

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya***Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace***

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Abstract:

Mohamed Seddik Benyahia is considered one of the most prominent figures in the history of modern Algeria, due to the significant role he played during the War of Independence and after independence. His academic background as a law student allowed him to establish himself as an advocate for the Algerian cause. He was very active within the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students in 1955, becoming one of the most prominent political activists who represented Algeria at the Bandung Conference. He then became one of the most prominent rapporteurs in the National Council of the Algerian Revolution, and later an active member of the delegations of the Provisional Government, through which he demonstrated his diplomatic competence. He was chosen as a member of the negotiating delegation in the Algerian-French negotiations from 1962 to 1969. Mohamed Seddik Benyahia's struggle did not end with the restoration of national sovereignty; rather, he continued his efforts with utmost dedication in building the foundations of the foreign policy of the Algerian state, becoming one of the most prominent diplomatic figures in resolving international conflicts.

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Despite the pivotal role of this remarkable figure, he has not received sufficient attention in historical studies. In Algerian libraries, one can scarcely find in-depth research on his struggle. Therefore, this article aims to shed light on his diplomatic efforts during the War of Independence and his contributions to world peace after independence. This is achieved by tracing his biography to understand the environment that shaped his character, his educational path, and how he acquired the fundamentals of political activism.

Ultimately, we seek to identify the factors that enabled him to become a prominent figure in the struggle and a diplomat, particularly on the international stage. To address this issue, we employ a descriptive approach and historical analysis to examine his life, as well as a comparative method to compare the testimonies of his contemporaries, thereby establishing the sequence of events and placing them within their historical context. To achieve the objectives of this study, we relied on several sources, most notably audiovisual materials such as documentaries containing statements by Mohamed Seddik Benyahia and testimonies from his contemporaries, such as his classmate Zouhir Ihaddaden, and his colleagues in the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students, such as Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi and Redha Malek, in addition to Algerian statesmen who worked with him in the diplomatic field. What we can conclude from this research is that the environment in which Mohamed Seddik Benyahia grew up was among the factors that contributed to the formation of his personality, due to his experience of colonial oppression in his society .

Furthermore, his educational journey in both Setif and Algiers brought him into contact with many figures in the Algerian national struggle, which led him to become a revolutionary through his words and advocacy for the Algerian cause, drawing on his legal expertise. He demonstrated exceptional competence on international platforms and in the Algerian-French negotiations, earning him the nickname "The Fox of the Desert".

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

Key words: Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya, Algerian revolution, Algerian-French negotiations, world peace.

ملخص:

يُعتبر محمد الصديق بن يحيى من أبرز الشخصيات في تاريخ الجزائر المعاصر، نظرًا للدور الكبير الذي لعبه خلال حرب التحرير وبعد الاستقلال. فقد مكّنه تكوينه الأكاديمي كطالب في القانون من أن يبرز كمُدافع عن القضية الجزائرية. وكان نشطًا جدًا داخل الاتحاد العام للطلبة المسلمين الجزائريين سنة 1955، ليصبح من أبرز النشطاء السياسيين الذين مثلوا الجزائر في مؤتمر باندونغ. كما برز كأحد أهم المقررين في المجلس الوطني للثورة الجزائرية، ثم كعضو فعال في وفود الحكومة المؤقتة، حيث أظهر كفاءة دبلوماسية عالية. وقد تم اختياره ضمن وفد المفاوضات الجزائرية-الفرنسية خلال الفترة الممتدة من 1962 إلى 1969. ولم تتوقف مسيرة نضاله عند استرجاع السيادة الوطنية، بل واصل جهوده بإخلاص في بناء أسس السياسة الخارجية للدولة الجزائرية، ليصبح أحد أبرز الشخصيات الدبلوماسية في حل النزاعات الدولية.

