

A psychological approach to history: A reading of the May 8, 1945 massacres in light of psychological concepts.

مقاربة سيكولوجية للتاريخ: قراءة في مجازر الثامن ماي 1945م على ضوء مقولات سيكولوجية

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• Abstract:

The psychological reading of history constitutes the objective and primary entry point for self-awareness and affirmation of existence. Moreover, it is a constant presence in affirming the formulation of historical facts according to a renewed vision within the framework of what is known as the historical process, its general laws, its realistic and objective significance, and its future horizons. Thus, psychology, with its various scientific and practical branches, offers us fruitful horizons for historical research from the perspective of values, ethics, civilization, etc. From this standpoint, the psychological reading of the massacres of May 8, 1945, must be based on historical justifications and multiple continuities, starting from the colonial movement on our homeland and reaching the methods of dealing with it in various forms of resistance, which were generally confined to the framework of the relationship between sadism and the victim, violence versus peace, and others. In light of this introductory presentation, I will attempt in this article to present a psychological approach to the massacres of May 8, 1945. Therefore, the importance of the article lies firstly in departing from the pattern of historical narratives and secondly in relying on the sciences that assist the science of history. Hence, the problem of intervention, in its general form, is to identify the hidden aspect of a historical phenomenon that occurred between a victim and a criminal, while controlling their relationship according to the laws and requirements of historical memory. As for the adopted methods, they are certainly limited to the historical and analytical methods due to the nature and specificity of the subject.

Keywords:

History, Psychology, May 8, 1945, Massacres

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• الملخص

تشكل القراءة السيكولوجية للتاريخ؛ المدخل الموضوعي والرئيسي لوعي الذات وتأكيد الوجود، فضلا عن ذلك الحضور الدائم في تأكيد صياغة الوقائع التاريخية وفق رؤية متجددة في اطار ما يعرف بالضرورة التاريخية وقوانينها العامة ودلالاتها الواقعية والموضوعية و آفاقها المستقبلية ،ومن ثم تقدم لنا –السيكولوجيا- بمختلف فروعها العلمية والعملية أفقا مثمرة للبحث التاريخي من الناحية القيمية والأخلاقية والحضارية ..إلخ؛ من خلال هذا المنطلق فإن القراءة السيكولوجية لمجازر الثامن ماي 1945م يجب أن تستند على مبررات تاريخية وإطراد متعدد بدءا من الحركة الاستعمارية على وطننا وصولا إلى طرق التعاطي معها بمختلف اشكال المقاومة، انحصرت بشكل عام في اطار العلاقة بين السادية والضحية، العنف مقابل السلم وغيرهما ؛ على ضوء هذا الطرح التقديمي سأحاول في هذه المقالة تقديم مقارنة سيكولوجية لمجازر الثامن ماي 1945م؛ وبالتالي فإن أهمية المقالة تكمن أولا في الخروج عن نمط السرديات التاريخية وثانيا في الاعتماد على العلوم المساعدة لعلم التاريخ؛ ومن هنا فإن إشكالية المداخلة تبحث بشكلها العام في التعرف على الوجه الخفي لظاهرة تاريخية وقعت بين ضحية ومجرم مع ضبط علاقتهما وفقا لقوانين الذاكرة التاريخية ومقتضياتها، أما بالنسبة للمناهج المعتمدة أكيد تنحصر في المنهجين التاريخي والتحليلي لطابع الموضوع وخصوصيته.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

التاريخ، السيكولوجيا، 8 ماي 1945، المجازر

• Introduction

A psychological reading of history represents an objective and fundamental approach to understanding the self, affirming existence, and reconstructing historical consciousness in a more mature and profound way. This approach also provides new possibilities for reformulating historical facts through a perspective that interacts with the concepts of historical becoming, with its general laws, realistic and objective implications, and future prospects that transcend the limits of traditional narrative. In this framework, psychology, with its theoretical and applied branches, offers rich and effective cognitive tools that enhance historical research, especially in its value, ethical, and civilizational dimensions. From this standpoint, reading the massacres of May 8, 1945, from a psychological angle requires returning to the deeper historical contexts, starting from the nature of the colonial project itself, with its ideological and psychological dimensions, and reaching the patterns of resistance that were formed in confronting it. Here we are faced with an unequal relationship distributed between the executioner and the victim, the sadist and the suffering, the killer and the killed. This duality reveals profound psychological dimensions clearly reflected in the nature and practices of colonial massacres. Based on this premise, this article aims to present a collection of psychological and intellectual pronouncements from thinkers of diverse backgrounds, applying them to the massacres of May 8, 1945, in an attempt to analyze these massacres as a complex historical phenomenon rather than an isolated incident.

