





# JAMEL DEBBOUZE ROSCHDY ZEM SAMI BOUAJILA A FILM BY RACHID BOUCHAREB (HORS-LA-LOI)

FRENCH RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 2010

## SYNOPSIS

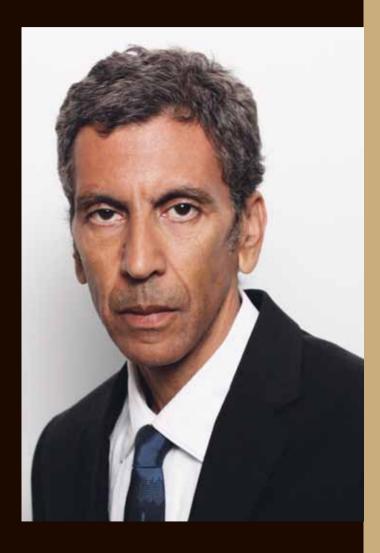
After losing their family home in Algeria, three brothers are scattered across the globe. Messaoud joins the French army fighting in Indochina; Abdelkader becomes a leader of the Algerian independence movement; Saïd moves to Paris to make his fortune in the shady clubs and boxing halls of Pigalle. Gradually, their interconnecting destinies reunite them in the French capital, where freedom is a battle to be fought and won.



## RACHD BOUCHAREB

#### Is this project one that you nurtured for a long time?

Yes, after Days of Glory, Outside The Law became the obvious next step. Days of Glory ends in 1945. And another story begins. The indigenous soldiers often talked about the years after the Liberation, the decolonization period. Olivier Lorelle, my co-writer, and I interviewed a lot of eye-witnesses to events, researched archives and viewed documentaries. The living memory is a fascinating source for a film. For example, we met a French forger who produced forged identity papers for the Resistance and again during the Algerian War. We met a lot of amazing people. I was very inspired by Jean-Pierre Melville's Army of Shadows. I saw the same kind of people—who devote their life to a cause.



The three brothers and their diverging paths give the film a genuinely tragic dimension.

Absolutely. A family can tear itself apart. There are several ways of fighting injustice. Rebellion is only one of them. The three brothers have different experiences, different approaches to events. They disagree on the right way to fight injustice and win freedom. Not everybody becomes a resistance fighter. The film emphasizes that. Everybody chooses the life they want. All the main characters and storylines are based on people we met and interviewed.

#### Abdelkader's hardline approach mirrors the brutality of the French police...

Revolution chews people up and spits them out. Repression is exactly the same. One of the scenes in the movie is borrowed from Army of Shadows, when members of the French Resistance have to eliminate a fellow Frenchman. It's a harrowing scene. I think that in every fight for freedom, there are terrible human tragedies. I wanted the film to have an epic quality. I developed characters who run the revolution in the same way Al Pacino ran business and the family in The Godfather. That freed my hands from a historical point of view. My film isn't a documentary. I make movies.

It would be difficult to imagine you making this film without Jamel Debbouze, Roschdy Zem and Sami Bouajila...

Yes, the film was for them. It was written for them. We know each other very well now, but I had to be the guide, have my hand on the tiller. They all work tremendously hard and contribute enormously on set. I watch the direction the film is taking, the development of each character. All three actors know they can rely on me—we have absolute trust in each other.

This is the first feature dealing with these real-life events. Were you ever scared by what you were taking on?

When you make Days of Glory or Outside The Law, what is there to be scared of? The French, Algerians, North Africans and Africans, especially the younger generations, need to know about the colonial past.

That's one of the functions of movies. But people go to see a movie, not read a history book. You have to tell them a story. Maybe after seeing the film, they'll want to find out more in books. In that respect, the film launches a debate in which everyone can have a say. Those who were at the heart of these events have a contribution to make—they are the living memory. It's about bringing together and respecting these different points of view. But events in history are still being elucidated. There are still eye-witnesses whose story will contribute to understanding history. Concerning events in Sétif in 1945, for example, French and Algerian historians need to work together in complete freedom to write the shared experience of France and Algeria without the intrusion of controversies surrounding the Algerian War.