ورغم الدور المحوري لهذه الشخصية المتميزة، إلا أنها لم تحظَ بالاهتمام الكافي في الدراسات التاريخية، إذ نادرًا ما نجد في المكتبات الجزائرية أبحاثًا معمقة حول مسيرته النضالية. ومن هذا المنطلق، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على جهوده الدبلوماسية خلال حرب التحرير، ومساهماته في تحقيق السلم العالمي بعد الاستقلال. ويتم ذلك من خلال تتبع سيرته الذاتية لفهم البيئة التي أسهمت في تشكيل شخصيته، ومساره التعليمي، وكيفية اكتسابه لأسس العمل السياسي. وفي النهاية، نسعى إلى تحديد العوامل التي مكّنته من أن يصبح شخصية بارزة في النضال ودبلوماسيًا متميزًا، خاصة على الصعيد الدولي.

ولمعالجة هذه الإشكالية، تم اعتماد المنهج الوصفي والتحليل التاريخي لدراسة حياته، إضافة إلى المنهج المقارن لمقارنة شهادات معاصريه، بما يسمح بإعادة بناء تسلسل الأحداث ووضعها في سياقها التاريخي. ولتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة، تم الاعتماد على عدة مصادر، أبرزها المواد السمعية البصرية مثل الوثائقيات التي تتضمن تصريحات محمد الصديق بن يحيى، وشهادات معاصريه، مثل زميله زهير إحدادن، ورفاقه في الاتحاد العام للطلبة المسلمين الجزائريين مثل أحمد طالب الإبراهيمي و**رضا مالك**، بالإضافة إلى رجال الدولة الجزائريين الذين عملوا معه في المجال الدبلوماسي.

ومن خلال هذا البحث، يمكن الاستنتاج أن البيئة التي نشأ فيها محمد الصديق بن يحيى كانت من بين العوامل التي ساهمت في تشكيل شخصيته، نتيجة معاشته للظلم الاستعماري داخل مجتمعه. كما أن مساره التعليمي في كل من سطيف والجزائر العاصمة أتاح له الاحتكاك بعدد من رموز النضال الوطني، مما جعله يتحول إلى مناضل بالكلمة والدفاع عن القضية الجزائرية، مستنداً إلى تكوينه القانوني. وقد أظهر كفاءة استثنائية في المحافل الدولية وفي المفاوضات الجزائرية-الفرنسية، الأمر الذي أكسبه لقب "ثعلب الصحراء".

كلمات مفتاحية: محمد الصديق بن يحيى، الثورة الجزائرية، المفاوضات الجزائرية-الفرنسية، السلام العالمي.

Introduction :

During the Algerian liberation struggle, political and military figures emerged who played important roles in confronting French colonial policy. Although historical writings have shed light on the figures who confronted the colonizer on the battlefield based on the nature of the armed struggle, historical facts prove the prominent role played by many political figures, especially in the diplomatic field, which depends on introducing the Algerian cause and defending it in international forums. Among the most prominent of these figures is the freedom fighter and diplomat Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahya, who confronted the French colonialists from the standpoint of justice and law. With his wisdom and political cunning, he exposed the crimes of the French colonialists and their inhumane practices in international forums until France recognized the right of the Algerian people to self-determination, and he became an active member of the negotiating delegation in Evian.

Given the scarcity of studies on this figure, I have decided to use this article to shed light on his life and most important activities, from his involvement in the political struggle during the liberation revolution to his diplomatic activities after independence, drawing on numerous sources, most notably the writings and testimonies of his comrades in the struggle and some of his contemporaries.

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

1- Mohamed El Sadik Ben Yahia: Birth and upbringing:

Mohamed El Sadik Ben Yahia was born on 30 January 1932 in the city of Jijel to a respected family with a good reputation in the region. His father, Farhat Ben Yahia, was one of the city's most prominent merchants, and his mother was Khlaf Safia. Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia was the youngest child in the family and grew up with his three brothers in a peaceful, loving, and harmonious family environment. (House of Culture of Jijel, Works : 2021)

He studied at the French school in his hometown of Jijel, where he was known for his intelligence and perceptiveness, which earned him permission to move from one year to the next. He excelled and obtained his primary school certificate and then his preparatory school certificate. At the same time, his father did not neglect to connect him to his Arab-Islamic roots, as he received lessons in Arabic language and grammar from Sheikh Muhammad al-Tahir al-Sahli at the Al-Hayat School affiliated with the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars. (Directorate of Mujahideen and Rights Holders of Jijel Province, Commemoration: 2023)

Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya joined the ranks of the Islamic Scouts and was an active, strong-willed member. In the mid-forties, he moved to the city of Setif to pursue his secondary studies at the "Alpartini ALBERTINI" school, where he spent another four years, during which he met Abdel Salam Belaid, who was studying in the same secondary school. After obtaining his baccalaureate degree, he moved to the capital to continue his studies at the University of Algiers. Due to the difficult financial situation, Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahya was forced to drop out of school before obtaining his bachelor's degree. He returned to the city of Bejaia and worked as a professor in its high school, but that did not prevent him from continuing his university studies until his wish came true and he obtained a bachelor's degree in law. (National Organization of the Mujahideen, Overview: s.d.)

Before studying law, he showed great interest in political science and moved to Paris to take the entrance exam for this major. Upon passing

the first stage of the exam, he was asked several questions, including why he wanted to study political science. His answer was revolutionary, as he spoke about the freedom of people to gain their independence, which is why he was rejected. Despite this, he applied several times to pass the same exam, and with the passage of time, the colonial authorities began to see him as a danger, especially since he was an educated and ambitious young man, and his liberal tendencies were not hidden from anyone. (Ahdadne, Works : s.d.)

2- His involvement in the Algerian political struggle:

Mohammad al-Siddiq ibn Yahya was interested in politics from a young age and interacted with its men at the local level. He was greatly influenced by Sayyid Mohammad Rawla, who was an enthusiastic and independent activist with a great knowledge of politics, its principles, and the various parties and their activities. He used to discuss various issues with him. It can be said that much of the credit for directing him goes to this man, who provided him with sound guidance at a time when children were not allowed to delve into these issues. He was also influenced by the Arabic language professor Sheikh Omar bin Al-Duhan, who belonged to the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, from whom he learned a lot about loving the homeland, defending it, and protecting the Arab-Islamic identity. (Al-Nahar TV, Symbol : 2016)

Since his childhood, the personality of Mohammad al-Siddiq bin Yahya has been characterized by revolution and great enthusiasm. At the age of twelve, he used to meet with adults in the café next to his father's house, and talk about colonialism and the necessity of fighting it, until he became nicknamed "Si Muhammad al-Watani." However, his father, Farhat, did not like his excessive interest in politics at the expense of his studies. (Al-Shorouk TV, Politician : 2022)

While studying in Setif, Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia was in constant contact with the activists of the "Lovers of the Manifesto and Freedom" movement, which was led by Ferhat Abbas. However, he did not like the latter's ideas calling for autonomy due to his revolutionary tendencies. Therefore, we find him getting closer to the

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

activists of the People's Party, especially when he moved to study at the University of Algiers in 1951, where he had strong relations with the activists of the "Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties." After obtaining his Bachelor of Laws degree in 1953, he specialized in the legal profession and began his internship with lawyer Ammar Ben Toumi, who has been considered the lawyer of the National Movement since 1946. His position as an intern helped him to be a link between the prisoners of the National Movement and the leadership. (Abbas, 2014,p144)

3- His struggle in the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students, 1955:

On February 27, 1955, the General Assembly of Muslim Students of North Africa sent an urgent appeal to all Algerian students, calling on them to form a general union. In this context, leaflets were distributed to various associations, and Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya was assigned to travel to France to convey this call to immigrant students. In the summer of 1955, the founding conference was held in France, which announced the birth of the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students under the presidency of Ahmed Taleb Brahimi. An office was then established in Algeria, headed by Muhammad al-Siddiq ibn Yahya. Its most prominent members included Salih ibn al-Qabi, Abd al-Salam Belaid, and Lamine Khan. (Taleb Al-Ibrahimi, 2011, p122).

According to the testimony of Saleh Ben Qabi in his book Algerian Diplomacy Between Yesterday and Today, Mohamed Al-Siddiq Ben Yahya played a major role in attracting university and high school students for the benefit of the Algerian revolution. He also contributed to the implementation of the first diplomatic mission undertaken by students in the name of the revolution, which was represented by the contact that the office of the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students was assigned to conduct with representatives of Guy Maule's government in February 1956 in Algiers. Although this meeting did not yield any significant results, it

enabled the revolutionary leadership to determine the extent of France's adherence to the Algerian Sahara. (Ben Al-Qabi, s.d, p18).

