

Enrico Mattei, oil industry man and his position toward the Algerian revolution

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Abstract:

The Algerian National Liberation Front pursued a highly flexible diplomatic strategy, which made it widely accepted internationally, Enrico Mattei, an oil and petroleum industry specialist, was one of the most famous Italian figures who believed in the struggle of the Algerian revolutionary issue and the sincerity of its demands.

The study aims to identify Mattei's contribution to the Algerian file abroad and the role he played in persuading many Italian politicians to reverse their pro-colonial positions, and provided Algerian diplomatic officials with important files on French economic policy in the Algerian Sahara, especially in the Evian negotiations.

Keywords: Enrico Mattei; Italy; oil; Algerian Revolution; France.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

FLN was fully aware that relying on military confrontation to resolve the battle with French colonialism was a losing bet, so it had to take France into a wider space that would allow a large movement, internally and externally, giving the Algerian issue more space for success, and international public opinion was the refuge through which the FLN preferred to fight its major battles against the occupation.

From the outset, the FLN was strongly concerned with the diplomatic battle with France, the last one that had a long way with the colonial legacy, and it also had the greatest potential of materials, human and political, and although the FLN was no longer an emerging political organization, it played the enemy in its own backyard, and from the depth of the European continent the activities of the Algerian revolution began to spread all over the world in search of legitimacy that would enable it to break its rights and demands.

Pursuing a policy of attending all international events without missing any opportunity, FLN missions and offices spread to most countries of European soil until they reached the Nordic countries, and indeed made friends with many active and European influentials.

Italy was one of the most important countries to which the efforts of the Algerian Revolution went in search of logistical support, and Enrico Mattei, a friend of the Algerian revolution, was one of the most prominent figures who supported Algerian diplomacy activities

abroad, took an interest in the Algerian Sahara issue and tried to draw the attention of Algerian diplomats to French ambitions in the Sahara.

As for the importance of the study, it lies in the fact that it states the Algerian-Italian relations and reveals to us one of the most important aspects of cooperation between the two countries in the field of energy and petroleum industry, and it also reveals an important figure in the history of economic world is Enrico Mattei and his position toward the Algerian revolution and the implications of this position on the Algerian file abroad, especially since Italy is an important European country in the field of international conflict and its role in the Atlantic system, which is considered as an ally of colonialism.

Therefore, any change in her position in the positive direction towards Algeria is an implicit victory for Algerian diplomacy abroad which will reverse the balance of power of our glorious revolution.

Based on what was addressed in the introduction, we raise the following issue:

- How much does Enrico Mattei contribute to supporting the Algerian case abroad?

In response to the issue, we have to identify the following topics that we will address based on the historical analytical approach:

- A. Introducing Enrico Mattei (1906-1962).
- B. The Italian policy towards the Algerian revolution 1954-1962.
- C. Enrico Mattei's position toward the Algerian revolution.

2. Introducing Enrico Mattei (1906-1962):

He was born, in 1906, in Italy, in the province of Pizarro from a modest family, Enrico Mattei worked early as an assistant at a tanning factory in 1923, then, he became a laboratory director in 1929, and as a result of his interest in chemistry, he moved to Milan and joined the Christian Democratic Party and was appointed as governor of the Oil Corporation (AGIP) (Azienda Generale Italiana petroli).

He was able to persuade the Italian government to abandon The decision to liquidate this institution, and advised it to invest within the framework of a public partnership union (ENI) that guarantees Italy gas and oil supplies, in order to supply Italy with fuel, thus gradually Enrico Mattei became director of the largest sector of the state for Italian hydrocarbons, and despite his ambition to make his country the leader of the European countries.

He always stood in the face of colonial domination and its brutal methods of exploiting the rights of vulnerable countries, and showed sympathy with the third world countries and fought against the dominance of the major Anglo-American companies, which want monopoly of the field of hydrocarbons. Mattei died in 1962 in a plane crash a minute before landing in Milan, Italy, to discover later that the plane was mined (**Khattab, 2013, pp. 459-460**).

It was therefore only Mattei's heritage of values of sincerity and loyalty principles that did not conflict with the rights and approaches when he opposed with his good idea everything that would rob peoples of their rights, he was a symbol of noble feelings.

3. The Italian policy towards the Algerian revolution of 1954-1962:

3.1 The official position:

The Algerian revolution proceeded in its international dealings based on flexibility to keep pace with international events pursuing the principles of positive neutrality, and when it set out on its way to break the restrictions that colonialism wanted to link to it, i.e. isolating it internationally so that it could tear the body out of sight, the FLN would not have imposed sympathy on the European people because this is not one of its principles.