## RACHID FILMOGRAPHY BOUCHAREB

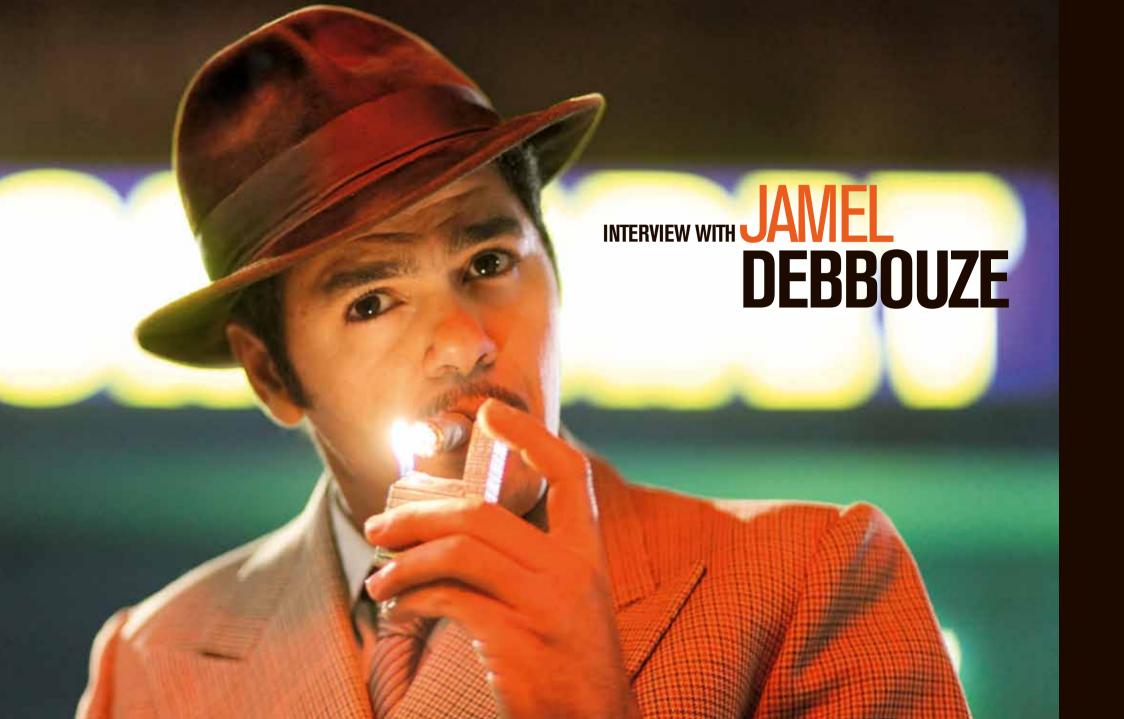
**London River (2009)** Silver Bear Award, Berlin 2009

Days of Glory (2006)
Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Picture
César Award for Best Screenplay
Best Actor Award, Cannes 2006

The Colonial Friend (2005)

### Little Senegal (2001) In competition, Berlin 2001

**Dust of Life (1995)** Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Picture



### How did you react when you heard you were teaming up again with the guys from Days of Glory?

I was crazy happy! When Rachid Bouchareb calls me, it feels like Raymond Domenech calling his team together for the World Cup. It's a privilege to go out there and defend his projects. And I also feel like I'm pulling on a France jersey because we tell a segment of French history each time.

### Is your character in Outside The Law a distant cousin of the one you played in Days of Glory?

To a certain extent. In Days of Glory, my character was quite fragile and seemed uninterested by what was going on around him—he saw the war as a kind of game. Similarly, Saïd in Outside The Law feels less concerned than his brothers by the war. He's obsessed with winning back the love of his mother, who sees him as a no-good thug. Her rejection really hurts, so he devotes himself to making a name for himself boxing to achieve his goal. He doesn't think the revolution can make him a free man because, in his mind, he's already free.

#### Even so, he's very protective of his brothers.

As the youngest, who was probably more pampered than his brothers, he has a stronger bond to the family than them. He's not as distant as Messaoud, or devoted to an ideology like Abdelkader. As soon as he senses his brothers are in danger, however, his instinct drives him to be with them even though he doesn't support their cause and he's against the war.

