

**The Contributions of Mostaganem and Tiaret in the Liberation
Revolution: An approach to writing local history**

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Abstract: This study discusses our experience with the local history of both the Mostaganem and Tiaret regions through original sources, represented in the archival documents of the colonial administration and its intelligence agencies, which monitored the public affairs of Algerians during the Liberation Revolution, as well as living sources from dialogues with revolutionary makers, including moujahideen and eyewitnesses who gave us their testimonies about the suffering of Algerians under colonial repression, as well as the moujahideen memoirs and their interviews with various media outlets about the major battles in their confrontation with the colonial army, providing us with a vivid picture of their revolutionary journey.

Through this study, we tried to highlight our most important studies on revolutionary activity in the two regions through fieldwork and other works published in books and articles in scientific journals, with the aim is to clarify the importance of local history during this sensitive period of Algeria's history in order to clarify many of the precise details that have remained distant from historical writing.

Therefore, this study addresses many of the issues raised in the local arena regarding the value of local historical writings and their detail in order to preserve the local memory of the two regions.

Keywords: Historical writing, Local History , the revolution, Mostaganem, Tiaret ,Oral sources ,Archival documents

Introduction:

Local history is considered a true key to accessing the general history of a country or a nation. Within the framework of this scientific study, writing history related to the local particularities of regions, cities, and villages was preceded by historians of the Islamic school who wrote about the regions and transmitted their

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details. It has evolved in our contemporary time through colonial monographic studies, which are administrative, geographical, and historical reports, in addition to academic studies by Algerian researchers. These have become a solid foundation for writing the detailed history of these regions, relying on primary sources such as testimonies, profound archaeological finds, documents, manuscripts, and field observations of various artifacts indicating landmarks of local history, including the traces of colonial crimes like prisons, detention centers, torture centers, etc...

The aim of this study is to uncover the fundamentals of regional history and the significant, yet often overlooked, events that have been ignored or avoided by mainstream history due to their sensitivity and local complexities

To this end, we have spent a considerable amount of time researching the history of local events and their relationship to society and other aspects of life, particularly those related to the Algerian War of Independence, which, while comprehensive in its general scope, relied heavily on local actors

The leadership of the revolution, which began with the group of 22 and the group of six that formed the core of the armed revolution, relied on prominent figures who had a significant impact on organizing the revolution locally and regionally. Let's take the example of the Oran sector, or western Oran, or the Oran province and its regions. It relied on prominent local leaders such as Zabana, Kouini, Bordji Amar, Cheriet, El Hadj Ben Alla, and others from the second and third tiers of leadership who established a local revolutionary organization subject to the regional leadership represented by the martyr Larbi Ben M'hidi, Ben Abdelmalek Ramdane, and the late Moujahid Boussouf. Thanks to these prominent local figures, the revolution was able to surprise and confuse the enemy forces on the night of November 1st, and the revolution spread rapidly throughout the Oran sector with disciplined leadership from Oran, Tlemcen, Mostaganem, Tiaret, Mascara, Sidi Bel Abbès, and other areas of the Fifth Région; with its districts, and historical sections.

In my writings on this subject, I focused on the regions of Tiaret and Mostaganem as a living model for our cultural, historical, and academic activities through modest writings, consisting of scientific articles published in some international and national journals, as

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well as numerous contributions at the local level through the organization of pioneering laboratories, such as the Laboratory of Algerian History at the University of Oran 1 and the Laboratory of Historical and Archaeological Studies in North Africa at the University of Tiaret. This raises a main issue regarding the importance of writing in local history and its academic role in disseminating realistic historical knowledge, based on the relics, testimonies, and memoirs of local actors, in addition to archival documents in their various local and colonial forms .

Therefore, a major problem arises for us regarding the type of local history writing for the Mostaganem and Tiaret regions And most importantly, in monographic studies?

From this perspective, a set of inquiries arises in our minds:

- What is local history and its implications on the history of the Algerian Liberation Revolution?
- What are the most prominent examples of our writings on the history of the revolution in the regions of Mostaganem and Tiaret?
- What were the written and oral sources relied upon in writing the local history of these two regions ?
- What are the difficulties and challenges in researching the history of the revolution locally ?
- What is the significance of local history in writing the history of the Liberation Revolution in all its details ?

We relied on a set of sources and references that focused on local history, such as monographic studies by French military personnel and researchers who dealt with this subject in detail, as well as studies by Algerian academic researchers through field and archaeological studies, including our writings on local history.