But the humanitarian message carried out by the Algerian revolution and its noble objectives, made it respected by European countries, even its allies to France, so many European figures, who worked to support the FLN and the Algerian government gave more legitimacy to our revolution, the support provided by these figures in different material and moral aspects made a big difference to the Algerian issue which urge it to continue its struggle abroad.

The official Italian position on the Algerian issue did not differ from those of western governments loyal to France and the United States of America, therefore, Italy was forced by virtue of its membership in NATO to support France politically and militarily, and despite all this, the Italian government agreed in 1957 to open an office of the National Liberation Front in Rome, which was then

headed by Mr. Saleh Mahboubi and then succeeded by Tayeb Boulahrouf (sghir, 2009, p. 439).

Despite the obstacles and restrictions, Mr. Tayeb Boulahrouf confirmed that he and his colleagues in the struggle were able to live and build friendly relationships with the Italian society, and even extended to include party and political figures, which later helped them to obtain military aid that they transferred to Algeria through Libya (Ben Fliss, 2007, p. 222).

The important role played by Mr. Tayeb Boulahrouf drew the attention of Italian officials of various levels to the Algerian cause, especially Mr. Enrico Mattei, who was one of the strongest supporters of Algeria's liberal struggle, where Boulahrouf says: "These figures, who were our real support when needed during our struggle against colonialism", as he held meetings with important Italian political and trade union figures among these figures: Mr. Alod, Secretary-General of the Italian Foreign Ministry, and Ninie, official of the Socialist Italian, the communist party official Togisatie, Secretary of the Italian Trade Union Ganinie and Pinots, Christian Democratic Mp (Ben Fliss, 2007, p. 223).

So, the foreign policy platform strategies and directions of the FLN are clearly defined since the beginning of its formation, where it worked hard to internationalize the Algerian issue by relying on creating strong relations with all the people of international law, each on a separate basis, and each according to the standard required in dealing, however, dealing with the countries of the East is different

from the countries of the West, and the principle of winning friendships of political groups was among the gains that Algerian diplomacy worked to achieve because popular condemnation, no matter how diverse its forms and manifestations, does not vary. Difference or victory can occur as much as can be achieved from the official government side.

Within this framework, we can observe the clear European-Western role in supporting French colonial policy in Algeria, as authorizing France to use NATO weapons in Algeria is an illegal face of unacceptable violations by Western governments against Algeria, making any achievement by the FLN on the territory of these countries a great victory for the Algerian diplomacy (**Bagnato, 2012, p. 425**).

So the colonial partnership that binds the countries of the western system is based on the absolute and explicit support of France, the colonial right for them exists, legitimate and inherited through generations, so their view of North Africa was one of ambitions inherited over the long periods of time, but the bullying colonialism around Algeria was the harshest and most violent in history.

So that France was luring European allies with Algeria's bounties in order to support and assist it in its project, which began in 1830, and wanted it a long-term project for generations. Subsequently, military missions and supplies from NATO countries rolled over to

France and the number of foreign scroll soldiers doubled in a way that preserved France's self-inspired presence.

With the emergence of the idea of the European Common Market, France found a more appropriate opportunity to achieve its ambitions, as it sought to convince European countries of the possibility of exploiting the natural resources of Algeria, and the plans for colonialism project aimed at essentially keeping the countries of the Maghreb, Central and Western Africa within the circle of western political and accordingly the project was put forward to the countries of the market under the slogan of Euro-African integration, later known as the Europe-Africa project.

Eura fric, a project that allows European countries to exploit the resources of African countries under the cover of colonialism and the power of economic and political influence (**Ben Fliss, 1985, p. 306**).

So France's policy of temptation was not only directed at the Algerian people in the form of those projects that appeared to be good for the people but also about the damned France, which was pursuing the same policy even with its European neighbours when it portrayed Algeria as an investor that would benefit the whole of Europe.

The fall of fascism and the urge of the Republic and the Italian Socialist Party that played a pivotal role in the upbringing of a public opinion that rejects colonialism, the Italian Socialist Party has been the second force in the country behind Christian democracy, making up a quarter of the electoral pool in the legislative elections with about

two million (2,000,000) members due to its structure and its media power, through several headlines for regional newspapers, as well as its structure in the cultural and sports field and its presence in the Italian General Federation of labors (**Bismuth & Taubert, 2014, p. 186**).

