THE FRENCH COLONIAL AUTHORITY AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN ALGERIA (1945-1948): POST-WORLD WAR II DEVELOPMENTS

Abdelhamid OUMRI

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Mots-clés : Algérie ; Seconde Guerre mondiale ; colonialisme français ; mouvement politique.

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Mots-clés : Algérie ; Seconde Guerre mondiale ; colonialisme français ; mouvement politique.
Introduction

After the First World War, Algeria witnessed several political currents, including the movement of Prince Khaled in the early 1920s and the integrative reform movement under the name "Federation of Electors" founded in 1927, which held its first meeting in September, attended by 150 Algerian political figures, led by Farhat Abbas and Ibn Djalloul."...they demanded the achievement of equality between Muslims and Europeans alike in various political, economic, social and educational fields, and another religious reformist movement that opposes integration and resists sectarianism was founded in 1931 under the name "Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars" led by Sheikh "Abdelhamid Ben Badis", "Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahim", "Mubarak al-Mili" and "Tayeb al-Oqbi". These political currents continued their activities and presented their demands, and despite their different orientations, they converged in the largest political demonstration Algeria had known during the 1930s, namely the Algerian Islamic Conference of 1936. This coincided with the success of the Popular Front in France, on which the national movement pinned its hopes for the realization of its demands, but the attitude of the French government towards those demands caused a special shock to the fusionists. It also led to the fragmentation of the Algerian national movement. The colonial authorities dissolved the parties of the National Movement. At the beginning of the Second World War. The decision was issued on 26 September 1939 to dissolve the People's Party. As a result, 28 prominent political figures were arrested, newspapers were confiscated, and these parties did not re-emerge until after the Second World War.

0.1. Importance of the Study

This research delves into the significance of the Algerian National Movement's transformation after the war. The study aims to shed light on how the movement's ideology, strategies, and goals evolved, encompassing shifts in leadership, resistance methods, and the overall vision for achieving independence. By analyzing these transformations, the research will explore their impact on the effectiveness of the struggle. Additionally, the study will examine the emergence of new political parties and internal debates within the movement, providing insights into the movement's political landscape. Understanding these internal dynamics is crucial for comprehending how they shaped the overall course of Algerian nationalism.

0.2. Research Problem and Question

After World War II, the Algerian fight for independence went through a big change. This study focuses on the years 1945 to 1948. The researchers want to understand how the Algerian National Movement changed its ideas (ideology), tactics (strategies), and how the movement itself was organized (internal dynamics) during this time. By looking at these changes, they hope to learn more about how they affected the path Algeria took towards independence. The study is dealt with the following main question: how did the transformation of the Algerian National Movement's ideology, strategies, and internal dynamics in the aftermath of World War II (1945-1948) shape the trajectory of the Algerian struggle for independence?

0.3. Hypothesis

This research proposes that World War II served as a catalyst for significant transformations within the Algerian National Movement. The experience of the war,
coupled with growing disenchantment with French rule, likely radicalized the movement's ideology, pushing them towards complete independence rather than integration with France. Furthermore, the study suggests a shift in tactics, with the movement potentially adopting a multifaceted approach that combined political action with the establishment of a military branch for armed resistance. Finally, the research anticipates exploring the internal dynamics of the movement during this period, including the emergence of new political parties and internal debates surrounding strategy and leadership. This multifaceted analysis aims to shed light on how these wartime transformations shaped the trajectory of Algerian nationalism.

**0.4. Objectives of the study:**

This research delves into the transformative period of the Algerian National Movement following World War II. To achieve a comprehensive understanding, the study has three key objectives:

Analysis of Movement Evolution: This objective entails examining the ideological shifts, changes in strategies and goals (including leadership, resistance methods, and the overall vision for independence), while tracing how these transformations unfolded throughout this pivotal period.

Impact on the Independence Struggle: The research will assess how these internal changes within the movement shaped and influenced the fight for Algerian self-determination. This analysis will shed light on the dynamic interplay between internal developments and the broader struggle for independence.

Internal Dynamics and Debates: This objective focuses on investigating the emergence of new political parties and the internal debates that arose within the movement. By analyzing these dynamics, the study aims to understand how they shaped the overall course and trajectory of Algerian nationalism. By addressing these interconnected objectives, this research seeks to provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the Algerian National Movement during this critical juncture in its history.

