

The November Revolution Between Philosophical Rooting and Practical Implementation: A Reading in the Perspective of Bukhari Hamana

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Abstract:

This topic addresses the philosophical dimension of the November 1st, 1954 Revolution through a reading of the perspective of the thinker Bukhari Hamana, who sought to highlight that the Algerian Revolution was not merely a political liberation movement, but an integrated intellectual project combining theory and practice. The revolution emerged in a harsh colonial context that targeted national identity, which led to the construction of a revolutionary philosophy based on collective awareness and a liberating will.

Bukhari Hamana sees that the philosophy of the revolution is based on five main foundations: optimism, clarity, work, democracy, and integration. Optimism represented a faith-based starting point in the possibility of liberation, while clarity constituted a condition for the people's awareness of their objectives, while work was embodied in the transition from theorization to armed revolutionary action. Democracy appeared as a collective practice expressing the will of the people, while integration ensured the harmony of the different intellectual, social, and political dimensions of the revolution.

These principles were manifested in reality through the unification of the people, the organization of revolutionary work, and confronting colonialism internally and externally, which enabled the revolution to achieve its objectives. Accordingly, the study concluded that the success of the Algerian Revolution is due to this deep interaction between philosophical rooting and practical implementation, which made it a distinguished model in global liberation movements.

Keywords: November Revolution, Philosophy of Revolution, Bukhari Hamana, optimism, clarity, work, democracy, integration

Introduction:

The November 1st, 1954 Revolution is considered one of the most important historical transformations experienced by the Algerian people, not only as a political liberation event, but

as an integrated intellectual and philosophical project that established a new awareness of man, history, and freedom. This revolution came in a colonial context characterized by oppression and systematic erasure of national identity, which required the emergence of a philosophical discourse restoring consideration to the Algerian self and establishing the legitimacy of the liberation struggle.

In this framework, the perspective of the thinker Bukhari Hamana emerges, who sought through his book “Philosophy of the Revolution” to philosophically root the Algerian Revolution, highlighting that it was not merely a spontaneous reaction or a situational act of violence, but rather the product of deep collective awareness based on a set of fundamental principles such as optimism, clarity, work, democracy, and integration. Accordingly, the problem raised by this topic revolves around: How were the philosophical foundations of the November Revolution manifested in their theoretical dimension? And how were they practically implemented in revolutionary practice? while revealing the dialectical relationship between philosophical rooting and practical practice of the revolution, through analyzing the applications of these principles in revolutionary reality, and showing their contribution to achieving independence and building national awareness.

First: Applications of the Philosophy of November

The philosophy of November was the result of struggle and intellectual and psychological accumulation across generations of Algerians who rejected French oppression and colonialism and believed in their ability to achieve liberation with courage to build an independent state. This philosophy was not merely a call to bear arms and shed blood or angry reactions against occupation, but rather an intellectual framework based on a set of foundations and applications that gave the revolution a deep liberation character, represented by what the great thinker Bukhari Hamana mentioned in five main axes: optimism, clarity, work, democracy, and integration.

First: Optimism:

In philosophical terms, optimism is defined as the doctrine that good predominates over evil in existence, and that this world we live in is the best of possible worlds because good prevails over evil and happiness over misery. Every philosopher who believes that existence is better than non-existence is considered an optimistic philosopher. Some optimists exaggerate their optimism to the point of denying the existence of evil and claiming that all existence is good. Among their traits are strong certainty, joy in knowledge, and patience in hardship¹. On this basis, Bukhari Hamana builds his intellectual starting point regarding the Algerian Revolution, expressing that optimism is a spiritual and practical ascent to overcome the challenges of eakness and setback that afflicted the Algerian people during colonialism. He establishes “a philosophy of revolution by governing the meaning of hope.”²

¹ Ismail Jamil Saliba, *Philosophical Dictionary*, Vol. 1, Beirut, Lebanese Book House, Beirut, 1982, pp. 312–313.

² Raïs Zouaoui, “A Deconstructive Reading of the Book *Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution* in the Thought of Professor Dr. Boukhari Hamana,” *Human Studies Journal*, Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem, Issue 02, 2016, p. 84.

The revolution needs this internal optimism and the desire for change and advancement in order to overcome conflict and siege at the social, political, and even military levels. