

## **Local Media, Torture, and French Intellectuals in Algeria during the French Colonial Period – Maurice Nadeau and Manifesto of the 121**

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### **Abstract:**

During the period of French colonial rule, the Algerian Revolution attracted considerable international sympathy, largely as a result of the propaganda initiatives undertaken by the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) to publicize this major revolutionary struggle. Support came from various parts of the world, particularly from other colonized societies. The prominence of the Algerian Revolution was further reinforced by expressions of solidarity from certain French figures, notably members of the French intellectual elite, including writers and journalists. Some of these individuals formally articulated their opposition to French practices toward Algerians by signing public declarations, most notably the *Statement on the Right to Civil Disobedience in the Algerian War (Manifesto of the 121)*, endorsed by 121 French intellectuals. While some of the signatories are well documented, information concerning the professional and political trajectories of others, such as Maurice Nadeau, remains limited. This study seeks to present Nadeau as one of the signatories of this statement.

**Keywords:** Algerian Revolution, Oran region, civil disobedience, French intellectuals, torture, Maurice Nadeau.

### **Introduction:**

The Algerian Revolution is regarded as one of the most significant revolutions of the twentieth century, owing to the profound sacrifices endured by the Algerian people—sacrifices that continue to receive international recognition. Over the course of seven and a half years, the unfolding events attracted wide coverage in Arab, international, and even French media. A key factor contributing to this engagement was the decision by certain prominent French figures to break their silence and denounce French practices in Algeria, particularly the use of torture. These revelations stirred the French intellectual elite, whose influence played a decisive role in shaping public opinion in France and beyond, and led to a number of notable initiatives, most prominently the signing of *Manifesto of the 121* on September 6, 1960, by a group of French intellectuals led by Jean-Paul Sartre. Among the 121 signatories, who included writers and critics, was Maurice Nadeau, whose opposition to French colonialism was grounded in his Trotskyist convictions. This study aims to examine one dimension of this intellectual engagement through the following research question: Maurice Nadeau and his position on the Algerian Revolution, 1954–1962.

### **French Colonial Policy in Algeria – The Oran Region**

Revolutionary activity in the city of Oran was based primarily on the operations of the *fidā`iyyīn*, as the organization of strikes and demonstrations in a large urban center such as Oran—where the majority of the population was European—proved particularly difficult. These challenges were intensified by the heavy concentration of military forces in the city, the imposition of sieges that effectively isolated it from its surroundings, and the systematic use of repressive measures. Despite these constraints, the local population maintained continuous contact with revolutionary leadership both within and beyond the city, thereby endowing the struggle with pronounced social and humanitarian dimensions. This engagement was manifested in practices of mutual assistance, notably through the sharing of food among Algerians: affluent merchants provided aid to the poor, while those of modest means or without employment contributed according to their capacities. Members of the *fidā`iyyīn* pursued by military forces were frequently given refuge in private homes, and nurses and caregivers attended to the sick and wounded by visiting them directly in their residences. Furthermore, surveillance cells were established at the entrances of working-class neighborhoods, which were enclosed with barbed wire, and night watch posts were organized on rooftops to monitor potential intrusions. Awareness campaigns were also conducted to encourage Algerians to abstain from attending entertainment venues, consuming alcohol, smoking, and organizing social gatherings<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to undermine the social and humanitarian solidarity between the population and its leaders, a French officer stated: “The stronger the cohesion of the *fellāga (mujāhidīn)* with the people, the more remote become the prospects of prolonging the occupation; the closer the *fellāga (mujāhidīn)* draws to rural areas, villages, and towns, the deeper their hostility toward us becomes, and the greater the distance from victory, survival, and the maintenance of control over Algeria.”<sup>2</sup> France persistently endeavored to obscure this revolutionary reality in Algeria. Nevertheless, the expansion of revolutionary activity became apparent through the reforms undertaken by the French government, which ultimately reflected an implicit recognition of the impossibility of sustaining colonial rule in Algeria. These reforms coincided with a period during which ten million Algerians were experiencing food shortages<sup>3</sup> unemployment, and the deterioration of the French economy as a result of global economic crises. The core objective of French reforms was to hasten the resolution of military and political issues in Algeria. In 1955, this process commenced with the reactivation of the 1947 law, which aimed to organize elections granting Muslims the right to political representation<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> -Mjawd Muhammad, *The Civilizational Dimensions of the Algerian Revolution – Maghreb Forum* - June 11-12, 2003, Publishing and Distribution House, 2005, p. 230

<sup>2</sup> -Ibid.p.234

<sup>3</sup> - Goyet-le- pierre ;*La guerre d’Algérie* ;éd.LAP.Perrin ;Paris ;1989.pp203-204

<sup>4</sup> - Elsenhanshartmut ; *la guerre d’Algérie 1954 -1962* publinoud 1999 ; p.81

François Mitterrand: Born on October 26, 1916 in France, he was a resistance fighter against Nazism, appointed Minister of the Interior, and then a candidate for the Union of the Left for three years. He died on January 8, 1966.



This position reaffirmed the speech delivered by François Mitterrand on 5 November 1954, in which he declared: “*Algeria is France... It is a single nation, and we will never agree to separation.*” He further asserted that “*the insurgents are separatists who have forgotten that all French citizens in Algeria and in France stand behind the government<sup>5</sup> which seeks to implement a policy of social democracy through the authority of the state. The government has taken all necessary measures to tighten control and surveillance across Algerian territory, and the only negotiations possible with them are war.*”<sup>6</sup> This stance reflected a dismissive attitude toward the revolution, intended to undermine it. Nevertheless, the revolutionary movement persisted as the French government continued to introduce reforms without acknowledging the FLN. The Prime Minister, Pierre Mendès France, declared that he would grant no recognition to the rebellion nor offer it any concessions, asserting that the defense of national sovereignty allowed for no compromise. Mitterrand also advocated for merciless repression of what he termed “terrorist acts,” emphasizing the necessity of separating the insurgents from the general Algerian population while reinforcing French military presence through the deployment of additional troops<sup>7</sup>. In effect, no solution other than intensified military intervention appeared viable to confront the revolution across all regions of Algeria—whether in cities, villages, or mountainous areas.

During his tenure from November 1956 to March 1957, Edgar Faure seldom addressed the Algerian question in cabinet meetings. Developments in Algeria sharply divided French politicians between those advocating legislative, economic, and political reforms while retaining Algeria as a French *département*, and those opposing such measures. Jacques Soustelle maintained that the effects of the reforms would require time to manifest and that Muslims had rejected them due to agitation by the National Liberation Front (FLN).

The period of the Fifth Republic saw the implementation of the most extensive reforms under Charles de Gaulle<sup>8</sup>, who pursued strategies shaped by the realities of the revolution while consistently asserting that Algeria remained French territory—a principal France was unwilling to relinquish. In addition to intensifying military operations, the government initiated socially oriented projects, even as levels of violence continued to escalate. The Minister of the Interior emphasized that he would exercise all available authority to suppress what he designated as terrorist acts.

The results of the referendum on the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, held on 28 September 1958, were likewise manipulated. In the city of Oran, 3,350,000 voters were reported to have participated, of whom 140,000 voted in favor (“yes”) and 450,000 voted against (“no”).

