

The political and military activity of Colonel Mohammedi Said during the Algerian Revolution (1954 -1962)

✉ **Omira Meliki ***

Communication, and Social Changes
Laboratory (PCMS)
University of Tizi Ouzou (Algeria)
omira.meliki@umt.dz

✉ **Aziz Khiter**

Communication, and Social Changes
Laboratory (PCMS)
University of Tizi Ouzou (Algeria)
azizkhitergeo@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines Colonel Mohammedi Said's military and political contributions to the Algerian Revolutions. It traces his revolutionary path from his early engagement in nationalist activism to his leadership of the historic Third Wilaya, and later his role in external operations as head of the Eastern Military Operations Committee and Chief of Staff of the Eastern Front.

It also highlights his appointment as Minister of State in the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic. The study further evaluates his leadership experience and analyzes its organizational and political dimensions to underscore his contribution to the development of the national Liberation Army's structure and command efficiency.

Article info

Received:

15/02/2026

Accepted:

27/04/2026

Key words:

- ✓ Mohammedi Said
- ✓ Si Nasser
- ✓ Com
- ✓ The Third Wilaya

*Corresponding author

Introduction

Military and organizational action constituted one of the fundamental pillars upon which the Algerian Revolution was built at its inception. The nature of the conflict necessitated the presence of a revolutionary leadership capable of coordinating effort and regulating operations, a role in which military commanders played a pivotal part. In this context, numerous figures emerged who undertook immense responsibilities; foremost among them was Colonel "Si Nasser" Mohammedi Said, a prominent military and political leader who maintained a significant presence across various stages and bodies of the Liberation Revolution, particularly following the Soummam Conference.

Accordingly, the central problem of this study is formulated as follows: **What were the military and political contributions of colonel Mohammedi Said to the Algerian Revolution between 1954 and 1962 ?**

The objectives of this study are to

- Highlight the early political trajectory of Colonel Mohammedi Said and his contribution to revolutionary activities during the initial stages of the Algerian Revolution.
- Examine Colonel Mohammedi Said's effort in managing and organizing military operations during his command of Third Wilaya, succeeding Colonel Krim Belkacem.
- Analyze the leadership role of Colonel Mohammedi Said in managing the Eastern military Operations Committee (COM Est) and subsequently the Eastern Staff Headquarters.
- Investigate and track the obstacles he encountered while managing these two military bodies.

This study employs descriptive - analytical historical methodology, seeking to trace the major events and historical milestones in Colonel Mohammedi Said's career. This is achieved through the analysis of available sources material, including testimonies and articles that have addressed his personality and contributions to the Algerian Revolution.

Given the scarcity of in-depth academic studies focusing on Colonel Mohammedi said, this research relies on available general references, attempting to utilize them within a scientific framework. This framework aims to underscore his leadership role at the head of the Third Wilaya and his revolutionary activities abroad __specifically his command of the Eastern Military Operations Committee and the Eastern Staff Headquarters –while evaluating his overall impact on the course of the Liberation Revolution.

1. Mohammedi Said: Upbringing and Early Political Engagement

Mohammedi Said was born in 1912 in the village of "Aït Frah", located 2 km south of Arbaâ Nath Irathen (Fort National). He hailed from an impoverished family, sharing the socio_economic conditions prevalent among the village inhabitants (Bouaziz, 2004, p. 182) . His initial education commenced at the local mosque, where he learned reading, writing, and memorized portions of the holy Qur'an. Upon reaching the age of eight, he enrolled in the French school established in the village. According to Mohamed Salah Seddik, he remained a student at this institution until 1927, the year he traveled to France with his father (Seddik, 2002, p. 182), presumably after obtaining the Primary Studies Certificate (CEP) (Abtroun, 2016, p. 12) . Following his arrival in France. he pursued his studies irregularly

due to shifting circumstances. It was there that he encountered the North African Star party (Etoile Nord_Africaine), officially joining its ranks in 1936 (Seddik, 2002, p. 182).

It is noteworthy that Mohammedi Said's formal affiliation with this party followed his second journey to France in 1935. In 1931, he had migrated to Tunisia in search of employment, working for a relative. Before returning to France, he visited his birthplace in 1933, where he was conscripted into military service. He served in Kolèa, gaining proficiency in various types of weaponry. Upon completing his military obligations, he returned to France in 1935 and clandestinely joined the party (Abbas, 2009, p. 311).

Although his initial contract with the independence movement coincided with his conscription into the French army _creating a paradox, as noted by Yahia Bouaziz_ this did not prevent him from being influenced by the party's ideology or becoming imbued with nationalist ideals. This conversation likely stemmed from a deep-seated resentment toward colonialism that had persisted since his childhood, fueled by the misery and injustice he and his fellow villagers endured. He never forgot the sight of gendarmes assaulting his elderly grandparents when they failed to locate a relative who had deserted the French army (Abbas, 2009, p. 311).

