

The May 8, 1945 Massacres and the Revolutionary Current in the Algerian National Movement: A Critical Analysis of Historical Testimonies

مجازر 8 ماي 1945 وردود فعل التيار الثوري في الحركة الوطنية الجزائرية: قراءة في شهادات بعض الفاعلين التاريخيين

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Article abstract:

During World War II and the criminal massacres that followed May 8, 1945, the Algerian people witnessed a surge of momentum and political awareness foreshadowing self-determination. This article traces the development of national political activity, focusing on the clandestine work of militants from the Algerian People's Party (PPA), who embodied the revolutionary current within the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty. Drawing on testimonies of historical actors, it highlights the responses of this current when it attempted to extend the revolution after the massacres. Although this project failed, revolutionary enthusiasm persisted among the elite. They worked to reorganize party cells, train militants, and provide arms. These efforts laid the groundwork for the nucleus of the National Revolution Army. That nucleus would later spearhead the November 1954 Revolution.

Key words: Revolutionary Current; National Movement; May 8, 1945 Massacres.

ملخص المقال:

يعالج هذا المقال أحداثا هامة شهدتها الحركة الوطنية الجزائرية خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية وما أعقبها من عمليات إجرامية بعد الثامن ماي 1945، حيث يقف عند ذلك الاندفاع الثوري والوعي الوطني الذي عاشه الشعب الجزائري أثناء الحرب والذي كان ينبئ بقرب تقرير المصير، وذلك من خلال تتبع التطور الذي عرفه النشاط السياسي الوطني، خاصة النشاط السري لمناضلي حزب الشعب الجزائري الذين كانوا يمثلون التيار الثوري داخل حركة أحباب البيان و الحرية. كما يستظهر من خلال شهادات بعض الفاعلين التاريخيين، ردود فعل هذا التيار حين حاول تعميم الثورة للرد على المجازر. وإن فشل هذا المشروع إلا أن الحماس الثوري بقي حيا في أوساط النخبة الثورية التي بذلت مجهودات جبارة لإعادة تنظيم خلايا الحزب وتدريب المناضلين وتسليحهم فوضعوا بذلك اللبنة الأساسية لنواة جيش التحرير الوطني الذي سيقود ثورة نوفمبر 1954.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التيار الثوري; الحركة الوطنية; مجازر 8 ماي 1945

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Introduction

World War II, with its rapid and transformative events, provided the Algerian people with an opportunity to confront the reality of French colonialism and to engage with emerging ideas advocating the right of peoples to self-determination. This exposure generated a heightened sense of political awareness and a strong drive toward Revolution, which manifested in several rebellions against the colonial administration. These initiatives were led by the remaining militants of the Algerian People's Party (PPA), who continued to operate clandestinely, forming a current that brought together a new generation of youth convinced that the revolutionary solution through preparation for armed struggle was the only viable means of confronting the colonizer.

This revolutionary current played an active role within the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty, particularly in demanding independence and the release of political prisoners. It also contributed decisively to the organization of the demonstrations of May 1 and May 8, 1945, by mobilizing protesters, producing banners, crafting slogans, and preparing flags. However, the unexpected and brutal repression of these peaceful marches, followed by the horrific massacres committed against defenseless Algerian civilians, pushed the leaders of this current to consider activating the revolutionary project, then known as the implementation of the *Direct-Action Directive*.

These events constitute the focus of this research paper, which argues that, despite the abundance of scholarship on the massacres of May 8, 1945, existing studies have often treated the role of the revolutionary current only superficially. Our analysis relies on the testimonies of key revolutionary figures, including Hocine Aït Ahmed, Ahmed Bouda, Mohamed Zerouali, and Mohamed Issami. The central objective is to address the research problem concerning the relationship between the revolutionary current and the developments within the national movement under the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty, as well as this current's responses to the massacres of May 8, 1945.

