

## **The Algerian Revolution and Liberation Movements in Africa The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) as a Model (1956-1974)**

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### **Abstract**

This study seeks to shed light on the influence of the Algerian Revolution on the thought and practice of the liberation movement in Angola. It also highlights the various forms of support provided by post-independence Algeria to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, which spearheaded the fight against Portuguese colonialism for nearly twenty years.

**Keywords:** Angola, Portuguese colonialism, Algeria, Africa, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola

### **Introduction**

The Portuguese colonial represents the earliest European incursion into the African continent and, paradoxically, the last to withdraw from it. From the launch of its colonial campaigns in 1415 with the occupation of the Moroccan city of Ceuta, to its departure from its final colonies in southern and western Africa in 1975, Portugal's colonial trajectory was both lengthy and arduous, marked by centuries of domination that inflicted profound suffering upon many African peoples. Among the nations most grievously affected was Angola, which endured nearly five centuries of Portuguese rule, one of the longest colonial occupations in modern history.

Despite the occupation's cruelty and persistence, the Angolan people managed to organize their resistance, inspired by the global wave of decolonization that spread across the world in the mid-twentieth century. In their struggle, they gained vital support from several nations, with Algeria standing at the forefront., which had only recently emerged from its own monumental revolutionary war against French colonialism. Algeria's own struggle against and victory over colonial rule made it a natural ally of the Angolan liberation movement.

This research paper seeks to explore the depth of Algeria's role in the Angolan struggle for independence between 1962 and 1975. Its purpose is to examine Algeria's efforts to organize liberation movements across Africa and to show the different ways it supported the Angolan cause., By fostering solidarity across Africa and beyond, offering both financial and military assistance, or diplomatic support that helped Angolan negotiators and confirmed their people's right to freedom and self-determination.

## 1. Historical Overview

The Portuguese colonization of Africa opened the door wide for other European powers to penetrate the continent. Portugal, therefore, was both the first to arrive and the last to leave, with Angola among its earliest and most long-standing colonies. remaining under Portuguese domination for nearly five centuries (1482–1975). Despite long-standing colonial rule, the Angolan national movement eventually brought together its people and allies, sparking a revolution against Portuguese control.

As the drive for national freedom became stronger, the 1950s and 1960s saw the rise of several liberation movements that led Angola's fight for independence. The most prominent among these were:

### **The National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA):**

Formed in 1962 by merging the Union of Angolan Peoples and the Angolan Democratic Party, the FNLA was notable for its close ties with the capitalist bloc, especially the United States, which gave the FNLA financial support and technical guidance. However, this connection made it hard to unite with other Angolan liberation movements that avoided ties with the West. (Silva, 2018, p. 5).

Nevertheless, the FNLA gained broad international recognition as the legitimate representative of the Angolan people and received strong support from the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In this context, the Government of the Republic of Angola in Exile (GRAE), led by Holden Roberto and established in 1963, secured recognition from eleven African governments as the sole legitimate authority representing the Angolan people (Hughes, 1963, p. 5). Furthermore, the Conference of African Heads of State and Government, held in Cairo from July 17 to 21, 1964, officially recognized the FNLA and its government-in-exile, marking a new stage in Angola's fight for independence and opening up new political and strategic possibilities. (Organization of African Unity, 1970).

### **The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA):**

The birth of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was the outcome of internal disputes within the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). Its founder, Jonas Savimbi, who came from the Ovimbundu ethnic group, which makes up almost one-third of Angola's population, left the FNLA on July 16, 1964, because of disagreements over the movement's leadership and direction. Savimbi argued that the movement's headquarters should be set up **inside** Angola, not outside the country. This way, the struggle stayed connected to the realities of Angola's people and land.

In his quest for external support, he aimed to build connections with various actors both in the region and abroad, he undertook diplomatic tours that included Algeria, China, Vietnam, North Korea, Egypt, and several Eastern European countries. By 1965, the latter managed to recruit several Angolan fighters from the Kongwa base in Tanzania., and on March 15, 1966, he formally announced the establishment of UNITA.

Shortly thereafter, on September 18 of the same year, UNITA launched its first military operation against Portuguese colonial forces. Its attacks became more frequent and intense throughout 1967, particularly in rural areas, which strengthened its presence in Angola. However, over time, support for UNITA, both from outside and within Angola, started to weaken, causing its influence and operations to gradually decline. (Höring, 2015, p. 40).

### **The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA):**

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was founded in December 1956 through the merger of the Angolan Communist Party (PLUA) and the Movement for the Independence of Angola (MIA). The movement emerged from a group of exiled students and intellectuals, many of whom adopted Marxist ideas and kept close links with the French Communist Party. From 1964 onwards, the MPLA adopted an explicitly leftist orientation and established direct links with Moscow, which let it receive important support from countries with the same ideas, especially in Africa, including Tanzania and Algeria. (Silva, 2007, pp. 146–147).

The MPLA supported creating a democratic system that included many political parties and civil society groups, guaranteeing respect for different religions and ethnic groups, equal rights, and no discrimination for anyone in Angola. One key feature of the movement was its diverse membership, with militants from many different ethnic and racial backgrounds, whites, blacks, and mixed-race Angolans, as well as members of the Ovimbundu population in Luanda. This diversity enhanced the MPLA's pluralistic and representative character.