Furthermore, it is highly probable that he experienced firsthand the bitterness of discrimination and systematic injustice faced by Algerian recruits in the French military. Consequently, his military service did not diminish his nationalist inclinations or his sympathy for the pro-independence stance of the North African star; rather, it arguably reinforced his commitment to the party's ideology and intensified his animosity toward French rule. In 1939, Mohammedi said returned once again to his birthplace, where he was forcibly conscripted into the French army following the outbreak of World War II (Seddik, 2002, p. 183). He was subsequently deployed to the European fronts, serving under the command of Adjel Adjoul (from the Aurès region), who held a higher rank. Following the French surrender to Germany in 1940, Mohammedi said defected from the French army and joined the Germans¹, who employed him as a lieutenant in the "Waffen _SS"² in May 1943 (Bouaziz, 2004, p. 343).

1 Said Saadi mentions that Mohamedi Said's desertion from the French army and his subsequent joining of the Germans were attributed to two factors: A: His performance influence by the personality and ideas of Sheikh Amin Al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, especially since the latter had several meetings with the Nazi leader Hitler; the author believes this influenced Mohamedi Said's decision to join the Nazi forces. B: Mohamedi Said's belief that Hitler would eliminate French tyranny and liberate the world. See: (Sadi, 2011, p. 138) .

2 The Waffen-SS was the military wing of the Nazi *schutzstaffel* (SS) organization, evolving over time into a force that combined political and military characteristics within the Hitlerite regime. By 1939, its membership exceeded 250000 men, divided into two main branches: the combatant Waffen-SS and the general Allgemeine-SS. The Waffen-SS units served as The Nazi party's private army, distinguished by high discipline and training. They included sub-formations, most notably the Death's Head Units (*Totenkopfverbände*), responsible for managing concentration camps and occupied territories; the Dispositional Troops (*Verfügungstruppen*), which fought alongside the regular German army (Wehrmacht); and Hitler's personal bodyguard (*beibstandarte*). These forces were characterized by absolute loyalty to Hitler and were linked to numerous crimes and violations during World War II. See (Annachiara, 2026).

During that same year, Mohammedi Said submitted a proposal to the German high command to enter Algeria and launch a revolution against France from the Djurdjura Mountains¹. The plan involved a parachute drop leading a battalion Of German and Italian soldiers alongside some Algerians². However, they were forced to land on the Algerian-Tunisian border after the pilot suspected they had been detected by British fighter jets. As Mohammedi Said attempted to enter Algeria, he was apprehended in Tèbessa in 1944³. Following his trial, he was sentenced to death and transferred to Lambèse Prison in Batna. within the prison, he met Ahmed Fekrach from Tizi Ouzou and activists from the new constitution party, such as Bahi Ladgham and Mondji Slim. A strong bond developed between them, which was later solidified after the outbreak of the Revolution when Mohammedi Said arrived in Tunisia in 1957 (Bouaziz, 2004, p. 345).At that time, Bahi Ladgham had become Vice president to Bourguiba and Minister of Defense, while Mondji Slim served as a senior state official in the Tunisian government⁴.

Regarding his detention, Mohammedi Said was fortunate that the French authorities did not expedite his execution. This delay allowed him to benefit from the general amnesty issued by De Gaulle on March 9,1946, which commuted his death sentence to life imprisonment with hard labor. Subsequently, Mohammedi Said and his colleagues engaged in a hunger strike to demand political prisoner status rather than being classified as common criminals. He succeeded in this demand and remained imprisoned until his release in 1952. During this period, he completed the memorization and recitation of the Holy Qur'an, transforming the prison into a school that deepened not only his faith but also his commitment to his country's cause and his fervor for the Liberation struggle (Khiter a. , 2024, p. 30).

1 - Accounts vary regarding the details and the year of this incident. Some attribute it to 1942, stating that the German commander "Rommel" and the Nazi intelligence apparatus had planned this operation since the German occupation of Libya in 1940, as part of their quest to control all of the North Africa. This version claims the landing occurred in Tunisia, where Mohamedi Said and his soldiers were apprehended. However, we have relied on the account provided Mohamedi Salah Seddik , who mentions that his information regarding Mohammedi Said's pre-revolutionary period was conveyed directly by Said while Seddik was preparing a biography of him his book the bluebird. We found this author's information to be more precise and clearer, unlike other accounts characterized by ambiguity and unanswered questions. See: (Seddik, 2002, p. 182).

2- Yahia Bouaziz mentioned that Sahi Ahmed stated during a seminar in Tizi ouzou that Mohamedi Said told him the number of Algerians who accompanied him in that operation was 17, including Mouh Ali, who remained imprisoned until his in 1962. See (Bouaziz, 2004, p. 345).