I. Definition of local history and its implications on the history of the liberation revolution in the two regions (Mostaganem and Tiaret)

Writing national history in general, and local history in particular, has become a crucial priority, requiring meticulous research and academic analysis of its events. This aims to chronicle many forgotten periods, relying on oral testimonies and the evidence of colonial crimes. This evidence includes examining caves, camps, detention centers, and other discovered sites through official and

popular channels. Researchers and historians, in particular, draw upon the findings of these sites to write a local history objectively, free from emotion and exaggeration. This analysis is informed by documents found in the possession of families and private individuals, as well as archival documents stored in archives, printed books, and the memoirs of key figures.^{1*}

For this purpose, studying the local history of the various events and incidents that took place in the Algerian regions during the liberation revolution is very important for several reasons, including:

- The availability of the primary material for writing this history from local testimonies and documents with private individuals, in addition to the archives of the colonial administration, which closely followed the events of the revolution through its security and intelligence institutions and its administrative staff.
- The archives of the revolution, particularly those belonging to the wilayas (provinces), including the Fifth Wilaya.
- Local newspapers that followed the news from their perspective, such as the newspapers of the settlers.
- Reports from revolutionary newspapers like Al-Muqawama (The Resistance) and Al-Moujahid (The Moujahid).
- Radio reports, especially those from the revolutionary radio station, Sawt al-Jaza'ir al-Moukafiha (The Radio Voice of Algeria), which broadcast its news from the Algerian-Moroccan border.
- The collective memory of the Algerian people in the region, which remains alive in the memories of many who lived through and witnessed the events of the revolution, who remember its events and developments.
- Academic studies and research projects that use the above elements to write an accurate local history.^{2†}

These are some of the motivations that led us to focus on this type of study throughout our research journey, through seminars,

¹ - Activities of the National Forum on Local History via remote lecturing, organized by the Association of Inter-State Heritage Preservation and Local History in coordination with a group of laboratories, including the Laboratory of Archaeological and Historical Studies in North Africa at the University of Tiaret, April 5, 2024

² - The project of PRFU: The history of the Tiaret region through the analysis of French archive documents.

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conferences, and various research projects that concentrated on the local history of the Oran region during the colonial period. This focus is embodied in academic writings on the Mostaganem and Tiaret regions.

To understand the importance of local history, many studies have addressed its definition and the significance of writing about it. No academic event is complete without discussing the importance of local history. For example, the newspaper El Shorouk hosted a group of researchers specializing in local history in one of its issues to share their views on its various fields and challenges, addressing the specificities of this type of intricate study and highlighting the opinions of some researchers on the following points:^{3‡}

-Many researchers and those interested in the subject describe writing local history as a difficult and perilous task, based on many considerations, some of which are limited to the extent of the possibility of being objective, especially since most of those who write about local issues are from the region or are geographically or emotionally close to it... because of the problem of subjectivity, even if the historian tries to adhere to objectivity..."

the problem of subjectivity in our opinions is very complex, due to the tendency to be swept away by the enthusiasm of the event the researcher is writing about, given its connection to the collective memory of the environment in which he lives. In this regard, Professor Dr. El Ghali Gharbi, Director of the Laboratory of Mediterranean Studies Through the Ages at Yahia Fares University in Medea, emphasizes in the introduction one of the laboratory's publications the great importance of documenting forgotten history, "moving away from the comprehensive view of national history that characterizes most academic historical studies and research, starting from local history," citing several works of the laboratory, including a book on Chlala El Adhaoura: History and Heritage (2020), another publication on Ain Boucif: History and Civilization (2021),

³ - Saleh Masoudi: Between serving forgotten causes and being cautious of subjectivity and tribalism, the responsibility of writing local history.. Positives and warnings «Al-Shorouk Daily Newspaper dated 06-03-2023

and "Bougzoul Zenakhra Through History... and a symposium on Chehbounia in April 2024..."^{4 §}

The university researcher "Ahsan Talilani "believes that we should encourage writers, historians, and the general public interested in writing the history of the regions they belong to, as they know them well and know their details. "In fact, I encourage writing the history of the family and clan, because from this local and marginal history we can write the central history. I believe there is no fear of exaggeration, because today there is public opinion and various means of communication that enable us to verify and correct all information and respond to all claims."

In short, Al-Shorouk newspaper conveyed the opinions of many professors about the importance of local history for the liberation revolution and the national movement by introducing the testimonies, scrutinizing and criticizing them, and highlighting the difficulties of using them in local history.^{5**}

Therefore, local history, from our point of view, is the history of the events and occurrences that took place in the two regions, through the model of this study (Tiaret and Mostaganem), by virtue of our humble writings about them, published in scientific journals, or those presented at local seminars and conferences, or through radio interviews on Tiaret and Mostaganem, in which I tried to focus on the importance of writing local history of Algeria in general and the history of the Liberation Revolution in the two regions in particular for several reasons, including :

- My geographical residence in both regions and my interest in the regions historically and geographically.
- Availability of a considerable collection of oral testimonies and my conversations with many fighters and revolutionaries of the liberation movement in both regions.
- Ease of communication with museum and cultural institutions, the Fighters' Organization, and the Fighters' Directorate in both regions.

⁴ - Publications of the Laboratory for Mediterranean Studies at the University of Media

⁵ - Saleh Sauodi: 'The Responsibility of Writing Local History.. Positives and Precautions' Al-Shorouk Newspaper File on Local History on 03-06-2023

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- Access to a considerable number of archival documents that focus on the history of the region through security and administrative reports, which are now open to the public.
- My observation of the traces of colonial crimes locally and their significance in analyzing the landmarks that have become natural testimonies to the events of the revolution, through caves that were revolution leadership centers, or mountains and forests that still bear witness to the impacts of battles, in addition to artifacts displayed in provincial fighter museums and the remnants of camps and prisons which the state has rehabilitated to remain as witnesses to colonial crimes.