Before this, the article will explore the relationship between history and psychology, highlighting the psychological and mental structures of the colonial regime during the perpetration of these

massacres. This will allow for a deeper understanding of the underlying motives behind its violent practices. The significance of this article lies, firstly, in its transcendence of the traditional descriptive nature of historical narratives, and secondly, in its application of the tools of the humanities, particularly psychology, to gain a deeper understanding of the historical event.

Therefore, the central problem addressed by this article is the attempt to uncover the hidden aspects of a violent historical phenomenon that occurred between two unequal parties: victim and perpetrator, etc., by examining the relationship between them in light of the laws and requirements of historical memory. This problem has branched into a set of pivotal questions, including:

- What is the nature of the relationship between psychology and history?
- How does the mental and intellectual structure of the colonial regime manifest itself during the perpetration of massacres?
- What is the value of employing psychological approaches in analyzing the massacres of May 8, 1945?

To answer these and other questions, both historical and analytical methods will be adopted, given the complex nature and the unique intellectual and human dimensions of the subject.

1. History and psychology...what is the relationship?

It is accepted that the events of history in its various fields are formed from the sum of human actions through their sequences in all times and places, especially if they have and still have an impact on human existence and on the structure of a human group, and implicitly on the existence of the structure of the present or future human group. In order for us to understand this proposition, which helps us to define the relationship between history and psychology accurately, it is worthwhile to address the concepts of history and psychology. As for the latter, the simplest definition of it is: the science that studies human behavior, noting that human behavior is of a great deal of complexity because it is influenced by the environment and the psychological makeup of the individual, as well as his experiences and physical abilities. The subject of psychology is man as a living being, how he behaves in different situations, and why he behaves in a certain way that may differ from or be similar to others¹; Psychology is concerned with investigating an individual's behavior and characteristics, studying their conscious and unconscious actions aimed at achieving interaction and adaptation to their surrounding environment. Psychology aims to understand, interpret, organize, and control individual behavior. It specializes in studying the human psyche, its movements and actions, attempting to interpret and understand them, and to uncover its inner workings, secrets, desires, motives, and hopes. The goal is to develop practical methods to help modify and correct its shortcomings, treat its problems and disorders, and enhance its positive qualities and strengths². Through this comprehensive definition of this science and its nature, it is clear that in order for the historian to understand the history of human society in a particular historical period, he must study the prevailing social psychology within it. Without it, it is difficult to understand the material development in society, due to the connection between human movement,

¹ - Robert Ace, *Psychology*, Al-Rasheed Press, Baghdad, 1945, p. 17.

² - J.T. Rizon and R. Thompson, , *Introduction to Psychology*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Syrian Ministry of Culture Publications, Damascus, 1996, p. 12.

action, needs, and issues with the secretions of the psyche and its active forces. This is because the natural and unnatural behaviors of humans are nothing but a reflection of the self on the ground, especially if we know that: "The influence of the social and psychological structure of individuals does not negate the individual's action. Sometimes the individual is assimilated into the environment involuntarily and consciously, and at other times the individual feels his personal identity and opposes the environment with his will after the application of reason and experience. The conscious personality, independent of the group, has a vital and active impact on life and the making of history and civilizations"³, On this basis, the science of history was defined by Ibn Khaldun as: "A report about human society, which is the civilization of the world, and what happens to the nature of that civilization in terms of conditions such as savagery and civilization, tribalism, and the various kinds of changes that people experience from one another, and what arises from that in terms of kingship, states, and their ranks, and what people acquire through their work and endeavors in terms of earnings, livelihood, sciences, crafts, and all that occurs in this manner..."⁴, Therefore, many human actions, whether in the field of politics, philosophy, religion, or art, represent only the external aspect of humanity, The inner life only reveals itself after penetrating behind these actions to determine its nature. Thus, its natural essence lies in the hearts of people. This view has led to a change in the focus of history for historians. Events have become important only insofar as they can reveal human nature and remove the veils from it. Within this context and approach, Gustave Le Bon, the French social psychologist and historian, says the following in his book *Philosophy of History*: "Historians accept that the agreement of many independent witnesses is evidence of truth. On the contrary, psychological experiments show that the greater the individual difference, the more there are, nevertheless, some tendencies that control the spirit of all individuals. Thus, an agreement on error can occur, even among witnesses, each of whom acts independently of the others."⁵, Hence, the historian or researcher in the field of history closely and deeply follows the movement of the human self and its behaviors through his understanding of its historical process. Within this context, the researcher and thinker Abdullah Al-Aroui believes in his book *The Concept of History* that history, by definition, is distinctly human and has no relation to matter or anything else. He says: "Instead of scattering our efforts in analyzing and criticizing partial and marginal statements that abound in books on the methodologies of history, we must go directly to the basic statement, which confirms that history is truly the history of humans for humans and by humans. As for anything else, it is either human history disguised or subject to another logic, the logic of observation (natural sciences) or the logic of revelation (the metaphysical)..."⁶, For a historian to succeed in understanding this, he must first understand the causes and reasons behind this human action or behavior. He must be aware of the questions of history (why and how?) that occurred, in order to provide his historical answer to cause and effect, driven by the desire to acquire historical knowledge. Even if his goal is to present the action dated with its place, time, and approximate