Muhammad al-Siddiq ibn Yahya played a major role in preparing for the May 19, 1956, strike. This was achieved through two months of consultations between representatives of the revolutionary leadership, headed by Abban Ramadan. He also played a prominent role as a lawyer defending detained students, which made him vulnerable to prosecution by the colonial authorities. However, the National Liberation Front devised a plan to smuggle him to Egypt via Tunisia. (Yazid, Works : 2021).

4- His participation in the internationalization of the Algerian cause:

Mohamed Al-Siddiq Ben Yahya contributed to introducing and defending the Algerian cause in many international forums, most notably his participation in the Bandung Conference and his selection by the interim government to be among the delegations participating in most international conferences and meetings.

▪ His attendance at the Bandung Conference 1955:

The Bandung Conference is considered a birth certificate for the diplomacy of the National Liberation Front, during which it presented the Algerian issue and was able to rely on and obtain support from the numerical bloc of Afro-Asian countries. One of the most important recommendations of the conference regarding Algeria is that fourteen countries from Africa and Asia submit a request to the United Nations General Assembly to present the Algerian issue at its tenth session and register it based on the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. (Boudarba, 2012, p196).

Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahya headed the delegation sent by the Front, along with Lakhdar Brahimi, as representatives of the students, along with Hussein Ait Ahmed and several diplomatic activists. According to Lakhdar Brahimi's testimony, the conference was a political marathon, lasting more than a month, during which the Cold War conflicts were at their peak at the time, as a result of the presence of various colors of the global political spectrum. (Abbas, 2014, p146).

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

After this conference, the National Liberation Front opened offices in several sisterly and friendly countries, which were considered diplomatic bodies through which it sought to gain support and endorsement for the Algerian cause. The most prominent of these was the Jakarta office in Indonesia, which was temporarily headed by Hussein Lahoul. After a short period, he was replaced by the two students, Muhammad al-Siddiq bin Yahya and Lakhdar Brahimi. (Abbas, 2014, p333).

▪ **His role in the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic:**

After the Provisional Government was established on 19 September 1958, Mohamed Sadik Ben Yahia was appointed Chief of Staff and Secretary General to Ferhat Abbas. He participated in the 14th session of the United Nations General Assembly alongside members of the mission to New York, which was composed of Algeria's most prominent diplomatic elite, to respond to De Gaulle's statement on the Algerian people's right to self-determination, announced on 16 September 1959. The Algerian delegation sought to emphasize the provisional government's desire for a peaceful, negotiated solution in accordance with United Nations regulations. (Boudarba, 2012, p196)

On February 14, 1961, Mohamed Ben Yahia was elected Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Fourth Non-Governmental Conference on Combating Colonialism in the Mediterranean and the Middle East in Tunis. He defended all victims of colonialism and denounced the need to release imprisoned leaders of the revolution and send lawyers and human rights committees to defend and visit them. The conference also protested against all death sentences issued against Algerians in both France and Algeria, and sent a telegram in this regard to General de Gaulle.

In early September 1961, Mohamed Ben Yahia participated with President Ben Khedda in the Non-Aligned Movement Conference in Belgrade. This delegation was strong in terms of the number and quality of participants, such as Lakhdar Brahimi and Mohamed Harbi.

