

Global Elites and the Algerian Revolution (Models)

Hadjersi Khadra 

Abstract. *The Algerian Revolution represents a universal cause that united diverse components of humanity against colonialism. Rooted in universal human values and Islamic teachings, as well as the principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality, the revolution sought to secure the fundamental rights of the Algerian people. Consequently, intellectual elites from Europe, the Americas, and Asia—diverse in ethnicity, religion, and ideology—rallied to its cause. The primary driver for these elites was the moral and humanistic impulse to oppose colonial oppression. French, Belgian, Swiss, Italian, Austrian, Yugoslav, Argentine, and Japanese intellectuals translated their convictions into action, either theoretically through media propaganda or practically by establishing support networks, providing legal defence, forging documents, and offering material aid. This article examines models of these global elites and analyses their motivations and contributions. The results demonstrate that the Algerian Revolution attracted a diverse coalition of global elites whose motivations, while varied, converged on a belief in the justness of the Algerian cause. Several key patterns emerge from the analysis.*

Keywords: *global elites, Algerian revolution, intellectuals, support networks, anti-colonialism*

Mohamed Boudiaf University of Msila, Algeria

E-mail: khadra.hadjersi@univ-msila.dz

Received: 11 May 2025; Accepted: 11 April 2026; Published online: 28 June 2026

© The Author(s) 2026. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

Qlobal elitəlar və Əlcəzair inqilabı (modellər)

Hadjersi Xadra 

Xülasə. *Əlcəzair İnqilabı, bəşəriyyətin müxtəlif komponentlərini müstəmləkəçiliyə qarşı birləşdirən universal bir səbəbi təmsil edir. Universal insan dəyərlərinə və İslam təlimlərinə, eləcə də azadlıq, qardaşlıq və bərabərlik prinsiplərinə əsaslanan inqilab Əlcəzair xalqının fundamental hüquqlarını təmin etməyə çalışırdı. Nəticə etibarilə, etnik mənsubiyyəti, dini və ideologiyası müxtəlif olan Avropa, Amerika və Asiyadan olan intellektual elitəlar öz məqsədinə çatmaq üçün birləşdilər. Bu elitəların əsas hərəkətverici qüvvəsi müstəmləkə zülmünə qarşı çıxmaq üçün mənəvi və humanist impuls idi. Fransız, Belçika, İsveçrə, İtaliya, Avstriya, Yuqoslaviya, Argentina və Yapon ziyalıları nəzəri olaraq media təbliğatı vasitəsilə və ya praktik olaraq dəstək şəbəkələri yaratmaq, hüquqi müdafiə təmin etmək, sənədləri saxtalaşdırmaq və maddi yardım təklif etməklə inanclarını həyata keçirdilər. Bu məqalədə bu qlobal elitəların modelləri araşdırılır və onların motivasiyaları və töhfələri təhlil edilir.*

Nəticələr göstərir ki, Əlcəzair İnqilabı müxtəlif motivasiyaları olsa da, Əlcəzair işinin ədalətliyinə inam üzərində birləşən global elitaların müxtəlif koalisiyasını cəlb etmişdir. Təhlildən bir neçə əsas nümunə ortaya çıxır.

Açar sözlər: global elitalar, Əlcəzair inqilabı, ziyalılar, dəstək şəbəkələri, müstəmləkəçilik əleyhinə

Məhəmməd Budiaf Msila Universiteti, Əlcəzair

E-poçt: khadra.hadjersi@univ-msila.dz

Daxil oldu: 11 May 2025; Qəbul edildi: 11 Aprel 2026; Onlayn dərc edildi: 28 İyun 2026

© Müəllif(lər) 2026. Bu, Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Beynəlxalq Lisenziyası (CC BYNC 4.0) şərtləri altında paylanan açıq girişli məqalədir.