3 - Conversely, some argue that the arrest took place in Tunisia after Italian soldiers surrounded to French authorities and informed on Mohamedi Said, his mission, and his whereabouts. Meanwhile, Said Saadi claims that Mohamedi Said entered a market in Tébessa wearing an elegant leather military uniform, which piqued the curiosity of villagers who gathered around him. Among them was an informant who alerted his commander, leading to intervention by the military police and his subsequent arrest. See: (Seddik, 2002, p. 184); (Sadi, 2011, p.138); (Bouaziz, 2004, p.344).

4 - However, given the difficulties Mohammedi Said faced while heading the Military Operations Command on the eastern border - due to the Tunisian government's obstruction of ALN units' activities - it can be argued that Mohamedi Said did not benefit significantly from that relationship. See: (Abtroun, 2016, p. 93) .

Upon his release and return to Aït Frah, the police commissioner of Arbaâ Nath Irathen, Mr. Grégoire, placed him under house arrest, requiring him to report daily to the police station for signature. Grégoire did not limit himself to surveillance and harassment; he incited the local population to boycott Mohammedi Said, forbidding them from speaking to or dealing with him. Anyone who defied these orders was penalized by being denied access to public administrative and security services. Consequently, Mohammedi Said found himself moving from a narrow prison of four walls to a broader social confinement. Due to this security harassment and the administrative -imposed social boycott, he purchased a donkey and worked as a woodcutter to secure a livelihood. This occupation eased the pain of his isolation, as the donkey became his sole companion in his forced solitude (Bouaziz, 2004, pp. 345-347).

2. Joining the Liberation Revolution: From Mohammedi said to "Si Nasser"

Before discussing Mohammedi Said's joining of the Revolution, it is imperative to note that his rebellion against France dates back to the 1940s, when he defected from its army to join the ranks of its enemy. Furthermore, his exceptionally bold, albeit unsuccessful, attempt [to launch a revolution] refutes any suspicion or attempt to undermine his revolutionary character or patriotism. This holds true despite certain accounts suggesting he was absent during the initial outbreak of the Revolution alongside its primary instigators in the Kabylie region. For instance, Yahia Bouaziz stated: *“Despite a long history of struggle and extensive military experience dating back to the 1930s, and despite the bitterness of nearly a decade in prison and the various forms of colonial injustice he endured, Mohammedi Said was not present at the inception of the Revolution. His joining was delayed until late spring 1955, as he awaited the release of Abane Ramdane from prison. He then contacted Ramdane, expressing his desire to join the Mujahedeen; subsequently, Abane Ramdane introduced him to Krim Belkacem, who was greatly pleased upon their introduction.”* (Khiter a. , 2024, p. 31)

1 - Regarding the reason for this delay, Yahia Bouaziz notes that the police commissioner's surveillance of Mohammedi Said, his movements, and his contacts prevented him from being part of the team prepared and launched the Revolution in Kabylie. See: (Bouaziz, 2004, p. 351) . In our view, if this account is accurate, another factor could be added to explain his late arrival: the social boycott and the life of isolation imposed upon him may have relegated him to the sidelines of developments. Furthermore, his absence from the country since the late 1920s and his time in prison likely limited his circle of acquaintances, particularly among active elements. As for the date of his joining (Spring 1955), this coincides with when Krim sent his deputy, Ouamrane, to the capital to take command. Could Krim have appointed Mohammedi Said as his deputy immediately upon his joining? Were there not other "Novemberists" - such as Izourene, Ali Zamoum, or Amar Ath Cheikh - with significant struggle records whom Krim could have appointed instead of Mohamedi Said, who appeared as a latecomer? Or was the military prestige Mohamedi Said acquired from the French and German armies the decisive factor for Krim? Such questions support the narrative that Mohamedi Said was not only an instigator on November 1, 1954, but also one of its organizers, a point corroborated by his own testimony in Cherif Abtroun's book.

Similarly, the account of Mohamed Abbas mentions that Mohammedi Said's integration into the Revolution followed an inspection tour by Krim Belkacem in the summer of 1954 in the Arbaâ Nath Irathen region. Mohammedi Said was among the activities present at the meeting where Belkacem confided that the Revolution was imminent. Mohammedi Said responded by saying, *We are ready; by God, if only ten men rise this time, they shall triumph over colonialism.*"However, on the subsequent page, Mohamed Abbas notes that Mohammedi Said did not officially join the Revolution until several months later (Abbas, 2009, pp. 313-314).