At this meeting, the delegation obtained new recognition of the interim government, in addition to support on the issue of the Sahara's affiliation with Algeria. (Harbi, 2004, p367)

5- His assumption of the secretariat of the National Revolutionary Council, 1957-1962:

The National Council of the Revolution was established pursuant to the decisions of the Soummam Conference. It was considered a legislative body of the revolution with the authority to legislate and monitor the revolutionary apparatuses. It includes 34 members, half of whom are essential and the other half are reserves. Muhammad al-Siddiq bin Yahya was among the assistant members of the council, as he was chosen as a representative of the university youth. (Abbas, 2014, p147)

In the first session of the National Revolutionary Council, which was held in Cairo from August 20 to 28, 1957, Muhammad Al-Siddiq Bin Hay played a major role in preparing for its work by assuming the secretariat of the Council. In preparation for the second session, he was appointed to the committee tasked with preparing the draft program, alongside Omar Ousseddik. During the meeting, the ideas advocated by Ben Yahia were adopted, particularly with regard to the revolution's diplomatic activity.(Harbi, 2004, p205–208)

Following the ongoing conflict between the foreign leadership represented by the interim government and the General Staff and the mutual accusations between them, the fourth meeting of the National Revolutionary Council was held in Tripoli from August 5 to 22, 1961, where Ben Youssef Ben Khedda was elected Prime Minister of the interim government, succeeding Ferhat Abbas. Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya was appointed to head a three-member committee, along with Omar Boudaoud and Mohammadi Al-Saeed, to discuss two basic issues: negotiations and leadership. According to the minutes of this meeting, which we reviewed in the Algerian National Archives, Ben Yahya played a major role in resolving the crisis between the interim government and the General Staff, as he was assigned to meet with the

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

five prisoners and involve them in resolving this crisis.(Algerian National Archives, Council meeting : s.d.)

As for the last meeting of the National Revolutionary Council, which was held from May 27 to June 7, 1962, Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahya was part of the ministerial committee tasked with preparing the program, which met in the city of Hammamet in Tunisia. The reason for Ben Yahya's appointment was that he was good at benefiting from defections, and the committee expressed its vision regarding the future of the country. Muhammad ibn Yahya, along with Muhammad Harbi, was tasked with drawing up the major features of economic, social, and foreign policies. Within the framework of the discussion that took place regarding the social nature of the revolution, Muhammad ibn Yahya supported the thesis that emphasized the necessity of forming a social state and eliminating feudalism. (Harbi, 2004: p171–172)

At the start of the conference, Mohamed Ben Yahia was appointed President of the Council, assisted by Ali Kafi and Omar Boudaoud. The meeting discussed two main points: studying the program and appointing a new leadership known as the Political Bureau. Bin Yahya was appointed to the committee selecting the members of this bureau. According to Ali Haroun's testimony, the committee began its work in a tense atmosphere, and on June 5, the council met again under the chairmanship of Mohamed Ben Yahia, where heated discussions took place among the members, prompting the session chairman to announce the committee's failure in its mission. On June 8, Mohammed bin Yahya left with Ali Haroun and Lakhdar bin Toubal for Tunisia, convinced that withdrawal was the best solution to avoid worsening the crisis. (Haroun, 2003: p29–32)

6- His participation in the Algerian-French negotiations 1960-1962:

The first contacts between the Algerian Revolution and the French government date back to the era of the Fourth French Republic, during the reign of Guy Mollet on April 10, 1956, when Mohamed Khider met with Guy Mollet's envoys through the mediation of the

Egyptian government, where the Algerian delegation demanded recognition of the National Liberation Front and the right of the Algerian people to self-determination. Other meetings took place between Mohamed Yazid and Abderrahmane Kiwan with the French delegation in September of the same year in Rome. These meetings were a test of the French government's pulse, and the negotiations did not become effective until after the establishment of the Fifth French Republic and de Gaulle's rise to power. (Ben Khedda, s.d: p15–16)

In response to the latter's desire to conduct negotiations, the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic sent both Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahia and Ahmed Boumendjel, who arrived in Paris on June 25, 1960, and were directly transported by helicopter to the Moulins prefecture, where they were isolated and prevented from contacting the press or receiving visits. During the talks, views were exchanged with the French delegates, who insisted on adhering to de Gaulle's plan and refused to address any issue other than the ceasefire. The reason for the failure of these talks is due to de Gaulle's secret contacts with the Fourth Province delegation led by Saleh Zamoum, in his attempt to cause a split in the ranks of the revolution, but he failed to do so. (Qaddash, 2011: p272–273)