**0.5. Method**

This research will employ a multi-pronged methodological approach to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the Algerian National Movement's transformation after World War II. Firstly, historical analysis will be utilized, involving the examination of data on demographics, economic indicators, and voting patterns. This data will provide a foundation for understanding the social and political landscape that shaped the movement's evolution. Secondly, discourse analysis will be conducted, focusing on speeches, writings, and public pronouncements of key figures within the movement and French colonial officials. By analyzing the language used, this approach can reveal changes in attitudes and strategies employed by both sides. Finally, while comparative analysis may not be the primary focus, the study acknowledges the potential value of comparing the Algerian National Movement's development to other independence movements during this period, both regionally and globally. Such comparisons could highlight unique aspects and characteristics of the Algerian struggle for independence.
1. Circumstances of the formation of the national movement currents after the Second World War

1.1 Political conditions

The National Movement parties were established after developments and events that took place on the political scene in Algeria, including the events of 8 May 1945, the dissolution of the « Ahbab al-Bayan wal-Hurriyya movement », and discussions on the development of a special law for Algeria. Political reforms were enacted, especially in the field of parliamentary representation. At the regional and international level, several events took place, most notably: The establishment of the Arab League, the spread of liberation movements, and the beginning of the conflict between the Western blocs led by the United States of America, and the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union.

1.2. Political Reforms and the Promulgation of the Law of Algeria, 1947:

The colonial administration tried to calm and soothe the atmosphere after the deep psychological effects of the events of 8 May 1945 and the human losses. Fearing that it would have negative repercussions on its presence in Algeria, it resorted to issuing several reforms, including the decision of 17 August 1945, which grants the Muslims of the second electoral college the right to send to parliament a number of representatives equal to the number of Frenchmen of the first electoral college. (Ageron, 1986:151). The French authorities were busy drafting a constitution for the Fourth Republic, during which they announced that Algeria would have its own law. While awaiting its promulgation, Algerians began forming new parties on the ruins of old ones in preparation for legislative elections in France and Algeria. (Saadallah, 2007:146) The French parliament's move to open the debate on a law for Algeria brought the parties of the National Movement back to the track of a reformist political approach. These parties, including the Jamiat al-Ulama, entered into a debate on the special Algerian law. (Saadallah, p. 146) Farhat Abbas and his group presented "autonomy" and the idea of a federal union. Then the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms presented the idea of a constituent assembly, while the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars presented a petition for the separation of religion and government. The organisations of the National Movement were disappointed after their proposals were rejected, and France gave Algeria a Basic Law, which Al-Madani described as: "distorted, amputated, as far as possible from the truth and the principle of freedom, and as far as possible from the desire of the nation, once again blocking hopes. These are the most important political developments that took place in Algeria after the Second World War. They will have an impact on the course of the national movement. As for the international political events that affected the national movement, if not influenced, they will affect some of its decisions, including the formation of the Arab League.

1.3. Economic, Social and Cultural Conditions

To study the conditions of Algerian Muslims, this leads us to draw a picture that is almost mythical, but it is a real picture produced by French colonialism in Algeria. Hunger, unemployment, starvation and ignorance are the main features of this picture. Ahmed Ben Omar wrote about this in Al-Manar newspaper:

Hundreds of thousands of Algerian Muslims have been prevented from earning a living. Famine has chased them from place to place. Diseases are killing hundreds of thousands of Algerian youth. As a result of this situation, the roads are filled with the
unemployed, the streets are filled with beggars, and the cities are filled with homeless people who have fled to them from the hell of the wilderness in search of food to feed themselves, and to seek help from their brothers against the injustice of the times and the injustice of the unjust. Ben Omar. (1951)

This situation has left Algerians in great misery, as Ahmed Mezghna said: "It is enough for a person to pass by the street "The Lalera" in Kasbah in the evening, to see hundreds of beggars standing on its sides, and to witness groups of men, women, children and old people in poverty, dominated by the fear of death". (Koraichi, 2001-2002: 64) Albert Camus carried out a field investigation in 1945 entitled in "Misery in Kabayel area and Crisis in Algeria" argues that the economic hardship hitting ordinary Algerians is much worse than that affecting Europeans. It emphasizes that while the crisis hurts everyone, Algerians are bearing the brunt of the suffering. The economic and social conditions experienced by the majority of Algerians, except for a small group of self-employed professionals and jobs. They did not rise to the level of what we call a "bourgeoisie". Despite the disparity between the two groups in Algerian society, and the difference in characteristics, they meet and move side by side, opposite the other side of the colonizers. (Koraichi, 2001-2002: 64) The French authorities issued a decree requiring all Arabic language teachers to know French as a prerequisite for their employment in schools. This decision was aimed at eliminating the Arab apparatus and destroying its structure, because they knew that most of these teachers did not know French. (Bouaziz, 2007: 66)

2. National political movements after the Second World War

After the Second World War, Algeria witnessed several political parties and organizations, differing in means and objectives. Each of them adopts a specific ideology or reference point in their struggle and struggle. We will focus primarily on national political movements, which have an impact on masses with their ideas, goals and objectives, including.