In order to ensure the continuation of the doctrine that “Algeria is French,” the French government introduced changes in administrative appointments and advanced the so-called “Heroes’ Peace” initiative in October 1958. This was followed by the promulgation of the

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<sup>5</sup> -Azghidi Mohamed Lahcen: *The Soummam Conference and the Development of the Algerian National Liberation Revolution 1956-1962*, n.d., National Book Foundation - Algeria, 1989, p. 73

<sup>6</sup> -Ibid.p.74

<sup>7</sup> -ibid.72-75

<sup>8</sup> - Ouaisa Rachid, *les Carnets de HARTMUT Elsenhans , la guerre d’Algérie*, éd.CASBAH 2009.p. 283



Law of 16 September 1959, which proclaimed that “Algeria is Algerian,” yet strictly within the framework of the French state, a position reaffirmed by the decision of 15 March 1960<sup>9</sup>. However, these French reforms were devoid of significance for Algerians, who had become firmly convinced that the only viable solution was the termination of colonial occupation—particularly as violence escalated following the promulgation of the State of Emergency Law, which entered into force on 3 April 1955. This law provided for a range of exceptional measures, including the imposition of curfews; the prohibition of residence for individuals deemed undesirable; house arrest; bans on public assemblies; authorization of searches of private dwellings at any time, day or night<sup>10</sup>; censorship of newspapers and other publications; and the possibility of closing cafés and cinemas<sup>11</sup>.

This law constituted nothing more than a reinforcement of the repressive apparatus in Algeria, functioning as a mechanism to further integrate the territory into France and ultimately suppress the Revolution. This process was implemented through the issuance of administrative and judicial measures that openly legitimized violence against Algerians—violence first brought to light by the journalists Claude Bourdet and François Mauriac. Repression thus became institutionalized, marked by the creation of a specialized intelligence unit within the army, the establishment of a Research and Operations Center, and the development of espionage structures.

Repressive practices persisted despite a report by Jean Mairey, Director-General of National Security, in which he denounced the methods employed. Torture had become systematic<sup>12</sup>, and an examination of French repressive legislation reveals that no region of Algeria experienced relative calm, as these measures were applied uniformly across the entire territory.

Such policies were regularly announced in local newspapers, notably *L'Échod'Oran* and *Oran Républicain*. These publications reported, among other measures, bans on strikes in Oran; prohibitions on political and local gatherings in the city on 29 March 1956; police surveillance of neighborhoods on 19 September 1956; an administrative decision banning fireworks on 5 November 1954; bans on meetings and demonstrations on 29 March 1956; and the imposition of curfews in the city of Oran on 31 May 1956 and in the districts of Hamri, Médioni, and Medina Djadida on 27 October 1956.

On 5 September 1957, one newspaper devoted an article on page five to the headline: « *Le couvre-feu est attendu à 31 communes de l'agrandissement* »<sup>13</sup> (“A curfew is expected in 31 districts of the metropolitan area.”)

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<sup>9</sup> - Harbi Mohamed Gilbert Meynier, *le FLN document et histoire 1954-1962* éd. Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004 p.131

<sup>10</sup> - Genévrière Deternant, *l'Agonie d'Oran*, 05 juillet 1962, 2eme éd. Jacques GANDINIE, Nice..p . 23

<sup>11</sup> - Tripier Philippe, *Autopsie de la guerre d'Algérie*, éd ; France empire , paris 1972 p. 184

<sup>12</sup> - *Ibid.*p.184

<sup>13</sup> - Branche Raphaëlle, *la torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie 1954 – 1962*,éd, Gallimard 2001 p.116 - 163



Neither of the two newspapers offered any commentary on these decisions, instead presenting them as routine legal measures and administrative procedures intended to restore order in the city of Oran, thereby implying that the events unfolding were merely temporary and insignificant disturbances. A review of articles published in *L'Échod'Oran* and *Oran Républicain* creates the impression of reading a single newspaper, as both outlets prominently displayed these regulations on their front pages, ensuring that Europeans and Muslims alike were exposed to them.

Despite the strict blockade imposed on Oran and the implementation of various repressive measures, the popular masses remained in continuous contact with their revolutionary leadership both within and beyond the city. They abstained from attending entertainment venues, consuming alcohol, smoking, and organizing celebrations, as these activities were strictly prohibited by the FLN. This stance was particularly significant for the political branch of the FLN, as it enabled it to counter enemy propaganda aimed at discrediting the activities of the civilian organization, especially through administrative structures that sought to attract Algerians by offering employment in the public sector.

The political branch of the FLN in Oran focused on the systematic collection of information concerning enemy movements and their collaborators. This activity included:

- the identification of informants and traitors associated with the *Deuxième Bureau* (French military intelligence).
- The compilation of lists of Algerian employees working within French civil and military institutions in order to supply the revolutionary leadership with pertinent information
- The identification of Algerian personnel employed in hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies to facilitate the provision of medical supplies and treatment to the revolutionary cause.
- The listing of Algerians with financial resources—such as merchants, craftsmen, civil servants, and others—for the purpose of securing financial contributions to the revolutionary treasury.

The political branch in Oran operated in close coordination with all revolutionary structures both inside and outside the city, with the aim of unifying strategic planning, identifying threats, and intensifying the operations of the *fidā' iyyīn*.<sup>14</sup>

The port of Oran became a site of intense activity during the war, characterized by the arrival of large quantities of military equipment—much of it technologically advanced—as well as substantial troop deployments of various nationalities operating within the NATO framework. The port was likewise dominated by a significant naval presence tasked with enforcing a blockade of the Mediterranean basin and monitoring the Oranese coastline, with the objective of preventing Wilaya V from receiving arms and military supplies.

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<sup>14</sup> - Oran Républicain, 31-05-1956 n° 6.394 p.8

29-03-1956 n° 6.408 p.1

19-09-1956 n° 6.501 p.8

In parallel, the French Army General Staff undertook a detailed strategic assessment that resulted in the production of a military map identifying sensitive zones requiring the concentration of French forces to ensure surveillance and comprehensive control over areas besieged by the National Liberation Army (ALN). These forces operated under the command of officers highly trained in modern warfare and guerrilla tactics, most of whom were graduates of elite military academies.

To further intensify pressure on the *mujāhidīn*, the deployment plan defined a number of key concentration zones as follows:

- **Zahana:** Headquarters of the 58th and 33rd Mobile Guard regiments.
- **Aïn Témouchent:** Headquarters of the gendarmerie<sup>15</sup>.
- **Es-Sénia Air Base:** Base of the air forces responsible for training, formation, and rapid intervention.
- **Hammam Bou Hadjar:** Base for artillery and infantry units.
- **Sig:** Deployment site of the 5th Gendarmerie Battalion, the 1st Mobile Regiment, and a mechanized regiment.
- **Ben Badis – Sidi Bel Abbès:** Stationing of the 5th Division, the French Foreign Legion, and the 13th Legion Regiment, with Sidi Bel Abbès serving as a major center for Legion forces.
- **Tiaret:** Stationing of a regiment of French conscripts performing compulsory military service, in addition to the 226th Regiment.
- **The city of Oran:** Deployment of land, naval, and air forces exceeding twelve units, each composed of four battalions distributed across working-class neighborhoods.
- **Aïn Nouissy (Mostaganem):** Stationing of the 29th Regiment<sup>16</sup>. **Bethioua:** Stationing of the 56th Mobile Unit.
- **Relizane (Sidi Ben Ali):** Concentration of Battalion S2–39.