Introduction

The Algerian revolutionary project is linked to a system of ideas and values that establish its legitimacy. These values were enshrined in the 1st November Declaration, which combined the principles of armed struggle with those of a humanitarian revolution rooted in Islamic teachings—brotherhood, tolerance, noble morals, and defence of one's country. Furthermore, the revolution was imbued with the principles of the French Revolution (liberty, fraternity, equality) and the right to self-determination for colonised peoples. Consequently, it earned the admiration of revolutionaries worldwide.

Many humanitarians, organisations, and individuals from around the world emerged to support the Algerian people. The cooperation of Arab, Islamic, and Third World countries is unsurprising. However, the cooperation of European countries allied with France, and even French nationals themselves, raises important questions: What motivated these people to defend and support the Algerian Revolution? Were their positions born of pure humanity, viewing freedom as a supreme value? Or were they driven by the higher interest of saving France's honour? This article explores these questions by examining specific models of European, American, and Asian elites who supported the Algerian cause.

Methods

This study adopts a historical and descriptive-analytical methodology. Primary sources include personal testimonies (such as an interview with the mujahida known as "The German Flower" conducted on 18 May 2021), published memoirs (e.g., Moureaux, 2000; Kaminsky, 2015), and contemporary newspaper articles from "El Moudjahid" (1957–1959). Secondary sources comprise doctoral theses (Ben Flic, 2007; Iddou, 2018), conference proceedings (Bagnato, 2010; Ould Kablia, 2010), and diplomatic documents from the Swiss archives (DDS, 1960). The study analyses the motivations, actions, and sacrifices of intellectual elites from Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Yugoslavia, Argentina, and Japan, categorising their support into theoretical (media, writing) and practical (networks, legal aid, forgery, material assistance) forms.

Results

European Elites and the Algerian Revolution:

Belgian Intellectuals:

The Belgian lawyer Serge Moureaux believed in the humane nature of the Algerian Revolution and saw it as his duty to oppose injustice. Accompanied by Marc Decoke, André Merchie, and Cécile Draps, and coordinating with French lawyer Jacques Vergès, Moureaux defended FLN activists before French and Belgian courts (Moureaux, 2015, p. 9). He was dubbed the "lawyer of the fellagha"

(Algerian fighters). Moureaux and his colleagues saved dozens of activists sentenced to death, including Akli Rabah and Abdi Arzqui (Haroune, 2006, pp. 167-181). Despite facing disciplinary penalties, including temporary suspension from practising law (Moureaux, 2015, pp. 20-21), Moureaux stated on the 50th anniversary of the revolution: "None of those who helped Algeria regain its independence have regretted it" (Moureaux, 2004). Other Belgian supporters included Luc Somerhausen, Jacques Nagels, the Jacmain spouses, Jean Doneux, and Jean van Lierde (Algeria Press Service (APS), 2020), (APS, 2020). The Belgian ambassador to Algeria, Pierre Gillon (2017), noted: "Their motives were diverse, but one factor united them: their belief in a just cause."

Another example is Lontin Georgette Jarradah Qandanbeel, nicknamed the "German Flower." At age 19, she enlisted in the revolution, transporting suitcases, smuggling Algerians, and providing her home as a shelter. After her husband's imprisonment, she travelled to Algeria, worked as a nurse in the mountains with the mujahideen for eleven months, and settled in Algeria after independence (Interview with the mujahida, 18 May 2021).

Swiss Intellectuals

Switzerland maintained official neutrality but unofficially tolerated FLN activities. An FLN office was opened in Bern led by Tayeb Bouhrouf with the help of Frenchmen Serge Michel and Jack Bertoli (Favrod, 1984, p. 321). A Swiss memorandum (DDS, 1960, document no. 15172) concluded that Switzerland had no international obligation to arrest Muslim deserters fleeing France.

Journalist Charles Henri Favrod, after witnessing Algerian suffering, contributed by publishing articles exposing colonial practices and joined the Jeanson network, providing shelter to activists. His first book, "The Algerian Revolution", was refused by a French publisher who insisted on calling it an "insurrection" (Favrod, 1984, p. 139).