After the resumption of negotiations, Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahya participated in the first Evian talks in May 1961 alongside a group of important national figures headed by Karim Belkacem, Saad Dahlab, Reda Malek, and Ahmed Boumendjel, in addition to Tayeb Boulharouf, with the participation of French government envoys led by Louis Joxe. The Swiss government was responsible for meeting the Algerian delegation's needs in terms of transportation and providing amenities. The French delegation was committed to the Sahara issue and the ceasefire, while the Algerian delegation stressed its commitment to the unity of the national territory and not making any concessions. Therefore, these negotiations failed and did not yield any results other than the release of about 6,000 detainees and the improvement of the conditions of the five prisoners. (Malek, 2012: p234)

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

After General de Gaulle realized that all his projects to crush the Algerian Revolution had failed, especially after the demonstrations of December 11, 1960, which demonstrated to the world the Algerian people's adherence to the principle of complete independence, he moved to resolve the Algerian issue through negotiations, seeking to achieve the greatest possible gains for France in Algeria. At the end of October 1961, an official meeting was held between the Algerian and French delegations in the Swiss city of Basel under the mediation of Olivier Long, represented by the Algerian delegation, Mohamed Ben Yahia and Reda Malek, and represented by the French delegation, Claude Cheysson and Bruno De Leusse. The discussions were arduous, especially regarding the Sahara issue. The Algerian delegation emphasized its commitment to territorial integrity, while the French delegation focused on preserving its interests in the Sahara and exploiting its resources. (Ben Khedda, s.d, p29–31)

The talks resumed with a second meeting on November 9, 1961, where Mohamed Ben Yahia and Reda Malek were assigned to provide answers on behalf of the interim government after discussing the proposals that were addressed in the first meeting, where they affirmed the complete rejection of French sovereignty over the Algerian Sahara. (Malek, 2012, 129)

After Ahmed Ben Bella and his fellow detainees went on a hunger strike to secure the rights of prisoners and attract international public attention, negotiations did not resume until the strike ended on December 9, 1961. A meeting took place between Saad Dahlab and Louis Joxe, during which the French delegation sought to fragment Algeria's territorial integrity by proposing referendums. During the talks, the Algerian delegation sensed that Joxe was motivated by a desire to reach a ceasefire. In this context, Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahia and Karim Belkacem were assigned to contact the five prisoners and inform them of the content of the negotiations. (Dahlab, 2007, p145)

From February 11 to 19, 1962, talks resumed in the Les Rousses region on the French-Swiss border, where several issues were studied,

most notably the ceasefire, the release of political prisoners, and the return of refugees. Committees were formed, each with its own tasks, with Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahya chairing the committee in charge of economic matters. All topics were discussed and texts drafted. (Malek, 2012, p278)

After the National Revolutionary Council approved Les Rousse's draft, the interim government announced its desire to officially continue negotiations in the French city of Evian. Mohamed Ben Yahia was part of the Algerian delegation, which consisted of Karim Belkacem, Saad Dahlab, and others, while the French delegation was headed by Louis Joxe. The talks lasted for 12 days due to amendments proposed by the National Council, where the Algerian delegation tried to convince the French delegation to accept the Council's proposals. The agreements were signed on March 18, 1962, and included a ceasefire, a self-determination referendum, the release of the five prisoners, and the approval of a transitional phase. (Dahlab, 2007, p145)

Following the signing of these agreements, Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya stated the following: “.... I believe that the struggle of the Algerian people to gain independence is a struggle thirsty for freedom, and this struggle does not only concern Algeria, but concerns every person in the world, especially Africans who endured hardships under the weight of colonial armies...” (Al-Shorouk TV, Martyr : 2023)

7- Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya, the man of peace after independence:

Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya continued his struggle and prominent diplomatic role after independence, as he was among the figures who sought to resolve the differences that occurred between the comrades in struggle during the crisis of the summer of 1962. During the Sand War between Algeria and Morocco in 1963, he was assigned by Boumediene, the commander of military operations, to look into the Moroccan file and some legal issues as a lawyer and expert, and by virtue of his previous experience in negotiations. (Zbiri, 2011, p422)

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

During the era of President Houari Boumediene, Mohamed Ben Yahia held many positions, most notably Minister of Information and Culture from 1966 to 1970, then Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research from 1970 to 1977, and Minister of Finance from 1977 to 1979. He demonstrated high efficiency in management by drafting the media and press law and establishing many cultural centers, and he also worked to reform the educational system and develop a strategy for the future of higher education in Algeria.