2.1 Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto:

The colonial administration issued a comprehensive amnesty for all political prisoners arrested after the events of 8 May 1945. When Mr. Farhat Abbas has been released. On 16 March 1946, the 41 weeks he spent in prison were enough for him to reconsider the experience of the "Ahbab al-Bayan wa al-Hurriyya". He intensified contacts with his political associates, presenting them with his new ideas and asking them for guidance on how to set up a new party and develop its political programme, which should be able to mobilize a large part of the living energies of both the French and Muslim communities. (Zoubiri, 1999: 105) Farhat Abbas was able to gather around him a group of executives, who believed in his ideas, and were ready to fight for them. He agreed with them to start a new party called « the Democratic Union of Algerian Manifesto ». In the second half of April, he submitted his statute to the competent authorities in order to be accredited and obtain a legal license. Immediately after accreditation, the party's leadership decided to participate in the French legislative elections, which were scheduled to take place on 02 June 1946. To appoint the second Constituent Assembly, in which Algerians were allocated thirteen seats. (Zoubiri, 1999: 107) Notables took centre stage in the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto. They had previously been part of the
integrationist movement. They were politically savvy and believed that they represented the best way to communicate with the French. Since the repression against Algerians did not affect them, they were seen as a force between the European and Muslim communities, among them: Farhat Abbas, Ahmed Boumengel, Kaddour Sattour, Abdelkader Mehdad, Abdelhamid Ben Salem, Mohamed Ben Kaddash, Cherif Saadan, Ibn Khalil, and Ahmed Francis. (Reghi, 2007:59) The party was based in the city of Setif and published the Algerian Republic newspaper in place of the previous newspaper of «the equality» (Saadalla, 2007: 141).

2.2 The Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms

The rise of the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties in 1939, acting as a successor to the banned People's Party, compels us to examine the party's internal struggles and conditions in 1946 upon Moussali El Hadj's return to Algeria. He encountered a party in disarray, particularly concerning who authorized the call to revolution and the conflicting order that some regions received but not others. Additionally, a growing inclination towards participating in elections was emerging among the leadership. Despite this internal discord, Massali El Hadj’s popularity remained strong among both party activists and the general public. (Zoubiri, 1999:149).

2.3. The People's Party faced a number of pressing issues upon reflection:

In the wake of the May events and subsequent decisions, the People's Party grappled with several pressing internal issues. Accountability – who would take responsibility for the events and resulting choices? Strategic Direction – how could the party reconcile its seemingly contradictory goals of armed resistance and political participation? Future Course – what overall strategy should guide the party moving forward? These internal debates were further complicated by the need to define the party's stance towards the first French parliamentary experience involving the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto. Faced with internal divisions and the need to adapt, Massali El Hadj and the remaining leadership of the People's Party opted to participate in the political process. They formed a new party, the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms (MTLD). This new organization presented itself as a legal political entity, operating within the constraints of the existing colonial laws. Unlike the People's Party's outright rejection of colonial rule, the MTLD's platform did not explicitly call for independence through revolution. This shift signaled a pragmatic acceptance of the current reality, allowing them to engage in elections and work within the colonial system. (Saadalla, 2007: 119) Activists were surprised by the People's Party's sudden decision to join the election under a new name, the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms. This choice, made quickly and without public input, came as a shock considering the party's current struggles. As one activist put it, "This rushed decision, made without consulting party members or the public, caught us completely off guard. Algerian people simply weren't prepared for this." (Ahmed, 2002:93) Mohamed Boudiaf believed that Massali El Hadj's shift in political strategy was due to Boudiaf's convincing arguments made to Arab country delegates at the UN in Paris. There, Boudiaf argues, El Hadj came to the conclusion that the party needed to adopt legal methods, collaborate with intellectuals, and gain the backing of French liberals to broaden its popular appeal. (Lounici, 1999:96) The Party supporters entered the stage of legitimacy, carrying with tow main characteristics, which are: Many intellectuals in Arabic and French joined the movement, after «the Star», and then the People's Party often included only
simple militants. Most of them were migrant workers. As well as a number of Algerian soldiers, who had served in the French army during the Second World War. Also joined the movement was joined by Some administrative workers and bureaucrats. (Saadalla, 2007: 142)