#### Do you feel he's out to take revenge on his destiny?

He's definitely out to win the respect of those who have a better chance in life. Saïd is a proud man. He wants to be the equal in every respect of the French people he meets and works with. So, for him, the end justifies the means. But, like all those who come to France to carve out a better life for themselves, what really drives him is winning consideration.

#### Do you understand why Abdelkader acts as he does?

Not really. I can't understand someone defending an ideology body and soul. No ideology is worth dying for. I'm convinced that it's possible to achieve your aims without spilling a drop of blood. At the same time, I haven't had to endure what Abdelkader goes through—death is constantly hanging over him and he gets enlisted in the revolution in jail. There's a clear sense that he has no alternative.





## JAMEL FILMOGRAPHY DEBBOUZE

**Let It Rain** by Agnès Jaoui (2008)

## Asterix At The Olympic Games by Thomas Langmann (2008)

**Days of Glory** by Rachid Bouchareb (2006) Best Actor Award, Cannes 2006

Angel-A by Luc Besson (2005)

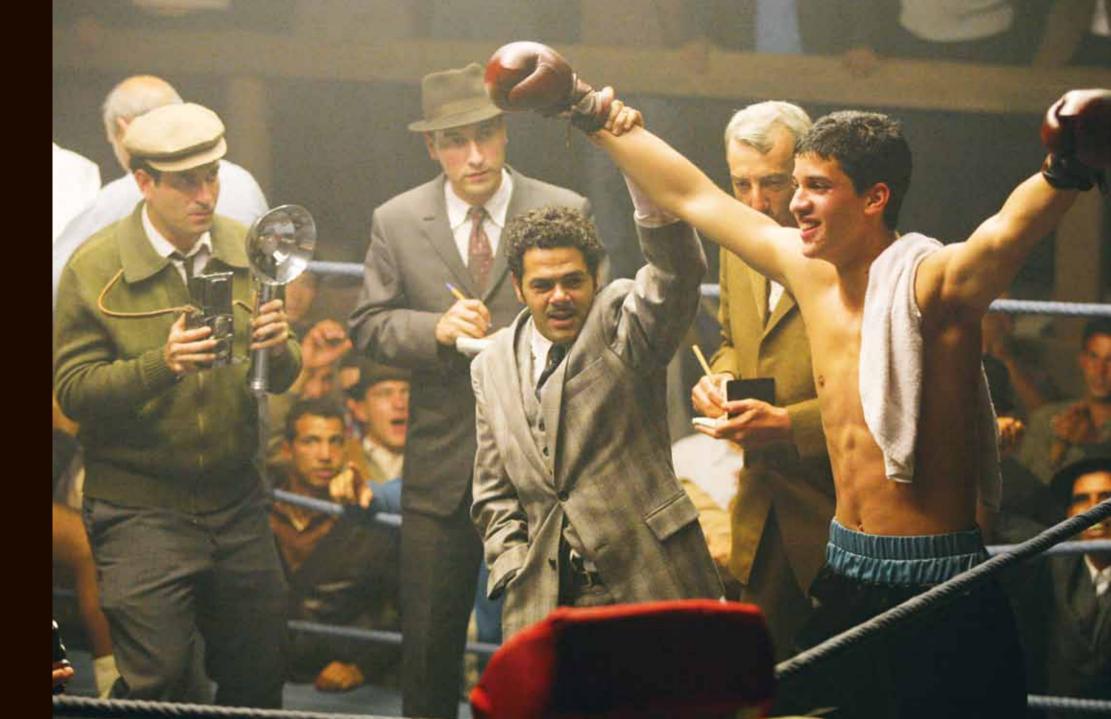
#### She Hate Me

by Spike Lee (2004)

## Asterix & Obelix: Mission Cleopatra by Alain Chabat (2002)

#### Amélie

by Jean-Pierre Jeunet (2001)





Your character is an activist who loses his humanity in fighting for his cause...

I knew from the start that he was an activist, but I only began to understand the character when I started to play him.