1. The Revolutionary Current during World War II

With the outbreak of World War II, the French colonial authorities launched a sweeping campaign of repression against militants of the Algerian People's Party (PPA). On October 4, 1939, they arrested several leading party cadres, including Messali Hadj, Ammar Boujrida, Khalifa Ben Ammar, Moufidi Zakaria, Chédli Mekki, Mohamed Fleta, and Mohamed Khider. (Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, 1992, p. 180)

In the absence of these key leaders, a group of young activists emerged within the party, driven by revolutionary enthusiasm and inspired by their direct experience of the war. From this context arose a revolutionary current, whose first manifestations appeared in the North African Revolutionary Action Committee, established in the spring of 1939. Its principal members, Amara Rachid, Taleb Mohamed, Hamza Omar, Fleta Ahmed, and M'guidèche Lakhdar, attempted to establish contacts with the Germans in the hope of obtaining support for armed struggle in Algeria. However, Messali Hadj, imprisoned at the time, firmly rejected any collaboration with the Axis powers. (André Nouschi, 1995, p. 154)

The committee engaged in several notable activities. It incited Algerian soldiers serving in the French army to mutiny, culminating in the uprising of a riflemen's unit at El Harrach on January 25, 1941, which resulted in the deaths of several French soldiers. It also distributed clandestine anti-French pamphlets calling for the release of Messali, such as *Al-'Aamal al-Jazairi* (The Algerian Action) and *Sawt al-Ahrar* (Voice of the Free). In addition, it collected and purchased weapons, establishing secret arms depots across the country. Despite these efforts, the committee did not receive recognition from the party's leadership, which denounced its activities as a deviation from party principles summarized in the slogan: "*Neither with the Resistance, nor with Germany, but with the Revolution of Algeria.*" (Mahfoud Kaddache, 2011, p. 721)

Amid this experience, the committee members concluded that large-scale activity required a strong organization capable of mobilizing youthful energy. This led to the founding of the Belcourt Youth Committee in 1942. According to Mohamed Yousfi, one of its prominent members, this organization became a refuge for political dissidents. Much of its structuring and organization was credited to Mohamed Belouizdad. The committee counted 1,500 militants, including 700 sympathizers, all of whom were prepared for semi-military action. It also integrated scouting groups and various cultural, artistic, and sports teams. Its activities included collecting weapons, training militants, and distributing secret pamphlets. Among its most famous actions was the *Recovery Operation*, led by Mohamed Khmissa with the assistance of the Shock Unit, which involved seizing an American truck loaded with weapons and military equipment. (Mohamed Yousfi, n.d., pp. 24-26)

What further deepened national consciousness and invigorated the enthusiasm of these youths were global developments during World War II. Among the most influential were the spread of Axis propaganda hostile to French rule in North Africa; the Atlantic Charter of 1941, whose third article affirmed the right to self-determination; the Allied landings in Algeria on November 8, 1942; the San Francisco Declaration paving the way for the establishment of the United Nations; and the mobilization of Arab states in the East to create the League of Arab States. (Nacereddine Saïdouni, 1995, p. 11)

All these developments renewed hope within the national movement, which sought to seize the moment by presenting its demands to the Allies through the *Manifesto of the Algerian People* on February 10, 1943. The manifesto condemned colonialism and demanded the Algerians' right to self-government. Although the initiative originated with the moderate current led by Ferhat Abbas, the revolutionary current, represented by Abane Ramdane, left its mark on the annex to the manifesto, which called for the establishment of an Algerian state at the end of the war, endowed with its own constitution drafted by a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage. (Benjamin Stora, 1999, p. 187)

It can be concluded that, despite the official dissolution of the PPA, its influence remained visible on the Algerian political scene through the persistence of its structures and networks and the activism of its militants, particularly in eastern Algeria, where clandestine cells were highly active. As Colonel Haj Lakhdar later recalled in his memoirs: "... *National political ideas had grown and flourished in the Constantinois region more than in any other part of the country... From 1944 onwards, organizational activities expanded, and the number of militants joining the national movement increased, as if the hour of revolution had already struck...*" (Colonel Haj Lakhdar, n.d., p. 26)

2. The Activity of the Revolutionary Current within the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty

The convergence of various nationalist forces around the Manifesto's demands and its annex created the foundation for a common platform of action. This was discussed at a conference held from 2 to 4 March 1944, attended by elected representatives, the Algerian People's Party, the Association of Muslim Scholars, and several other social groups, excluding the communists. Honorary presidency was granted to Messali Hadj, who was then imprisoned in southern Algeria. This decision paved the way for the creation of a coalition known as the *Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty*, officially proclaimed on 14 March 1944. (Mahfoud Kaddache, 2011, p. 338)