³ - Antaly Rakitov, , *Historical Knowledge*, Dar Dimashq, Syria, 1989, p. 11.

⁴ - Taher bin Ali, *Ibn Khaldun and the Manifestations of the Concept of History through Methodology*, Al-Wahat Journal of Research and Studies, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2016, p. 747

⁵ - Gustave Le Bon, *Philosophy of History*, Dar Al-Maaref, Egypt, 1954, p. 96.

⁶ - Abdullah Al-Aroui, *The Concept of History: Words, Doctrines, Concepts and Principles*, Arab Cultural Center, 4th edition, Casablanca, 2005, p. 34.

historical significance, the value of history becomes clear, as do the difficulties the historian encounters within this complex field. Joseph Horse expressed this in his book, **The Value of History*, saying: "If the historian is permitted to immerse himself in the toil of his work to the point of finding in it the best reward for his patient effort, we cannot expect other people to be satisfied with this situation. For they have the right to demand an account from the historian of the use of his life, and to inquire into how he can benefit from this accumulation of knowledge that he constantly amasses. He must, therefore, consider this effort he is making, the intention he has set for it, and the opportunity he can attain—in short, he must consider the benefit of..." the date"⁷ , Therefore, the science of history is a vital field for proving the analytical behavioral studies of individuals within its research framework, because it deals with a historical figure or a behavioral phenomenon in an indirect way whose results have been agreed upon. Moreover, there are also the impulses of unconscious emotional life that the historian studies in scientific ways, such as the movement of the masses and their development within what is dictated by the laws of historical becoming and the logic of reason and its controls. As Gustave Le Bon says in this field: "Many of the conflicts that disturb the life of nations and control their history are due to the instinctive life that generates desires, and the matter will undoubtedly remain so until the day when humanity gets rid of the unconscious inherited life and reaches sufficient development in which reason is in control. This stage has not yet been reached, and therefore history includes few events that were inspired by reason."⁸ , The psychological researcher must study the event from the perspective of his specialization, comparing the documented practical results with his scientific theories to reveal its behavioral and psychological tendencies. In addition, the socio-psychological study of history helps the researcher in the humanities to reach good results. Likewise, the historical researcher benefits in his research from diagnosing historical facts and establishing scientific principles and foundations for their interpretation. This matter was noted by Malek Bennabi in his book *The Conditions of Renaissance*, where he expressed this awareness by saying: "It is a social observation that history has a cycle and sequence. Sometimes it records for the nation great, glorious, and noble achievements, and at other times it casts its effects upon it, delivering it into its deep slumber. If we take this observation into consideration, it becomes incumbent upon us, in solving our social problems, to look at our place in the cycle of history and to understand our conditions and what excuses us for the factors of decline, and what we possess for the reasons of progress. If we determine our place in the cycle of history, it will be easier for us to know the factors of renaissance or decline in our lives."⁹ , Moreover, the historian can gain and learn new things from social psychology, such as the concept of the inferiority complex in leaders and peoples, introversion, repression, and other psychological illnesses that may spread in a particular society. All of this will certainly refine and polish the cognitive and scientific competence of the historical researcher. It also helps in discovering what is unclear. If we accept that history is a science of criticism and analysis, and that the historian goes so far as to take into account the psychological factors that may participate in and influence the formation of historical events, then, according to the researcher Karl Popper - a specialist in the philosophy of science and professor of logic, science, and methodology at the University of London - this aspect is the only thing that does not make history

⁷ - Joseph Horse, *The Value of History*, 3rd ed., Oueidat Publications, Beirut, 1986, p. 114.

⁸ - Gustave Le Bon, previous reference, p. 111.