On the other hand, Mohamed Salah Seddik _who gathered information regarding Mohammedi Said's post -Revolutionary activities through Mohamed Izourène_ asserted that Mohammedi said did not merely join at the outbreak, but actively participated in its preparation and initiation. By April 1955, he had become the deputy to Krim Belkacem (Seddik, 2002, p. 185) . This narrative is corroborated by Mohammedi Said's own testimony recorded by Professor Cherif Abderoun in his book Si Nasser, which compiles Said's testimonies and memoirs. In these accounts, Mohammedi Said mentions that following his release and return to his village, he was compelled to report daily to the police station. Despite the constant harassment and surveillance, he maintained contact with Krim Belkacem, Amar Ouamrane, Mohamed Izourène, and Omar Ath Cheikh to prepare the Third Zone (wilaya III) for the Revolution. He further notes that he coordinated operations, organized combat groups, and stockpiled weapons from the Quranic school he had established, in collaboration with Krim Belkacem and his comrades (Abtroun, 2016, pp. 15-18).

Following the arrest of Rabah Bitat, commander of the Fourth Zone, in March 1955, Krim Belkacem dispatched his deputy, Amar Ouamrane, along with Abane Ramdane to take command of that region. Consequently, Belkacem appointed Mohammedi Said as his deputy for the Third Zone around April 1955. Subsequently, alongside Krim Belkacem, Mohamed Izourène, and Ahmed Ouzaid, he participated in thwarting the French intelligence plot to infiltrate the Revolution, known as " Force K" or " Operation Bluebird" (L' Oiseau Blue). He also participated with Krim Belkacem in the Soummam Conference; however, they did not arrive until the day of its commencement on August 20, 1956. This delay was due to sweeping operations conducted by the French army following the "Maillot"skirmish on July 15, 1956, during which a mule carrying sensitive conference documents escaped. To protect the conference and divert enemy attention from its venue, groups of Mujahedeen were assigned to conduct operations far from the meeting site; Mohammedi Said would occasionally leave the conference to participate in these diversionary maneuvers (Abtroun, 2016, pp. 38-40).

3. Command of the Third Wilaya (1956_1957):"The Transition from Militant to Leader"

Following the Soummam Conference, Mohammedi Said was appointed Colonel at the head of the Third Wilaya¹ and an additional member of the National Council of the

1- He assumed command of Wilaya around mid-October, when Krim Belkacem left Wilaya III for the capital to join his colleagues in the CCE emerging from the Soummam Conference.

Algerian Revolution (CNRA) (Alaoui, 2013, p. 92) . Mohammedi Said recalls that upon assuming command of the Third Wilaya, he sought to ensure popular unity and worked on organizing the population and supporting the Mujahedeen. This was achieved by strengthening the departments of health, information, communication, justice, and various administrative and political apparatuses. These efforts aimed to enable the Revolution to counter the activities of the Special Administrative Sections (SAS), which sought to isolate the people from the Revolution and recruit them against it. Furthermore, he organized numerous military operations against the French army and the Messalist movement, particularly in the hinterland (Abtroun, 2016, pp. 61-63). The Mujahid Abdelaziz Waali notes that it was during Mohammedi Said's tenure that the Mujahedeen battalions began traveling to Tunisia to procure weaponry (Waali, 2011, p. 275).

During his leadership of the Third Wilaya, Mohammedi Said also succeeded in establishing profound communication between the Revolutionaries and the rural masses in the Kabylie region. He was renowned for his simplicity and ability to win over broad segments of the common population¹. He was also known for his piety and strict adherence to Islamic teachings², to the extent that the journalist Yves Courrière remarked that Mohammedi said made that Third Wilaya "pray to God more than it fought."

However, despite his military prestige derived from his experience within the German army during World War II³, he tended to remain stationed at the Third Wilaya headquarters near his birthplace⁴ and was not fully acquainted with all its sub-regions and local

Mohammedi Said was assisted by the Majors. - (commandants): Kasi Hamai, Ahmed ouzaïd, and Amirouche Aït Hamouda. See (Khiter A. , 2006, p. 269)and (Waali, 2011, p. 277seq) .

1 -Mohammedi Said's ability to win people over to Revolution also stemmed from his mastery of oratory, contrary to accusations that his mobilization methods relied on emotional impulsiveness. Accepting such accusations would imply that the inhabitants of Kabylie were merely reactionary rather than politically conscious, a premise that cannot be accepted. See: (Sadi, 2011, p. 139) Attesting to his oratorical skill is the Mujahid Abdelaziz Waali, who attended one of his speeches in the village of Thamlilwin in Ifri- Ouzellaguen in 1956. He described the speech as so influential that the rock upon which Mohamedi Said stood is still known today as "Mohammedi Said's Rock. See: (Waali, 2011, p. 275) .