According to its president, Ferhat Abbas, the objectives of the movement were: the urgent defense of the Manifesto, freedom of expression, condemnation of colonial domination and its racial discrimination, and the creation of a spirit of solidarity among all Algerians regardless of ethnicity or religion. (Ferhat Abbas, 2005, p. 167) As for its demands, Abbas's supporters and Messali's supporters agreed on the central demand outlined in the February 1943 Manifesto: "*An Algerian state endowed with its own constitution,*

drafted by an Algerian Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage by all the inhabitants of Algeria.” Through its newspaper *Al-Moussawat* (Equality), the movement also launched a wide propaganda campaign against the decree of 7 March 1944, adopting the slogan: *“No to French citizenship, yes to Algerian citizenship.”* (Yahia Bouaziz, 1995, p. 111)

One striking feature of this movement was its ability, in a short time, to attract a broad militant base. According to most sources, its membership reached 500,000 activists. This large number made it difficult for the leadership to control activities, particularly those of the revolutionary current from the PPA, who by late 1944 were openly promoting the demand for independence. This development alarmed Ferhat Abbas, who declared: *“... We have learned that some elements claiming affiliation with our movement are speaking of Algerian independence... If this is true, these elements are harming our cause and betraying our ideology...”* (Benjamin Stora, 1999, p. 188)

Indeed, militants of the revolutionary current within the dissolved PPA, led by Mohamed Lamine Debaghine and Hocine Asla, exerted an evident influence on the movement through clandestine activities aimed at mobilizing the masses and fostering hostility toward France. This is evident in the underground press and leaflets such as *Algeria Libre* (Free Algeria) and *Al-‘Amal al-Jazairi* (The Algerian Action). In February 1945, a leaflet posted on walls read: *“O Muslim brothers, the life of your country is in danger. Colonialism has ruined it materially and morally. The Algerian people have not enjoyed civilization under French occupation. The Arabic language has been oppressed since the occupation, and Islam has become an object of ridicule. Our dignity will only be safeguarded within the framework of an Algerian entity and an Algerian government based on the sovereignty of the Algerian people and rejecting any foreign authority. For this cause, your brothers have died in prisons and suffer in jails and camps, while others continue to struggle passionately under both legality and secrecy.”* (Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, 1992, p. 232)

At the Congress of the Friends of the Manifesto held from 2 to 4 March 1945, the influence of the revolutionary current on its demands became evident. A memorandum was drafted rejecting the demand for an Algerian republic tied to France and replacing it with the following: the substitution of an Algerian Parliament for the existing colonial councils; the replacement of the Governor-General with an Algerian government accountable to Parliament; and recognition of the Algerian flag, in other words, an affirmation of the principle of complete independence. (Yahia Bouaziz, 1995, p. 110)

The activities of the revolutionary current did not stop at political demands and clandestine propaganda. Its members also devised a plan to launch the revolution immediately after the end of World War II. This idea was discussed among PPA leaders who met in Constantine on 4 April 1945, in the presence of 500 delegates from the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty, during the commemoration of the fifth anniversary of Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis’s death. The plan envisioned smuggling Messali out of prison to Sétif, from where he would proclaim the establishment of a Provisional Government under his leadership. However, the colonial authorities discovered the plan and, on 23 April 1945, hastily transferred Messali from Chlef to Laghouat, and then to exile in Brazzaville. (Mohamed Harbi, 1983, p. 36)

Even before Messali’s transfer, events in KsarChellala reflected the revolutionary ferment among the Algerian people. According to the testimony of Saad Dahlab, one of the leading figures behind this uprising, the events unfolded after he delivered a speech at the weekly market in Chellala, where he openly called for independence and presented a letter to the Governor of Algiers during his visit to the region. This led to his arrest, along with three accompanying militants, which in turn provoked clashes between the French police and the population. The situation escalated when paratroopers surrounded the area and arrested Messali along with several militants. (Saad Dahlab, 1995, p. 101)

In reality, the events at KsarChellala epitomized the climate of tension that marked April 1945 and revealed, with stark clarity, the colonial administration’s deep hostility toward the Muslim population and its determination to suppress the demands of the national movement.

