

## The counter-revolutionary movement in the sixth state 1957-1958 between local and foreign writings

الحركة المناوئة للثورة في الولاية السادسة 1957\_1958 من خلال الكتابات المحلية  
والاجنبية

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Informer of the Maghreb unity throughout history

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### Abstract

This study addresses the anti-revolutionary movement of Bellounis in the sixth state through French and local writings. This movement was a French industry par excellence due to the French support to him, whether financially, militarily, or logistically. Bellounis, the person in whom France found what she was looking for, worked with the French intelligence under the cover of Messali to mislead the people and keep them away from their noble mission. He found fertile ground in the 6<sup>th</sup> state after the leadership of the 3<sup>rd</sup> state confronted him. From there, the second chapter of the conspiracy began in a new form. However, the political and military strategy developed by the state leadership to confront this movement had the merit of purifying the state of this anti-revolutionary movement and its agents in the region.

### Keywords

Mohamed Bellounis; National Liberation Front; National Army of the Algerian People; Military ranks; Weapon.

### الملخص:

تتناول الدراسة حركة بلونيس المناوئة في الولاية السادسة من خلال الكتابات الفرنسية ونظيرتها المحلية، هذه الحركة التي كانت صناعة فرنسية بامتياز من خلال الدعم الذي قدمته له سواء ماديا وعسكريا ولوجستيكيًا، بلونيس الشخص الذي وجدت فيه فرنسا ضالتها، وبدأ العمل مع المخابرات الفرنسية تحت غطاء مصالي، لتضليل الشعب وإبعاده عن مهمته السامية، حيث وجد الأرض الخصبة في الولاية السادسة بعد أن تصدت له قيادة الولاية الثالثة، ومنها بدأ الفصل الثاني للمؤامرة في شكل جديد، لكن الاستراتيجية السياسية والعسكرية التي وضعتها قيادة الولاية لمواجهة هذه الحركة تم بفضلها تطهير الولاية من هذه الحركة المناوئة للثورة وعملائها في المنطقة.

### الكلمات المفتاحية:

جبهة التحرير الوطني، محمد بلونيس، الجيش الوطني للشعب الجزائري، الرتب العسكرية، السلاح.

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## 1. Introduction

Mohammed Bellounis was one of the first to oppose colonialism with hostility, which cost him imprisonment and punishment in many cases, not to mention that Bellounis had a national asset prior to the revolution through many of his positions. However, following the outbreak of the liberation revolution, Bellounis was one of the first people on whom Messali Hadj relied to prove his party's armed presence, particularly in the Kabylie region. Due to the presence of the National Liberation Front, which worked to eliminate the *Messalite* movement, it was not in Bellounis's best interests to fall into the hands of the colonial army.

This study aims to answer the main problem of the "anti-movement of Bellounis and his establishment of the National Army for the Algerian People" following the agreement with France, especially after what is known as the "*Melouza*" case, which resulted in the following problems: How was this army formed and armed? What are the most important battles that took place between his army and the National Liberation Army? And what are the reasons that led to its collapse and estrangement with its ally, namely the colonial army?

## 2. Bellounis's cooperation with France

The case or experience of Bellounis between 1956 and 1958 is referred to in French historical writings as "Operation Olive Tree," which is the period during which the dangerous alliance between Bellounis and his followers with the French army confronted the National Liberation Army and the Front. The developments of this process constitute one of the most important chapters of the colonial project, which aimed to create anti-revolutionary strongholds in the areas where it sought to spread, such as the sixth state, and even those that were active revolutionary foci, such as the third and fourth states.

Colonial politicians announced their intentions to adopt a dangerous and long-term political project aimed at creating a "third force" formed from a political gathering of "moderate" Algerian patriots, representing an acceptable alternative to the National Liberation Front in the domestic arena and a cover for French policy aimed at eradicating The Algerian case by keeping it an internal change in the international arena (شيبوط، 2012، صفحة 135).

As an extension of the contacts that took place between the traitor Bellounis and the colonial authorities before 1956, other contacts took place on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1957 in Beni Yelmene with the intelligence officer who came from Algiers for this purpose. This meeting resulted in a number of points of agreement between the two parties as follows:

- Fighting the National Liberation Front and working to uncover its cells and its supplying routes.