The second characteristic was the phenomenon of conflict and strife. There were two groups competing for leadership in the same way as the traditional clans. It was no longer a matter of "those above" and "those below", but of "the second class". And « Belkour » owners. The point of contention was the transition towards legitimate work and the pattern of appointing members of the Central Committee. Deep divisions within the Algerian People's Party (APP) erupted at the first conference of its successor, the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms (MTLD). This critical meeting was sparked by strong opposition from party leaders to Messali Hadj's decision to participate in elections, a move seen as contradicting the APP's core ideology. Where the first report on the party's position on the elections was presented by Hussein Lahoul and Chaouki Moustafaoui, while the second report was presented by Hussein Lahoul and Chaouki Moustafaoui. The second report was presented by Hussein Ait Ahmed, which included the opinions and ideas of a group of young intellectuals and enthusiasts for the armed struggle. In light of the two reports, the conference discussed the reality of the party and prepared a future plan. (Zoubiri, 1999, p. 153)

2.3 The Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars

After the Second World War, the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars organized itself to adapt to the new situation. Like the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto and the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms. Because it is an association and not a party. However, it has a say in the course of events and everything that affects the future of the country, especially the issues of Arab education and the Islamic religion, public freedoms and national identity, based on a common history and the unity of the land, people and values. (Saadalla, 2007: 143) After the death of Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis on 16 April 1940. Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi took over the leadership of the Association, where it became more involved in political matters. He believes that "Islam is a religion and politics, and the Association of Scholars is a religious-political organization, a convincing case that does not need a question or an answer, and the Association of Scholars believes that if a religious scholar does not know politics and does not work in it, he is not a scholar" Sheikh Al-Ibrahimi, speaking of the Society's position on political issues, adds: "In every point of Algerian politics, the Society of Scholars has a genuine opinion, which it declares, defends, and publicizes, and disagrees with the opinion of others with evidence, and agrees with it with evidence, because it does not accept imitation in religion, as well as in matters of life. In 1947, the newspaper "Al-Bassaer" resumed publication after it was suspended at the beginning of the Second World War. Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi assumed the editorship of the newspaper and wrote most of its editorials. The newspaper began to address political and religious issues with a political flavour. Another characteristic that emerged after the events of May 1945 was the adoption of a policy close to that of the Algerian Bayan party led by Farhat Abbas. The reason for this is that the Ulema Society was against the extremism of some elements in the Party for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms. (Zoubiri, 1999 :153)
3. Demands and goals:
The national movement had urgent demands, such as improving the living conditions of Algerian Muslims, economic, social and cultural reforms, and other postponed demands, which represent the goal for which every national party and association struggles. Therefore, Farhat Abbas and his comrades in the Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto saw the way out of the Algerian problem as granting autonomy and establishing a federal system, after the failure of the attempt at integration and equality. In addition, The Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms, on the other hand, did not see an alternative to full independence, and its goals included the establishment of a constituent assembly, the separation of religion from the state, and free Arabic education, which remained a demand of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars.

1.2. The Democratic Union of the Algerian Bayan and the idea of autonomy:
The Bayan Party's vision for Algeria's future is encapsulated in the draft constitution proposed by Farhat Abbas. This document outlines a sovereign Algerian Republic with its own government and flag, recognized by France. While envisioned as part of the French Union, Algeria would have a participatory role in the Union's foreign relations and national defense. Internally, the Republic would enjoy absolute sovereignty, overseeing domestic affairs including the police force. The draft proposes a unique form of dual citizenship, granting Algerians in France and French nationals in Algeria full rights and privileges within each other's countries. The Algerian parliament, elected through universal suffrage, would hold legislative power, while the President and Council of Ministers would wield executive authority. France's role would be limited to an advisory representative accepted by the Algerian government. Finally, the draft emphasizes bilingualism, establishing Arabic and French as official languages with education compulsory in both for all Algerians. (Bouaziz, 2007:118) Farhat Abbas and his fellow deputies caused a major surprise with this project, especially since French public opinion was used to hearing Algerian moderates calling for equality and providing some social and political rights. The Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto (UDMA) seeks a middle ground on the Algerian question. They oppose both complete integration into France, as well as outright independence advocated by the People's Party. As UDMA advisor Boussouf explains, "We firmly reject the path of secession, which would only create division among Algerians. Instead, we call for a gradual legal evolution that recognizes Algerian identity and guarantees the right to self-governance within the French Union." (Kaddache, 2008, p. 377) Farhat Abbas rejected the extremes of integration, independence, or separation. Instead, he envisions a new generation of Algerians. This empowered citizenry would be "democratically and socially constituted," equipped with modern industrial and scientific knowledge. Our aim is to create a young state, led by French democracy... The creation of an Algerian state inevitably results in a true fraternal community of Muslims and Europeans in Algeria, a bridge between Christianity and Islam, and above all an act of reconciliation, bringing together disparate elements. (Farhat, 2010, p. 188)