From this standpoint,⁶ ††we will address in the second section of it a study of the most important writings about the region, citing the approved sources and references and the methodology followed in this type of historical writing.

II. Samples of our writings about the history of the revolution in the regions of Mostaganem and Tiaret

I traced the movement of Algerian society locally during the Algerian Liberation Revolution by relying on oral narratives and dialogues with the actors and makers of the revolution in the regions of (Tiaret and Mostaganem) for several personal and research-related reasons.

- From the personal side: it consisted of engaging with the popular narrative that continuously recounts the heroism of Algerians throughout the revolution, and the continued remembrance of this stage by the makers of the revolution with all its personal suffering and heroism, which the popular memory still recalls generation after

⁶ - The Kariyar Detention Center in Sidi Ali, Mostaganem Province, and the Mahdia Detention Center in Tiaret are the subjects of our studies discussed as follows:

- "Crimes of French colonialism in the Dahra region, the Kariyar Detention Center as a model," November 1 Magazine, a quarterly published by the central organ of the National Organization of Mujahideen, Issue 189
- "From the crimes of French colonialism in the Tiaret region, the Mahdia Detention Center (formerly Birido) as a model," November 1 Magazine, a quarterly published by the central organ of the National Organization of Mujahideen, Issue 191

generation, as well as my presence in revolutionary areas, where the aftermath of the colonial crime is still clearly visible.^{7††}

- As for the scientific research aspect: it was represented in holding seminars and forums, and delivering lectures during national occasions, as well as during the programming of specialized research projects on local history at the level of laboratories and various research institutions in both Mostaganem and Tiaret. Therefore, in my studies on the region, I addressed various topics related to the revolutionary activity and its manifestations, relying on sources that witnessed the events of the revolution, including fighters and citizens who were at the heart of the battle, as well as special archival documents and others stored in Algerian and French archival houses. These include administrative and security archival documents that monitored the revolution's activity in the two regions, which helped me uncover many historical facts and oral narratives that are part of popular memory, which still recount the most prominent events of this region within the general history of the Algerian liberation revolution.

Writing in the field of local history is important and difficult at the same time due to historical sensitivities in conveying testimony or extracting certain personal information, which the historian should deal with using a scientific methodology, with a humanistic approach, away from publicity, glorification, or downplaying certain events or the roles played by the revolution's actors.

I have addressed in studies on the local history of the two regions many detailed topics in the field of historical research through the following models:

- Studies on the general conditions of revolutionary work in the two regions through the activity of the Liberation Army and the position of the colonial army towards the activities of the National Liberation Army:

- An article published in the New Eras magazine titled 'The Outbreak of the Revolution in the Oran Department and the Difficulties Faced by Revolutionary Work in the Region': It focused on the general circumstances that accompanied the outbreak of the revolution in the Oran sector, the main actors and makers of the

⁷ - The landmarks and impact of the colonial crime in every corner of the two regions, from caves and prisons to eyewitnesses who still recount these events.

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revolution in the departmental circles, emphasizing the importance of the revolution's comprehensive success and the difficulties faced by the revolution in this large-area department that has a high proportion of settlers. It also touched on the stance of the settlers and the local and central administration regarding the outbreak of the revolution.

- An article about the activities of the National Liberation Army in the Tiaret region through archival documents published in the New Eras magazine: It focused on the beginning of revolutionary work in the region that was included within the seventh sector of the fifth state, highlighting the main battles that took place in the area and the reaction of the colonial army and its intelligence apparatus to the revolutionary activity in the region.

- An article on the outbreak of the revolution in Mostaganem and its development: published in Al-Ibar Journal for Historical and Archaeological Studies: It explained the general circumstances of the outbreak of revolutionary activity in the Mostaganem region, the reaction of the colonial administration against revolutionary activity, and touched on the various major battles that took place in the region in 1956.

- An article entitled 'Colonial Psychological Warfare in the Mostaganem Region' in which I tried to address the repressive methods employed by the French and their security and civil apparatuses in confronting the Algerian revolution, published in the aforementioned Al-Ibar Journal.

- An article entitled 'Major Battles in the Dhahra Region and the Reaction of the French Occupation Army' to this revolutionary activity in the region, presented during a national forum on the values of the revolution via remote conferencing with the participation of several research laboratories.

- A study entitled 'Crimes of French Colonialism in the Tiaret Region: The Mahdia Prison as a Model,' published in Al-Mujahed Journal.

- Contributing with several national presentations on revolutionary activity in the two regions as part of the activities of the Directorate of Moujahideen in Tiaret and Mostaganem, including:

- Presentations on revolutionary figures such as Hamdani in Tiaret and Ben Abdelmalek Ramadan in Mostaganem, in addition to

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commemorating national events related to the local memory of the two regions on various national occasions.