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- The implementation of various operations under the supervision of the French intelligence services and their direct management with the contribution of SAS officers (SAS: Specialized Administrative Sections).
- Putting special French commandos units in a state of permanent readiness to intervene militarily alongside the Bellounis movement under the command of Captain "Rocolle", providing these units with wireless devices and means of transportation, as well as arming them with American-made weapons for disguise and camouflage.
- Establishing an intelligence network to provide the colonial authorities with information about the methods of the Liberation Army, its organizations, and cells in cities and countryside, and work to eliminate them.
- Determining the area of activity of this movement (المنظمة الوطنية للمجاهدين، 1985، صفحة 34)

Since the beginning of 1957, Bellounis tried to contact the French in several attempts, and in the third attempt, he succeeded in attracting the attention of Governor General Robert Lacoste, who instructed General Salan to follow up on this issue (Le Mire, 1988, p. 174). This issue is still known only through French sources, writings, and testimonies, so Bellounis sought to communicate with France since January 1957, and was hoping to reach the Governor General, Lacoste, through the civil governor in Ain Boucif Bendersa. (Valette, 2001, p. 143)

On receiving the report, General Salan assigned the administration to lay the first building blocks for cooperation between France and Bellounis through the Coordination Center between the Armed Forces and officer "Pineau", who was tasked with meeting Bellounis on May 31, 1957, with the assistance of Captain Charles, the intelligence officer in Sidi Aissa. Salan gave a strictly confidential written order, appointing General Allard personally to lead the operation and communications (Valette, 2001, p. 143), who had the right to observe him and his actions. The operation was called "Operation Olivier" "The Olive Tree" (Le Mire, 1988, p. 175), which included Colonel "Vernières", Captain "Pineau", and "Rocolle", the commander of the mobile paratroop division called "11<sup>th</sup> Shock Parachute Regiment", as well as "Bauer", "Aimes", and Colonel "Katz", as the commander of the Ghardaia region and the southeastern region in charge of the Laghouat sector (Ageron , 1998, p. 68), which was supervised directly by "Salan" on the authority of the Governor General, "Robert Lacoste." The work of this committee was linked to the coordination center among the armed forces in Algeria.

The "Lacoste" government decided to continue the experiment, but only on a military level, saying, "We will accept military cooperation with Bellounis and his supporters to ensure the fight against the National Liberation Front

while excluding any political action on his part at the political level." The work revolved around:

1. Observation and action against the National Liberation Front in the western and northern region of Beni Yelmene.
2. Intelligence work and infiltration of the Zayani (Zian Ashour) elements in the Ouled Naïl area.
3. Intelligence work on the status of the National Liberation Front in the sixth state.
4. Acting against the leaders of the rebellion, while confronting them (Valette, 2001, p. 145)

In his statement in collaboration with French authorities, particularly after what happened in Beni Yelmene, he published and read himself a statement. Bellounis's status changed to open employment for the French army on August 14, 1957. On this date, he met with Colonel "Vernières" and Captain "Rocolle" at his headquarters in the city of Dar Chioukh to put into action what had been previously agreed upon with Captain "Pineau" in May of the same year. Colonel "Vernières" summarized the positive atmosphere of the meeting in a report he sent to "General Salan" on August 24<sup>th</sup>, in which he wrote: "Bellounis is very ambitious, it seems that he is the right party if we want to play the Algerian national movement card ... and perhaps the solution to the Algerian issue is very soon." (شبوط، 2012، صفحة 135)

The French authorities monitored the movement of Mohammed Bellounis and sent him a set of warnings in a number of instructions to control the movements of Bellounis. On September 4, 1957, "Lacoste" sent an instruction to the commander of the military sector, emphasizing the importance of preventing any political and administrative organization of the army of Bellounis, as well as the importance of arresting each element of Bellounis' activists outside the specified frame.

In addition to other instructions concerning other cases, such as visits by civilians to Bellounis, where it recommended preventing those, such as journalists, from going to Bellounis without obtaining a license granted by the French security authorities, as another instruction from Colonel "Katz" on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1957, alerted that they are not ineligible to conduct a traffic control operation in their area of activity (بلحاج، 2015، صفحة 146)

### **3. Bellounis concentration**

The first stationing of the Bellounis forces was in a place called "Tarmount", where he gathered his assistants who had been with him before his cooperation with colonialists. A number of volunteers from Beni Yelmene and its suburbs joined them after notable incidents that this movement was exploited for its benefit with the help of SAS and French intelligence officers.