3.The Revolutionary Current and the Events of May 8, 1945

Most testimonies and studies suggest that what occurred in May was, in fact, a revolutionary movement prepared by the leadership of the dissolved Algerian People's Party, which constituted the revolutionary current within the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty. This leads us to argue that the events of May 8 were the outcome of national consciousness and a broad political orientation, rather than isolated incidents or a circumstantial uprising.

By the end of World War II, the Algerian people were ready to embrace any stance that expressed their aspirations. Ferhat Abbas described the prevailing atmosphere of enthusiasm and political agitation in Algeria at the time: *"The masses were aflame with patriotism and burning with enthusiasm, firmly determined to aspire to a better life."* (Ferhat Abbas, 2005, p. 169)

This enthusiasm was reflected in slogans written on walls in many Algerian cities, such as: *"...Prepare yourselves, for zero hour is approaching..."*, *"...Let us ready ourselves for revolution..."*, *"...O Algerians, fight for freedom and die if necessary, but show no mercy to the oppressors. O Algerians, the mountains are calling you, for the hour of Revolution is near..."* (Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, 1992, p. 232)

Due to the large number of police informants infiltrated into the ranks of the PPA, information regarding party activities quickly reached the departments specializing in Islamic affairs in Algiers, particularly those under Colonel Cott, who, in turn, transmitted them to the various offices of the General Government. (Yves Benot, 2000, p. 52)

In April 1945, French General Henri Martin declared: *"...Multiple sources from Sétif have confirmed that the Algerian People's Party is preparing for a general uprising. The demand for membership cards in the Friends of the Manifesto has doubled. The incited Muslim youth have become a dangerous weapon in the hands of the vanguard, whether in cities or villages, as they appear determined to wage relentless struggle..."* (Kamel Benyaïche, 2018, p. 281)

Hardline settlers, who sought the repeal of the decree of 7 March 1944 granting new political rights to specific categories of Algerian Muslims, exploited this situation to achieve their own objectives and undermine the national movement. They found support from the colonial administration, which was increasingly eager to seize any opportunity to provoke and repress Muslims. (Yves Benot, 2000, p. 54) Their chance came with the demonstrations of May 1, 1945.

Regarding the planning of these demonstrations, Mohamed Zerouali (Mohamed Zerouali, 1995, biographical note) recalls, in his testimony, a meeting held in early April at the Mouloudia Club, attended by a group of leaders, including Mohamed Abdoun, Hocine Asla, and Abdallah Filali. At this meeting, it was decided to organize a demonstration on May 1, with slogans calling for Algerian independence and the return of Messali from exile.

Afterwards, the local leadership of the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty requested authorization from the Governor-General to organize a parade on the occasion of Labor Day, to proceed from Bab El Oued to the Central Post Office. (Mohamed Abbas, 2001, p. 38)

When the procession of 20,000 people reached Rue d'Isly, French soldiers stationed in front of the headquarters of the Tenth Military Division opened fire on the Algerian flags being carried. Four demonstrators were killed on the spot, and seven more died in the following days from their injuries. (Mohamed Abbas, 2013, p. 74)

This demonstration was not confined to Algiers alone but spread to many cities, including Sétif, Blida, Oran, Béjaïa, and Guelma. It was followed by a broad campaign of arrests targeting PPA militants, including Hocine Asla, Mohamed Heni, Mohamed Mahi, and others. (Kamel Benyaïche, 2018, p. 286)

As a result of this repression, Ahmed Bouda recalls in his testimony that the PPA distributed a leaflet condemning the police attack on the peaceful demonstration and warning of the consequences of violence.