That's when I realized that no great leader—Gandhi, Mandela, Che or whoever—can afford half-measures. They have to be full-on, excessive radicals. So it's not surprising that Abdelkader occasionally loses his humanity. Like the Viet-Cong, the FLN fighters were war machines trained by the Stasi. There inevitably comes a time when the machine takes over. Abdelkader makes it very clear that the revolution is not about individuals, but turning the masses into an irresistible force.

#### But, personally, he isn't capable of killing.

That was Rachid's idea. I was about to take the rope and strangle my victim when he stopped me, saying I was a "machine" that incited others to action but couldn't commit such an act myself.

He's an intellectual who's handles concepts better than weapons.

#### The understanding between the actors is palpable.

That was already there, so when Rachid offered us parts in a project that was even more ambitious than Days of Glory, we immediately got to work.

Everybody agreed that the trap to avoid was falling into a political movie and losing the action-adventure dimension that we all loved.

#### What's it like working with Rachid?

Rachid has experience and knowledge that we don't possess. In age terms, he's halfway between us and our parents, so he could ask a lot of us. He didn't have to say much—we understood exactly what he meant.







## FILMOGRAPHY SAMI BOUAJILA

**London River** by Rachid Bouchareb (2009)

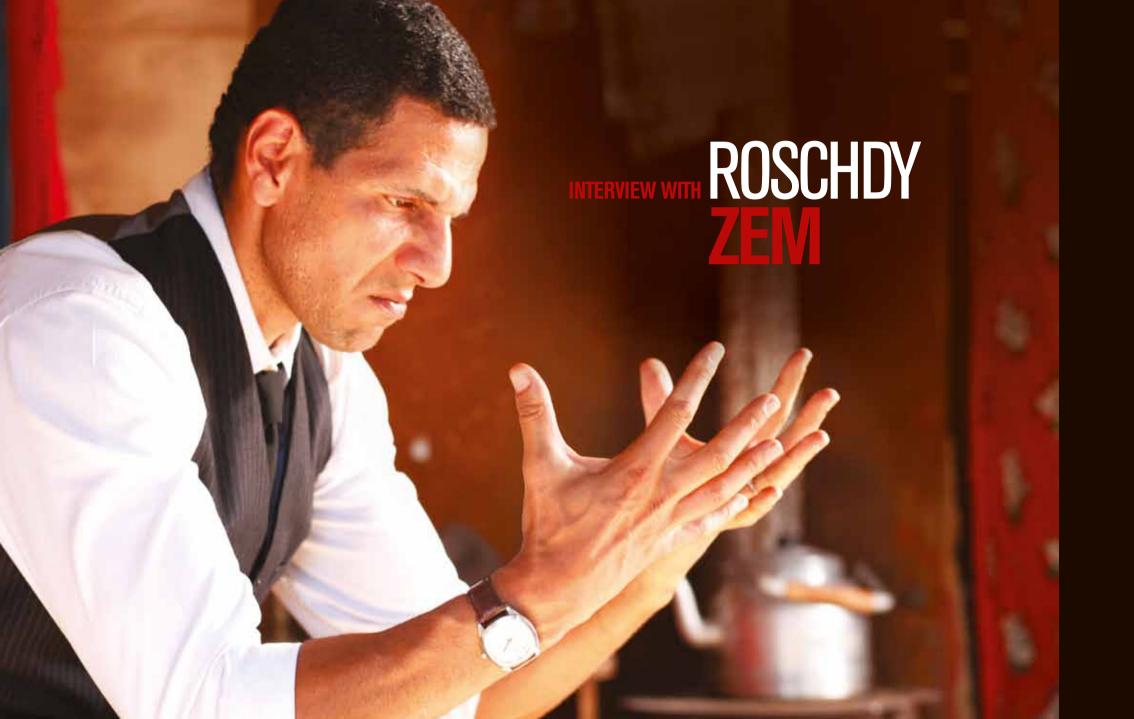
Inner Circle by Laurent Tuel (2009)

**The Witnesses**by André Téchiné (2007)
César Award for Best Supporting Actor

**Days of Glory** by Rachid Bouchareb (2006) Best Actor Award, Cannes 2006

### Summer Things by Michel Blanc (2002)





#### You're an integral part of Rachid Bouchareb's family of actors

Yes, ever since the first time fifteen years ago, we've kept working together.