The movement received extensive support from numerous African and non-African countries, particularly after its participation in the Second Conference of African Peoples, held in Tunis from January 25 to 31, 1960. Among its key supporters were Algeria, Ghana, Mali, Guinea-Conakry, Tanzania, Morocco, and Egypt, in addition to China and the Soviet Union, despite the political differences between the two countries. This wide support across Africa and beyond led the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to officially recognize the MPLA as the main movement leading the fight against Portuguese colonialism. (Silva, 2018, p. 7).

From 1967 onwards, the support provided by China, Zambia, and Tanzania played a decisive role in expanding the MPLA's operations. It facilitated the opening of a new front in eastern Angola, with Zambia serving as a major logistical base and rear support zone, while the coasts of Tanzania were used to move Chinese weapons to Angola's battlefields. This network of regional support significantly enhanced the MPLA's military capabilities, increased its movement on the ground and gave it more flexibility in fighting Portuguese colonial forces. (Agostinho, 2011, pp. 15–16).

## **2. Algeria's Vision of Liberation Issues in the African Continent**

Algeria's view on decolonization was shaped by its own struggle for independence, a fight that went on for more than a century and a third. Throughout those years, Algerians came to know the colonizer intimately, enduring and studying its methods. Experience and history had taught them that what was taken by force could only be regained by force, and that all forms of colonialism shared the same essence.

Based on this conviction, Algerian leaders, in the wake of independence, adopted the slogan "Liberation struggles are indivisible", guided by the principle of the "unity of battlefronts." Algeria thus began to support independence and revolutionary movements confronting colonial and dictatorial regimes. The African continent was the primary area for this support due to its geographical closeness and the fact that all its nations, without exception, had suffered the flames of colonialism.

Within this context, President Ahmed Ben Bella, soon after becoming president, he promised several Angolan leaders that Algeria would give material and diplomatic support to help Angola gain its independence. Ben Bella even said he was ready to send volunteers if needed, he considered Algeria's struggle closely connected to Angola's eventual victory. He believed that failing to secure that victory would greatly weaken the Algerian revolutionary example, then widely recognized around the world.(Ahmed Ben Bella, n.d., pp. 27–53).

For Ben Bella, the Angolan cause was similar to that of "Arab Palestine." He believed Arabs had a moral duty to support it, just as they supported Palestine, since Africa formed part of their strategic and security space. (Safi Saïd, 2012, p. 146). Ben Bella made no attempt to conceal Algeria's dispatch of weapons and volunteers to different battlefronts; he stated it publicly before large crowds. During a mass rally in Algiers in November 1964, he proclaimed: "*We shall send weapons and volunteers to our Congolese brothers... as we have already done.*" (The President's Daily Brief, 1964, p. 6).

As part of its effort to end colonialism, Algeria tried to share its revolutionary experience and spread its model of resistance to other parts of the world. This was shown in the way it welcomed many fighters and activists from different continents. Although the country was still healing from its own war, it became a stronghold of international struggle and a "Mecca" for revolutionaries. Many came looking for safety and support, and Algeria soon became a refuge and meeting place for some of the most important leaders of liberation movements around the world.

Among those received were figures such as Dr. Eris and Karl Michael, leader of the Black Panthers, along with members of the Mozambique Liberation Front and the Swiss Liberation Movement. Algerian airports were often crowded with revolutionaries from Brazil, Chile, South Africa, Chad, Angola, and other nations, drawn by the revolutionary spirit that permeated the country and the sense of belonging to an alternative homeland that revitalized their struggle for freedom and emancipation.

To help these militants and organize cooperation, the Algerian authorities created a special unit to support African activists and exiles, based in Ben Aknoun. The unit was led by Colonel Slimane Hoffman, the FLN's advisor on international affairs, with Major Bekhti Nemiche as his assistant. This cell became Algeria's extended arm, reaching out to many countries still suffering under colonial rule.

Algeria's support for these revolutionaries even covered their daily needs. As the number of activists and refugees grew, the authorities provided housing for them, and many were able to eat for free at the well-known Pasteur Restaurant. A 1972 report in *Le Monde Diplomatique* noted that 27 liberation movements were present in Algeria at the time, and the government was spending about 500,000 francs each month to support these opposition groups.(Fábio Lucas da Cruz, 2016, pp. 64–65).

A bulletin issued by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in January 1964 reported the arrival of an Algerian ship in Dar es Salaam, carrying weapons and supplies for liberation movements by the promise made by President Ahmed Ben Bella to his Tanzanian counterpart, Julius Nyerere, during the latter's visit to Algeria to attend the celebrations of Independence Day on July 5, 1963.

This support was not limited to Tanzania alone. The same report indicated that a portion of the military supplies might have been intended for Mozambican and South African refugees residing in Tanzania. As part of its military training and capacity-building efforts, Algeria hosted hundreds of Mozambican fighters during this period. They received intensive guerrilla warfare training before the first units were sent to Tanzania at the end of 1963. (Central Intelligence Agency, 1964).

During that same year, Algeria hosted over a thousand fighters from several African countries, giving them advanced military training to improve their combat skills. To support this, the authorities provided the Châteauneuf military camp for training MPLA fighters. They also offered logistical support, helping with passports, visas, and travel arrangements for opposition leaders and revolutionaries.

Algeria's support went beyond logistics; it also used its media to promote and publicize liberation movements. Algerian newspapers and radio stations provided coverage for these groups. They were also given official permission to print and distribute revolutionary journals and bulletins. In addition, Algeria's diplomacy strengthened its role within the Non-Aligned Movement, using this platform to gain support from Africa and around the world for liberation movements based in Algeria. (Fábio Lucas da Cruz, 2016, p. 66).