Orders were given to militants to respond in kind if confronted by the police. (Ahmed Bouda in Mohamed Abbas, 2013, p. 75)

As for the demonstrations of May 8, Mohamed Zerouali recalls that, after the bloody events of May 1, Ferhat Abbas contacted the group and proposed organizing demonstrations on the occasion of Armistice Day, May 8, 1945, informing them that he would apply for authorization. The group received this proposal with skepticism and engaged in lengthy discussions to assess whether, under such circumstances, it was appropriate to push the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty to organize new demonstrations on Victory Day. Finally, it was agreed that each district leadership should act independently and assess the balance of power on the ground to determine whether to undertake such an initiative. (Mohamed Zerouali in Mohamed Abbas, 2001, p. 38)

Indeed, demonstrations spread across many cities, including Algiers, Constantine, Sétif, Kherrata, El Eulma, Annaba, Guelma, Khenchela, Biskra, Collo, Jijel, Taher, Béjaïa, Tlemcen, and Saïda. The marches in Sétif and Guelma were marked by defiance and confrontation when police officers provoked demonstrators by forcibly seizing national flags. This led to clashes between the two sides, which the colonial police exploited to open fire and disperse the crowds. Thus, the peaceful marches escalated into a popular uprising across many villages and hamlets throughout May. (Nacereddine Saïdouni, 1995, p. 20)

The repression of this uprising was marked by extreme brutality and violence, carried out by the French army and settler militias, with the approval of the Free French Government led by General de Gaulle. A force of 21,300 soldiers was placed at the disposal of the French army, and the Governor-General of Algeria, Chataigneau, was ordered to enforce the authority of victorious France, to prevent any challenge to French sovereignty in Algeria, and to employ all necessary means to suppress movements hostile to France. (Kamel Benyaïche, 2018, p. 286)

4. The Order for Revolution on May 23, 1945, and the Counter-Order

The brutal repression carried out by the colonial authorities during the May 8 demonstrations was enough to ignite a spirit of revenge among the Algerian masses and prepare them for revolutionary action. It led to a widely held conviction that armed struggle was the only means of liberating Algeria. Groups numbering from hundreds to thousands were thus formed, particularly in villages and rural hamlets, where they launched initial attacks against colonial interests such as watchtowers, barracks, and administrative centers. On May 9, for instance, the inhabitants of Aïn Abessa attacked the gendarmerie post, burning down the barracks and several settler farms. (Mahfoud Kaddache, 2011, p. 720)

In the Kherrata region, some demonstrators agreed to form groups to carry out attacks on the post office, the tax office, and the courthouse. In Guelma, certain tribes rose against colonial repression and, on May 9, marched toward the city from Oued Zenati and Sedrata, cutting the railway line between Guelma and Bouchegouf. (Mohamed Larbi Zbiri, 1999, p. 79)

In the face of this widespread upheaval, members of the PPA began to believe that the time for revolution had to be set. Delegates, including Belouizdad, Filali, and Cherchali, traveled across Algeria, urging local party leaders to intensify their activities. (Mohamed Harbi, 1983, p. 37)

The plan outlined consisted of sabotage operations targeting railways, cutting telephone and electricity lines, attacking gendarmerie and police posts, organizing campaigns against the colonial administration, and establishing a fund for financial support. (Mohamed Larbi Zbiri, 1999, p. 80)

For their part, some PPA leaders from the Constantine region traveled to Algiers and requested that the party's executive committee begin implementing the *Direct Action Directive*. They aimed to spark a general

uprising that would relieve the populations of Sétif, Guelma, Béjaïa, and Kherrata, who alone were bearing the brunt of French military operations. (Mohamed Abbas, 2013, p. 75)

Regarding the *Direct Action Directive*, there is insufficient information about the circumstances of its issuance or the planning behind it, aside from a few testimonies that provide fragmentary details inadequate for constructing a clear historical context.