As he's a very faithful director, there was never any question of not being part of this project. Interestingly, over the years, he's become tougher on his actors.

He still gives us a lot of scope to come up with ideas, but now he knows precisely where he wants to take us.

#### How did you prepare for the shoot

The first time Rachid mentioned it to me, he asked me to take a look at Sterling Hayden's character in John Huston's The Asphalt Jungle.

When I saw the movie, it was obvious what Rachid was looking for: a combination of brute force and restraint.

#### And the psychology of the character?

After he returns from the war in Indochina, Messaoud isn't sure where he fits in. He's lost his natural authority as the older brother and adopts a more paternal position, arbitrating between the other two and never really choosing sides.

What he experienced in Indochina has marked him deeply, as symbolized by the scar over the eye he lost in battle.

He also returns with a certain admiration for the Viet Minh, who were fighting the French to win back their freedom and land.

So joining the FLN seems natural to him-it's a noble cause.

#### He kills men, but it tortures his conscience

Messaoud kills so that his brothers won't have to, and especially so that Abdelkader won't have to cope with the guilt of a criminal act. It's a kind of sacrifice he makes, but it really hurts him to kill a man. After he strangles the guy in the bar, he is sick to his core. That was vital for me. I didn't want him to seem like a cold-blooded killer.

#### How do you get on with your "brothers", Jamel and Sami?

I'm sandwiched between a genius and a perfectionist. We spend a lot of time talking over details of our performance and the characters' motives, constantly working out how we can all improve. In that respect, it's an extension of what we started on Days of Glory.





## ROSCHDY FILMOGRAPHY ZEM

#### The Girl From Monaco

hy Anne Fontaine (2008

#### **Bad Faith**

by Roschdy Zem (2006)

#### Days of Glory

by Rachid Bouchareb (2006) Best Actor Award, Cannes 2006

#### Le Petit Lieutenant

by Xavier Beauvois (2005

#### Live and Become

oy Radu Mihaileanu (2005

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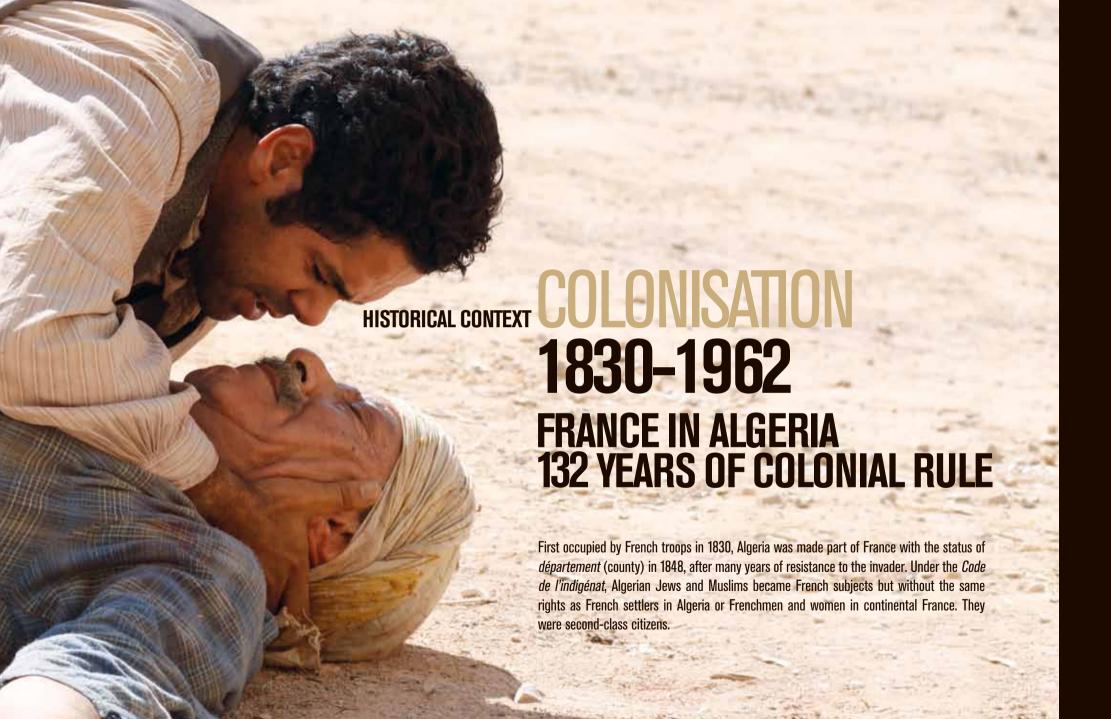
by Olivier Marchal (2004