This support went beyond Africa, reaching movements from other regions as well. These included the Palestinian Liberation Movement (Fatah), the Provisional Government of Vietnam, which had its headquarters in El Biar, and the Khmer United National Front (KUNF) of Cambodia, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (formerly the Dhofar Liberation Front) (Fábio Lucas da Cruz, 2016, p. 66).

After the 1967 Arab defeat (the Naksa), Algeria took an even broader approach in supporting liberation movements beyond Africa. When Ben Bella's successor, Houari Boumediene, cut diplomatic ties with the United States because of its strong support for Israel during the war, Algeria increased its aid to liberation movements, especially those not aligned with the Western bloc, such as the Vietnamese resistance and the American Black Panther Party.

Within this framework, Algeria welcomed Stokely Carmichael, a leading thinker of the Black Panthers, on September 6, 1967, followed in 1969 by Eldridge Cleaver, one of the party's top figures. The Algerian authorities provided Cleaver with a monthly salary, and he became both ambassador and head of the party's international section, officially established in Algiers in 1970. This was the first time in the history of the Black struggle in the United States that the movement had an official representation abroad. (Youssef Oussama Bounab, n.d.).

The Central Intelligence Agency described Algeria as having been, and still being, "the principal and safest haven for revolutionary exiles from all corners of the world." The report credited this wide-ranging support to Algeria's "revolutionary zeal," which had made the country a global center for liberation movements, including the Black Panthers, Quebec separatists, and political prisoners from the United States and Southern Africa.

To promote African solidarity, Eldridge Cleaver worked with several leaders of African liberation movements living in Algiers to organize the 1969 "Pan-African Festival." The event was officially sponsored by the Algerian authorities and supervised by the Ministry of Information and Culture, led by Mohamed Ben Yahia.



The festival stood out for the large participation of representatives from liberation movements, as well as prominent artists and intellectuals from around the world. It provided a unique chance to build ties of cooperation and solidarity between political activists and cultural figures from many countries, while also bringing global attention to African causes. The event was a major success, the continent had never before seen a cultural gathering of such size and impact. It played a key role in strengthening cooperation among liberation movements, turning culture into a tool of resistance and a political instrument against colonialism.(Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, 2008, p. 161).

### **3.Ahmed Ben Bella: Institutionalizing the Liberation Struggle in Africa**

After gaining independence, Algeria quickly committed to supporting liberation movements across Africa, following a clear diplomatic plan and a broad strategic vision that included appointing a Special Advisor for African Affairs. Honoring promises made by the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic during the war, Ben Bella's first government stepped up efforts to invite many leaders of nationalist movements to Algiers. These meetings provided a chance to exchange ideas and coordinate efforts to defeat colonialism and achieve independence.

As former colonial powers pressured their ex-colonies to expel and persecute liberation leaders, Algeria became a safe haven for many of them. Understanding the importance of offering political and diplomatic protection, something the Algerian revolution had itself benefited from through its representative offices abroad and the Provisional Government established on 19 September 1958, independent Algeria quickly opened offices for several liberation organizations.

In this context, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) opened a representative office in central Algiers on Didouche Mourad Street in early February 1963. The opening was attended by Ben Bella, the Ministers of Sports and Trade, and the ambassadors of the Soviet Union, China, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. (Alves, 2013, p. 67).

The MPLA's office in Algiers took advantage of the Non-Aligned Movement Conference to intensify its activities, launching a broad campaign against the arrest of some of its members by its rival, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). This initiative reflected the strong political backing the movement enjoyed, a point emphasized by Mário de Andrade during a press conference in which he praised Ben Bella's government for its role in strengthening the MPLA (Alves, 2013, p. 67).

Meanwhile, Algiers also hosted the headquarters of the "National Liberation Front," which united several anti-fascist movements engaged in the struggle against Portugal's Salazar regime. The Algerian authorities welcomed large numbers of opponents and political exiles, providing them with both material and logistical support as part of their broader efforts to end Portuguese colonial presence in Africa (Diogo Silva Cancela, 2014, p. 59).

Algiers also hosted the leaders of the Angolan Unity Front (FUA) following a wave of arrests and repression targeting its members. In light of the severe financial difficulties that hindered the Front's operations, its leader Daskalos transferred the movement's activities to Algeria in January 1963, where he and his companions were received by President Ahmed Ben

Bella. The Algerian government granted them the right to reside and work, particularly in the education sector.

However, tensions soon arose between the Unity Front, led mainly by white Angolans, and the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which enjoyed stronger support from the Algerian authorities. In addition, suspicions surrounding alleged collaboration between the FUA member Gustavo and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency undermined the organization's credibility. Consequently, the activities of the Exile Committee were suspended (Diogo Silva Cancela, 2014, pp. 62–63).

On the other hand, Algeria's financial and military assistance to the Angolan national movement played a decisive role in advancing the Angolan revolution. In November 1962, President Ben Bella received a delegation from the MPLA, including Mário Pinto de Andrade and Lúcio Lara, to discuss ways of supporting Angola's struggle against Portuguese colonialism. During the meeting, Ben Bella reaffirmed Algeria's unwavering commitment to the Angolan cause (Ahmed Ben Bella, n.d., p. 46; Alves, 2013, pp. 59–60).