During the era of President Chadli Ben Hadid, he was chosen to become Minister of Foreign Affairs due to his specialization in the diplomatic field and his experience in secret negotiations. He began his work by bringing about a comprehensive change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, appointing people with high competence in this field. Chadli relied on him for the smallest details related to the ministry, and his mark appeared in organizing several visits by world presidents to Algeria, such as the visit of the Queen of Britain, the King of Spain, and the presidents of Nigeria and Gabon. He also participated in official receptions for many delegations on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the liberation revolution, headed by the American delegation. (Taleb Al-Ibrahimi, 2014, p 26–36)

He accompanied President Chadli Bendjedid on many official visits, and also worked on the Palestinian-Israeli file. On the sidelines of the emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly on Palestine on July 22, Mohammed bin Yahya confirmed that global imperialism is behind the support for the Zionist entity, which made him continue to ignore the rights of the Palestinian people and expand into Arab lands. He also stated in the special session on July 24, 1980, the following: "... The complete disregard for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, the expansion of Zionist settlements in Arab lands, and the Zionist gangs' disregard for the decisions of the international community would not have been possible without the support they receive, which implements the strategic goals of imperialism..." (Army Magazine, 1980, p13)

Perhaps the most important role played by Mohammed bin Yahya in his diplomatic career was his leadership of international mediation in the liberation of American hostages in Tehran. After the Iranian Revolution and the fall of the Shah's regime in Iran in 1979, the United States received Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as a political refugee, which angered the Iranian people. A group of students stormed the American embassy in Tehran and detained 52 diplomats for 444 days. This incident sparked a major political crisis between the two parties, as the United States sought to mobilize the international system to pressure Iran and impose a comprehensive presence on trade and financial relations with it. It also resorted to using military force by landing a commando force in Tehran to try to free the hostages, but it failed, causing a dangerous escalation in relations between the two countries. (Algerian Public Television, Mediation : 2025)

Many parties tried to resolve the crisis, but failed. In the end, Algeria was chosen for this mission because its diplomats enjoy credibility and international respect, most notably its Foreign Minister, Mohamed Siddiq Ben Yahia, and its Ambassador to the United States, Reda Malek, in addition to Abdelkrim Gharib, its Ambassador to Tehran. After three months of great efforts by them to mediate and move between Iran and the United States, the hostages were released in January 1981, thus proving Algerian diplomacy's efficiency in resolving international conflicts. (Army Magazine, 1981, p39)

Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya continued to strive to bring peace to the world until he died in the crash of the plane carrying him on a mission to end the Iran-Iraq war in May 1982.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we can say that the environment in which Muhammad al-Siddiq ibn Yahya grew up contributed greatly to the formation of his personality, due to the manifestations of colonial domination he experienced in his society. His studies in the city of Setif also brought him into contact with some figures of the national struggle within the Movement of Lovers of Manifesto and Freedom, which prompted him to become a revolutionary with words and

Mohammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya
Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

advocacy through his defense of Algerian political prisoners. He also had a strong presence in the National Council of the Algerian Revolution and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, which qualified him to be part of the negotiating delegation in the Algerian-French negotiations between 1960 and 1962, where he played a pivotal role in directing their course, due to his precision in reviewing the texts of laws and agreements.

This status, which Mohammed Siddiq Ben Yahia attained during the liberation revolution, led him to hold several positions within the Algerian state after independence, most notably as Minister of Foreign Affairs under President Chadli Bendjedid. Through this position, Ben Jadid demonstrated his high competence in strengthening Algeria's position on the international stage, in addition to his prominent role in resolving international conflicts, such as the liberation of American hostages in Tehran.

Appendix:

Appendix A : a picture of Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya



Appendix B: Muhammad Al-Siddiq bin Yahya within the negotiating delegation in Evian



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Diplomat of the Algerian Revolution and man of world peace

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