#### Alias Betty

hy Claude Miller (2001)







In 1870, the Crémieux decrees granted French nationality to Jews living in Algeria. At the same time, after the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, there was a huge influx of settlers, doubling the European population in Algeria to 500,000 by 1914. Despite a period of agrarian crises and brutal repression by the colonial power, the indigenous population also soared, from 2 million to 5 million. Almost 40% of the best arable land was seized and redistributed to settlers at cut prices, leaving hundreds and thousands of former landholders in poverty.

The overall growth in population concealed the fact that between 1866 and 1883, half the population "disappeared", not because of war or repression—the conquest of Algeria was complete—but because of increased mortality due to famine and the spread of epidemics among people driven off their land. The French and indigenous populations lived side-by-side, but segregated from each other by separate legislative frameworks. In the early 20th century, an intellectual elite gradually emerged to run political organizations, protests and publications. Several independence movements were formed, including Etoile Nord-Africaine (ENA) in 1926, then the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA) and the Oulemas, joined after the war by the Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques (MTLD), the Mouvement National Algérien (MNA) led by Messali Hadj, and the Union Populaire Algérienne (UPA) of Ferhat Abbas, who later became a leader of the FLN. They all demanded equal rights and the end of the *Indéginat* system. Although 134,000 Muslim Algerians, along with 230,000 troops in "indigenous" units,

Although 134,000 Muslim Algerians, along with 230,000 troops in "indigenous" units, participated in the liberation of France, and despite the official suppression of the *Indigénat* in 1945, the end of World War Two brought no change in their lives. From 1946-1953, the independence movement became more radical and, in 1954, the FLN adopted the principle of armed struggle and set up its armed wing, the ALN.

The Algerian War of Independence or Algerian Incidents, depending on whose side you were on, had begun.

"Algeria is France!" Pierre Mendès France, 1954

"The streets were littered with the dead and dying. The repression was indiscriminate. It was a huge massacre." Kateb Yacine

## THE ROOTS OF WAR...

#### **INCIDENTS**

From the Setif massacres to Red All Saints' Day

On 8th May 1945, in most cities in Algeria, Algerians marched to demand greater political freedom and rights, to celebrate the end of World War Two or to demand the release of nationalist leader Messali Hadj, who had been deported to Brazzaville on 25th April 1945 after the incidents in Reibell. In eastern Algeria, Setif, the hometown of prominent nationalist Ferhat Abbas, and Guelma were the scenes of violently repressed marches that turned into riots. In Setif, 7-8,000 marchers, including a number of Algerian nationalists, began rioting after a police officer fired at a young protestor carrying an Algerian flag. The march degenerated, Europeans were attacked and many protestors were killed or wounded by the police and army. In the days that followed, the protesters turned their anger on settlers and isolated farms. Dozens Europeans were massacred. The police forces and army, with armed militiamen in Guelma, brutally suppressed the "nationalist uprising", but the repression continued for two weeks with the approval of the whole chain of command right up to the governor, General Chataigneau, in Algiers, and with the knowledge of General de Gaulle's government in Paris.

There are many explanations for the events of 8th May 1945. In 1945, nationalist propaganda was at a peak. Ferhat Abbas and his Amis du Manifeste et de la Liberté (AML) had a large following ever since he delivered his Algerian People's Manifesto to the French authorities in 1943. Similarly, Messali Hadj's PPA movement was honing plans for an insurrection to coincide with the end of the war. At the same time, the settlers stubbornly refused any reforms. Tension was high after long years of war under the Vichy regime. Also, many Algerians had fought in Europe against Germany and the Atlantic Charter's declaration of the right of peoples to self-determination seemed likely to be taken up at the San Francisco conference.