2 -The Islamic orientation in the Kabylie region was robust during the Revolution, particularly from 1957 onward, due to the significant emphasis Mohamedi Said and Amirouche placed on religious education and the Arabic language. Nine sessions were allocated to these subjects in the weekly training program for the third Wilaya's Mujahideen, supplemented by circulars issued by the command calling for the application of Islam in daily life. See: (Khiter A. , 2006, p. 270)

3- Even Abane Ramdane remarked about him: "He is a professional with experience in warfare, combat and the use of various weapons." Abdelaziz Waali described him as "an honest man who sincerely and seriousness, possessing management skills." Se (Waali, 2011, p. 375).

4- In this regard, Hocine Benmaalem notes in his memoirs that Mohamedi Said rarely left his headquarters, as his principle was based on immobility. This contrasted with Amirouche, who was constantly on the move, never needing a mount, to the extent that it was said Amirouche made the entire Third Wilaya his home. See: (Ben Maalem , 2014, p. 98) .

commanders, often sufficing with limited visits. Recognizing this communication gap with officers, he summoned them to a general meeting from March 22_25,1957, in the Draâ Ben Khedda region. This invitation nearly resulted in catastrophic consequences for the Revolution in this Wilaya. The strategic oversight lay in summoning the regional commanders five months prior to the meeting. This lead time allowed the French, upon arresting certain officers such as Ahmed Bouderra (Head of Health Services), to discover the location and date of the meeting as early as November 1956. Had it not been for the unexpected visit of Krim Belkacem and Benyoucef BenKhedda_who were en route to Tunisia _to the site on the eve of the meeting, a disaster would have been imminent. Krim Belkacem ordered the immediate dispersal of the gathering after a French reconnaissance aircraft was sighted hovering overhead (Khiter, 2006, p. 270).

To assert that Mohammedi said committed certain errors during his leadership of the Third Wilaya is a plausible and expected matter for any active leader, based on the principle that "only those who do nothing make no mistakes." However, the levelling of accusations, the exaggeration of errors, and the persistent focus on lapses to disparage or defame his character contradict historical objectivity and scientific ethics. Assertions that Mohammedi said lacked mobility _travelling only on pack animals or that his intense piety was sometimes a factor in weakening his leadership (as some opportunists allegedly exploited his religiousness to gain promotions, leaves, or transfers to safer zones) are criticisms that remain within the realm of acceptable academic debate (Khiter a. , 2024, p. 36).

As for labeling Mohammedi Said as "fanatical" simply because prayer and fasting were observed by everyone during his command, or describing him as a "reckless" figure prone to repeated blunders who disregarded the lives of his soldiers and the civilian population _we believe that if such descriptions were accurate, the blame would lie primarily with those who selected such a reckless individual to lead a province as significant as the Third Wilaya. Furthermore, why did the Mujahideen and cadres of this Wilaya __including figures like Amirouche and many others known for their integrity and rejection of anything detrimental to the Revolution _ not leadership continued to entrust him with further responsibilities in the political and military governing bodies of the Revolution abroad until 1962 (Sadi, 2011, pp. 138-145).

The prejudice against this figure in such a manner may, and the "Islamist" political path he chose for himself after 1962. This led his subsequent political opponents to attempt to undermine his revolutionary legacy and overtly tarnish his reputation by hurling arbitrary accusations and using disparaging descriptions. (Khiter a. , 2024, p. 37)

The purpose of presenting this perspective is to emphasize that an objective judgment of any revolutionary leader's career, or an evaluation of their role and contribution, should not be constructed based on the political paths they chose post-independence. Similarly, the history of the Revolution _and specifically the biographies of its leaders _ should be studied away from their personal disputes. Those who fall into trap risk deviating from historical objectivity, falling into error, and diminishing the rights of these men, who remain, with both their virtues and flaws, an integral part of our history and heritage (Khiter a. , 2024, p. 37).

4. Mohammedi Said in the leading bodies of the Algerian Revolution.

4.1. Command of the Eastern Military Operations Committee (COM)

By late summer 1957, Mohammedi Said was summoned by the revolutionary leadership abroad to Cairo. The primary reason for this summons was likely to attend the inaugural meeting of the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA), scheduled for August 1957 in Cairo. However, his attendance was delayed due to the hardships he encountered on his journey, which nearly claimed his life and that of Si El Haouès in Biskra upon his arrival in Egypt, he was directed to participate in a training course at the Brigade Officer's College, which lasted until April 1958. His graduation coincided with the decision of the second Coordination and Execution Committee (CCE) to establish the Military Operations Command (COM) (Khiter a. , 2024, p. 38).

The concept of the Military Operations Committee came into existence on April 9, 1958, following the CCE's approval of the project. A decision was made to establish two military operations commands: one in the East on the Tunisia _Algerian border, and the other in the West on the Moroccan _Algerian border. This military structure was known by the acronym "COM" (Saidani, 2020, p. 43).