During their meeting with General de Gaulle, French officers submitted new proposals regarding military operations aimed at countering the attacks carried out by the *mujāhidīn*. These proposals included the collection of intelligence on the military and political structures of the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the National Liberation Army (ALN):

- The creation of a small rapid-intervention unit modeled on *mujāhidīn* detachments and equipped with modern weaponry to enable swift action
- The provision of rapid-intervention units with modern aircraft, particularly helicopters; the unification of civilian and military command structures to enhance operational effectiveness
- The doubling of the number of officers assigned to Algeria in both military and civil capacities.

However, de Gaulle chose to reassign military officers serving in civilian administrative posts to exclusively military functions and to replace them with civilian officials<sup>17</sup>. At the same

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<sup>15</sup> - The Wilaya Meeting on the History of the Revolution, Wilaya of Oran, Oran, September 22, 1986, National Organization of Mujahideen, p. 10

<sup>16</sup> -Ibid.p.10

<sup>17</sup>-Ibid.p.21

time, he sanctioned the use of coercive practices, foremost among them torture in its various forms. These methods included:

- The use of electric shocks applied to different parts of the body, including sensitive areas; forcing detainees to sit on glass bottle.
- Beatings with sticks, rifle butts, and kicks; immersion of prisoners in water tanks, exposed to extreme cold in winter and excessive heat in summer.
- Suffocation by covering the face with cloth while stretching and striking the body to the point of near asphyxiation.
- Forcing detainees to ingest harmful or potentially lethal substances such as salt, soap, or chemical compounds.
- Feeding prisoners sand and soil until suffocation or death occurred; dragging detainees by fastening them to moving military vehicles until fatal injuries were sustained
- Directing flames from welding equipment toward prisoners' bodies.
- Compelling detainees to commit acts of sexual violation against one another, including within family relationship.
- The use of trained attack dogs as instruments of torture; the extraction of fingernails, eyes, genital organs, and teeth using pliers; burning prisoners with cigarettes and heated wooden implements.
- Rubbing salt and hot spices into open wounds and forcibly inserting metal objects into bodily cavities.
- Forcing detainees to walk or lie on nails and burning embers; employing venomous snakes and dangerous reptiles.
- Running military vehicles, including tanks and trucks, over civilians while they were still alive<sup>18</sup>.

One mujāhida recounted to me, during our meeting at the Oran Conference on Women's Resistance held in 2007 at the El-Mouahidine Hotel, the torture to which she had been subjected. She stated verbatim:

“Why is the media shocked by what happened in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq? Let them come to us, and we will tell them about the ‘Abu Ghraib’ that existed here in Algeria under French occupation. When the soldiers completely stripped me of my clothes—and did the same to my elder brother—and in front of people we knew, they placed me on top of him.”

She recounted this episode with tears streaming down her face as she spoke<sup>19</sup>.

Such practices are profoundly degrading and reprehensible, laying bare the extreme brutality inherent in the French colonial system.

From their inception, French newspapers adopted clearly defined political orientations, yet a comparative reading makes it possible to identify both convergences and divergences in their editorial positions. *Oran Républicain*, aligned with a communist outlook, consistently advocated deep structural reforms in Algeria. Its coverage focused on major socio-economic

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<sup>18</sup> -ibid.

<sup>19</sup> - National Conference on the Role of Women During the Resistance and the Liberation Revolution, Oran Province, National Organization of Mujahideen, El Mouahidine Hotel, Oran Province, June 19, 2007 - A living testimony.



issues, notably unemployment in an industrial and economically dynamic city such as Oran, as well as the pronounced social divide between Europeans and Muslims.

The newspaper called for the improvement of living conditions among the Muslim population, arguing that meaningful integration into national life required social inclusion rather than continued marginalization. It also underscored the importance of safeguarding freedom of expression and encouraging the coexistence of diverse opinions. Through a recurring column entitled *Opinion d'un militant, Oran Républicain* addressed questions related to labor, unemployment, economic difficulties, and the broader Algerian situation, proposing remedies informed by a French socialist-communist framework.

Because it did not fully conform to the directives of the colonial authorities, the newspaper's positions were often met with hostility in official circles. The intensification of violence in Algeria, for example, prompted the publication of a series of articles under the title *Où va l'Algérie ?* ("Where is Algeria heading?"). These articles examined the progressive deterioration of conditions since 1 November 1954, analyzed their structural causes, and repeatedly concluded that the crisis was rooted in intertwined political, economic, and social factors. The newspaper maintained that only by addressing these underlying issues could the French government hope to restore stability in Oran and in Algeria more broadly.

*Oran Républicain* also scrutinized political speeches on the Algerian crisis, often characterizing them as lacking sincerity and seriousness. Nevertheless, such criticism remained carefully circumscribed by the limits of expression tolerated by the authorities, as any transgression risked suspension or legal prosecution. Consequently, a review of its issues reveals the absence of any article that directly engaged with the national liberation cause.

With regard to *L'Échod'Oran*, it stood out as the local newspaper most closely aligned with French colonial policy, adhering consistently to the editorial line it had maintained since its establishment. It professed a clear distinction between journalism and politics, while in practice positioning itself as an intermediary between political authorities and the general public, on the assumption that policymakers possessed the requisite authority and clarity of purpose. The newspaper thus served as a platform for the defense of settler interests, enjoying the confidence of the European population in the information it disseminated.

In this capacity, *L'Échod'Oran* actively promoted the economic interests of the French settler community and expressed unwavering support for the military, while displaying little concern for the social, economic, or political problems faced by the Algerian population. It effectively functioned as the mouthpiece of the colonial settlers—an orientation that is hardly surprising given that its founder was himself a settler and naturally sought to mobilize the newspaper's resources in service of his own interests and those of his community.

Within this newspaper, successive French governments were generally met with a degree of approval, with the notable exception of the socialist Jacques Soustelle, whose policies received only limited support.

The collapse of French governments was treated as a major political event, one of such importance that it could not be ignored by the press.

Nevertheless, the French left did not consistently approach the Algerian question from the perspective of the Algerian population. The communist movement itself was divided between supporters and opponents of independence, and *Oran Républicain* aligned with the latter



position. Although it persistently called for reforms, these demands were articulated within the framework of continued French presence, viewing Algeria as an inseparable part of France and rejecting any notion of separation<sup>20</sup>.

This stance is clearly reflected in the newspaper's coverage at the outbreak of the revolution, where its perspective converged with that of *L'Échod'Oran*. Both newspapers initially depicted the events as disturbances caused by groups portrayed as unrepresentative of Algeria as a whole, alternately labeling them as "terrorists," "rebels," or "outlaws."<sup>21</sup>

The idea of an external conspiracy was widely circulated, while revolutionaries were depicted as socially and psychologically troubled youths who vented their frustrations through acts of violence. *Oran Républicain* failed to engage with the structural causes of the revolution, instead attributing the unrest to the dissatisfaction of a limited number of irresponsible young individuals and presenting it as a transient disturbance destined to fade rapidly. This interpretation was reinforced by the publication of numerous articles addressing social concerns and urging the French government to undertake reforms. In practice, however, these articles functioned more as a critique of right-wing politics than as an affirmation of Algerians' legitimate claims to life and equality. From a communist standpoint, Algeria was thus primarily instrumentalized as a means of contesting the prevailing political order.