The repression was disproportionate and ruthless. All the men the French army could gather together, including the Foreign Legion, Moroccan tabors, Senegalese tirailleurs and settler militias, took ferocious revenge. The air force and navy bombarded towns and villages as terror spread to the whole region. Many corpses couldn't be buried and were thrown into wells or into the Kherrata Gorge. Militiamen used lime kilns to dispose of the bodies. Machine guns raked villagers fleeing into the mountains. On 19th May, De Gaulle sent General Paul Tubert to lead an investigation into the incidents and stop the repression. Tubert had served with distinction in the French Resistance, was a member of the provisional parliamentary assembly and member of the League of Human Rights central committee. Tubert and his team were kept in Algiers for six days, well away from the actual events, and only allowed to leave for Setif on 25th May, when everything was over and the militias had been dissolved. In fact, Tubert was recalled to Algiers the very next day so that it would be impossible for his report to get to the bottom of what happened. On the back of the few facts he was able to gather, Tubert nonetheless produced an unambiguous report of the situation, which was quickly shelved and never made public. Paul Tubert was appointed Mayor of Algiers shortly afterwards. The full text of his report is clearly shows that the French authorities were acutely aware of what had happened in Setif.

Official figures state that 102 Europeans were killed in and around Setif, while 1,165 Algerians died in the subsequent repression. Algerians sources suggest that figure is nearer 45,000. We will never know for sure. Various British and French sources place the figure somewhere between 6,000 and 15,000. There are, however, reliable figures for the number of Algerian victims in some towns, such as Oued Marsa (200) and Kheratta (600). According to historian Annie Rey-Goldzeiguer, *The only thing we can be sure of is that the figure is more than a hundred times that of the European death toll. The massacre marked a whole generation.* 

The writer Kateb Yacine was a middle school student in Setif at the time. He wrote, The 8th May march was peaceful and the violence took us completely by surprise. Our leaders had no plans for this turn of events. It resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. In Guelma, my mother lost her memory (...). The streets were littered with the dead and dying. The repression was indiscriminate. It was a huge massacre.

It was the events of 8th May that made Krim Belkacem, one of the six founders of the FLN, decide to begin clandestine operations.

## SECRETS AGENTS AND DOGS OF WAR

The Red Hand A well-oiled killing machine

General Duval, who oversaw the repression, boasted, *I've secured peace for ten years*. But he warned, *If France doesn't act, a worse rebellion will begin and the situation will be irretrievably lost*. And he was right. On 1st November 1954, in the mountainous regions of Aures and Kabylia, the authorities and settlers were targeted in a series of bombings and assassinations. Known as Red All Saints' Day, these incidents marked the beginning of the Algerian War.

UDMA and MNA to begin its armed rebellion against the "French occupier". Channeling weapons from Egypt via Morocco and Tunisia, the FLN built up a stock of arms that, by 1958, allowed it to repel the French army in guerilla warfare.

In 1955 and early 1956, a prolonged wave of bombings prompted the French government to order the "physical elimination" of activists—Algerian, French (to begin with) or foreign—who were helping the independence movement. The SDECE (French secret services) created an underground organization led by Constantin Melnik under the command of General Paul Grossin, who reported directly to the Prime Minister. This organization was called La Main Rouge (The Red Hand).

Originally, The Red Hand was an obscure pro-French group started in Tunis by settlers who planted a few bombs. By using the name, the SDECE was able to assassinate leading Algerian figures pretty much all over Europe and North Africa with complete impunity. They also killed Belgians, Swiss and Germans, who were either arms dealers or sympathizers with the Algerian cause. Using disinformation and fake press conferences, these killings were attributed to The Red Hand.