⁹ - Malik Bennabi, *Conditions of Renaissance*, Dar Al-Fikr for Printing and Distribution, Damascus, 1989, p. 47.

sterile. He said in his book, *The Poverty of Historicism*: "History is a science that is concerned with researching what remains of past events and trying to use them to clarify and interpret the present. The research of historians expands to include everything related to man and his actions, from political and social affairs to matters of money, economics, and so on. Hence, the branches of history are numerous: there is political history, economic history, social history, and military history."¹⁰, This diversity in the fields of historical research will compel the historian to strive, by all means, to utilize the scientific laws established by psychology in its various branches to interpret and understand the individual and collective transformations occurring in their behaviors, as well as the various leaps that led to historical transformations in the life of each society, especially if we know that most major historical events¹¹ It was led by people with distinct psychological and educational tendencies, both negative and positive. Within this framework and vision, Joseph Hors believes that it has become necessary to focus on linking history to the psychological state rather than focusing on linking it to things. He says: "The ultimate logic of things is not inspired by history. In the face of this issue, we must first reject the idea that we can find in history the ultimate explanation of things, and obtain a sufficient answer to the 'why' questions about human existence on this planet, and about countless events in which people are involved."¹²

In summary, this brief intellectual presentation makes it clear that the relationship between history and psychology is a close, "integrated," functional, and organic relationship. Both are closely connected and feed into each other's scientific knowledge. It is not possible to read a psychological phenomenon without referring to the science of history, nor is it possible to read a historical event without referring to the study of the psychological reasons that caused it.

2. The intellectual and psychological characteristics of colonialism during the perpetration of massacres

2.1 Colonial crime is legalized and organized

As for the legitimization of crime, the colonial system has relied on it since its occupation of Algeria in its philosophy when committing any criminal act, to "legitimize" this operation and bury it from history; this gives it the legal right to absolve itself of it. This process - the legitimization of crime - was carried out and viewed by its policy theorists and their cronies in the political and military establishment as a civilizational victory and a heroic act, while at the same time searching for ideological and moral justification for the act - the crime - and this is what will legitimize its criminal acts later on. The French Ministry of Defense published an article on its website entitled *What is May 8, 1945?* This article included statements that confirm the French state's evasion of responsibility for the massacres. The same article also called for "honoring the French soldiers who participated in the Second World War, and who ensured the protection of French interests in the

¹⁰ - Karl Popper, *The Sterility of Historicism: A Study in the Methods of the Social Sciences*, Dar Al-Maaref, Egypt, 1959, p. 173.

¹¹ - For example, the battles and wars that took place during the Islamic Middle Ages, the world wars, the reform movements that appeared here and there, and other historical events that changed the course of the world.

¹² - Joseph Horse, previous reference, p. 115.

colonized countries."¹³, Therefore, there is no doubt that what happened on May 8th was a violation of the rules of international humanitarian law; moreover, the event constituted crimes against humanity, according to French testimony¹⁴, This crime was committed by representatives of the French state in Algeria against demonstrators who went out peacefully to demand their most basic rights. In addition, we find that international organizations that raise slogans of peace and others were on the side of this colonial approach, as they turned a blind eye to what Algeria was subjected to from a destructive colonialism that launched a fierce crime with different dimensions: "The first was the creation of French Algeria and its integration within the framework of the Western intellectual and civilizational system, the second was the abolition of its historical and geographical existence and the destruction of its personal components and its removal from consideration, and the third was the prohibition of all resistance that disturbs France's mood in Algeria."¹⁵, Moreover, it worked to mobilize its diplomats and consuls to cover up its crimes under the guise of international legitimacy. Within this context and with the aim of seeking legitimacy, we find that the colonizer considers the actions committed by it in Algeria to be an internal matter and that no one else has anything to do with it. This is what it actually succeeded in doing. Therefore, it can be asserted that French colonialism in Algeria never knew shame for its criminal acts, nor for its actions in the massacres of May 8th, and it knows no limit to its hypocrisy before the international community, forgetting that Napoleon Bonaparte's wars came under the guise of spreading the principles of brotherhood, love, and equality, and that colonialism came under the pretext of helping peoples achieve prosperity and progress¹⁶.

2.2 Violence as a culture, not a term, in French colonial thought

As for the culture of violence, deeply rooted in French colonial thought, understanding its nature necessitates first deconstructing its terminology to facilitate a simplified understanding. We observe that the culture of violence is composed of the terms "culture" and "violence." The concept of culture, when linked to violence, becomes deceptive, concealing its true nature and acquiring several meanings far removed from culture in its ethical, civilizational, and diverse forms. Instead, it becomes a concept closely tied to hatred, racism, and animosity towards the other. Anyone investigating the May 8th massacres will notice the horrific violence inflicted upon Algerians. It is impossible to separate colonial policy from violence as a culture; indeed, it is inconceivable that a human mind could kill approximately 45,000 people, according to some statistics, in a single day¹⁷, Moreover, the culture of violence has permeated the colonial system on the basis that it is a source of power and survival since its occupation of Algeria. This is what Hegel concluded, as he asserted that the use of violence falls within the framework of the idea of the sovereignty of (God) and the dialectic of the relationship between the slave and his master. He concluded that: "Human existence