French journalism operated under significant constraints, relying financially on settler support, as in the case of *L'Échod'Oran*, or remaining subject to French legal frameworks that empowered authorities to suspend or close newspapers deemed to infringe upon regulations governing freedom of expression—measures that *Oran Républicain* regarded with particular apprehension.

What is particularly noteworthy is that, notwithstanding their ideological divergences, both newspapers exhibited comparable attitudes of hostility and racial bias toward Algerians, mirroring other French publications whose primary objective was to incite the Christian European community<sup>22</sup>. As a result, colonial French press discourse tended to converge, portraying the revolution as an act of rebellion or insurrection and reporting developments in Algeria through commentary lacking analytical depth or seriousness.

Nevertheless, some French newspapers adopted a more supportive stance toward the resistance, most notably *Témoignage Chrétien*<sup>23</sup>, which was explicitly anti-colonial<sup>23</sup>. Other outlets, such as *Le Monde*, *L'Aurore*, and *Le Figaro*, also reported on the Algerian War<sup>24</sup>.

Colonial French journalism generally sought to interpret events through its own ideological lens, thereby reinforcing the assertion that "Algeria is French." In this context, newspapers

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<sup>20</sup> -Zoubir Saif Al-Islam: A History of Journalism in Algeria, National Publishing and Distribution Company – Algeria – n.d., p. 88

<sup>21</sup> - l'écho d'Oran 12-10-1844 n°1

<sup>22</sup> - Oran Républicain 09-02-1955 p 2

<sup>23</sup> - Ibid. p.8

<sup>24</sup> - Gharbi El Ghali, French Strategies in the Face of the Algerian Revolution 1954-1958, PhD Thesis, Faculty of Humanities and Islamic Civilization, University of Oran, 2004-2005, pp. 220-221.



frequently highlighted cultural and sporting activities in Algeria to create the impression that the territory constituted an integral part of France.

The characteristics of French journalistic discourse during this period may be outlined as follows:

- Downplaying the importance of the revolution during its initial phase.
- Instilling among Algerians the perception that they were confronting an unprecedented context marked by insecurity and instability.
- Resorting to exaggeration and the dissemination of fear<sup>25</sup>.

Despite their political differences, both right- and left-wing currents converged in promoting doubt and suspicion among Algerians, thereby depriving the revolution of its popular dimension and reducing it to acts of terrorism attributed to bands of thieves and outlaws<sup>26</sup>.

At the onset of the revolution, the population of Oran had limited access to sources of information beyond local newspapers, particularly *L'Échod'Oran*, which largely echoed the perspectives of the authorities and the settler community. As a result, the newspaper frequently published military communiqués and reports emphasizing French army victories, functioning as a psychological instrument intended to reassure and consolidate the confidence of the European population<sup>27</sup>.

Regarding the French left, it remained largely constrained and unable to realize its objectives, as it was subject to colonial policies that imposed a predetermined media discourse. This limitation exerted a discernible influence on public opinion, as evidenced by the circulation figures of both newspapers.

Nevertheless, the expansion of the liberation revolution throughout Algeria and the establishment of its own media outlets prompted Algerians to seek information from revolutionary sources<sup>28</sup>. This development, in turn, revealed the shortcomings of the French press, which proved incapable of presenting a realistic and objective account of events. In fact, there was minimal divergence between the two principal newspapers<sup>29</sup>, *Oran Républicain* and *L'Échod'Oran*, in their treatment of the revolution. Reports on revolutionary activities were relegated to the final pages, with coverage largely confined to the Kabylie region, northern Constantine, and the western sector<sup>30</sup>. On the one hand, this approach reflected a deliberate silence concerning events in Oran; on the other, it conveyed an image that diverged sharply from the reality of the revolution in other regions of Algeria, which were experiencing sustained unrest.

This situation points to two key observations. First, revolutionary operations in the city of Oran were less extensive than those in the aforementioned regions, owing to geographical

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<sup>25</sup> -Ibid.p.222.

<sup>26</sup> -Hamdi Ahmed, *The Algerian Revolution and the Media*, 2nd ed., National Foundation for Communication and Publishing, Algeria, 1995, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup> --HellalAbdelrezak ,image d'une révolution ,éd office de Pub. Univ.Alger1988 p 131

<sup>28</sup> -Ghabi al-Ghali, *Op.Cit*, pp. 223-224

<sup>29</sup> -Ayadhi Nasr eddine, *Colonial Journalistic Discourse in Times of Crisis – Sources – Issue 1*, National Center for Studies, 1999, pp. 15-17

<sup>30</sup> - Ghabi al-Ghali, *Op.Cit*, p.85



differences between urban centers, rural areas, villages, and mountainous zones. Movement in Oran was more constrained, particularly given the predominance of a European population. Second, both newspapers persistently endeavored to depict Oran as a city characterized by security and stability, portraying incidents as isolated and individual events comparable to occurrences elsewhere in the world. Moreover, when reporting incidents attributed to unidentified perpetrators, the newspapers implicitly suggested, through indirect discourse, an underlying accusation directed at Algerians<sup>31</sup>

Given the French authorities' acute awareness of the media's role in shaping public opinion, intelligence operatives were deployed to supply journalists with direct information on developments in Algeria. The press was thus regarded as an instrument for reinforcing repressive policies and advancing the positions of the central government in Paris, while opposition newspapers were subjected to harassment and confiscation<sup>32</sup>.

The French media exhibited distinctive features and strengths derived from its long-standing history, established professional expertise, and a communicative style that combined accessibility with sophistication. This style relied heavily on sensationalism, a tradition that has persisted to the present. These characteristics are reflected in several key aspects: the continuity of an experienced press capable of managing events with relative ease; the development of a targeted communicative approach adapted to specific audiences; close alignment with the French government's interpretation of events in Algeria; reliance on advanced media technologies supported by international backing; and the observation by European and American commentators of notable similarities in language, style, and analytical frameworks, often accompanied by extensive detail.

The deterioration of France's economic, political, and social conditions compelled journalists to intensify their defense of French interests in Algeria. This was achieved through persuasive and impactful strategies aimed at discouraging settlers from leaving Algeria, which was widely regarded as "France's cash cow."

The Oran sector, characterized by fertile land, abundant water resources, dams, factories, and raw materials, generated considerable wealth for France through agricultural revenues and diverse forms of production, thereby contributing significantly to the French economy. However, fedayeen operations substantially diminished this contribution, particularly through the sabotage of iron, copper, zinc, and coal mines, including those in Kenadsa and Beni Saf. In addition, several mines suspended their activities as a result of successive strikes, alongside the destruction of settlers' farms and economic establishments<sup>33</sup>.