- Chairing research projects and contributing to others as a research member, including:

- Member of a university research project related to the national elite, led by Professor Mehdi Ibrahim (2012-2015), focusing on the positions of elected councils at the outbreak of the revolution in Oran province.

- Member of a research project on the colonial administration in the Oran sector and its southern region, led by Professor Ibrahim Mahdid.

- University research project PRFU, entitled the History of the Tiaret Region during the Colonial Period, through analysis of French archive documents.

Special publications on the history of the revolution in the two regions include:

- The history of the liberation revolution in the Dahra and Mostaganem regions through testimonies, archival documents, and examination of the traces of colonial crimes.

- Member of the scientific committee for several national and international conferences on the liberation revolution in the Oran West region, including:

Chair of the scientific committee for the National Conference on the Human Values of the Liberation Revolution held in 2022 via remote participation

Chair of the scientific committee for the Conference on the History of the Revolution in the Oran West region through the testimonies of mujahideen, their memoirs, and archival document analysis in Ramadan 2024

Supervision of master's theses, others under discussion, including:

- The liberation revolution in the Mostaganem region at the University of Continuing Education in Mostaganem in 2006

- The outbreak of the liberation revolution in the Ben Abdelmalek Ramadan region at the University of Continuing Education in Mostaganem in 2006

History of the Revolution in Western Oran: Supply and Armament as a Model Through Al-Mujahid Newspaper 2018

- The Relationship Between the Seventh Area of the Fifth Wilaya and the Third Area of the Fourth Wilaya 2022

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Memorandums in Progress, Recently Discussed in June 2024,
Including:

- History of the Liberation Revolution in the Tiaret Region Through the Testimonies and Memoirs of the Moujahideen
- Crimes of French Colonialism in the Tiaret Region: Mahdia Prison as a Model
- French Repressive Policy in the Fifth Wilaya: The Death Penalty Case as a Model

I also participated in radio sessions in Tiaret and Mostaganem during national and scientific occasions, by analyzing the history of the revolution and its important events.

Through these study models, I sought to delve into the exploration of documents and the recording of testimonies related to the revolution's history in both regions, discussing and analyzing its most prominent events and aspects of revolutionary activity there.

III. Written and Oral Sources Used in Writing the Local History of the Two Regions

To study the local history of the liberation revolution in the aforementioned regions, we relied on a collection of written sources from archives, memoirs of the fighters, oral accounts of the revolution makers in the two regions, and academic references.^{8 §§}

For this purpose, historical writing about the topic of the revolution is considered essential at the outset by listening to the oral narratives of the revolution's actors, examining them, criticizing them, and comparing them with other sources. Thus, the history that prevails in our society is, for the most part, oral history that speaks in the voice of the tribe and the individuals who participated in the revolution and experienced it through the oral stories of the heroes' deeds and the colonial crimes committed. It is, in itself, a sense of

⁸ --Reviews our studies the document and its archive:

- "A Descriptive and Critical Study of the Colonial Archive Present in Algerian Archive Centers, the Archive of the Wilaya of Mostaganem as a Model," Algerian Journal of Manuscripts, Issue 14, January 2018

- "The Role of Archival Records Present in the Historical Service of the French Land Army in Vincennes in Writing the History of Contemporary Algeria 1H/1," Al-Mir'at Journal, issued by the Maghreb Studies Laboratory, Elites and Nation-Building, Issue 5, June 2017

the importance of the oral narrative, which has become one of the sources that contemporary historians rely on. In our view, it is a continuation of an ancient historical approach since the poems of Homer, the pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry, and the poems of the liberation revolution that still glorify heroism; regardless of their interaction and occasional exaggeration, they are credible because they come from people who lived through the events in all their details.

From this standpoint, we will attempt to define the oral narrative, its importance in contemporary historical writing, and its examination and criticism. According to some researchers, the oral narrative is: 'historical writing that has become a necessity, similar in status to written documents...' ^{8 ***}.

According to other studies, it is also of great importance in writing local history, as 'oral narrative is of great importance in historical knowledge, used by professional historians in archiving testimonies, and it is no less important than written documents in the absence of source texts that accompanied the event. This is because the scientific method followed is capable of making oral narrative a source free from doubt and relying on it in uncovering historical facts.' ^{9 †††}

Through some definitions of the oral narrative, I tried to highlight its importance as a complementary source to other sources. I relied

⁸ - The Shourouk newspaper dialogues with a group of researchers look at the importance of local history based on oral narratives, as well as a dialogue with moujahideen on the same subject, including a conversation with the late moujahid Naamaoui Abdellah from the Dahra region, who memorized the revolutionary poems and recited them to us. Also, the oral narratives that many of our mothers still tell their children about the revolutionary chants that the moujahidin used to recite when entering their designated centers, according to my mother on many occasions, when she recounted to us the entry of the moujahidin into our grandfather Haj Kadour's house in the Khadaidia village of Sidi Ali municipality, Mostaganem province, during the revolution.

⁹ -ibid and you see also : The explanatory scholarly material that has been presented on the importance of oral narrative in academic historical writing through examining it and comparing it with other sources: a lecture on oral narrative taken from the University of Setif 1 website titled 'Critical Studies of Historical Writings Through Oral Narrative,' accessed on 25-5-2024.