Shortly after this meeting, Ben Bella ordered the dispatch of the first major shipment of Algerian weapons to the United Progressive Alliance, sufficient to equip two battalions of 1,200 fighters. The weapons were temporarily stored in Tunisia in preparation for delivery to the Angolan frontlines. These supplies represented a significant boost for the Angolan revolutionaries, enabling them to expand the scope of their military operations at a time when the scarcity of arms had been a major obstacle to launching armed resistance (Central Intelligence Agency, 8 February 1963).

In December of the same year, the Algerian authorities delivered additional quantities of small arms to the Angolan fighters and simultaneously trained about fifty insurgents. Continuing in this spirit, on 16 January 1963, President Ben Bella renewed his unconditional pledge of support to the Angolans. A special Algerian mission was subsequently dispatched to study means of expanding assistance to the Angolan nationalists (Central Intelligence Agency, 26 January 1963).

The Front later succeeded in securing substantial financial aid in Algeria: its leaders received 15 million francs, in addition to donations raised through public rallies and festivals, which alone in Tizi Ouzou exceeded 5 million francs, with another 3 million allocated specifically for the purchase of weapons (Diogo Silva Cancela, 2014, p. 64).

With Algerian training and armament, the movement entered a new phase of its struggle, launching armed attacks that secured effective control over large areas of the Cabinda region. This strengthened its position and led to its official recognition in 1964 as a national liberation movement in Angola alongside the Government of the Republic of Angola in Exile (GRAE) (Salwa Mohamed Labib, 1976, p. 203).

In parallel, Algerian diplomacy played a pivotal role in the establishment of the African Liberation Committee, created by a special resolution of the Addis Ababa Conference. Known as the Committee of Nine, it included Algeria among its members and served as a regional framework for supporting liberation struggles across Africa. The committee's work was particularly significant in backing the Angolan movements, through financial and logistical mechanisms funded by its special support fund, which strengthened the liberation war efforts

on the continent and consolidated solidarity among African governments and peoples (Shawqi Attallah al-Jammal, 2002, p. 443).

During the period 1964–1965, Algeria contributed more than £39,000 to the African Liberation Fund, exceeding its commitment of £35,000 and accounting for 5% of the total fund. Algeria ranked third among African contributors, after Egypt and Nigeria, which fulfilled only their pledged amounts, in contrast to countries such as Rwanda, Somalia, and Mauritania, which made no contributions, or Ethiopia and Sudan, which paid less than their agreed-upon shares (Conseil des Ministres, 1969, p. 6).

Algeria's commitment at this critical moment strengthened its standing within the Organization of African Unity (OAU), giving it significant influence over the organization's policies and activities. Algerian representatives, whether in OAU meetings, conferences, or within the Secretariat, played a prominent and influential role, benefiting from the respect and recognition earned by the Algerian revolution across most African states. Through its steadfast support for liberation movements on the continent, Algeria was able to forge strategic partnerships and alliances with numerous African countries, which in turn benefited from Algeria's diplomatic and military assistance, positively impacting the trajectory of liberation struggles, particularly the Angolan cause.

Algerian authorities also placed great importance on media as a tool for promoting liberation causes, especially those movements based on its territory. Within this framework, the first issue of the newspaper *Al-Thawra al-Africiyya* (*The African Revolution*) was published on 2 February 1963. Its editorial outlined the newspaper's mission: to highlight the struggle of the peoples of those territories and call on all freedom-loving individuals to join their fight, noting that one-third of Africa—our motherland, remains under foreign domination, particularly in the Portuguese colonies.

This initiative was carried out under the official direction of President Ben Bella, who entrusted lawyer and revolutionary ally Jacques Vergès with supervising the establishment of a media outlet dedicated to African liberation causes during the November 1962 celebrations of the Algerian Revolution's outbreak. Vergès was appointed due to his extensive connections with African leaders, having previously served as a special adviser to the Minister of African Affairs in the Moroccan royal court (Quemeneur, 2017, pp. 90–91).

In parallel, Radio Voz da Liberdade (FPLN), broadcasting from Algeria in Portuguese between 1963 and 1974, played a key role in promoting the Angolan cause, targeting Portugal and its African colonies. The station was managed by several Portuguese exiles, most notably the poet, writer, and politician Manuel Alegre, and through its three weekly programs, it sought to expose repressive and racist policies and highlight the achievements of the Angolan nationalists. The broadcasts also aimed to mobilize domestic public opinion against Oliveira Salazar's regime, contributing to the destabilization of the Portuguese government in Lisbon (Diário de Notícias, 2008).

Additionally, the newsletter issued by the MPLA's Algiers office played a significant role in garnering support for the Angolan cause, raising awareness of the repression and oppression suffered by the Angolan people under Portuguese occupation, and drawing the attention of international organizations. The newsletter also helped enhance the MPLA's



regional and continental image, especially in light of the hostile campaigns against the movement during this period (Alves, 2013, p. 67).

In addition to radio broadcasts, the Angolan Studies Center, established in Dujonchai Street in Algiers in 1964, contributed significantly to documenting the history of the Angolan revolution and educating Angolan fighters and refugees. A Portuguese-language bulletin was also published, focusing on cultural and ideological training, as well as the history of the national movement and the Angolan revolution (Diogo Silva Cancela, 2014, p. 66).