Gradually, their arsenal and tactics expanded to include techniques worthy of a spy novel-booby-trapped cars, letter bombs, abductions, bodies dumped in concrete or out at sea, sabotage of cargos of weapons, and assassination by bullet, of course, but also by poisoned dart. The SDECE drafted in reservists from an elite paratroop corps, including the controversial Captain Paul Aussaresses, as well as gangsters and thugs, including the famous underworld figure Jo Attia, to create a unit of battle-hardened dogs of war, accountable directly to the Prime Minister. From 1956-61, they waged a savage and invisible war against the Algerian independence movement.

Without realizing the full extent of the French state's involvement, the FLN set up dedicated units, such as that of Captain Medjoub, to counter The Red Hand. The brutal, parallel war between the two outfits often swung in favor of The Red Hand, who could call on discreet assistance from the authorities. At the end of the war, having been infiltrated by anti-Gaullists from the OAS splinter faction, The Red Hand dissolved to avoid its members turning on each other. All official information concerning this episode is classified Top Secret or has been destroyed. The Red Hand's members were subsequently used by France in undercover operations in sub-Saharan Africa.

*"I think it was legitimate. If I had the chance to do it again, I would."*Antoine Méléro, former French police officer, on Al-Jazira, 18th December 2009

### The FLN in Paris The MNA and FLN, brothers at war

In 1954, there were roughly 200-250,000 Algerians in France, mostly miners, construction or factory workers. 8-10,000 of them were members of the MNA, Messali Hadj's party. After the FLN began to recruit in France, in 1957, the two parties and their activists soon fell out.

Essentially, the conflict was over the dues collected by the MNA, which the FLN wanted a part of. Both sides were also well aware of the strategic importance of the Algerian community in France. Skirmishes and score-settling resulted in up to 4,000 deaths, with the FLN emerging victorious to impose a "revolutionary tax" on the Algerian community in order to fund its war effort. The FLN's hard-won supremacy and widespread presence ensured that nearly all Algerian workers paid the tax. Trafficking and prostitution also filled the FLN's coffers and resulted in turf battles between North African and Corsican gangsters in Pigalle. The contribution of France's Algerian community was supplemented by funds from Arab countries or Eastern bloc governments, paid every month into Swiss bank accounts. The FLN deployed its extensive network of continental or Algerian Europeans-communists, union activists, workers, intellectuals, clergy-in logistics operations-transporting funds, safe houses, supplies, and so on. Despite the police's ruthless hunting down and elimination of its leaders in France, the FLN remained well organized and was even able to go on the attack: sabotage of factories, attacks on police stations, forgery of ID papers, shooting police officers, burning fuel dumps, publishing an underground revolutionary newspaper... In September 1958 alone, 56 sabotage operations and 242 attacks were carried out. The repression became increasingly high-profile, culminating in the police killing hundreds of Algerians in the streets of Paris and surrounding towns in October 1961. The FLN continued its attacks, however, until independence in 1962.

continued its attacks, however, until independence in 1962.

Fifty years on, in Algeria and France, the history of the colonial period and the war for independence remains tangled in a web of conflicting stories, memories, passions and political considerations.

"On 8th May 1945 (...) this wave of murderous violence, in which the role of the French authorities was crucially important, cost thousands of innocent lives".

Bernard Bajolet, French Ambassador, April 2008





## **CREW**

Producer **Executive Producer** Screenplay and Dialogue

> Editing Yannick Kergoat Original Score Armand Amar

Director of Photography Set Designer

**Production Designer** 

Olivier Walczak

Still Photographer

Special Effects Les Versaillais Visual Effects

First Assistant Director

Production Manager in Tunisia Hamid Ell Euch Post-Production Supervisor Cedric Ettouati

Jean Bréhat **Muriel Merlin** 

**Olivier Lorelle** 

Rachid Bouchareb

Christophe Beaucarne , AFC

Yan Arlaud Taïeb Jallouli

Costume Designers Edith Vesperini

Stephan Rollot

Sound Marc Engels

Franck Rubio **Thomas Gauder** 

Roger Arpajou

Mikros Images Belgique Casting Justine Leocadie

Mathieu Schiffman

Script Supervisor Elodie Van Beuren

Music Supervisor Elise Luguern

## STUDIO CANAL