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To support the ranks of this movement, the colonial authorities handed it over to a large number of Algerians trained to deal with intelligence (the capital's blue circles) and various anti-revolutionary movements. In preparation for the departure of Bellounis's forces towards the South, the French authorities put at their disposal the necessary transportation and communication means. Bellounis, who declared himself a General at the head of his forces, moved with his French advisor "Aimes" and the intelligence man "Rocolle", as well as the Commandos Auxiliary Squad, along with his loyal old aides such as EL Ouahrani, Rabeh EL Kebaili, Rabah EL Berradi, towards Haouch Naas "Dar Chioukh " near Djelfa, passing by café El Berarda ، المنظمة الوطنية للمجاهدين ، (1985، صفحة 35)

Dar Chioukh was chosen for the concentration due to its strategic location. This choice has its reasons:

- This region is in the middle of the revolutionary centers and it is easy to supervise.
- The main national highway crossing the south (National Road No. 1) is present in the region, which facilitates the colonialists crossing their vehicles to implement the larger plan of separating the desert from the rest of the Nation.
- From 1956 to 1957, this region was rife with revolutionary activity, to the point where crossing the national road required both land and air protection., so it was chosen for the concentration of Bellounis to contribute to impeding this revolutionary activity (حامدي ، 2013، صفحة 90)

In Hassi El Euch, near Hassi Bahbah, "General Salan" handed the Algerian flag to General Mohamed Bellounis in order to deceive the people and mislead them by falsely claiming internal independence and suggesting the need to confront the National Liberation Front associated with communism, as they used to spread with the aim of insulting the Liberation Front and undermining its reputation, detracting from its popularity (المنظمة الوطنية للمجاهدين، 1985، صفحة 35)

Among the plans carried out by Bellounis was the "alleged independence," in which he claimed that he negotiated with France and brought independence, which was nothing more than an open game with France, in which France agreed to raise the Algerian flag around his position and urged him to move outside of it. (حامدي ، 2013، صفحة 91)

Major "Lakhdar Bouregaa" wrote that the sixth state was neglected from the beginning and no attention was paid to its position like the rest of the other states, which led the loyalists to concentrate in it after they fled the north in May 1957 after a fierce battle. Furthermore, 45 members were killed and 28

were captured, and those who remained alive withdrew to the central region of the Sixth State due to its availability of strategic characteristics, from which General Mohammed Bellounis, in coordination with the French enemy officers, took the headquarters of his command and established his stray group (بورقعة، 1990، صفحة 14)

Ballounis, with the support of the French army, reinforced his army, whose number reached about three thousand men, spread across the suburbs of M'sila, Sidi Aissa, and Bou Saâda to the borders of Djelfa. He benefited from supplies of weapons and ammunition of various types of equipment in the same way that French units did. Bellounis was promised that he would play the role of "Bao Dai", but thanks to the determination of the Liberation Army, he was executed before he reached it, after the Moudjahidines of the Fourth State managed to penetrate its ranks (اتومي ، 2008 ، صفحة 152)

#### **4. Establishment of the National Army of the Algerian People ANPA**

After an agreement with the French authorities to name the army's members, the "National Army of the Algerian People," which is, in fact, the structure that has come to include all the regiments that joined under the Algerian national movement.

At first, this naming appears to be very sophisticated and significant for hundreds of men with few weapons led by Bellounis. The genius of Bellounis and his assistants was represented in his attempt to justify this title with facts and build a new army with this naming, beginning with this small core. (Chems Ed Dine, 1998, p. 39)

In 1955-1956 and until the conclusion of the agreement with the French forces, the Bellounis forces were divided according to a clear model, whereby the Bellounis members were divided into groups of 50 to 60 men, which constitute the basic unit. The leadership of these groups is supervised by an assistant and a sergeant. Each sector contained two groups. The sector is subject to the authority of a second lieutenant, and all heads of sectors are subordinate to a leader and deputy to Bellounis, on whom he depends directly. (Chems Ed Dine, 1998, p. 40)