On April 4, 1958, Krim Belkacem, in his capacity as Minister of the Armed Forces, decided to establish the Military Operations Committee (COM) to unify the command of the National Liberation Army (ALN). This move received outward support tempered with caution, which soon evolved into outright rejection, particularly when the names of the Eastern and Western commanders were announced: Mohammedi Said and Dehiles Sadek. Both Boussouf and Bentobbal were encouraged to declare their absolute opposition, arguing that both appointees belonged to the same Wilaya and region. This was interpreted as an attempt at large _scale containment [of power]. Consequently, Krim Belkacem had to concede regarding the Western Command; he accepted his colleagues' proposal to appoint Dehiles Slimane as deputy to Houari Boumèdiène and to appoint three deputies for Mohammedi Said (Hechmaoui, 2010, pp. 137-138).

Ultimately, an agreement was reached to form two committees for military action:

- The Eastern Military Operations Committee (COM Est): Headquartered in Ghardimaou , Tunisia, and entrusted to Colonel Mohammedi said (commander of Wilaya III), assisted by Colonel Mohamed Lamouri (Commander of Wilaya I), Amara Bouglaz (Commander of the Eastern Base), and Ammar Benaouda (representative of Wilaya II).
- The Western Military Operations Committee (COM Ouest): Headquartered in Nador, Morocco, led by Colonel Houari Boumèdiène (Commander of Wilaya V), assisted by Sadek Dehiles (Commander of Wilaya IV) (Saidani, 2020, p. 43).

A set of mandates was outlined for the Eastern COM, including: supplying and arming the interior, overseeing military operations on the eastern border, and working to infiltrate units stationed at the borders into the interior within a timeframe not exceeding one month. The assignments also included destroying the Morice Line and confronting the Bellounis

group and his followers . This effort yielded tangible results, such as the pursuit of Bellounis elements and the strongholds of the [rival] National Movement on the eastern front, in addition to regularizing the status of officers who joined the Revolution after defecting from the French army (Djebli, 2014, p. 254).

The early days of the committee coincided with one of the largest "crossing battles", the Battle of Souk Ahras (April 26 to May 3, 1958). This battle constituted the first test faced by Colonel Mohammedi said as head of the Eastern Military Operations Committee (Djebli, 2014, p. 254).

Shortly after the COM Est commenced its duties, internal disturbances emerged, eventually leading to the suspension of its functions and the sanctioning of its members. This causes of this crisis include:

- Sharp internal disagreements: Mutual accusations arose; Chairman Mohammedi Said was unable to assert his authority and accused his deputies of plotting to overthrow him, while they made no effort to refute these claims or show actual recognition of his command (Belhadj, 2009, p. 275).
- Concentration of combat units abroad (Tunisia): This negatively impacted the Mujahedeen's morale, as many commanders became more inclined toward respite while the Revolution inside the country was at its peak.
- Weak leadership and the inability to enforce military discipline: Mohamed Zeroual _ who served in a military unit in Tunisia __notes that the failure of the COM Est was primarily due to its commander, Colonel Mohammedi said, who according to Zeroual, lacked the necessary intellectual and organizational qualifications; he was suited for commanding a small unit rather than a large military apparatus.
- Prevalence of regional loyalties (*Regionalism*): Soldiers only recognized leaders or deputies from their original Wilaya as, leading to the fragmentation of command and weak organizational cohesion. This situation prevented Colonel Mohammedi Said from asserting control over the committee 's affairs (Zeroual, 2007, p. 376).
- Escalating tensions due to training policies: A plan was adopted to train cadres withdrawn from units by placing them in camps¹ regardless of their military ranks or levels. A unified program designed for new recruits was applied to everyone, generating resentment and a loss of discipline (Hechmaoui, 2010, p. 107).

Another contributing factor was the significant failure of the COM Est in dealing with the electrified lines [Morice and Challe Lines]. It failed to find effective solutions to breach them, and weapon convoy crossing attempts often ended in disastrous results. Consequently, individual infiltration __despite its extreme difficulty and danger __became the only

1- These were farms owned by families residing in Tunisia who ceded them to the Revolution. They were established specifically for volunteers joining the Revolution front Europe to receive training supervised by graduates of military academies in Arab countries, including a center near of Elkef and others.

available means to transport weapons and maintain contact with fighters in wilaya II (Djebli, 2014, p. 210).

This committee also witnessed a rift between Mohamed Lamouri, Amara Bouglaz, and Ammar Benaouda on one side, and Chairman Colonel Mohammedi said on the other. The dispute centered on the chairmanship; Ammar Benaouda believed he was most entitled to the position as a member of the "Committee of 22" that paved the way for the Revolution. This justification was supported by Lamouri and Bouglaz, who also expressed dissatisfaction with their membership, believing they were internationally sidelined from Wilaya I and the Eastern Base. Meanwhile, they criticized Colonel Mohammedi said for allegedly making unilateral decisions without consulting the other (Zeroual, 2007, p. 381).

Due to the disturbance and personal disputes within the COM Est, the committee came into conflict with Krim Belkacem, the Minister of the Armed Forces. On September 9, 1958, he imposed sanctions on its members; the COM Est was dissolved, and the CCE terminated the committee's experiment. Sanctions were issued against its members on charges of failure and negligence in executing leadership decisions, as well as incompetence. These measures deepened the rift between the sanctioned members and Krim Belkacem; they viewed the penalties as unjust, while the Minister interpreted their stance as a conspiracy against the Provisional Government (GPRA) (Zeroual, 2007, p. 387).

Various charges were leveled against the sanctioned members: Amara Bouglaz was accused of squandering revolutionary funds, regionalism, and sowing discord; he was punished with exile to Iraq after being demoted from Colonel to Captain. Ammar Benaouda was accused of suspicious personal conduct; his rank was reduced to Captain, and he was appointed as the Revolution's envoy to Lebanon. Mohamed Lamouri was convicted of regionalism and dividing the ranks; he was demoted to Captain and appointed as a representative in Saudi Arabia. As for Colonel Mohammedi said, he was suspended from his duties for one month (Harbi, 1983, p. 182).

4.2 .Command of the eastern staff headquarters

With the dissolution of the eastern and western military committees, the border situation entered a state of leadership vacuum. consequently, the coordination and execution committee (CCE) had to find an urgent solution to this critical situation. Following the inaugural meeting of the provisional government of the Algerian republic (GPRA) ,it was decided to establish a general staff for the national liberation army (ALN) (Tegua, 2010, p. 469).

It is noted that the CCE's decision to establish two Staff Headquarters_ one on the eastern border and the other on the western border __was effectively implemented on October 1,1958 ,just days after the founding of the GPRA on September 19,1958.the newly formed government issued its first official decree, which included the appointment of the eastern staff under the command of colonel Mohammedi Said and the western staff under the command of colonel Houari Boumediene (Belhadj, 2009, p. 276).

The Eastern and Western Staff Headquarters were assigned the mission of entering Algeria to achieve the unification of the National Liberation Army. This decision was reached during a meeting held in Tunisia on October 8, chaired by Colonel Krim Belkacem and attended by Colonels Mohammedi Said, Ahmed Nouaoura, and Ouachria. It was decided that units stationed along the borders must be moved into the interior by October 25 at the latest. However, this decision remained a "dead letter" and was never executed; the Eastern Staff continued to operate from its headquarters in Ghardimaou, Tunisia, while the Western Staff remained stationed in Oujda, Morocco (Belhadj, 2009, p. 277).

The failure of the two Staff Headquarters to enter national territory is attributed to several factors, most notably the lack of troop compliance with high command orders and the persistence of regional loyalties. For instance, some units from Wilaya II _comprising approximately two thousand soldiers _refused to recognize the authority of the Eastern Staff. Furthermore, the prevailing organizational disorder and the chaos surrounding border crossings which were fortified with electrified fences and mines _ rendered the decision impossible to implement; any attempt to breach these lines would have resulted in catastrophic human casualties for the border army (Seghiri, 2023, p. 641).

In general, the Eastern and Western Staff project can be regarded as a new organizational attempt and an extension of the COM experience, despite its eventual failure. From this perspective, Colonel Krim Belkacem had to draw inspiration from the leadership experience in the Western region __specifically regarding military discipline and obedience __ and reconsider the leadership of the Eastern region by replacing it with a more competent command capable of enforcing order, given Colonel Mohammedi Said's shortcomings in managing border military affairs. Thus, the situation remained unchanged despite subsequent organizational attempts led by Mouloud Idir, until the establishment of the General Staff (EMG) in 1960. In this new structure, Mohammedi Said did not retain his position; instead, he was appointed Minister of State without portfolio in the (GPRA) (Seghiri, 2023, p. 642).

Some researchers argue that there is a correlation between the removal of Krim Belkacem from the Ministry of the Armed Forces and the exclusion of Colonel Mohammedi Said from the General Staff command. However, another perspective suggests that the true reason lies in Mohammedi Said's weak operational performance on the eastern border during the period (1958_1960), contrasted with the success achieved by Houari Boumèdiène in imposing order and discipline on the western border. This success earned Boumèdiène the leadership's confidence, leading to his assignment to appoint his deputies and from the General Staff (EMG). (Khiter A. , 2006, p. 185)

Conclusion

In concluding this study, in which we sought to document some of the contributions of Colonel Si Nasser, whose role in Algerian Revolution manifests as a leading figure who contributed organizational and military efforts since assuming command of the Third Wilaya, we record the following conclusions:

It can be asserted that Colonel Mohamedi Said's leadership of the Third Wilaya was characterized by a form of spatial stability; he was less mobile, tending to remain at his headquarters to oversee the Wilaya's affairs. However, this relative immobility did not signify a lack of activity; he exerted considerable organizational efforts within the Wilaya working to unify ranks and enforce discipline among the *Mujahideen*.

Furthermore, given his religious background, he accorded special attention to ethical and spiritual dimensions, emphasizing the necessity of adhering to religious teachings among the Mujahideen as a fundamental element for refining conduct and bolstering morale.

Nevertheless, his tenure was not devoid of certain administrative errors and oversights that accompanied the management and command process. Consequently, the evaluation of his experience fluctuates between success in organization and discipline on one hand, and limited mobility and performance shortcomings on the other.

His leadership of both the Eastern Military Operations Committee (COM Est) and the Eastern Staff Headquarters did not achieve the desired success. This failure is attributed to a combination of intertwined political, organizational, and personal factors. Organizationally, these two experiments suffered from the prevalence of regional and tribal loyalties, which led to the fragmentation of decision-making and the difficulty of enforcing discipline. At the subjective level, Colonel Mohammedi Said faced challenges in exerting influence over his deputies and establishing his command prestige; he was unable to maintain firm control over various field commanders in both instances, resulting in internal conflicts that hindered military performance. Despite his competence and military experience, these factors made achieving sustainable success in managing the Eastern Front a difficult task.

Nevertheless, Colonel Mohamedi Said remains a prominent figure in the history of the Algerian Revolution. He contributed to the consolidation of the armed struggle and the development of confrontation strategies against colonialism. Even if his experience was marred by some failures, it remains an integral part of the Algerian Revolution's trajectory, which witnessed milestones of both success and challenge alike.

Bibliography

Books

Primary Sources

- Mohamed Salah Seddik .(2002) .**Of the Immortals** .Algiers: Dar al-Ummah.
- Abdelaziz Waali .(2011) .**Events and Facts in the History of the Liberation Revolution in Wilaya III** .Algiers: Dar al-Jazair lil-Kutub.
- Cherif Abtroun .(2016) .**Si Nasser (Mohammedi Said)** .Algiers: Casbah Editions.
- Houcine Ben Maalem .(2014) . **Memoirs of Major General Houcine Ben Maalem** .Algiers: Casbah Editions.

- Mohamed Abbas .(2009) .**Great Revolutionaries** .Algiers: Dar Houma.
- Mohamed Harbi .(1983) .**The National Liberation Front: Myth and Reality** .(1) Beirut: Arab Research Institute.
- Mustapha Hechmaoui .(2010) .**Roots of November 1st, 1954 in Algeria** .Algiers: **Dar Houma**.
- Tegua, M. (2010). **The Algerian Revolution: The Source, the Symbol, and the Wealth**. Algiers: Casbah Editions.
- Zeroual, M. (2007). **The Problem of Leadership in the Algerian Revolution (Wilaya I as a Model)**. Algiers: Ministry of Mujahideen.

Secondary Sources

- Aziz Khiter .(2024) .**Revolution Leaders in the Kabylie Region: Colonels and Captains 1954–1962** .Tizi Ouzou: Dar al-Amal.
- Djebli, T. (2014). **Arms Supply During the Algerian Revolution 1954–1962**. Algiers: Dar al-Ummah.
- Mohamed Alaoui .(2013) .**Leaders of the Revolution Wilayas 1954–1962** .Algiers: Dar Ali bin Zaid.
- Sadi, S. (2011). **Amirouche: A Life, Two Deaths, a Testament**. Algiers: Moghan Print.
- Saleh Belhadj .(2009) .**History of the Algerian Revolution** .Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-Hadith.
- Yahia Bouaziz .(2004) .**The Revolution in Wilaya III 1954–1962** 1st ed .(Algiers: Dar al-Ummah.

Theses

- Abdennour Khiter .(2006) .**The Evolution of the Leadership Bodies of the Algerian Revolution 1954–1962**. (Doctoral dissertation) .University of Algiers 2, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Journal article

- Saidani, Lakhdar. (2020). **The Political and Military Evolution of the Revolution: Challenges and Institutions 1956–1962**. Al-Qirtas Journal for Intellectual and Civilization Studies, 41–53.
- Seghiri, M. (2023). **The Evolution of the Border Army: From Inception to the Birth of the General Staff (1954–1960)**. Algerian Historical Journal, pp. 631–652.

Internet websites

- Fiore Annachiara .(2026 ,02 14) .EBSCO Information Services.: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/schutzstaffel-ss>