¹³ - Ministry of the Armed Forces, What is May 8th?, Published on: May 7, 2024,

<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/actualites/cest-quoi-8-mai>

¹⁴ - We find many French leaders and politicians boasting about their crimes committed in Algeria, and taking pleasure in their criminal acts. For example, the torture of Algerian detainees by General Aussaresses in his book – General Aussaresses, translated by Farhat Said, My Testimony on Torture: Special Interests, Algeria 1957-1959, Dar Al-Maarefa, Algeria, 2008, all pages.

¹⁵ - Abu al-Qasim, Saad Allah, Research and Opinions on the History of Algeria, Vol. 2, Dar al-Basair, Algeria, 2007, p. 89.

¹⁶ - See: Gustave Le Bon, The Spirit of Revolutions and the French Revolution, Hindawi Foundation, Cairo, 2012, pp. 88-90

¹⁷ - There are no accurate official statistics on the number, but this is the most commonly used figure, so we adopted it to diagnose the situation and not to determine the number.

throughout history is impossible without violence, as it is an inevitable rule for preserving survival, existence and power, and it is an application of the existence of the absolute spirit in the dialectic of the master and the slave. War preserves the status of states from destruction and prevents them from falling into the deadly habit (peace) that destroys the economy.”¹⁸, According to this approach, French colonial culture also erased the term "peace" from its archives. Therefore, the culture of colonial violence is nothing but a mask that hides the reality of the violence upon which it is based, and in its sociological implications, it is nothing but institutional violence that feeds on the practices of "colonial policy that was based in Algeria on settlement, Christianization, racism, and assimilation..."¹⁹, This is what we witnessed throughout the night of colonialism. Therefore, based on the three aspects of colonial policy mentioned above, the historian and scholar of Algerian history during the colonial period concludes that the colonial violence inflicted on the Muslim Algerian revolved around three types:

Symbolic violence²⁰: This touched the educational and social aspect with the aim of belittling and humiliating the Algerian Muslim and making him a citizen of the status of the natives, subject to the status of a follower and slave, while uprooting all meanings of dignity, honor and chastity of the Algerian self and demolishing its spiritual cohesion politically, socially, religiously, linguistically and ethnically, and then working to curb the wheel of resistance and then impose psychological defeat and internal subjugation on the Algerian Muslim, in addition to practicing racism and the condescending view of Algerians and ridiculing them. This was done through the formulation of a legal arsenal by the French Republic, and what confirms this is the diversity in colonial policy, which was not limited through its applications to one area.

- Physical violence: This was employed by the colonial authorities in acts of individual and mass killing, arrest, torture, arson, looting, plunder, and theft of Algerian resources. It carried a distinctly criminal, military, and economic dimension, fueled by a philosophy of force used to subjugate Algerians through the use of arms to expand and impose absolute and comprehensive hegemony. This was aimed at instilling psychological and intellectual dominance of the colonial system over the Muslim Algerian. Colonialism acted as a burning, destructive, and annihilating machine in Algeria.

- Intellectual violence: This is the most dangerous type of violence, as its consequences are still felt today. It was achieved by stripping Muslim Algerians of their most basic natural and civil rights, such as the right to freedom, life, movement, education, and health, among others. Furthermore, Western culture was imposed on the authentic, deeply rooted Arab culture of Algerians through legislation, effectively erasing the intellectual and personal characteristics of Algerian identity.

¹⁸ - Hegel, translated by Naji Al-Awnali, Phenomenology of Spirit, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 2006, p. 479.

¹⁹ - See: Amiraoui Ahmidah, The Effects of Colonial and Settlement Policy on Algerian Society 1830-1954, National Center for Studies and Research on the National Movement and the November 1, 1954 Revolution, Algeria, 2007, all pages.

²⁰ -The first to use this term was the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, meaning that this term is a product of French culture. To learn about the concept of the term, its uses, types, and other aspects, one can refer to: Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Nazir Jahel, Symbolic Violence (A Study in the Origins of Educational Sociology), Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, 1994, all pages.