3.2 The informal (popular) position:

As a result of the increasing intensity of French criminality, the Italian public interest in the Algerian issue began to be evident, especially after the events that took place in the border area between Tunisia and Algeria known as saqiya Sidi Youssef, which led to the imbalance between France and the Italian public opinion which viewed that France with its actions has no intention of solving the Algerian problem, so demonstrations in front of the French Embassy in Rome in June 1958 were held, The Communists worked on collecting donations for Algerian refugees, since they represent a quarter of the electorate, and the Dei Satiri Theatre held a discussion with Mr. Tayeb Boulahrouf on December 11, 1961 (**Edo, 2017-2018, pp. 257-258**).

The formation of the Italian Anti-Colonial Italian Committee, a branch of the Standing Committee for the struggle against colonialism in the Mediterranean, this is in fact a front for the Italian Communist Party, The Italian solidarity with the FLN increased, and the committee included members such as: Dina Forti, Maurizio Valeni, Ugo Bartesaghi, Ferruccio Parri (**Khattab, 2013, p. 427**).

The committee was later renamed the Committee for Friendship and Solidarity with the Algerian people and in Italian it's called: (Comitato D'amicizia Ed'auto Col Popolo Algeriano) in appreciation of these humanitarian efforts from the Italian people, the Italian labor movement also tried to link the FLN with the Vatican, where President Farhat Abbas had already spoken with Pope Johannes XXIII to create a kind of rapprochement between the two countries **(Keller, 2014, p. 300)**.

In Rome, in addition to the mentioned committee, Italy witnessed the establishment of another committee called the Italian Committee for Peace in Algeria called in French (Le Comité Italien Pour La Paix En Algérie), that included the most important left-wing figures:

Vincezo Balzamo, Férruci Parri, Giancarl Vigorelli, the commission's organic law provides for its objectives of defending the Algerian issue, defending the Algerian people's right to self-determination, raising funds for the FLN, propaganda and media for the Algerian issue abroad **(Edo, 2017-2018, pp. 258-259)**.

From the above, we note that the blackness imposed by France on the Algerian revolution was that Algeria is a French land and its internal affairs belongs only to France and that its presence in Algeria came to spread the features of civilization, all these lies became evident due to the efforts of Algerian diplomats exposed to international public opinion.

Even the French neighboring countries who have a natural alliance with France are now fully aware of the reality of the situation in Algeria and the reality of the crimes that are committed against humanity, which has led many Italian figures that rejects injustice and stands by the Algerian people and thus force the French enemy to submit to the will of truth.

The Italian support for the Algerian revolution has gone beyond the left parties known as anti-colonial imperialism, such as: (the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the far left) and even reached the social democratic center with its various references **(Khattab, 2013, p. 277)**.

Art, too, promoting the Algerian issue, with many Italian artists' paintings that show the reality of the Algerian people, exposing the crimes of colonialism, for example: Valensi Maurizio, a former mayor of Naples, who fought for Algeria's independence, Bertini also who relied on the backgrounds of newspapers carrying out the massacres of the terroristic Secret Army Organization (OAS). Baj Enrico, who founded with some artists "The Nuclear Movement and the Dangers of Nuclear Radiation" in 1951, was banned in Italy because it presented the torture by the French army, while Cremonini Leonardo, another Italian painter whose French violence against Algerians was the focus of his drawing entitled "Torture" in 1961 **(Khattab, 2013, pp. 177, 367)**.

So despite the different means of expressing opposition on the part of the Italians, the message is the same: to show popular solidarity with the Algerian revolution and to declare a position that rejects colonial practices.

4. Enrico Mattei's position toward the Algerian revolution.

Mattei's name has been associated with supporting the Algerian issue since the beginning of the Algerian revolution because he believed in the sincerity of its demands after meeting with the leaders of the liberal struggle abroad, Mattei was one of the most prominent figures belonging to the Christian Democratic Party, he specialized in the field of hydrocarbons, and established the National Commission For the so-called Italian hydrocarbons: (Ente Nazionale Idrocarb Uri) in 1953, and remained its president until 1962, where Mattei noticed the French interests in the Algerian Sahara and the restrictions imposed by France in dealing with these resources in an unregulated or logical manner, he realized that Algeria's independence and dealing with the Algerian leadership is the best solution to develop the work of his institution in the Algerian Sahara (**Edo, 2017-2018, pp. 260-261**).