According to Chouki Mostefai's testimony, the order for revolution did not call for launching a general insurrection, but rather for initiating a diversionary operation to distract the enemy for a few days. The *Direct Action Directive* was sent to most regions, but militants and cadres were cautious, except in certain areas of Kabylia and western Algeria. (Kamel Benyaïche, 2018, p. 294)

However, according to Hocine Aït Ahmed (2002, p. 36), the revolutionary elite was determined to generalize the uprising that began on May 23, 1945. Algeria was divided into military zones assigned to revolutionary leaders as follows:

- Algiers and its suburbs under Mohamed Belouizdad
- The western region under Mohamed Mahfoudi and Abdallah Filali
- The eastern region under Massoud Boukadoum and Chédli Mekki
- The southern region under Mohamed Ben Mehel
- The ChercHELL region under Djilali Rekimi
- The Larbaâ and Tablat region under Ahmed Bouda

Mohamed Zerouali recalls that, after the massacres of May 8, the party leadership wavered between those calling for the generalization of the uprising and those who were cautious. It seems the dominant position was Dr. Debaghine's, who issued the order for a general insurrection. The order was carried to the Djurdjura region by militant Arzeki Djomaa and Waali Bennaï, along with several students from the Ben Aknoun high school in Algiers, including Ali Laïmèche, Ammar Ould Hamouda, Hocine Aït Ahmed, Omar Oussedik, and Saïd Chibane.

Zerouali and his companions were determined to proclaim the uprising on the night of May 24, but just before carrying it out, they received a counter-order to desist. This left them in a state of disobedience before the date, compelling them to launch the resistance against their will. Mohamed Zerouali and his companions held out for six months. Still, under intense pressure on the region, the colonial administration succeeded in persuading the Sheikh of the Zaouia to put an end to the resistance. Zerouali was captured in the Djurdjura region on October 12 while returning from Algiers after a heated meeting with central leader Ahmed Bouda, who candidly told him that he had not supported the order for revolution. (Mohamed Zerouali in Mohamed Abbas, 2001, pp. 39–41)

From these testimonies, it appears that the issuance of the *Direct Action Directive*, which called for the initiation of revolutionary activity, was an attempt by certain cadres of the revolutionary current to bring the armed struggle project to reality, a project planned during World War II.

Following the criminal acts that accompanied the May 8 demonstrations, orders were given to implement this project. However, weak coordination, poor organization, and difficulties in communication among militants prevented its success. Nevertheless, the idea was not abandoned but merely postponed, and it was later revived with the creation of the *Special Organization (OS)*.

5. The Revolutionary Elite and the Reunification of the Movement

In the aftermath of those tragic events, the colonial authorities hastened to arrest dozens of leading figures from the three movements that had constituted the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty. They exiled Messali Hadj to the jungles of French Congo.

Thus, the revolutionary elite, led by Lamine Debaghine and Mohamed Belouizdad, along with a small group of militants, found themselves responsible for leading the party, which was in a state resembling the

devastation left by a hurricane. They had to oversee the party's grassroots revival while simultaneously renewing its external relations, beginning with their brethren in Tunisia and Morocco.(Mohamed Abbas, 2001, p. 86)

According to Mohamed Mechat's testimony, Mohamed Belouizdad arrived in Constantine. He tasked him, along with Abdel Salam Habachi and Abdel Rahman Guerras, with transporting secret mail, distributing leaflets, and conveying instructions to eastern Algeria. Their tasks also included writing graffiti demanding the release of prisoners, particularly the leaders of the national movement.(Mohamed Mechat, 2010, p. 36)

For his part, Mohamed Issami (Mohamed Issami, biographical note, 2013)

Recalls that, after the events of May 8, Mohamed Belouizdad came to Constantine to regroup militants. He, along with Abdel Rahman Guerras, visited Issami at his residence in Biskra to deliver a bundle of leaflets. A meeting was held with militants at the headquarters of the Muslim Scouts.

Belouizdad's instructions focused on re-establishing the PPA's organizational system on new foundations suited to the conditions and developments of the time. It was decided to create a wilaya (province) comprising the regions of Biskra and the Aurès, its boundaries defined in a later meeting in Constantine, with Mohamed Issami appointed as its head. At that time, the wilaya included the following sections:

- Biskra, led by Ahmed Mahboub
- Oued Souf, led by Ahmed Miloudi
- Touggourt, led by Abdel Hafid Derouiche
- M'Chouneche, led by Ahmed Ben Abdelrazak
- Arris, led by Saleh Mokhtari
- Fom El Toub, led by Mostefa Ben Boulaïd
- Barika, led by Mohamed Khendira(Mohamed Issami, testimony on YouTube, n.d.)