3. The historical context of the May 8, 1945 crime and its psychological and intellectual repercussions

There are very many studies related to the massacres of May 8, 1945, and there are also very many reasons, backgrounds, circumstances, and facts about them. Every time a historical document appears, it gives new facts about the incident. Moreover, the brutality of the crimes and their repercussions were a major reason for the disagreement about them. However, it is accepted that this disagreement opens the door to fruitful historical research and motivates researchers to delve deeper into the subject to reach the objective and historical truth of the incident and to hold those responsible for it legally and morally accountable.

3.1 Historical context and background of colonial crime

Historically, many activists, including Benyoucef Benkhedda, believe that the initial spark of this incident was rooted in the colonial administration's fear of the growing activity of the Friends of the Manifesto and Freedom movement, as: "The administration did not look favorably upon the growth of its activity, so it devised a well-planned police conspiracy that resulted in an emergency meeting on the situation on April 18, 1945, at the Chlala Palace, where the governor of the Algiers province (Louis Perrier) and those present with him decided to place Messali Hadj under house arrest, in addition to arresting the activists of the People's Party. Riots broke out in the city, and Messali was arrested and transferred to Brazzaville and then to Bakouma."²¹ This did not sit well with the activists of the People's Party, and they decided to hold massive demonstrations in protest against it. Algerians participated in them in various parts of the country, and they coincided historically with International Workers' Day. According to Jean-Louis Blanche, Algerians participated in the demonstrations of May 1, 1945, in various parts of the country. In the city of Setif, there were about 3,000 Algerian demonstrators, and in Guelma, the Friends of the Manifesto and Freedom Committee organized a demonstration across the city expressing its absolute condemnation of what happened to Messali. The same thing happened in various other Algerian cities, the capital, Oran, and others²². Following this event and demonstration, and according to the analyses presented by some researchers in their study of the incident and many testimonies from both the French and Algerian sides, there were: "Widespread arrests that affected the activists of the Algerian national movement, in addition to martyrs and wounded, and the roads were closed, along with many acts of beating and insults by the French police."²³ However, historical studies following this event have not reached a clear consensus on the course of events and their developments. Furthermore, there is significant disagreement regarding what transpired between May 1st and May 8th, 1945, from a historical perspective. Some believe it was a premeditated act by the colonial authorities, while others consider it a peaceful uprising of a people demanding their most basic rights. The fact that the events occurred in different regions further complicated matters.

²¹ - Ben Youssef Ben Khedda, translated by Masoud El Hadj Masoud, *Roots of November 1, 1954*, 2nd ed., Dar Al Shatibiya Publishing, Algeria, 2012, p. 138

²² - Ahmed Daoud, *Colonial Barbarity in the May 1945 Massacres, as Reflected in French Writings: Jean-Louis Blanche as a Model*, *Al-Mir'ah Magazine*, Issue 4, December 2015, p. 123

²³ - Among the important studies in this field we find: Amer Rakhila, *May 8, 1945, The decisive turning point in the course of the national movement*, University Publications Office, Algeria, n.d., p. 63 et seq.

Moreover, the sheer number and sometimes overwhelming nature of the events hindered a clear understanding. However, there is agreement on what happened on the 8th, both in terms of time and location. Historical studies, personal memoirs, and numerous newspapers concur that May 8th was a day of pain, sorrow, and tragedy for the Algerians: "The demonstrations and clashes began in the city of Setif on Tuesday, May 8th, 1945, coinciding with the weekly market day. Moreover, the events erupted during the Chateaubriand government. On the same day, a peaceful demonstration was organized in front of the Grand Café de France, where the national flag was raised. The police attempted to seize the flag from the child Bouzid." Shaal, who refused to hand it over, was shot dead by the police, and many others were wounded. Thus, the flames of sedition were ignited, and bloody clashes occurred between the police and the demonstrators, resulting in the fall of thousands of victims"²⁴, The same thing happened in the city of Guelma and the rest of the regions. This is, in short, the historical context and background that led to the massacres, and the consequences of this crime remain a subject of widespread discussion and debate to this day.

3.2 The psychological and intellectual impact of the crime on Algerians

The massacres of 1945 inflicted a psychological and mental shock on Algerians, both as a people and as politicians. We notice a clear change in their intellectual and psychological state. After this event, we observe a radical shift in the mindset of political parties in terms of structure and struggle. Intellectual visions were brought closer together among them, despite the diversity of their ideological orientations. In this context, Ahmed Mahsas mentions that the various parties of the Algerian national movement: "They moved beyond the debate about the political necessities that some of them were defending, and it began to revolve around a central issue, which is determining the method and capabilities that would achieve liberation...so it was necessary to preserve and develop the principle of unity..."²⁵, Furthermore, the conviction grew that the struggle against the colonizer needed to shift from empty political demands to direct confrontation. Revolutionary consciousness began to strengthen and emerge, along with an intellectual and cultural break with the colonizer and a rejection of coexistence with him. This was clearly demonstrated through their stances on the events²⁶, As for the entire Algerian people, they broke the barrier of fear and discovered the hidden and criminal face of the colonizer, in addition to their conviction of the necessity of using force to expel the colonizer, especially after France's international standing was shaken. Thus, according to researcher Mohamed El Amine Belghith, the massacres and their consequences produced: "a new young generation that rejects the myth of the French liberating and free civilization, which was the favorite tune of a number of intellectuals of the old generation, as the Algerian people became convinced that achieving independence could only be done with