The deterioration of the French economy compelled France to import foodstuffs, notably wheat, in an effort to restore balance to its disrupted trade deficit. Raw materials were likewise imported to sustain French factories, which were facing widespread unemployment and bankruptcy. Furthermore, France sought financial assistance from the United States, the

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<sup>31</sup> -Boumali Ahcene, *The Strategy of the Algerian Revolution in its First Phase 1954-1956*, National Company for Communication, Publishing and Advertising - Algeria - n.d., pp. 132-133

<sup>32</sup> -Ghabi al-Ghali, *Op.Cit*, p.89.

<sup>33</sup> -Ayadhi Nasr eddine, *Op.Cit* , p. 16

United Kingdom, and Canada, a direct consequence of the excessive expenditures borne by successive French governments in their efforts to suppress the revolution, particularly the daily military costs, which exceeded three million francs.

At the social level, widespread dissatisfaction emerged among workers and peasants in response to France's deteriorating social conditions. This discontent was further exacerbated by political instability, marked by the fall of governments and the appointment of successive new administrations<sup>34</sup>

- **French Intellectuals Confront French Colonialism in Algeria – Statement 121: Declaration on the Right to Civil Disobedience in the Algerian War**

The seven years of the Algerian Revolution were marked by extensive violence against the Algerian population across all social strata perpetrated by the French army. French military forces were redeployed from Europe to Algeria with the aim of suppressing the revolution, which sought freedom and independence for the Algerian people. These forces did not confine their actions to armed confrontations with the National Liberation Army; rather, they also carried out indiscriminate killings of unarmed civilians, including children, the elderly, and women. In addition to mass killings, practices of torture and forced displacement were widespread, generating profound indignation among French intellectuals. Some of these figures articulated their opposition openly through political writings that denounced the methods of torture used in Algeria, most notably Jean-Paul Sartre<sup>35</sup>.

In the face of a brutal occupying power, rebellion and struggle appeared to be among the few remaining options available to the oppressed population. Consequently, a segment of the French intellectual elite displayed sympathy for, and responsiveness to, the demands of the Algerian revolution, at least for a limited period. This group included leftist and free-thinking intellectuals whose perspectives on the Algerian question varied, and who maintained professional or personal ties—directly or indirectly—with Jean-Paul Sartre, such as Albert Camus, Francis Jeanson, and Frantz Fanon.

These committed thinkers—except for the first among them, who, according to Simone de Beauvoir, was described as “an indecisive man ultimately siding with the French community and the *Pieds-Noirs* (*Black feet*) in Algeria, caught between two opposing positions”—were confronted with a profound moral dilemma: whether to support the Algerian cause or to align with his non-Muslim compatriots. He condemned the National Liberation Front's struggle and its field operations, advocating instead the establishment of an Algerian federation that would unite Muslims and Europeans under French law in order to safeguard the country. In this sense, it may be argued that he set aside the FLN's objectives and demands for independence.

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<sup>34</sup> - Articles de presse français ou Etrangère concernant l'Algérie ; Janvier 1955, n°14 ,15  
Janvier 1956 n°26 service d'information , Alger

<sup>35</sup> -Omrani Abdelmajid: The French Intellectual Elite and the Algerian Revolution 1954-1962, Dar Al-Shihab Printing House, Batna, p. 111

From his writings and public statements on Algeria, it appears that he did not acknowledge the Algerian people's right to freedom and independence. He recognized the *Pieds-Noirs* (*Black feet*) as the genuine indigenous inhabitants of Algeria, writing:

*"In this context, I have tried to define my position clearly. An Algeria composed of unified federal peoples, linked to France, seems to me far better in terms of simple justice than an Algeria associated with the Islamic empire..."*

Elsewhere, he sought to justify his position by stating:

*"In the event that a terrorist throws a bomb in the Belcourt market, where my mother is shopping, and this act results in my mother's death, I would be responsible in defending justice, and in doing so, I would also have defended this terrorism. I love justice as I love my mother..."*

This statement reveals a tension between abstract principles of justice and personal attachments, illustrating Camus's fundamentally oppositional stance toward the Algerian revolution. He refused to recognize the historical legitimacy and sovereignty of the Muslim Algerian population, endorsing and condoning the French army's use of all forms of coercion and torture against them, prioritizing the protection of approximately 1.2 million Europeans over the nine million Algerians. In 1959, he admitted to a friend:

*"When Algeria's independence is declared, I will undertake activities and propaganda against the self-determination of the Algerian people."*

Following this, Frantz Fanon and, of equal moral stature, Francis Jeanson, stood in stark contrast to Albert Camus. Janson was a political thinker, writer, and philosopher with extensive practical experience in matters of colonialism and resistance. His biography records that he endured oppression and injustice while confined in internment camps in Spain during the Second World War. After enduring these hardships, he returned to Algeria, where he witnessed firsthand the colonial practices and policies imposed upon the country. He described Algeria as a "volcano," perpetually on the verge of eruption.

In 1955, together with his wife Colette Jeanson, he co-authored *L'Algérie hors la loi* ("Algeria Outside the Law"), a work in which he openly criticized French colonial policies and advocated for the rights and freedoms of the Algerian people. Janson argued that the French Left bore a moral responsibility to align with the Algerians' struggle, linking the legitimacy of their political achievements to support for the fight for liberation.

Jeanson further extended his commitment by establishing a clandestine network in France to support the revolutionary activities of the National Liberation Front (FLN). From 1956 onward, this network provided direct material assistance to FLN fighters and activists, including safe housing within France, the establishment of external communication channels, facilitation of *fedayeen* movements abroad, and the supply of arms. Janson dedicated himself to the Algerian revolution with tireless resolve and without expectation of personal gain; for instance, he transferred ten million francs and facilitated the clandestine movement of six Algerians to Switzerland..

While these material contributions were significant, they were overshadowed by his unwavering determination, ideological conviction, and perseverance in the pursuit of independence. His guiding principle was to serve the revolution, fully integrating with the FLN's members and organizational structure, participating in numerous operations, and



consistently acting toward the shared objective of dismantling colonial and imperial domination.

When the French authorities uncovered the aforementioned network, they arrested most of its members; however, its founder and leader, Janson, evaded capture. This occurred in February 1960, and the trial of the network's members began on 15 September 1960. The group comprised nineteen French men and women alongside six Algerians. The primary charge leveled against them was that the network was harboring Algerians and facilitating their clandestine movement to avoid police detection<sup>36</sup>.

These individuals exhibited a notable convergence in both their theoretical and practical commitments, demonstrating integrity and dedication. They provided substantial support to the revolutionary network and actively participated within the ranks of the National Liberation Front (FLN), aligning their actions with the movement's strategic imperatives, with the foremost priority being the pursuit of justice and freedom for the Algerian people.

Jean-Paul Sartre adopted a philosophical position distinct from that of other French intellectuals regarding the Algerian revolution. He remained consistent with the principles he had articulated before and after the Second World War, particularly those concerning freedom, responsibility, and anti-colonialism. Alongside his wife, Simone de Beauvoir, he participated in numerous international conferences and symposia, including the Peace Conference held in Helsinki, Finland, in 1955.

During his address at that conference, Sartre affirmed the right to peace and explicitly linked it to the right of colonized peoples to self-determination. He also met with members of the Algerian delegation, engaging in discussions about the grave situation in Algeria. Through these exchanges, he acknowledged the reality of a widespread uprising that had developed into a violent and bloody conflict. This awareness was further shaped by reflections on the testimony of André Mondouz, a literature professor at the University of Algiers, who, upon returning to Paris, conveyed greetings from the Algerian revolution and called for a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Algeria.