Diplomatic tensions between Algeria and Portugal intensified to the point of rupture due to the presence of the MPLA in Algiers and Portugal's insistence on retaining its colonies. The year 1964 witnessed a major deterioration in bilateral relations, culminating in Algeria severing diplomatic ties with Lisbon in May of that year and imposing a boycott on 150 Portuguese economic products (Diogo Silva Cancela, 2014, p. 65).

#### **4. Algeria as the Gateway for Cuban Support to Africa**

The roots of Algerian-Cuban relations date back to Algeria's liberation struggle, during which Havana supported the Algerian people against French colonialism, establishing close ties with the leaders of the National Liberation Front (FLN) and backing their revolution. In 1961, the Cuban government formally recognized the Provisional Algerian Government, providing military assistance, hosting some Algerian refugees, and training revolutionaries in guerrilla warfare tactics.

This alliance was further strengthened during the Sand War between Algeria and Morocco in 1963, when Fidel Castro sent military equipment, tanks, and troops to support Algerian fighters on the frontlines (Fábio Lucas da Cruz, 2016, pp. 60–62).

The relationship was reinforced by a shared revolutionary ethos and a mutual sense of responsibility to eliminate colonial presence in both Africa and Latin America. President Ahmed Ben Bella articulated the depth of this alliance, stating: *"I want everyone to know once and for all that Algeria and Cuba are more united than any two countries in the world"* (Central Intelligence Agency, 1963, p. 3).

In this context, Che Guevara helped transform Algeria into a center for supporting liberation movements in Africa and Latin America, particularly following his visit to Algiers in mid-1963, which led to the establishment of the "African Liberation Committee." Its primary mission was to assist liberation movements on the continent, especially in supporting Congolese rebels against Joseph Mobutu's Belgian-backed regime (Youcef Oussama Bounab, n.d.).

Guevara later undertook an extended three-month African tour, visiting Algeria three times, as well as Mali, Brazzaville Congo, Guinea, Ghana, Benin, and Cairo, holding intensive consultations with Ben Bella to coordinate support for the freedom fighters. As a result, Cuba sent combatants to Zaire and Brazzaville in 1965 and provided assistance to Guinea-Bissau between 1966 and 1974. Algeria served as a cornerstone for much of this support, particularly during Ben Bella's presidency (Fábio Lucas da Cruz, 2016, pp. 60–62).

Algeria effectively became Havana's main headquarters in Africa and its gateway to the continent, with Algiers serving as the central hub for Cuban political engagement in sub-

Saharan Africa. The Cuban embassy in Algeria played a critical role in providing technical and military aid to liberation movements across the continent (Alves, 2013, p. 45).

### **Cuban Support via Algeria**

During this period, Cuba provided substantial support to several African liberation movements through Algeria, particularly those under Portuguese colonial rule, such as Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. Cuban assistance included the deployment of military advisors, the provision of arms, and training programs. Cuban forces also played a decisive role in supporting the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), helping the movement consolidate control over Luanda, which ultimately contributed to Angola's declaration of independence in 1975 (Central Intelligence Agency).

In a U.S. National Security Council memorandum to President John F. Kennedy dated 15 July 1963, officials expressed surprise at the cordial relationship between Algeria and Cuba, describing it as puzzling. The memorandum suggested that President Ahmed Ben Bella sought to appease domestic factions opposed to continued ties with France and to align the Algerian left with revolutionary movements in Cuba and Angola. Similarly, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs J. Wayne Fredericks sent a memorandum expressing concern over the favor shown to Che Guevara during Algeria's Independence Day celebrations on 15 July 1963, noting the relative lack of attention given by Algerian authorities to U.S. aid efforts (Robert W. Komer, 1963).

The fall of Ben Bella represented a major setback for Cuba in Africa. The CIA considered him Havana's strongest ally on the continent, as he had been a key conduit for Cuban support and intervention, cooperating closely with Havana to assist African liberation movements (R. J. Smith, 1966).

### **Houari Boumediene and the MPLA: Less Dramatic, More Effective**

President Houari Boumediene's policy, particularly during his early years in office, emphasized domestic affairs over the international activism that had characterized his predecessor. Unlike Ben Bella, whose opponents criticized him for his obsession with supporting liberation movements at the expense of Algeria's national security, Boumediene strongly opposed deploying Algerian troops abroad. As Minister of Defense in December 1964, he opposed Ben Bella's plan to send additional forces to the Republic of Congo, citing the potential for renewed conflict with Morocco (Diogo Silva Cancela, 2014, p. 66).

Consequently, the military support for the MPLA was questioned during the early years of Boumediene's rule, creating some uncertainty regarding Algeria's assistance to liberation movements. However, this situation was short-lived. Boumediene quickly affirmed at the El Mouradia Palace that Algeria would remain faithful to the principles of non-alignment and the charter of the Organization of African Unity, particularly in its support for African liberation movements. He continued his predecessor's policies, though in a manner less dramatic but more effective (Diogo Silva Cancela, 2014, pp. 67, 74).