²⁴ - Qasmi Youssef, The Massacres of May 8, 1945: Background and Dimensions, The Guelma Region as a Model, Journal of Human Sciences, Vol. 8, No. 15, October 2008, p. 132.

²⁵ - Ahmed Mahsas, trans.: Al-Hajj Masoud, The National Revolutionary Movement in Algeria from the First World War to the Armed Revolution, Dar Al-Qasbah Publishing, Algeria, 2003, p. 260.

²⁶ - For further details on the matter, see the book by Ben Youssef Ben Khedda, the aforementioned source, pp. 154-166. And the article: Ben Fatima Samia, May 8, 1945, The Popular Uprising and its Repercussions on the Course of the Algerian National Movement, Al-Maaref Journal for Historical Research and Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2003, pp. 451-481. And many other studies within this field, which are naturally numerous.

weapons and weapons alone, and thus the call for armed struggle found its way among the youth of the post-World War II era.”²⁷, The broad masses of the people, increasingly aware of and concerned about colonial injustice, became convinced of the necessity of repeating demonstrations, strikes, and various forms of protest, especially among the various bases of the working class. Moreover, the rural and urban populations came to see in the existing colonial system only despair and revolution²⁸, Whatever the case, this transformation ignited the spark of revolutionary consciousness among the Algerian people to elevate the national stature, raise its flag high, and defend its honor and self, certain that the criminal colonial enemy understands only the language of "conscious" power, that is, to meet colonial violence with revolutionary violence. In their view, resistance became the salvation and the only way capable of deterring it and stopping its crimes and aggression, in order to preserve their dignity and honor and to restore their rights and their land. Thus, they understood well that: "Colonialism is an organized negation of the other and it is a firm decision that denies every human quality..."²⁹, This new awareness, resulting from the psychological and mental state of the Algerian people and national movement after the event, expresses the birth of a new era and a militant state capable of change and advancement. The popular action rejecting colonial arrogance and intellectually and psychologically aligned with the revolutionary political project will contribute to achieving liberation from the traps of colonial injustice and their return to the arena of history as they were before the arrival of the colonizer in 1830 AD.

3. An approach to massacres and their repercussions, along with some psychological perspectives.

The first statement: "Barbarism is an element accompanying civilization; civilization produces barbarism, conquest, and domination." ³⁰- Edgar Morin

Reflecting on this statement not only compels us to consider and scrutinize the massacres perpetrated by the colonial regime, but also, despite the shadows of their magnitude and contradictions, leads us to question how civilization and barbarism can coexist and be necessary for one another, despite their apparent contradiction. This is a strange paradox, the manifestations of which become apparent when we examine it closely through the lens of European colonial culture and its barbarity in general, and French culture in particular. Its philosophy was based on the premise that they represented civilization, reason, and progress, drawing on their Greek miracle, their Enlightenment, their Renaissance, their human rights, and their major scientific and political revolutions, which, according to them, were fundamentally at odds with the barbarity, backwardness, and savagery of the "barbarians." The Algerian people suffered throughout the French colonial period from this conviction, upon which the French waged their false "civilizing" wars and justified their "colonization," the destruction of Algerian culture, and the theft of their

²⁷ - Mohamed El Amine Belghith, France's massacres in Algeria during the month of May 1945, Crime and Punishment, Journal of the Faculty of Fundamentals of Religion - Al-Sirat, No. 3, September 2000, p. 329.

²⁸ - The matter can be discussed in more detail by referring to the book by Muhammad Harbi, translated by Najib Ayad, The Algerian Revolution: Years of Labor, Mufum Publishing, Algeria, 1994, pp. 14-15-16

²⁹ - Frantz Fanon, translated by Sami Al-Durubi, The Wretched of the Earth, Madarat for Research and Publishing, Cairo, 2014, p. 200.