Italian Intellectuals

Enrico Mattei, founder of ENI and opponent of the global petroleum cartel, supported the Algerian cause politically and materially. He used his newspaper "Il Giorno" to criticise French policy and support Algerian self-determination (Bagnato, 2010, p. 33). Mattei financed a conference on peace in the Mediterranean in Florence (3–6 October 1958), where Ahmed Boumendjel of the Provisional Government spoke despite French protests (Droua, 2010, p. 51). He also sponsored the training of future Algerian petroleum executives at ENI schools (Bagnato, 2010, p. 34). In recognition, Krim Belkacem sent thanks to Mattei in June 1960. According to Abdelmadjid Chekhli (2010, p. 59), Mattei paid with his life for defending the Algerian cause. Other Italian supporters included Giorgio La Pira, Lelio Basso, Pietro Nenni, and journalist Mario Pirani (Malik, 1960, p. 61; Bataglia, 2010, p. 43).

Austrian Intellectuals

Austria adopted a policy of neutrality but embraced the Algerian cause. Rimer Holzinger, from the Austrian Socialist Youth Movement, was urged by Winfried Muller (Si Mustapha Muller) to support deserters from the Foreign Legion (Edo, 2018, p. 270). Other figures included Ismail Balisha, Karl Blecha, Peter Kreisky, and Rudolf Kirchschläger (Edo, 2018, p. 270). Journalist Georg Scheuer published FLN statements in "Neue Österreich", including a statement by Ferhat Abbas on 8 February 1960 (Friedrich, 2010, pp. 87-91). The Austrian orientalist Jantsch wrote: "The Algerian Revolution did not take place for supposed reforms... but for complete freedom and total independence" (El Moudjahid, 1957).

Yugoslav Intellectuals (Photographers and Journalists):

Stevan Labudović, the official photographer for President Tito, became known as the "Photographer of the Algerian Revolution". Sent to Algeria in 1959 for two months, he remained for years,

documenting battles. He stated: "They fought with weapons, and I fought with my camera" (Amraoui, 2016, p. 347). His archive included approximately 83 km of video film reels and 274 photographs (Yahyaoui, 2017). Journalist Zdravko Pečar, correspondent for "Borba", stayed with revolutionaries for a month and later earned a doctorate with a thesis titled "Algeria up to Independence" (Pečar, 2011, p. 7). He wrote: "The essence, strength, and ethic of the Algerian War lie in the people's determination to win their national freedom" (Pečar, 2011, pp. 11-12).

American Elites: The Argentine Photographer Adolfo Kaminsky:

Adolfo Kaminsky, an Argentine photographer of Russian-Jewish origin, was a forger for humanitarian reasons. After visiting Algeria in 1953, he stated: "Those scenes troubled me greatly; I often felt ashamed to be among the whites" (Kaminsky, 2015, pp. 205-209). In 1957, he joined Francis Jeanson's network, providing forged passports and identity cards for FLN activists for five years (Kaminsky, 2015, p. 125). He also sheltered wanted FLN activists. After independence, he burned counterfeit money intended to destabilise France's economy and settled in Algeria, marrying an Algerian woman (Kaminsky, 2015; www.blogs.mediapart.fr, 2019).

Asian Elites: The Japanese Journalist Suzumi Taniguchi:

In 1957, Algerian students Chawki Mostefaï and Mustapha Nekkadi were invited to Japan. A 21-year-old Japanese student, Suzumi Taniguchi, accompanied them as a translator for 15 days (Taniguchi, 2014, p. 110). He stated: "I was greatly impressed by their national enthusiasm, so I immediately decided to study the Algerian problem in depth" (Taniguchi, 2005). He published a bulletin titled "Algérie News" in Japanese and French. With Abdelkader Chanderli's help, he contributed to establishing the Japan-North Africa Friendship Association on 14 February 1961, which included parliamentarians Yasuhiro Nakasone and Takuma Utsunomiya (Kisaichi, 2014, p. 25). Other supporters included Nagano (President of the Japanese Lawyers' Association) and Dan Tokusaburō (Kiouane, 2009, pp. 36-39).