The proposal put forward by the Democratic Union of Algerian Manifesto (UDPM) and its president Farhat Abbas is a progression from the idea of integration to autonomy. It is also a victory for the national movement, which converged on the idea of the right of peoples to self-determination. In summary, The Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms presents a clear set of demands for Algeria's future. First and foremost, they call for an end to French colonial rule and the establishment of a fully sovereign and
independent Algerian nation. This independent Algeria would be governed by a representative government wielding all the elements of sovereignty, including executive, legislative, and judicial power. Furthermore, the Movement emphasizes the importance of democratic principles, advocating for a sovereign Algerian Constituent Assembly established through a unified and direct election on a single date, one where all citizens, regardless of nationality or religion, can participate. (Al-Aggoun, 2007:28-29) The movement operates under an urgent program of action encompassing political, social, and cultural spheres. Domestically, it fights for the application of democratic freedoms, liberation of victims of colonial repression, and the independence of the Islamic religion. In France, the movement seeks allies within democratic circles and aims to raise awareness of the Algerian national struggle among the French public. Internationally, it strives to garner greater sympathy from world powers for the Algerian cause while maintaining neutrality in the conflict between the two blocs. This program is rooted in the principles of democracy, social justice, and cultural self-determination. The movement seeks broad support for its goals, both domestically and internationally, employing peaceful and non-violent methods of struggle. (Kiwan, 2007:143-144)

3.3 The demands and objectives of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars:

The goals and demands of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars after the Second World War are no different from those before the war. It fought against the deviant Sufi doctrines, which corrupted religion, blocked the minds of Algerians, froze their thoughts, paralyzed their consciousness, and called for taking Loyalty to colonialism. (Ibrahim, 1999:22) She also fought against employees in the religious corps, as they are a weapon used by France against non-religious workers. The association also endeavored to preserve the Arabic language and spread free Arabic education. (Ibrahim, 1971, p. 153) Sheikh "Al-Bashir Al-Ibrahimi" summarized the objectives of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars in the article he presented in 1947: "Reviving the components that died or weakened in the souls, then demanding the lost rights on the basis of religion, language, gender, morals, history and traditions, and correcting their bases, then insisting on the demand in strength and intensity, then insistence, desperation and sacrifice. The demands of the scholars association were also evident in the open letter, which presented to the President of the French Republic in 1949: "The Algerian people, through experience and practice, have come to believe only in the four pillars of their life; namely their Algerian identity, their nationality, their Arabic language and their Islamic religion".

Those who examine the content of the document easily realize that the Algerian Muslim scholars association is no longer content with the programme outlined in its statute, but that its long experience in the fields of education and religious reform has led it to enter the world of politics, knowing that reform is only possible for those who have power.

Zoubiri (1999:206)

One of the most important developments after the Second World War was the entry into the world of politics and the increased political activity of the association. Because of the fighting for the issue of "separation of religion from the state".
Conclusion

There were several developments in the movement after the Second World War, and after the Algerian Law of 1947, theoretically: Farhat Abbas abandoned the idea of integration and equality and started calling for independence. He called for the establishment of an Algerian parliament and an elected government. The Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms agreed to participate in the elections after the rejection, and the two parties participated in the elections and called for independence, one autonomous and the other full independence. Eventually, Following the events of May 1945, tensions between the two parties escalated. Each side accused the other of collaborating with French colonial authorities. This poisoned the well of their relationship, making reunification impossible. Even a call for reconciliation by the President of the Association, Mohammed al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi. Because of the disagreements between parties, they saw it as a loss of focus and purpose. The association has tirelessly strived to mend these divides, actively working on numerous occasions to bring parties together. Their goal is to foster a spirit of brotherhood, understanding, and tolerance, paving the way for a unified front.

References