In 1956, Sartre published a forceful article in his influential journal *Les Temps Modernes*, entitled "Colonialism Is a System" (*Le colonialisme est un système*). In this text, he called for the recognition of Algeria as a state and advocated negotiations with the National Liberation Front (FLN), which he regarded as the legitimate representative of the Algerian people. He wrote:

*"We, the French of the metropole, must learn the single lesson drawn from the preceding facts: colonialism is in the process of self-destruction... Our role is to help colonialism commit suicide—not only in Algeria but wherever it exists. Those who think we can abandon it are fools; one cannot abandon what one never truly possessed. On the contrary, we must establish new relations with Algeria, between a free France and a liberated Algeria."*

Jean-Paul Sartre maintained that the Algerian question was not merely political or economic in nature; rather, it embodied a system of total exploitation, manifested in both structure and practice, sustained through methods he considered morally indefensible—most notably,

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<sup>36</sup> -Ibid.pp76-86



torture. He viewed torture not simply as an excess of war but as an institutionalized practice intrinsic to colonial domination. Indeed, Sartre described torture as “a plague that has afflicted the entire age.”

He urged those subjected to torture to resist, drawing in part on his own wartime experiences under the German occupation during the Second World War. In his public interventions, he denounced the systematic character of repression in Algeria and condemned the arbitrariness of arrests and interrogations. In one of his statements, he declared:

“...*They arrest here and there, randomly, every Muslim available for questioning... Neither Maurice Audin, nor Allak, nor Garrouk have opened their mouths. And there is no doubt that the executioners of El Biar are severe and brutal in this regard.*”

Thus, the positions of French intellectuals concerning the Algerian War and colonial policy were sharply divided between supporters and opponents of the colonial order. Jean-Paul Sartre assumed a prominent role in opposing colonial policy, notably through his participation in the demonstration of 17 October 1961 against mass repression in Algeria—an event that became symbolically significant for the Algerian Revolution. Through his writings, he forcefully exposed the brutality of torture and consistently called for peace grounded in justice. His position was supported by a limited number of French intellectuals, whose solidarity contributed positively to the broader struggle<sup>37</sup>.

In early September 1961, 121 French intellectuals jointly signed a public declaration, later known as the *Manifesto of the 121*, in which they defended the legitimate rights of the Algerian people.<sup>37</sup>

In an old building, *Chercheure Midi*, on 5 September 1960, judicial proceedings began concerning the support network for the National Liberation Front (FLN), commonly known as the Jeanson network. Its members had been identified, investigated, and referred to trial. Among the defendants, as previously noted, were six Algerians and eighteen French citizens, represented collectively by twenty-six lawyers.

The trial unfolded in a distinctive atmosphere, at times marked by tension and public outcry. It nevertheless offered the French public an opportunity to confront the realities of colonialism. The proceedings acted as a catalyst for segments of French society, exposing the coercive methods and deceptive practices underpinning colonial rule. For many intellectuals—men and women alike—this exposure proved decisive, shaping their personal trajectories and informing their engagement in clandestine activities, as they became increasingly aware of the illegitimate and violent character of the war.

On the same day that the trial session of **Francis Jeanson** opened, the *Manifesto of the 121* was publicly announced, affirming the right to civil disobedience in the Algerian War. It was signed by prominent figures from the fields of academia, literature, and the arts, who declared:

“*We respect and justify our refusal to bear arms against the Algerian people. We respect and justify the actions of the French citizens who consider it their duty to extend aid and*

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<sup>37</sup> -Rais Hussein: The Algerian Revolution in the Eyes of French Intellectuals - Jean-Paul Sartre as a Model - International Conference on Algeria and its Heritage, Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, Algeria 2011



*protection to the oppressed Algerians in the name of the French people. The cause of the Algerian people, which contributes decisively to the dismantling of the colonial system, is the cause of all free individuals.”*

The signatories of the manifesto exerted a tangible influence on public opinion<sup>38</sup>. The majority were intellectuals associated with the journal *Les Temps Modernes*, directed by **Jean-Paul Sartre** and **Simone de Beauvoir**. Through their collective stance, this group of French intellectuals conveyed to the international community that principled and conscientious voices could emerge even within a colonial power. They openly affirmed their support for the Algerian people’s right to self-determination while rejecting the policy pursued by their own government under Charles de Gaulle.

The manifesto elicited a strong reaction from the French Prime Minister at the time, Michel Debré, who adopted stringent measures against those advocating insubordination, civil disobedience, or assistance to draft evaders. A journalist sympathetic to the Algerian revolution was detained for two weeks after police discovered 170 copies of the manifesto in his possession. Law enforcement authorities subsequently intensified searches and inspections of media outlets—including magazines and newspapers that denounced the war in Algeria, such as *L’Express*, *Les Temps Modernes*, *La Vérité*, *La Liberté*, *Esprit*, and *France Observateur*—thereby placing the French government in a position of public embarrassment.

**Jean-Paul Sartre** remarked:

*“In truth, we do not possess a clear conscience. We are implicated; our consciences may not be fully awakened, yet they remain deeply unsettled. Our rulers are well aware of this and prefer that we remain in such a state. All those who seek protection and security thereby become complicit in the crime through a pretense of ignorance; everyone has heard of the methods of torture.”*<sup>39</sup>

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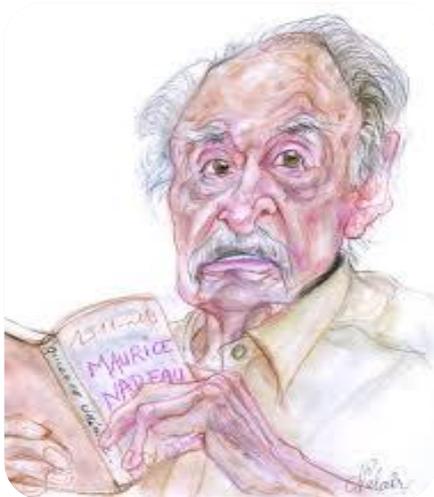
<sup>38</sup> - Henri Alleg, Jacques de Bonis, Henri J.Douzon ; Jean Freire, Pierre Haudiquet

<sup>39</sup>- Henri Alleg , *La Guerre d’Algérie*, Tome3, Des complots du 13mai à l’indépendance ; Temps Actues, Paris, 1981. p231

Key Signatories of Manifesto 121 (September 1960)