Algeria's financial contributions to the African Liberation Committee experienced fluctuations during this period. In 1968/1969, Algeria's contributions had declined compared to earlier years. During 1965/1966, Algeria paid slightly over £35,000, compared to £39,000

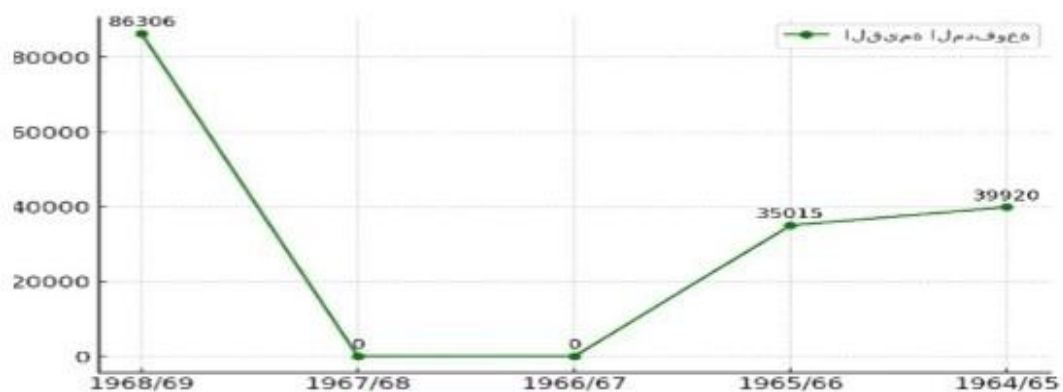
in the last year of Ben Bella's administration. During the periods 1966/1967 and 1967/1968, Algeria did not meet its pledged contributions of £80,000. Nevertheless, Algeria later attempted to compensate for this shortfall, paying approximately £86,000, which exceeded its officially required commitment of £40,000 (Organization of African Unity, 1969, pp. 7–10).

#### Algeria's Contribution to the African Liberation Committee (1964/65–1968/69)

Year	Allocated Amount (GBP)	Paid Amount (GBP)	Unpaid Amount (GBP)
1964/65	35,000	39,920	0
1965/66	40,000	35,015	4,984
1966/67	40,000	0	40,000
1967/68	40,000	0	40,000
1968/69	40,000	86,306 (Includes part of the arrears)	0

The delay in Algeria's contributions to the fund during this period can be attributed to the country's substantial involvement in the Arab war effort against Israel. In 1967, the Third Arab-Israeli War broke out, in which Algeria played a prominent role. Beyond its field participation, sending 2,500 soldiers and officers to the Egyptian front, Algeria also provided significant financial support to the Arab countries involved. A special fund was established for the war effort, to which the Algerian authorities contributed 80 million francs in two installments to Jordan, 80 million francs in two installments to Syria, and 30 million francs to Egypt, covering part of the war expenses (Mohamed Tamalt, 2001, p. 69).

#### Development of Algerian Support for African Liberation Movements (1964/65–1968/69)



Under President Houari Boumediene, Algeria's support for African liberation movements became increasingly evident over time, as reflected in its steadfast position during the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1967, which underscored Algeria's continued backing of liberation movements. Boumediene repeatedly emphasized that the Algerian revolution was not only a means of national liberation but a guiding strategy for internal development and for supporting peoples struggling for freedom and independence. He insisted that the world could not remain "idle while colonialism persisted over the peoples of South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Namibia..." (Houari Boumediene, n.d., p. 85).

In 1968, Algeria hosted the 5th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) from 13–16 September, as well as the 13th session of the African Liberation Committee from 16–22 July. In his address, Boumediene called for the continued struggle for the liberation of Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Guinea-Bissau. The session resulted in significant decisions, including a 10% increase in the OAU budget and support for the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde and Guinea (Bekai Al-Munsif et al., 2016, pp. 103–105).

The final communiqué of the meeting condemned Portugal's use of chemical weapons, napalm, and white phosphorus bombs against African peoples, as well as Portugal's allies in NATO for their continued support of Portuguese colonial policies (Organization of African Unity, 1968, pp. 9–10).

During Algeria's tenure as chair of the African Liberation Committee, the committee's report noted that the liberation struggle in Africa had strengthened significantly, with more regular communications established between the executive secretariat and the MPLA. This facilitated the expansion of military operations to new areas in northeastern Angola, including Luanda, Kwanza Norte, and Santo Zaire. The report also highlighted the problem of member states failing to meet their contributions to the committee's fund, which hindered the provision of essential resources for liberation movements (Organization of African Unity, 1969, pp. 3–5).

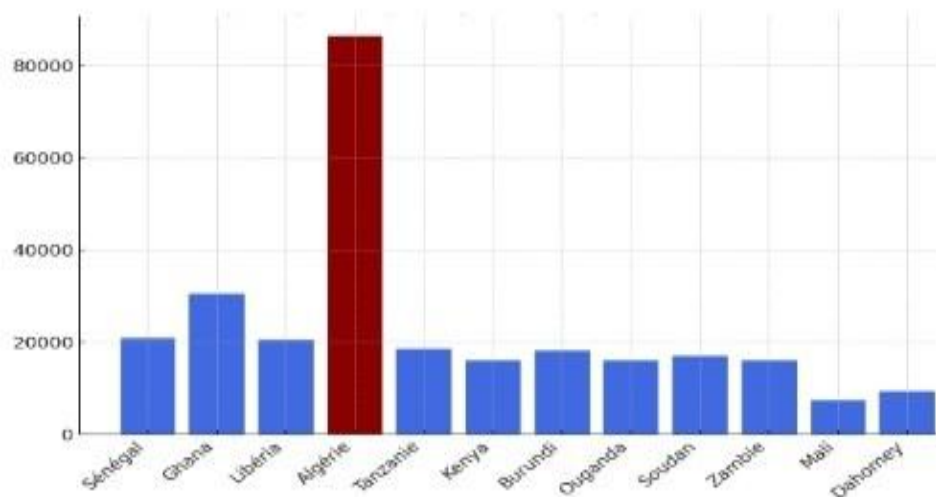
Algeria also made intense efforts to bridge divisions among Angolan factions, pressing for the formation of a unified front and conditioning its assistance on achieving unity (Central Intelligence Agency, 1962, p. 8). Efforts included reconciling the MPLA with the FNLA, facilitating the release of MPLA fighters held by the FNLA, and ensuring the safe passage of MPLA cadres through Congolese territory and the recovery of weapons seized by the Kinshasa government, with Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika playing a key role in removing obstacles.