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on it in writing many studies about the history of the revolution in both regions, as many citizens and fighters still preserve narratives that they transmitted from the battlefield and events or heard from those who were part of the events. We tried to adopt them according to a scientific methodology through comparison and cross-checking the reported information with other narratives, written sources, and the memoirs of the fighters. Also, in direct interviews with fighters, they provided accounts and reports of the battles and events related to the revolution.¹⁰ ¶¶

Additionally, important interviews were conducted with the Secretary-General of the Fighters' Organization in the Wilaya of Mostaganem and with some fighters who participated in the outbreak of the revolution in the Dhahra region, through direct or radio interviews and via the Memory Program of Algerian Television. Among them were the fighters Mohammed Belhamiti, Abdelkader Karraoui, and the late fighter Boumehdi Zerouki. These interviews were significant and enabled us to write the history of the region in several articles and works specifically about the local history of the liberation revolution in the Dahra region.¹¹ §§

- Memoirs of the event-makers who participated, either closely or from a distance, in the events of the revolution in the regions of Mostaganem and Tiaret, from both sides: Algerian and the colonial side (Moujahideen, French soldiers, and French writers who witnessed the events):

The personal memoirs written by the event-makers from both sides are considered one of the important sources for documenting the history of the liberation revolution locally, as they are regarded as written living testimonies.

¹⁰ - Dialogues with a group of moudjahidins during national occasions and in direct independent interviews on Tiaret Radio, as well as students' interviews with the moujahidins who supervised their memoirs during the months of April and May 2024 in order to complete the graduation memoirs.

¹¹- See our articles on the outbreak of the revolution in the Oran region in the journal Masadir, and on the colonial psychological warfare in the Mostaganem region (previous references), and our book, **"el thawra bi el dahra wa mousteghenem"**: "History of the Revolution in Dahra and Mostaganem," published by Dar Al-Moudjadid Publishing and Distribution , Setif in 2023.

- I also relied on another contemporary source of the revolution's events through colonial newspapers affiliated with the General Government in Algeria or newspapers of the settlers, as well as the Moudjahid newspaper of the revolution. These newspapers provided us with important historical information about the most prominent events of the revolution and the revolutionary activities of the Algerians in the Western Oran region. Initially, we browsed the newspapers Al-Muqawama and Al-Moudjahid, which focused on conveying the course of the revolution's events, major battles, the heroics of the Moujahideen, and the ambushes carried out by the Liberation Army Moujahideens. ^{12 ****}

Colonial newspapers such as Echo d'Oran also provided us with important information about various events of the revolution from their perspective by writing journalistic reports based on French intelligence, attempting to downplay the events of the revolution. However, they clearly confirmed the prominent spread of revolutionary activity after 1956 and followed the events of major battles, such as the Battle of Sidi Zagai in Mostaganem in 1956, the Battle of Mount Manwar in Mascara, the battles in Tlemcen, and the guerrilla actions in the city of Oran. They could not deny the advanced revolutionary activity in western Oran, especially in the regions of Mostaganem and Tiaret, despite their bias towards the French intelligence view of the revolution in these two regions ^{13. ††††}

Therefore, both national and colonial press provided us with important information that allowed us to write the history of the two regions through comparison, approach, and analysis of texts that confirmed the major events of the revolutionary work in both regions.

- I also relied in writing the history of the revolution in the two regions on administrative and security documents stored in archives in Algeria and in France, or on web sources: archival documents

12- The issues of El Moudjahid newspaper covered many events of the revolution and its major battles, such as the Battle of Menouar, in which France used internationally prohibited chemical weapons in several areas of the Oran region, and the Battle of Jebel Seikh in western Dahra, near Ouled Maallah in Mostaganem on November 14, 1957

13 - The issues of the newspaper “L'Écho - d'Oran”, since 1956, are based on reports from the French intelligence service regarding major battles

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stored in Algerian and foreign archives are considered very important in writing local history, especially those documents related to the monographic history of the regions and administrative and security correspondence that was extremely secret at the time, and has now become accessible to the public and researchers according to specific regulations.

Many researchers define the archival document, such as Professor Sir Hilary Jenkinson, who is among the researchers specializing in the field of archives, as follows: 'Archives' or 'archival documents' are the documents that were created in the course of performing any type of work and were part of that work; therefore, they were preserved by the individuals responsible for managing these activities for reference. They are not limited to government work but may also include documents of associations, individuals, or non-governmental entities. In this sense, documents are those that naturally gather papers, films, or anything that carries a trace or information. The archival collection is also defined as a collection of pieces,' that is, 'documents' of any kind. ¹⁴***

I benefited greatly in writing the local history of my regions of Mostaganem and Tiaret from these documents that were provided to me, as well as a huge amount of information that I employed in writing research and studies related to the precise history of these areas during the Liberation Revolution, through some samples that we will try to introduce in order to give the topic its research value as follows:

- Some archive stock boxes available in the overseas archive in Aix-en-Provence, rich in documents related to the monitoring of the administrative and security apparatus regarding the course of the revolution in both the regions of Mostaganem and Tiaret, through some sample boxes such as:
- ANOM, Oran Department, Box No. 926/88, report from the SLNA of Tiaret to the General Directorate of the SLNA of Oran, 26-02-1954
- ANOM, B No. 926/88, report of the P.R.G, Tiaret, March 5, 1954

14- Mona Salhi: "The Importance of Local Documents in Writing the Social History of Algerians" , Algerian Historical Journal, Volume: 3, Issue: 01, June 2019. Serial Number: 11. pp. 245-255

- AOM, B, No. cab 10/54, General Government of Algeria: "The Events of Algeria, Speech and Address by Mr. Roger Léonard to the Algerian Assembly, pp. 2-10 November 1954, official printing, Algiers.
- AOM, Box No. 7G/1009, brief Presentation on the Rebellion and its Evolution
- AOM Box No. // 149 Rebellion, Oran Department
- As for the archives of the Vincennes Palace, we consulted a huge amount of documents that help the researcher follow the history of the revolution with the Oran delegation, including:
 - Vincennes Archives Shat B N° 1H/32066/D3, service note: psychological action to be carried out on auxiliary troops (harkas, Makhzens, cases, and Saharans)
 - Vincennes Archives Shat (Historical Service of the Army, box 1H/2756, D2 Reports on the Battle of L'Ouarsenis, April 17, 1959)

These samples of documents are considered highly important due to their secrecy at the time of writing because of their security or administrative nature, and they provided us with rich information about the development of the revolution in the region through major battles and the interrogation of captured moujahideen. They also presented some documents of the revolution that were in the possession of the moujahideen, as these documents reflected the strength of the revolutionary discipline of the moujahideen, with some of them confessing during interrogation sessions and under torture. These are testimonies from archival documents that have come to incriminate colonial France through the detailed information contained in archival reports about the names of captured revolutionaries and their personal and revolutionary histories ¹⁵.§§§§

With a precise and comprehensive understanding of the archival document used for the purpose of historical writing, and its utmost importance in investigating the news of a certain period of our history, especially what relates to the history of the Liberation Revolution at the local level, therefore, "the document – in a broad sense – is any source of information through which the historian's

15-voir ANOM série continuée b N° // 149 rébellion département d'Oran

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mind is able to extract something in order to understand the human past as it is viewed through the presented issue..." 16 *****

For this purpose, the exploitation of archival documents stored in Algerian and foreign archives is of scientific value for analyzing certain events and determining their historical circumstances and geographical context, particularly in relation to the events of the revolution from the perspective of colonial reports, especially the archives of the Palace of Vincennes, which contain a historical department of the French Army with a vast collection on the revolution and its development, as well as the operations of the French army and its psychological warfare against Algerians 17 ††††† . Or reports of the National Liberation Army and the institutions of the National Liberation Front through their offices abroad or during the period of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, which represented the Algerian people, and which in its statements conveyed through global newspapers or secret reports monitored the activities of this government, condemned the crimes of French colonization in Algeria in general, and in the two regions exposed to colonial crimes through the construction of prisons and the imprisonment of suspected Algerians or the capture of the moujahideen 18 †††††

In addition to academic studies from university theses and publications related to the local history of the liberation revolution . 19 §§§§§.

16 - Abdel Rahim Al-Hassnawi: Approaches and Perceptions of Excavations in the Concept of the Historical Document. Nat site dated 27-04-2020, accessed on 01-06-2024

17 - Mohamed Belil: "The Role of Archival Records Available at the Historical Service of the French Army in Vincennes in Writing the Contemporary History of Algeria," Al-Mir'at Journal, published by the Maghreb Studies Laboratory, Elites and the Construction of the National State, Issue 5, June 2017

18 - He looks at the articles of the November 1st magazine, issued by the National Organization of Moujahideen, issues 167-169, look at the crimes of colonialism in the two regions

19 - Scientifically documented doctoral and master's theses, including: the history of the revolution in the Fourth Region, as well as the history of the Seventh Region of the Fifth Wilaya, and a study of the role of the Algerian

There are also the testimonies of the Moujahideen and their memoirs about the events of the revolution in the two regions, which provided us with historical information about the major battles and events of the revolution, as well as the crimes of colonialism through interviews with the Mujahideen in several cities of the two regions, or through radio programs as well as journalistic writings with the Moujahideen documenting their testimonies. ²⁰*****

Also, the memoirs of the Moujahideen who wrote about the history of the revolution in the two regions: such as the Moujahida Mariam Mokhtari in her memoir entitled "A Mujahida's Biography" and the book "Revolutionary Figures of Mostaganem" issued by the National Organization of the Mujahideen in Mostaganem, authored by Mansour Arzgui in coordination with the Organization of the Moujahideen of Mostaganem and published by Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem in 2024. All these sources provided us with content for modest studies about the history of the revolution in the two regions.

countryside in the revolution, a doctoral thesis on the national movement and revolution in Mostaganem by the researcher Karawi Nadia, and a doctoral thesis by the researcher Karkab Abdel Haq on the national movement and revolution in the Sidi Bel Abbès area, etc...