**Liste de signataires**

[Arthur Adamov](#) ; [Robert Antelme](#) ; [Georges Auclair](#) ; [Jean Baby](#) ; [Hélène Balfet](#) ; [Marc Barbut](#) [Robert Barrat](#) ; [Simone de Beauvoir](#) ; [Jean-Louis Bédouin](#) ; [Marc Beigbeder](#) ; [Robert Benayoun](#) ; [Maurice Blanchot](#) ; [Roger Blin](#) ; [Arsène Bonafous-Murat](#) ; [Geneviève Bonnefoi](#) ; [Raymond Borde](#) ; [Jean-Louis Bory](#) ; [Jacques-Laurent Bost](#) ; [Pierre Boulez](#) ; [Vincent Bounoure](#) ; [André Breton](#) ; [Michel Butor](#) ; [Guy Cabanel](#) ; [Georges Condominas](#) ; [Alain Cuny](#) ; [Jean Czarnecki](#) ; [Jean Dalsace](#) ; [Hubert Damisch](#) ; [Adrien Dax](#) ; [Guy Debord](#) ; [Jean Delmas](#) ; [Danièle Delorme](#) ; [Jacques Doniol-Valcroze](#) ; [Bernard Dort](#) ; [Jean Douassot](#) ; [Simone Dreyfus](#) ; [René Dumont](#) ; [Marguerite Duras](#) ; [Yves Elléouët](#) ; [Dominique Eluard](#) [Charles Estienne](#) [Louis-René des Forêts](#) [Théodore Fraenkel](#) ; [André Frénaud](#) ; [Jacques Gernet](#) ; [Louis Gernet](#) ; [Edouard Glissant](#) ; [Georges Goldfayn](#) ; [Anne Guérin](#) ; [Daniel Guérin](#) ; [Jacques Howlett](#) ; [Édouard Jaguer](#) ; [Pierre Jaouen](#) ; [Gérard Jarlot](#) ; [Robert Jaulin](#) ; [Alain Joubert](#) ; [Maurice Joyeux](#) ; [Henri Krea](#) ; [Robert Lagarde](#) ; [Monique Lange](#) ; [Claude Lanzmann](#) ; [Robert Lapoujade](#) ; [D. de La Souchère](#) ; [Henri Lefebvre](#) ; [Gérard Legrand](#) ; [Michel Leiris](#) ; [Paul Lévy](#) ; [Jérôme Lindon](#) ; [Georges Limbour](#) ; [Éric Losfeld](#) ; [Robert Louzon](#) ; [Olivier de Magny](#) ; [Florence Malraux](#) ; [André Mandouze](#) ; [Maud Mannoni](#) ; [Jean Martin](#) ; [Renée Marcel-Martinet](#) ; [Jean-Daniel Martinet](#) [Andrée Marty-Capgras](#) ; [Dionys Mascolo](#) ; [François Maspero](#) ; [André Masson](#) ; [Pierre de Massot](#) ; [Jean-Jacques Mayoux](#) ; [Jehan Mayoux](#) ; [Gustave Monod](#) ; [Théodore Monod](#) ; [Marie Moscovici](#) ; [Georges Mounin](#) ; [Maurice Nadeau](#) ; [Georges Navel](#) ; [Claude Ollier](#) ; [Jacques Panijel](#) ; [Hélène Parmelin](#) ; [Marcel Péju](#) ; [José Pierre](#) ; [Jean-Charles Pichon](#) ; [André Pieyre de Mandiargues](#) ; [Edouard Pignon](#) ; [Bernard Pingaud](#) ; [Maurice Pons](#) ; [Jean-Bertrand Pontalis](#) ; [Jean Pouillon](#) ; [Madeleine Rebérioux](#) ; [Denise René](#) ; [Alain Resnais](#) ; [Jean-François Revel](#) ; [Paul Revel](#) ; [Alain Robbe-Grillet](#) ; [Christiane Rochefort](#) ; [Jacques-Francis Rolland](#) ; [Alfred Rosmer](#) [Gilbert Rouget](#) ; [Claude Roy](#) ; [Françoise Sagan](#) ; [Marc Saint-Saëns](#) ; [Nathalie Sarraute](#) ; [Jean-Paul Sartre](#) ; [Renée Saurel](#) ; [Claude Sautet](#) ; [Catherine Sauvage](#) ; [Jean Schuster](#) ; [Laurent Schwartz](#) ; [Robert Scipion](#) ; [Louis Seguin](#) ; [Geneviève Serreau](#) ; [Simone Signoret](#) ; [Jean-Claude Silbermann](#) ; [Claude Simon](#) ; [René de Solier](#) ; [Laurent Terzieff](#) ; [Jean Thiercelin](#) ; [François Truffaut](#) ; [René Tzanck](#) ; [Vercors](#) ; [Jean-Pierre Vernant](#) ; [Pierre Vidal-Naquet](#) ; [J.-P. Vielfaure](#) ; [Claude Viseux](#) ; [Ylpe](#) ; [René Zazzo](#)



### **Maurice Nadeau: A Man Who Did Not Know Algeria Yet Defended It**

Maurice Nadeau was among the signatories of the *Manifesto of the 121*. Born in Paris on 21 May 1911, he was a teacher, writer, literary critic, editor, and French publisher. He was also the founder of Gilles Nadeau.

He pursued his studies at the École Normale Supérieure of Saint-Cloud before entering political life. In 1930, at the age of nineteen, he joined the French Communist Party, where he was active alongside Georges Cogniot; however, he was expelled from the party in 1932.

An avid reader of Lenin and Leon Trotsky, his intellectual inclinations led him to join the Union of Communists in France founded by Pierre Naville. During these years, he maintained close contact with leading literary and intellectual figures, including Louis Aragon, André Breton,

André Gide, Jacques Prévert, and Benjamin Péret.

In 1936, he was appointed professor of literature and remained in that position until 1945. He worked briefly as a literature teacher in Prades but soon chose to teach in Thiais in order to remain closer to Paris. He collaborated with André Breton on the journal *le temps "Clef"*, protesting the arrest of Spanish Republicans in France during the intensification of the Spanish conflict.

After a brief period of military mobilization, Nadeau resumed teaching during the Nazi occupation of France while simultaneously engaging in clandestine political activities. He became involved in a resistance network that was later dismantled during a police crackdown, resulting in the deportation of David Rousset and several of its members. Rousset's wife subsequently assisted Maurice Nadeau in evading arrest.

He was a revolutionary figure who consistently opposed oppression and affirmed the right of peoples to protest and to revolt. The trajectory of his life suggests a coherent ethical stance rather than a posture of duality or opportunism: he acted in accordance with his convictions, without denying others the same right—even when such positions ran counter to the policies of his own country, France. For him, belief in revolution stemmed from a broader commitment to the right of peoples to live free from injustice and oppression, a position firmly rooted in leftist thought.

This first phase of his life culminated in 1945 with the publication of *Histoire du surréalisme* ("History of Surrealism"), a work that became a major reference in the field.

He subsequently worked as a literary critic for *La Libération*. His appointment was facilitated by Pascal Pia, editor-in-chief of the Resistance newspaper *Combat*, then directed by Albert Camus. Nadeau supervised the literary page for seven years and began publishing works that surprised many of his contemporaries, notably through his defense of Louis-Ferdinand Céline despite the latter's well-known anti-Semitic positions.

Thus began a long period of activity across various publishing houses and newspapers. He served as director of the *La Voie de la Vie* series at Coréa Publishing from 1949 to 1954,



worked as a critic for *Mercure de France* (1949–1953), contributed to *France-Observateur* and later to *L'Express*, and edited the literary journal *Les Lettres Nouvelles*<sup>40</sup>. This title later became the name of the publishing house he founded in 1977, which he continued to direct until his death. From 1984 onward, it operated under the name *Éditions Maurice Nadeau*, a publishing house that played a significant role in introducing major French writers who later achieved international recognition.