Algeria also mediated an agreement between the MPLA and the FNLA, establishing a unified military command and a supreme council for the liberation of Angola, in a step toward consolidating armed resistance against Portuguese colonialism (Bekai Al-Munsif et al., 2016, p. 109).

Notably, despite limited resources, Algeria continued its generous support for African liberation movements during this period. During the 14th session of the Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from 8–12 February 1969, the committee approved a budget plan to strengthen the liberation struggle. The budget allocated £50,000 to supply arms and equipment to Angolan liberation movements, £12,000

for propaganda and raising awareness of the Angolan cause, and £140,000 to support...

### Algeria's Continued Support for African Liberation (1968–1969)



The budget for training centers established in Eastern Africa was £50,000, while £70,000 was allocated for centers in Western Africa (Conseil des Ministres, 1969).

Algeria's actual commitment to supporting African liberation movements is evident from its financial contributions to the Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa. According to the table of member-state contributions for the period from 1 June 1968 to 31 June 1969, the total contributions from Senegal, Ghana, Liberia, Algeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, Sudan, Zambia, Mali, and Benin amounted to £276,000.

Despite Algeria's pressing need to invest its financial resources in domestic economic development and growing national needs, it was the largest contributor, providing £86,000. Analysis of the data shows that Algeria's contribution represented 31.2% of the total, reflecting its leading role in supporting African liberation movements and its consistent commitment compared to other members of the committee, a stance Algeria maintained since independence (Conseil des Ministres, 1969).

### African States' Contributions to the African Liberation Committee (1968/1969) – in Pounds Sterling

In addition to this generous support, Algerian diplomacy intensified efforts to mobilize international backing to pressure Portugal. Algeria adopted a multidimensional strategy, including economic boycotts of Portugal, efforts to ban arms and military equipment transfers to its army, and campaigns to expel Portugal from the World Health Organization. Furthermore, Algeria leveraged international platforms to block any form of external assistance to Portugal (Bekai Al-Munsif et al., 2016, pp. 106–107).

Meanwhile, the MPLA relied heavily on its representative office in Algeria to advance its cause on all fronts. Over a span of approximately 14 years, from the opening of the MPLA headquarters in February 1963 to Angola's independence on 11 November 1975, Algeria served as a cornerstone in many stages of the struggle against Portuguese colonialism. In this context, as part of its efforts to consolidate its legitimacy as the representative of the Angolan



people, the MPLA revised its foreign policy in 1971 to strengthen its position as the sole legitimate representative of Angola internationally. During the Second Kitxe Conference, the movement proposed restructuring its overseas missions to expand its influence and consolidate its representation abroad.

### **International Presence and Media Strategy of the MPLA**

To strengthen its international presence and promote the legitimacy of its cause, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in the 1970s established a dedicated department for producing photographic reports, slides, and short documentary films highlighting the political and military activities of the movement. The MPLA also prepared new media and artistic materials to be featured in newsletters and sent to its overseas missions. Algeria, whose representation had played a prominent media role since 1963 in publicizing the struggle of the Angolan people, was responsible for distributing these materials to countries including Canada, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Mali, Guinea-Conakry, Mauritania, Tunisia, and Morocco (Alves, 2013, p. 92).

After a long struggle by African peoples to end the dominance of European colonial powers, and with the convergence of multiple internal and external factors, the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in April 1974 marked the end of colonial rule in Angola. Following the overthrow of the Marcello Caetano regime in Lisbon and the fall of the “dictatorial” Oliveira Salazar regime, along with its brutal repression in Angola, a new government was formed to lead negotiations hosted in both the British and Algerian capitals with leaders of the Angolan liberation movements (Chloé Maurel, 2010, p. 195).

A classified U.S. intelligence report highlighted Algeria’s key role in guiding the ceasefire negotiations, noting that the firm stance adopted by the negotiating delegation during talks on Angola, Mozambique, and Equatorial Guinea in London in May 1974 was encouraged by Algeria. According to the report, Algerian authorities advised the delegation, which met with the Algerian president and foreign minister before departing from Algiers on the Algerian president’s plane to London, to maintain a firm position even if it led to delays or the stalling of negotiations (Central Intelligence Agency, 1974, p. 6).

The ceasefire was declared in mid-October 1974, with the independence of Angola scheduled for 11 November 1975. In the run-up to this date, international attention intensified among Non-Aligned Movement countries, emphasizing that the Angolan issue should be resolved within the framework of the Organization of African Unity. For Algeria, the MPLA was recognized as the sole Angolan liberation movement fighting for true independence. Algeria also condemned the internationalization of Angola’s internal issues by the United Nations (Alves, 2013, p. 101).

Thus ended the chapter of settler colonialism that had weighed heavily on the Angolan people for centuries, one of the longest and most brutal episodes in modern colonial history, culminating in the victory of Angola’s liberation struggle, in which Algeria played a decisive role.