³⁰ -Edgar Morin, translated by Ahmed Alami, Where is the World Heading?, 1st ed., Arab Publishers, Beirut, 2009, p. 62

land, etc. All of this was aimed at "bringing the barbaric Algerians out of their savagery" and sharpening Their minds and morals were enlightened by culture and civilization, and in the name of this "noble" goal, according to them, they committed the massacres of May 8, 1945, against unarmed demonstrators who had no fault other than being different from them in race and language. They believed that by committing this crime, they had silenced every voice opposed to French civilization. Returning to the event, we understand that French barbarity and civilization are two inseparable pillars, as it became clear that the meaning of civilization here means "savagery," far removed from the refined and creative meanings of civilization. Thus, barbarity and savagery are nothing but a fundamental component and an effective driver of colonial crimes.

The second quote: "Victory achieved through violence is equivalent to defeat, for it is fleeting." - Mahatma Gandhi³¹

It is generally agreed upon by those knowledgeable about Algerian history and those interested in researching colonial crimes that the French use of violence in Algeria brought no good and built nothing. However, within the context of the details of the crime and its repercussions—the sense of "oppression" inflicted upon the vulnerable Algerian—we understand the absolute truth that one aspect of their intellectual and psychological defeat and comprehensive moral collapse was their use of violence in the pursuit of victory. Therefore, a careful reading of the May 8th massacres as a historical phenomenon, which occurred between a weak party and a strong and violent one, reveals many truths. The victory they perceived—the French—was essentially a defeat and a historical failure. According to this view and approach, we find that immediately after the event, national sentiment grew, revolutionary consciousness matured rapidly, and Algerian victories increased on both the popular and diplomatic levels. The stagnant situation was stirred, the barrier of fear was broken, and the recurring slogan became: "What is taken by force can only be regained by force." Thus, a precise evaluation of the colonial crime of May 8th, examining its intellectual, human, organizational, and procedural components, reveals The Algerians knew the source of the flaw and weakness and the ways to treat it, and they believed that the word of truth is a power that does not come through weakness, surrender and cowardice, but rather through sacrifice, patience and confrontation. Hence, it was decided to confront colonialism in the same manner and approach, and this culminated in the great revolutionary explosion on the first of November 1954 AD. Hence, it can be said and asserted that the occurrence of the massacres of the eighth was a preliminary prelude to the complete collapse of the colonial system in the country.

The third saying: "Freedom with danger is better than peace with freedom." - Jean-Jacques Rousseau³²

Approaching this statement, the massacres of May 8th, after the Algerians rose up to demand their rights and determine their own destinies, represents a message of steadfastness and defiance against injustice and colonialism, knowing that this colonizer and his brutal machine are superior in

³¹ - Mahatma Gandhi, trans. Ismail Mazhar, His Biography as Written by Himself, Issa Al-Yabi Press, Egypt, (n.d.), p. 216

³² - Jean-Jacques Rousseau, trans. Adel Zuaiter, The Social Contract, Dar Hindawi, Cairo, 2012, p. 57

strength and equipment. The strength of resistance and the spirit of resistance and rejection of the prevailing situation appeared in exchange for restoring honor and dignity among the Algerians, thus responding to a faint internal call to sacrifice so that the homeland may live free. This is the philosophy of the Algerian demonstrators on May 8th, when they decided to sacrifice themselves without caring about the crime that would be inflicted upon them, knowing that what happened in terms of genocide against the Algerians was a crime that has no parallel.

- **Conclusion**

After this presentation and intellectual discussion of its details, and after a historical and psychological reading of the event, I arrived at the following conclusions:

- The relationship between history and psychology is a close, complementary, functional, and organic one. They are intertwined and each nourishes the other's scientific knowledge. A psychological phenomenon cannot be understood without referring to history. History is a vital field for validating behavioral analysis studies of individuals within its research framework. Similarly, a historical event cannot be understood without examining its underlying psychological causes.
- The crimes committed on May 8th were merely the practical application of a colonial culture of violence that had permeated the colonial system's mindset, considered a source of power and survival since its occupation of Algeria. Therefore, they viewed these massacres as a victory and a heroic act, but in reality, they were a manifestation of intellectual and psychological defeat and a complete moral collapse. Furthermore, their attempt to legitimize these crimes was a barbaric and savage act, disguised under the mask of civilization, progress, and renaissance. Moreover, the colonial violence perpetrated on May 8th, in its sociological implications, was nothing more than institutionalized violence, fueled by the practices of colonial policy.
- This event, although it was a colonial evil, ignited the spark of revolutionary consciousness among the Algerian people to raise the national banner high and defend its honor and self, certain that the criminal colonial enemy understands only the language of "conscious" power, that is, to meet colonial violence with revolutionary violence. In their view, resistance became the salvation and the only way capable of deterring it and stopping its crimes and its tyranny..

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