Bellounis called his units the National Army of the Algerian People and kept the Algerian flag as a symbol of his army, as he promoted himself to the rank of a general who was proud of the size of his units, which, according to French statistics, reached 3000 men, at least half of whom joined his ranks in 1957 from France and the capital and Mechtas of Melouza in the aftermath of the massacre. The duplication that occurred in the villages of Melouza and Beni Yelmene (شبيوط، 2012، صفحة 135)

El Hadi Derouaz states that Bellounis had an army called the Algerian National Army led by General Mohammed Bellounis, and several factors helped him in its spread, including:

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- The leaders in the states were busy organizing and mobilizing to confront the enemy.
- Difficulty of communication and exchange of news and information between leaders due to the difficult circumstances that each of the historical states was going through.
- The lack of a coordinating body capable of collecting information and taking the necessary measures, which was settled by the revolution in the Soumam conference, so the French took advantage of these circumstances and started carrying out their despicable and failed conspiracies in the southern region due to its importance in that period with the emergence of oil that made them salivate and increased their ambitions. (درواز، 2009، صفحة 119).

However, this mobilization was not enough. Bellounis determined to use several authoritarian methods by imposing a human tax in the municipalities of Sidi Aissa and Sour El-Ghozlane. Consequently, he was able to recruit about 800 soldiers in his army. That tax was about forcing families with more than two sons to provide the Algerian National Army with one or more combatants according to surplus. After that, the Bellounis army began to have respectable capabilities (Chems Ed Dine, 1998, p. 41)

Bellounis, on the other hand, went beyond his geographical boundaries by recruiting other elements from Blida, Boufarik, and Tizi Ouzou, as he was in charge of the tasks of recruiting and giving orders to join Bellounis' army while luring them with good working conditions and a monthly grant of up to 2700 French francs, especially since these people were living in unemployment and emptiness. Recruits were subjected to threats and intimidation in the event of their rebellion against the call to join, even when it comes to sons close to the French administration, such as Agha Ouled Oum Hani, who was ordered to attend with his son in order to be recruited into Bellounis's army, which led to the intervention of the military authorities in Ghardaia to prevent that (بلحاج، 2015، صفحة 146)

According to the French military reports, Bellounis exerted a lot of pressure on men who are able to fight. At the end of February 1958, the pro-officials of the Sidi Aissa region received an order from Bellounis to enroll 5,000 young men within two months. Thus, the increase in compulsory recruitment is consistent with Bellounis strategy because according to a report issued by the military commander Si Larbi, 2,000 men are required to permanently attend training centers in the camp (Valette, 2001, p. 161)

Many times, the recruitment process was marred by serious violations, such as when 150 men from the Abdel Aziz tribes and the children of Sidi Younes were kidnapped and shot dead in Dar Chioukh in June and July 1957, in addition to the killing of the elderly and the kidnapping of young men from

cafes in Djelfa, torturing them, imprisoning them, and then arming them. Those who were no longer able to continue fighting were subjected to slaughter, as Moftah did for some of his members (Valette, 2001, p. 163)

At the beginning of November 1957, that is, four months after the implementation of the initial agreements, it can be said that Bellounis almost "set the law" on the lands of the mixed municipalities of Djelfa and Bou Saâda. He expelled the National Liberation Front and neutralized the French administration in that region. The Algerian people's national army consisted of four brigades in many fields and about 3000 men, in addition to the "11<sup>th</sup> Shock Parachute Regiment" (Guillard , 2009, p. 109).

## **5. Organization and distribution of the army**

### **5.1. Command Center**

- Mohammed Bellounis: Commander of the National Army of the Algerian People.
- Si Megueri: Bellounis deputy in charge of administration and means.
- Si Mohammed: Political Adviser.
- Si LArbi Lekbaili: Military advisor in charge of rapid intervention.
- Si EL Hocine Hadjidj: Officer assigned to liaise with the Paratroopers and the 11<sup>th</sup> Shock Parachute Regiment.
- Si Hammoud: Finance Officer.
- Bellounis' Special Guard: 8 soldiers.
- Book 05.
- Guard company: 40 soldiers.

**5.2. The central region (Dar Chioukh):** under the leadership of Captain Abdelkader and includes the intervention units:

- The Cairo Battalion had 250 men. The Bachir Battalion, Belkacem Moustach Battalion, Rabeh El Barradi Battalion, and Saad Battalion; each contained 100 men, and the training center led by Si Djamel had 400 men.