Discussion

The results demonstrate that the Algerian Revolution attracted a diverse coalition of global elites whose motivations, while varied, converged on a belief in the justness of the Algerian cause. Several key patterns emerge from the analysis.

First, "moral and humanistic impulses" were the most consistently cited motivation. Serge Moureaux (2015, p. 10) described his work as "the single most useful thing I have accomplished in my life." Adolfo Kaminsky (2015, p. 125) stated he was "convinced from the start that the Algerian people would win their independence." This suggests that the revolution's framing as a humanitarian struggle against colonial oppression resonated deeply with intellectuals across different cultural and political contexts.

Second, political ideology played a significant role, particularly among leftist and socialist circles. Italian supporters like Enrico Mattei and the Austrian Socialist Youth Movement acted within anti-colonial and anti-imperialist frameworks. However, the presence of Christian Democrats in Italy (Mattei) and conservative figures in Japan (Nakasone) indicates that support transcended strict ideological boundaries.

Third, personal relationships and direct exposure to Algerian suffering were critical catalysts. Charles Henri Favrod's trip to Algeria in 1952 and his meetings with Algerian soldiers in Indochina transformed his journalism. Suzumi Taniguchi's 15 days with Algerian students changed his life's trajectory. This highlights the importance of people-to-people contact in building transnational solidarity.

Fourth, national policies of neutrality (Switzerland, Austria) created enabling environments for support networks, even as France pressured these states. The Swiss memorandum (DDS, 1960) legalistically justifying non-arrest of deserters demonstrates how neutral states could tacitly accommodate anti-colonial movements.

Fifth, the costs of solidarity”“ were substantial. Serge Moureaux faced suspension from law practice. Enrico Mattei was assassinated—widely believed to be because of his opposition to French colonial interests (Chekhli, 2010, p. 59). Georges Laperches lost his life. Yet, none of the figures studied expressed regret, reinforcing the depth of their commitment.

Finally, the transition from wartime solidarity to post-independence friendships is notable. Many supporters—Kaminsky, the "German Flower," Taniguchi—settled in Algeria or maintained lifelong ties, becoming bridges between their home countries and the new Algerian state. This suggests that their engagement was not opportunistic but rooted in genuine human connection.

Conclusion

Thanks to the struggle of the Algerian people for freedom—a natural and legitimate right of every human being—and their adoption of armed struggle not as an end but as a means to achieve peace, the revolution came to represent the struggle of all humanity against colonialism worldwide. The solidarity of leaders, free people, and intellectuals from all races, ethnicities, religions, and ideological persuasions rallied to the Algerian Revolution. These global elites translated their convictions into action through legal defence, media propaganda, document forgery, material aid, and personal sacrifice. Their legacy continues to serve as a model of transnational solidarity for justice and human dignity.