Mattei strongly opposed the policy of the global oil cartel "Seven Sisters", which monopolizes the oil market, and to point out that Mattei was the first to call these seven sisters, these companies were active in the field of hydrocarbons in 1950 as the largest oil companies in the world, as in 1973 it controlled nearly (80 %) of the world's oil reserves as these companies seek to impose economic and

political conditions for their activity, In accordance with its interests, it reflects the awareness of modern capitalism of economic and political patterns on a global scale by its followed (**Alhamaoui, 2016, p. 140**), strategies in the field of production, refining and distribution (**Ibrahim, 2019, p. 124**).

In 1960, the first pipeline to transport Algerian gas to Italy was proposed and agreements were signed in 1977, the first part of the project was established between 1978 and 1983, and was named under the friend of the Algerian revolution Enrico Mattei (**Arabi, 2021, p. 371**).

Enrico Mattei's activity extended even to the media level as he tried by the Milan-based daily IL Giorno to promote his ideas through which he sought to win the sympathy of the Italian public opinion with Algeria (**Mourlane, 2017, p. 85**).

He also provided the Algerians with all the possibilities for their formation in the field of hydrocarbons, and provided them with material and moral support, which worried the French intelligence that put him under tight control, and to point out that Mr. Mario Piratto was Mattei's personal and permanent representative to the Government. Due to his noble and timeless attitudes towards the Algerian revolution and his struggle for the economic interests of his country, Enrico Mattei paid a price for it, as he was killed by order of the "Seven Sisters" or "French secret interests" (**Edo, 2017-2018, pp. 261-262**).

In preparation for independence, Mattei was able to hold several meetings with several leaders of the Algerian revolution in Italy and Switzerland, such as Farhat Abbas, Ahmed Francis, Mohamed Yazid, Abdelhafid Boussouf, he defined to the Algerian negotiating delegation in Evian the most appropriate negotiating strategy for Algeria to exploit its wealth in the field of hydrocarbons and energy, and impose its sovereignty over its internal goods so that France does not exploit them for its own benefit (**Ambassade d'Italie et Institut culturel Italien, 2010, p. 10**).

Because France has always insisted on the file of the Algerian Sahara which has disrupted the negotiations and hindered it many times, the French side insists every time to separate the Sahara from the rest of the Algerian soil, and here the support of Mr. Mattei appeared Who sent his assistant, Mr. Mario Birani to Tunisia in 1962, to cover the event as a journalist and address the fuel file with Mohamed Khaladi, Reda Malik, kasdi Merbah, Hammoud Hamza Karwa, and identified the major axes of the negotiating strategy and support them with documents and laws governing this field of hydrocarbons (**Khattab, 2013, p. 463**).

So Mattei was an obstacle to French interests in Algeria, and his role went beyond the recruitment of Italy's political class to defend and promote the Algerian issue, much further when he became the real adviser of the interim government of the Algerian Republic and the negotiating delegation in Switzerland, having taken on the task of protecting Algeria's oil interests from European colonial.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on what has been addressed in this research paper, we conclude the following findings:

- Despite the simplicity of the methods and means used to fight colonialism, the Algerian revolution was able to obtain international legitimacy that enabled the Algerian interim government to gain a place in the group of sovereign states and to receive wide international respect for its activities and efforts due to the good reputation of the Algerian militants abroad.
- Promoting the Algerian issue in Europe and Italy in particular was not easy, since they have an ancient colonial past and have friendly relations and geographical, ideological, cultural and historically with France, so the French intelligence was very active throughout the European continent and therefore the task of penetrating these countries and changing their attitudes towards France was very difficult.
- The Algerian revolution spread in Europe through the activists sent by the National Liberation Front and offices that were based in most countries of the continent. In addition to, the efforts made by the institutions of the Algerian revolution represented in the diplomatic media such as the Union of Students and Workers, the artistic and sports band and the Algerian Red Crescent teams, which enabled them to form many friendships with many different European personalities and from all classes, and this opened the

way for them to put forward their views and introduce the Algerian issue to win supporters.

- Enrico Mattei was a symbol of sacrifice because his only concern was to preserve the Italian economy, fight everything that harms it, and even fight monopolies by colonial states in the third world countries, which created a conviction to free the Algerian economy from French colonial domination, so that it can deal with the independent Algerian state in accordance with a legal framework that preserves the benefit of both parties and in legitimate ways because these monopolistic companies depend on a half-half formula in their dealings with the productive countries.

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