**5.3. The North Region:** It includes Sour El-Ghozlane and Ezzagher Echarqi under the command of Major Hocine and consisted of 4 battalions.

- The Omar El Ouahrani Battalion joined 180 men, including 80 cavalry. The Saïd Brigade included 200 men, the Slimane Battalion included 100 men, and the Embarek Battalion included 80 men.



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**5.4. The south-west region:** It included the districts of Aflou, Djelfa, and Laghouat under the leadership of Captain Moftah, who oversaw:

- The Abdallah Battalion, which had 200 men, the Abdesselam Battalion, which had 200 men, and the Si Hani Battalion in Ksar El Hirane, which had 40 men.

**5.5. Southeast region:** representing in Bou Saâda under the command of Captain Abdelkader Latreche who supervised:

- The Belkacem Battalion, consisting of 110 men, the Badri Battalion, consisting of 250 men, the Saidini Battalion, consisting of 110 men, and the Djoghlafl Battalion, consisting of 110 men. (Guillard , 2009, pp. 109-110)

Bellounis placed his headquarters in Dar Chioukh, 30 km from Djelfa, and the command center personnel lived in one of the houses deserted by the residents of Dar Chioukh due to the previous events. Bellounis remained invisible, in which he did not appear much, and was alone in charge of receiving French liaison officers. He worked a lot from nine a.m. until three p.m. His concern was to protect himself because he has been subjected to several assassination attempts, but he was surrounded by high security. Any visitor and even his officers were searched and stripped of their weapons before meeting him, surrounded by four guards and his two daughters in uniform to guard him (Valette, 2001, p. 156).

## **6. Military ranks and weapons**

### **6.1. Military ranks**

The military ranks were classified into two categories: officers and non-commissioned officers. The appointment of officers was the exclusive responsibility of the head of forces (Bellounis), while non-commissioned officers were appointed and promoted at the suggestion of military sector commanders. The rank badge was a 2 cm diameter star of different manufacture.

**Officers:** with a golden star on their shoulders:

Second Lieutenant : 3 branches.

First Lieutenant : 4 branches.

Captain: 5 branches.

Major: 6 branches.

**Non-commissioned officers:** have a silver star on their shoulders:

Corporal: 3 branches.

Sergeant: 4 branches.

First Sergeant: 5 branches.

Warrant officer: 6 branches.

The officers used to wear their insignia on the shoulder, attached to a green velvet epaulette with the caption "Victory from God and Close Relief", embroidered with gold thread, on the side of which were red epaulette with the words "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful." His rank insignia was with a golden star with nine branches. As for the seal, according to the documents and correspondence bearing its seal, it had a circular shape with a star and a crescent in its center on its side, with the words "The Algerian National People's Army" (Chems Ed Dine, 1998, p. 46)

## 6.2. Weapon

The National Army of the Algerian People has received large material aid. This force made up of guerrillas must be able to prevent the National Liberation Front coming from Morocco towards the oil areas in the Sahara, and this aid has grown since the beginning of the experiment (the agreement). One day, Bellounis was upset when he arrived at the command center to find out contacts with the French authorities and discovered 7 or 8 Renault trucks, distributing cigarettes, French combat clothing, including military shoes, a radio station operated by a French army worker, and daily visits by French officers (Valette, 2001, p. 164)

### **Arming the National Army of the Algerian people in July 1957:**

1. **Weapons of French origin:** 6 24-29 / 14 MAT 38/10 Submachine Gun / MAT 49 Submachine Gun / A few 7.65 mm pistols.
2. **Weapons of British or American origin:** 2 BAR machine guns / 100 American rifles GARANT 60/8 American rifles / 2 or 3 Thomson machine gun / 20 pistols of 8mm.
3. **Weapons of German and Italian origin:** 60 to 80 Mauser rifles / 100 Statti suspension rings / 400 to 500 caliber hunting (Valette, 2001, p. 165).