## Conclusion

The Algerian Revolution, with its inspiring liberation experience, became a source of inspiration for many African liberation leaders. It instilled new hope in the hearts of people living under colonial oppression, rekindled the spirit of resistance, and motivated numerous movements to launch their own struggles for freedom, following the example set by Algeria.

### **Algeria's Role in Supporting Angola's Liberation Struggle**

Through its own revolutionary experience, Algeria not only served as an inspiration but also committed its full weight to assisting liberation movements, in the framework of dismantling the colonial system it had itself endured and fought against.

In this context, Algeria supported the Angolan revolutionaries in their struggle against Portuguese colonialism. It contributed to mobilizing support and strengthening African and continental solidarity in the fight to end colonialism in Africa. This support was not limited to the years of the Angolan revolution itself but also encompassed the pre-revolutionary period, during which Algeria provided a safe haven for Angolan leaders of varying political orientations. It assisted them in preparing for their revolution through military training, supplied weapons to the frontlines, and provided financial and media support.

Algeria also played a distinct diplomatic role in advocating the Angolan cause, both through the Organization of African Unity, at the United Nations, and within the Non-Aligned Movement. As a prominent member of the Committee for the Coordination of African Liberation, Algeria leveraged its prestige, revolutionary credibility, and financial contributions to actively support the struggle of the Angolan people.

Furthermore, Algeria acted as a coordinating hub among countries supporting Angola. The MPLA's representation in Algiers played a pivotal role in maintaining communications, forging alliances, and gradually serving as the gateway through which the movement expanded to the continental and international arena. Algeria also worked to attract additional supporters to the Angolan cause. In this regard, Algeria became the entry point for Cuban support to Angola, particularly as Havana's assistance during this period was crucial to the success of the MPLA and to consolidating its position. Fidel Castro committed significant resources to confronting Western colonial powers and supporting the Angolan liberation struggle.

The prominence of Algeria's support can be attributed to the revolutionary spirit that remained vibrant among its post-independence leaders, who sought to export their experience to other peoples still under colonial rule. Despite inheriting economic difficulties from the colonial period and having limited resources, Algeria extended substantial financial support to the Angolan liberation movement, investing funds it urgently needed for domestic development.

However, Algeria's proactive stance attracted the hostility of several Western powers, most notably the Salazar regime in Portugal, prompting Algeria to sever diplomatic ties with Lisbon. Just as Algeria took a firm stance during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, it acted decisively in support of Angola, embedding this support within the broader Cold War struggle between the two blocs.

This approach was evident in Algeria's clear alignment with the leftist MPLA, favoring it over rival factions, some of which leaned closer to capitalism. While Algeria attempted to bridge divisions and tie its support to Angolan unity, the preferential treatment of the MPLA

highlighted the Algerian authorities' deliberate backing of this faction, empowering it both continentally and internationally as the sole legitimate representative of the Angolan cause.

Algeria's policy of supporting African liberation movements also aligned with the broader communist bloc, intersecting with the positions of countries like China, Cuba, and the Soviet Union. Coordination with these nations was evident, both in international forums and within the ranks of the Angolan nationalist movement itself, where Algeria, alongside these partners, played a crucial role in guiding and supporting the MPLA.

### **Algeria's Multifaceted Support for the Angolan Revolution**

Several countries formed a supportive bloc for the Angolan revolution, providing diplomatic, military, media, and financial assistance, thereby strengthening the MPLA's position on the international stage.

Beyond diplomatic and military backing, Algeria played a pioneering media role in promoting the Angolan cause. It exposed the racist practices of Portuguese colonialism and revealed its abuses to the international public. The opening of the MPLA's representation in Algiers coincided with the publication of the first issue of *The African Revolution* newspaper in early February 1963. The newspaper's editorial line, as indicated by its name, openly supported revolutionary movements across the continent. The Algerian authorities also facilitated the publication of several newspapers and bulletins on behalf of the Angolan nationalist movement, in addition to providing Portuguese-language radio broadcasts, which had a wide-reaching impact, even within Portugal itself.

Algeria's defense of Angolan rights can be divided into two main periods: the presidency of Ahmed Ben Bella and the presidency of Houari Boumédiène.

During Ben Bella's period, Algeria displayed great enthusiasm and commitment in supporting the wave of liberation across Africa. The government invested its full weight in assisting colonized peoples, largely disregarding internal and external opposition. This unwavering commitment may have been used by his adversaries as a pretext to justify the coup against him.

In contrast, President Boumédiène adopted a more pragmatic approach, prioritizing domestic affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict, which dominated Algeria's foreign policy agenda. His rule coincided with three major wars in the Middle East: the 1967 war, the War of Attrition (1967–1970), and the October 1973 war. Algeria played a pivotal role in these conflicts, both through field participation and by financially supporting neighboring states, which resulted in a relative decline in Algeria's attention to African liberation causes. During his era, African struggles no longer occupied the same priority as they had under Ben Bella.

Nevertheless, Algeria's influence remained crucial during the negotiations leading to Angolan independence. The country dedicated over fourteen years to supporting the rights of the Angolan people. From hosting leaders of the Angolan nationalist movement on its soil to facilitating key negotiations, Algeria spared no effort in solidifying Angolan rights and ensuring their firm footing in the struggle for agreements, consistently demonstrating its unwavering commitment to the Angolan people's right to self-determination.

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