Despite the colonial security services' pursuit of PPA members, Lamine Debaghine, leader of the revolutionary elite, continued to travel inside and outside Algeria. In the summer of 1945, he went to Tunisia with militant Abdallah Filali to conduct talks with representatives of the Neo-Destour Party led by Habib Bourguiba. The discussions resulted in the signing of a document affirming the solidarity of the peoples of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, and their determination to coordinate efforts in negotiations with French colonialism for evacuation from the region, whether through peace or war.

The document was signed on behalf of Algeria by Dr. Lamine Debaghine, Abdallah Filali, and Chédli Mekki; on behalf of Tunisia by Mongi Slim and Allal Belhouane of the Neo-Destour Party, along with Fadel Ben Achour and Chédli Belkadhi, representing religious scholars. Debaghine then traveled to Oujda, Morocco, on a similar mission.(Mohamed Abbas, 2001, p. 86)

Mohamed Issami also recalls that Debaghine visited them in Biskra in the autumn of 1945 and contacted Dr. Saadan, who had been released before the general amnesty law was issued—Debaghine aimed to revive the tripartite coalition. Still, Saadan rejected the idea, telling Issami: "...It is enough that they deceived us once..." a reference to the revolutionary activities of Debaghine and his comrades without the approval of the Manifesto leadership, which believed in resolving the Algerian question within a peaceful framework.(Mohamed Issami, testimony, n.d.)

Accordingly, after the promulgation of the general amnesty law on March 16, 1946, and the release of national movement leaders, each pursued political activity within his own current. Messali Hadj founded the *Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties (MTLD)*, which upheld the principles of the PPA. At the same time, Ferhat Abbas established the *Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto (UDMA)*, which maintained the Manifesto's demands.

Conclusion

At the end of this research paper, it can be said that the revolutionary current, which operated clandestinely during World War II, played a significant role in spreading revolutionary propaganda and fostering enthusiasm for the prospect of self-determination. It was found in the Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty, a political cover for mobilizing the masses. As soon as World War II ended, the national movement became more resilient and conscious than ever before, entering with the French a new era of challenge and confrontation. The Friends of the Manifesto and Liberty thus became the legitimate expression of revolutionary nationalism.

With the brutal repression carried out by French colonialism during the events of May 8, 1945, the current government judged that the time had come to implement the *Direct Action Directive*, scheduled for 23 May 1945. According to the testimonies of most historical actors, this project was not welcomed by all the leaders. Nevertheless, orders were issued for its execution in an attempt to ease pressure on the regions that had suffered massacres and indiscriminate killings. However, due to poor organization and communication difficulties between areas, this decision was eventually abandoned.

Despite this failure, the revolutionary current, through its elites, sought to reunify the fragmented national movement. Thanks to the efforts of Mohamed Belouizdad, Aït Ahmed, Mohamed Lamine Debaghine, Chédli Mekki, and others, it laid the foundation for the military organization that would later emerge as the *Special Organization (OS)*.

Accordingly, the events of May 8, 1945, and the massive loss of life that ensued, estimated by most sources at 45,000 martyrs, had results that can be considered positive in highlighting the shortcomings of the peaceful struggle and reinforcing the demand for armed struggle. The Algerian people thus became convinced that revolutionary violence was the only means to restore their usurped national sovereignty.

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12. Mohamed Issami (1918–2013), born in Sidi Okba, Biskra, joined the Algerian People's Party in 1937. He was among the organizers of the May 8, 1945, demonstrations in Biskra, contributed to reviving the PPA's activities in eastern Algeria alongside Mohamed Belouizdad, and later helped establish the Special Organization (OS). He was arrested on November 1, 1954, and spent five years in French prisons. After his release, he rejoined the revolutionary struggle until independence, then withdrew from politics and returned to his profession as a tailor. He passed away in September 2013.

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23. Mohamed Zerouali (d. 1995) was among the prominent militants of the Algerian People's Party. He served as head of the PPA section in Dellys and, after Messali Hadj's arrest in August 1937, was appointed leader of the Kabylia region. He was one of the first to implement the order to generalize the revolution following the massacres of May 8, 1945. He was discovered and arrested in October of the same year, remained in prison until the ceasefire in March 1962, and passed away in 1995.