20 - Dialogues and field interviews with many mujahideen in the two regions, including: an interview with the mujahid Belhamiti Mohamed at his home on October 30, 2018, and with the mujahid Mohamed Ammar at the headquarters of the National Organization of Moujahideen in Mostaganem, and with the mujahid Madani Ben Djilali, called Ben Tawajin, and Benani Al-Ghali and Ghazali on national radio occasions, or during our meetings with them at the headquarters of the Organization of Moujahideen, as well as dialogues with the mujahideen of the Tiaret region, such as the mujahid Shatah Jaloul, Al-Habib Wadah, and Hamdi Sahrawi on many national occasions. Our book on the history of the revolution in the regions of Dhahra and Mostaganem reviews the testimonies and memoirs of the mujahideen and field surveys of the colonial crime sites, published by Dar Al-Moujaddid for Publishing and Distribution in Setif in 2023, as well as field observations, and studies on the revolution in the Tiaret region through the activity of the National Liberation Army in the Tiaret region through archival documents in the Journal of New Ages, Volume 7, Issue No. B27, Summer-Fall 2017, as well as a study on the Battle of Ouancheres 1959 published in Al-Bahith Journal issued by Dar Al-Thaqafa in Tissemsilt.2015

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IV- Difficulties and Issues in Researching the History of the Revolution Locally

Writing an accurate scientific history based on original sources is sufficient for following a strict historical methodology that relies on comparison and approach, and extracting realistic scientific results through various sources and references that have dealt with the history of the revolution in detail at the local level. However, there are certain difficulties that a researcher faces in this field for several scientific, personal, and technical reasons, including:

- -Subjectivity in writing this national history emotionally, through the testimonies and memoirs of the mujahideen, due to the closeness to the events and empathy with these testimonies stemming from a sense of national feeling, as we faced many difficulties in extracting some facts about the development of the revolution in the two regions and its painful events, especially regarding the effects of the colonial crime that still bear witness to the atrocity of colonial crimes.

Although the researcher's task is to investigate the facts by sifting through the narratives and comparing them with other sources, some may have been lost, or the colonial reports may not have mentioned them—for example, what happened in the region's detention centers that were secretly operated by the security apparatus, and did not refer to the acts of torture—which we derived from the testimonies of the mujahideen who were inmates of these punitive prisons, sometimes leading to being carried away by the emotions of those testimonies in order to do them justice; except after strenuous effort to verify that information through the effects of the torture endured by these mujahideen, who still preserve the pains of that period through our discussions with the mujahideen, such as Belhamiti and Qaraoui Abdelkader, who were subjected to torture in several French occupation prisons, as well as our dialogues with the mujahideen of the Tiaret region, such as the mujahideen Hamdi Sahraoui, inmate of Mahdia prison, and Habib Wadhah, inmate of Oran and Tiaret prisons, who spoke about their suffering inside these prisons.²¹⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺

21- Dialogues with the moujahideen involved on national occasions and private dialogues between the years 2012-2024, some recorded on the radio of

- Extensive research into the facts of the revolution at the local level leads one to search for documents related to revolutionary institutions or archives that are difficult to access, which complicates the task for researchers in extracting relative historical facts about local history.

- It is difficult to verify testimonies and documents still held by families, and sometimes researchers or those interested in the local history of the revolution rely on them in audio or written media, often including some exaggerations that elevate their relatives or diminish the heroic deeds of other fighters. This necessitates studying local history from multiple perspectives by linking it to the national history of the revolution, through reliance on the official institutions of the liberation revolution.

- Attention should be paid to comparing the various testimonies, the memoirs of the moujahideen, and popular oral narratives with colonial writings that "described the local event to us, in all its social, political, and cultural dimensions, alongside family documents, of course." However, according to many researchers, caution is necessary here, as these documents, writings, and even testimonies or memoirs may be full of fallacies, self-serving and tribal rhetoric, and distortion at the expense of objectivity and integrity. The honest researcher must contemplate, examine, and compare them with others before writing local history.²² *****

It is necessary to know the historical and geographical context of the events of the revolution locally. For researchers of local history in their regions, writing is more objective than for another researcher who writes about local events in regions he does not know. Therefore, researchers should tour and visit places of detention, the effects of battle, and so on. For example, we conducted many studies on the Tiaret and Tissemsilt regions, so we

Mostaganem and Tiaret, others are testimonies for Algerian media, including Memory TV in its special programs featuring dialogues with these moujahideen, among them a dialogue session with the mujahideen Belhamiti Mohammed and Qarawi Abdelkader in October 2022, and a recorded session with the mujahid Hamdi Sahraoui during the commemoration of the Battle of Sidi Rabah in February 2024.