In mid-January 1958, he parachuted 11 packages containing 3 casings of machine guns, a basket of attachments for this type of weapon, a box of grenades, and a Mortar of 60 mm (Valette, 2001, p. 165)

As for transportation and the hangar, Bellounis tried to equip his units. He had received 6 Jeeps in July 1957. Furthermore, in January 1958, he received another 12 Jeeps, a driving car and 9 GMC trucks. As for the financial aid to the Algerian national movement, he purchased fancy cars such as:

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"Packard", "Peugeot 203", and even a large "Delahaye", "Simca Aronde", in addition to 7 Peugeot trucks and Jeeps Willys (Valette, 2001, p. 168)

In December 1957, General Salan issued an order to distribute all equipment and weapons to Bellounis, whereby the liaison officers handed him transport equipment represented in: 6 jeeps, a driving car, and 3 trucks 203. The Algerian people's national army owned wireless equipment in general for short or medium-range locations, used in infantry units, in addition to 15 "SCR300" columns were installed. Bellounis was not in contact with his units except for the 11<sup>th</sup> Shock Parachute Regiment, which he was connected to by phone. Supplies increased over time (April 1958), namely 24 columns of SCR300 and 4 "ANGRC9" devices. (Valette, 2001, pp. 165-169)

Thus, beginning in September 1957, French aid began to flow into the army of "General Bellounis" in the form of various weapons, equipment, and materials in the form of a massive funding amounting to 70 million old francs per month. The general's share was two million francs as a salary, and the rest was for loyal soldiers and soldiers who joined him after they arrived from various regions of Algeria, France, and the recruitment areas. (Ageron, 1998, p. 69)

### **7. The most important battles between the Army of Bellounis and the National Liberation Army**

Many battles and clashes took place between the National Liberation Army and the Army of Bellounis, in numerous different places. Among these battles, we mention the Battle of Djbel Haouass on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1957; the Battle of Katiyya and Taouazara in the suburbs of Echaref in November 1957; the Battle of Djbel Mennaa in January 1958 in association with the French; the battle of Djbel Messaad in March 1958 in conjunction with the French; the battle of Zafaraniya in February 1958; the battle of Djbel Boudenzir on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1958. We will focus on the battle of Djbel Zarga on February 02<sup>nd</sup>, 1958.

This battle took place in the Zarga Mountain, which is considered one of the lofty mountains. Its height and extension are directed toward Djbel Messaad, which overlooks the village of Hamel in the third region, the Sixth State. The formations involved in this battle by the colonialists were a battalion of the Algerian People's National Army under the command of Abdelkader Latreche, a corps of paratroopers, a squadron of aircraft, and the 11th Shock Parachute Regiment, all under the command of Captain Rocolle (Le Mire, 1988, p. 182).

On the side of the National Liberation Army, there were soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion under the command of Omar Idris and with the assistance of Farhat Tayeb (Chaouki), Bouamama, Ben Sliman Slimani (Lakhal), and Derbali Sliman (Boukrouche) (جرد، 2009، صفحة 227)

The battle resulted in the deaths of 143 people, numerous injuries, the downing of an aircraft, the capture of weapons and a communication device as well as the death of Captain Rocolle. Concerning the Liberation Army, the two fighters Djelloul Meguellati and Sediki Hadj were martyred. (المنظمة الوطنية للمجاهدين، 1985، صفحة 35)

### 8. Bellounis's collapse

The National Liberation Front used the method of penetration and propaganda aimed at distorting the image of Bellounis among his followers and the residents of his area of activity. Omar Idris had an effective role in penetrating Bellounis's areas of influence such as Qantara, Laghouat and Ghardaia, where the nomadic Bedouins who were dependent on Bellounis were forced to flee to other areas (بلحاج، 2015، صفحة 171)

This penetration was confirmed by the statements of some French officials on many occasions, including the call of "Colonel Massignac" to the General to provide him with information about the Liberation Front's infiltration of the Army of Bellounis, which was confirmed by "General Salan" on May 07th, 1958 by sending a negative report stating that the Liberation Front penetrated the ranks of Bellounis, and this penetration also affected his staff. (Valette, 2001, p. 239)

As for the military, the Liberation Front remained in a continuous confrontation with the Army of Bellounis. However, what should be mentioned here is the military strategy aimed at entrapping Bellounis and ending his movement. This was done by targeting the members of the Bellounis army, as indicated by some archive documents, such as kidnapping and assassination (بلحاج، 2015، صفحة 174).