References

1. DDS. (1960, September 1). *La Suisse est-elle obligée d'interner les déserteurs musulmans en Provence de la France?* (Document No. 15172). Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland 1848–1978. DODIS Archive
2. *El Moudjahid*. (1957, September 5). The Algerian problem by the great Austrian orientalist Janzet. *El Moudjahid*, (10).
3. Interview with the mujahida Lontin Georgette Jarradah Qandanbeel (“The German Flower”) at her home in Tiket, Batna Province. (2021, May 18). [Personal interview].
4. Favrod, C. H. (1984). *Quelques remarques en marge de la négociation franco-algérienne et les non-offices suisses: Les retentissements de la révolution algérienne*. ENAL.
5. Haroun, A. (2006). *La 7e Wilaya: La guerre du FLN en France, 1954–1962*. Casbah Éditions.
6. Kaminsky, S. (2015). *Adolfo Kaminsky: A life of forgery* (Original work published as *Une vie de faussaire*). Dar Al-Qasba.
7. Moureaux, S. (2000). *Avocats sans frontière: Le collectif belge et la guerre d'Algérie*. Casbah Éditions.
8. Pecar, Z. (2011). *Algeria: A Yugoslav journalist's testimony about the Algerian War* (F. Saidi, Trans.). Moufem Publishing. (Original work published in the 1960s)
9. Taniguchi, S. (2014). The National Liberation Front mission in the Far East in Tokyo: How the Japanese supported this newborn state. In H. Mas'oud et al. (Trans.), *Japan and Algeria: 50 years of friendship*. Dar Al-Qasba.
10. Benflis, A. (2007). *The foreign policy of the Algerian Revolution: Constants and variables (1954–1962)* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Algiers.
11. İddou, C. (2018). *Support networks for the Algerian Revolution in Western Europe (1957–1962)* (Doktorluq dissertasiyası). Djilali Liabes Universiteti, Sidi Bel Abbès.

12. Bagnato, B. (2010). Italy and the Algerian War (Government, parties, social forces). A. Azizi (Tərc.), *Enrico Mattei and Algeria During the National Liberation War* adlı konfrans materiallarında. Granada Nəşriyyatı.
13. Bataglia, M. (2010). Memoirs of a former ambassador or Mattei's special envoy for petroleum affairs in the Maghreb region. A. Azizi (Tərc.), *Enrico Mattei and Algeria During the National Liberation War* adlı konfrans materiallarında. Granada Nəşriyyatı.
14. Chekhli, A. (2010). The Evian Accords. A. Azizi (Tərc.), *Enrico Mattei and Algeria During the National Liberation War* adlı konfrans materiallarında. Granada Nəşriyyatı.
15. Droua, A. C. (2010). *Enrico Mattei and Algeria During the National Liberation War* adlı konfrans materiallarında. A. Azizi (Tərc.). Granada Nəşriyyatı.
16. Gillon, P. (2017). *International conference on the Northern Front: Belgians and the War of Liberation (1954–1962)*. Milli Kitabxana.
17. Kisaichi, M. (2014). Algerian–Japanese relations: A model of solidarity and cooperation. A. Azizi (Tərc.), *Enrico Mattei and Algeria* adlı konfrans materiallarında. Granada Nəşriyyatı.
18. Malik, R. (2010). The wealth of the Algerian Sahara in the Evian negotiations. A. Azizi (Tərc.), *Enrico Mattei and Algeria* adlı konfrans materiallarında. Granada Nəşriyyatı.
19. Ould Kablia, D. (2010). Enrico Mattei and the Algerian Revolution. A. Azizi (Tərc.), *Enrico Mattei and Algeria During the National Liberation War* adlı konfrans materiallarında. Granada Nəşriyyatı.
20. Amiri, L. (2010). Neighbourhood spaces in decolonisation conflicts: The case of Switzerland during the Algerian War of Independence. *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, (97–98), 50–57.
21. Amraoui, D. E. (2016, iyul–dekabr). Foreign photographers in the War of Liberation: Between profession and friendship. *Âges*, (30–31).
22. APS. (2020, 10 noyabr). *Serge Moureaux: "The work of Belgian lawyers was an attempt to highlight the intelligence of a people who had slavery imposed upon them"*. *Algerie Presse Service*.
23. Moureaux, S. (2004, 10 noyabr). *Speech by Serge Moureaux on the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution*. Embassy of Algeria in Brussels.
24. Pečar, Z. (1958, 8 dekabr). Thirty days with the Algerian revolutionaries. *El Moudjahid*, (33).
25. Taniguchi, S. (2005, 27 aprel). *Distinction: Medal of Recognition awarded to Mr Susumu Taniguchi*. Japan-Algeria Centre.
26. Yahyaoui, D. (2017). *Friends of the Algerian Revolution*. Radio Algeria International.