22 - Al-Shorouk Newspaper, op cit

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had to visit these regions or benefit from some researchers interested in the history of the Ouarsenis region . ²³§§§§§§§§

There are difficulties in writing the local history of the Algerian revolution, due to psychological and social sensitivities and the repercussions of the revolution's impact on Algerian society in general, and the lack of documented academic writings about it. This requires the researcher who writes about this subject to be familiar with other helpful sciences, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and politics, in order to be able to be familiar with the topics related to writing the local history of the liberation revolution, which is not without complexities related to the aforementioned sciences, in our humble opinion.

V. The importance of local history in writing the history of the liberation revolution in all its details

A thorough understanding of the local history of the revolution requires giving it special importance and scholarly value through documenting testimonies, investigating and analyzing documents in order to process them scientifically, free from bias, subjectivity, tribal conflicts, and other sensitivities, with the aim of writing a local history of the revolution in order to write a comprehensive general history of the revolution.

For this purpose, relying on local documents and testimonies of moujahideen who are still in good health helps researchers to write a scientific history that needs scrutiny and scientific analysis away from emotions in order to highlight the status of the revolution and its makers at the local level. Many of the leaders of the revolution at the local level became national leaders, such as the moujahid Othman bin Haddou, who was the leader of the fourth region, to

23 - When we undertook writing local studies about the revolution in the province of Ouarsenis , I had to visit the mountains and valleys of the region and seek the assistance of researcher Lahcen Mohamed, author of several studies about the Ouarsenis area. Our studies look at the relationship between the fourth district of the fifth wilaya and the seventh district of the fifth wilaya within the framework of a conference at the University of Relizane on the relations between historical regions in 2022, as well as an article about the Battle of Ouencharis published in the researcher's journal in 2015.

later become the leader of the fifth state. Many of the local battles, such as the battle of Sidi Zegai in Dahra, or the battle of Jabal al-Manawer in Mohammadia, or the battles of the Ouarsenis, were participated in by national battalions through cooperation between local battalions of the regions with battalions from other regions.

From this perspective, we conclude from this study the paramount importance of focusing on local history, to deduce its crucial role in writing a documented and scientifically sound history based on rigorous scientific methodologies, in order to achieve the desired goal, which is as follows:

- Many researchers believe that "we need to write local history to make up for what we have missed, to restore the status of the vast, forgotten regions in our homeland,..." ²⁴ *****

To achieve the general objectives of writing local history, academic researchers must not leave the field open to amateur writings and researchers who glorify individuals and families at the expense of objectivity and credibility. It is essential to cultivate serious researchers who can undertake this noble yet complex task, equipping them with rigorous scientific methodology to prevent them from falling into the traps of populism, regionalism, tribalism, and racism. ²⁵+++++

Therefore, we must write a positive local history of the Algerian liberation revolution to shed light on neglected aspects of local history, drawing upon the aforementioned sources that we have relied upon in writing numerous studies on the subject.

Conclusion

Local history, in general, serves as a research introduction to the general history of the Algerian revolution encompassing all regions of Algeria. This revolution began on November 1, 1954, with a small number of fighters relying on local leadership, and then spread to other regions of Algeria. This was done according to a phased revolutionary organization, from dividing Algeria into five zones at the beginning of the revolution to organizing the country into six revolutionary provinces and a provincial revolutionary council, which formed the National Council of the Revolution. Consequently, the regions were part of this large organization,

24 - Al-Shorouk Newspaper,op cit

25-ibid

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allowing local leaders to manage their areas according to circumstances and new developments.

In the Dahra region of the Mostaganem Province, or the French district formerly belonging to the Oran Prefecture, the leadership of the revolution managed to organize its ranks and overcome the divisions within the independence movement by assigning one of the national leaders, represented by the martyr Ben Abdelmalek Ramadan, to lead the revolution politically and militarily, coordinating and working directly with the local leadership, led by the martyr Bordji Amar, which is a true testament to the course of local history in the service of national history; there are many examples through the clashes and major battles in which national leaders participated alongside local leaders, Like the Battle of Sidi Zagai in Dahra from September 14-16, 1956, and the Battles of the Ouarsenis, including the Battle of Oued Daoussa in the Seventh Region.

In the Tiaret region, the revolutionary spirit of the youth of the Special Organization was embodied, who initially coordinated their revolutionary work with the Sixth Region at the saida and Mascara, before the Seventh Region was established, as stated to us by the moujahid Habib Wadhah, and also in the dialogues of the revolution's living leaders in television sessions on the Memory Channel and also on the National Organization of Moujahideen website of the Fourth Wilaya, which is rich in testimonies about the revolution in the Tiaret district, which previously included parts of present-day Tissemsilt and Saida.

Therefore, we derive the importance of writing the local history of the revolution in the Oran sector, then the fifth province and its various areas, including the fourth and seventh regions, which are the scope of our research and studies; highlighting the importance of local sources in particular, such as the testimonies and memoirs of the fighters, and the traces of the colonial crime that still bear witness to it, and comparing them with French security and administrative reports, reports from various revolutionary institutions, and contemporary media of the revolution events from colonial newspapers, and revolutionary newspapers, such as Al-Muqawama and Al-Moujahid; and newsletters from the revolution

areas that we can use to write the history of the two regions scientifically and accurately.

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