Shortly before his death, on 16 May 2013, he publicly called for the preservation of his newspaper *La Quinzaine*. He received several international awards during his lifetime and passed away in Paris on 16 June 2013.

He also joined Jean-Paul Sartre in signing the *Manifesto of the 121* during the Algerian War of Independence, reflecting his enduring commitment to Trotskyist principles that emphasized the defense of human dignity, opposition to bureaucratic domination, and advocacy of permanent revolution—a theory formulated by Leon Trotsky.

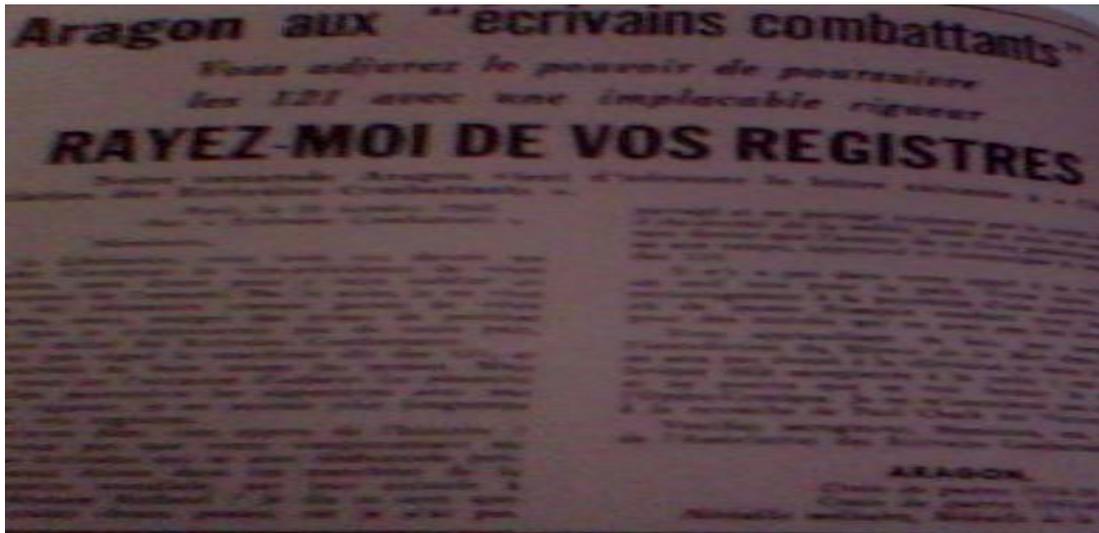
As Trotsky explained, “*Permanent revolution,*” in the sense attributed to this concept by Karl Marx, denotes a revolution that refuses to compromise with any form of class domination. It does not halt at the democratic stage but advances toward socialist measures and continues the struggle against both internal and external reactionary forces. It is conceived as an uninterrupted historical process, in which each phase is rooted in the preceding one, and which culminates only with the complete abolition of class society.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Marx and his fellow communists advanced this idea in opposition to bourgeois ideology, which maintained that once a “rational” and democratic state had been established, social and political contradictions could be resolved through peaceful evolution and reform. Within this framework, Marx regarded the bourgeois revolutions of 1848 as the immediate prelude to a forthcoming proletarian revolution. Historical developments, however, did not confirm this expectation: the Revolution of 1848 did not evolve into a socialist revolution, nor did it ultimately secure a decisive democratic victory. Consequently, any misjudgment lay not in Marx’s methodological approach but in the objective historical conditions, which had not yet matured sufficiently to bring about the anticipated revolutionary transformation<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> - Taos Aït Si Slimane, Maurice Nadeau, signataire du "Manifeste des 121" blog "[Tinhinane](#)", le dimanche 16 avril 2006 à 22 h 32

<sup>41</sup> - Trotsky and Leon: Permanent Revolution or Revolution in Stages? - Selected Texts from the Writings of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky - Publishing House, 1989. pp. 23-49



*From : Henri Alleg, Jacques de Bonis, Henri J.Douzon ; Jean Freire, Pierre Haudiquet :La Guerre d'Algérie, Tome3, Des complots du13mai à l'indépendance; TempsActues, Paris,1981. p.232*

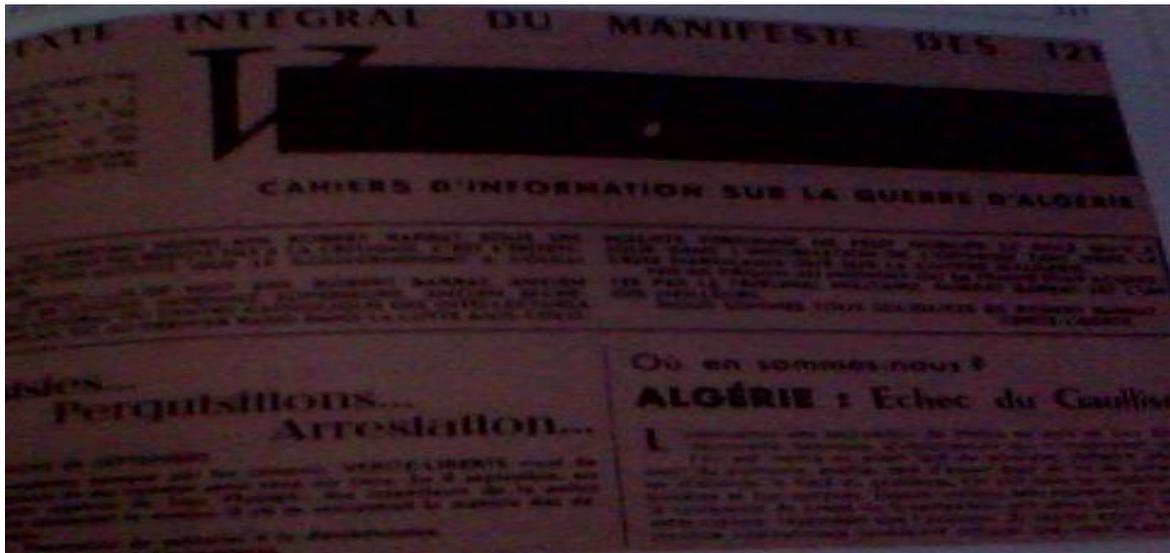
Accordingly, it may be concluded that the leftist convictions of Maurice Nadeau—grounded in the defense of democracy and in opposition to bourgeois domination and class hierarchy—led him to stand in solidarity with the Algerian people in their aspiration for equality and independence. This position was clearly reflected in his signing of the Manifesto of the 121, which categorically rejected all forms of torture and injustice inflicted upon Algerians and expressed an unequivocal denunciation of the colonial system.



His commitment extended beyond the defense of Algerians alone; it was rooted in a broader humanist conviction affirming the universal right to freedom, dignity, and self-determination. Although Algeria achieved independence decades ago, the memory of those who stood in solidarity with its people endures. Recognition should not be limited to those who offered material or military support, but should also encompass those who contributed through intellectual advocacy—

those who affirmed before the world that Algeria was not French, but a distinct entity with its own identity and historical specificity.

In this regard, the public declaration of support by a group of French intellectuals, who openly endorsed the Algerian Revolution without fear, played a significant role in influencing both French and international public opinion.



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