Furthermore, after the return of Omar Idris from Morocco, where he was reinforced with two battalions estimated at 250 moudjahidines from the Fifth State as part of the military strategy to confront Bellounis, the latter's forces became trapped between Omar Idris's forces on the one hand, and the third region's forces led by Ahmed Ben Abderrezak (El Haoues) on the other hand. Within this framework and the plan, the two areas carried out several attacks and clashes that had an effective impact in inflicting defeats on the movement of Bellounis in the mountains of Mennaa, Boukhill, Nisnisa, Kroun EL Kebch, Kehila, Boudérine and El Meksem. The remnants of the traitors retreated from the mountains to settle in the flat lands close to the centers of French colonialists (المنظمة الوطنية للمجاهدين، 1985، صفحة 40)

Moreover, in order to settle scores with the traitor Bellounis, the military leaders in Morocco held meetings in June 1958 to study the elimination of Bellounis, who was surrounded by French forces in each of the Amour Mountains in the east, Qada in Aflou in the north, and Mount Boukhel in the southeast. On June 15<sup>th</sup>, a meeting was held near Tizi Ouzou, where officials

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of the Third State and front units met in the Ouled Naïel Mountains to take a joint decision on the measures to be taken against the forces of Bellounis and the French forces. On June 18<sup>th</sup> of the same year, the French forces learned of the order issued to the military commanders of the Liberation Army to do the impossible to dismantle Bellounis's forces. (Valette, 2001, p. 238)

The rupture between Bellounis and the colonial authorities finally reflected in the armed confrontation between the two parties in the town of Ksar EL Hirane in Laghouat at the beginning of May 1958, when the elements of Bellounis, led by Si Larbi, were surprised by a sudden attack by the French forces. The operation ended with the escape of about 1,200 armed men from the Army of Bellounis, where they joined the National Liberation Front according to the newspaper "Paris-Journal", which was seized in Algiers and was banned from publishing because of its publication of this news (بلحاج، 2015، صفحة 178). On June 04<sup>th</sup>, 1958, in a final meeting in the Senate, Bellounis was delivered an ultimatum of General "Salan" which included the following: "join the French army officially and remove your seditious flag, otherwise we consider you our enemies". (Valette, 2001, p. 242)

However, Bellounis responded negatively to this offer. On this basis, the military authorities began to liquidate the Bellounis file through a military operation called "Damier", a process that began with a psychological war on Bellounis. According to reports, the psychological warfare bore fruit through the joining of many Bellounis's members to the French forces, and there are those who remained loyal to Bellounis. (بلحاج، 2015، صفحة 181)

As for the fate of Mohammed Bellounis, it was confirmed on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1958, when he was found shot dead in Djebel Zemra, 30 km from Bou Saâda. Opinions differed on the cause of his death, with some sources claiming that on July 13, Bellounis was arrested while riding a camel on the road leading to Djelfa. He was taken freely, rather than a prisoner, to the army camp in Bou Saâda, where he was killed by the Harki who recognized him and killed him in revenge for those who were his victims (Valette, 2001, p. 255). There are stories stating that the National Liberation Front adopted his liquidation by saying: "The execution of the traitor Bellounis by the patriots of the National Liberation Front and the joining of all his elements to the Liberation Army put an end to the recent French colonial attempt to divide the Algerian people". While Thomas Obermann indicated that the leader of the National Army of the Algerian People was killed in an attack by a patrol of his former supporters who had defected from him (Guillard , 2009, p. 179). His body was displayed on the back of an open truck after he was tied to a wooden board to roam all the markets of the neighboring cities of Bou Saâda and Djelfa (Chems Ed Dine, 1998, p. 82)

## Conclusion

The Bellounis movement was a French industry par excellence, found through logistical, military, and material support, making this movement a remote control force that could be directed to anyone. Moreover, the agreement, cooperation, and joint action between Bellounis and the French army against the National Liberation Front was a fatal blow for the Messali party, which lost much of its credibility.

The last days of Bellounis and his movement were indicative of the fluctuation of his positions between the continuation of the alliance with the French army on the one hand, and anti-colonialism on the other hand. This hostility against colonialism was his common denominator with the National Liberation Front. He lost many of his soldiers and his army, carrying their weapons against the French forces after the "Damier" operation.

The leadership of the movement cracked, especially after the political and military strategy set by the state leadership to confront the Bellounis movement. The public became increasingly aware of the need to support the leaders of the National Liberation Army and join the revolution, as well as the violent battles in which the Bellounis army was defeated and lost a large number of his aides and huge quantities of his weapons.

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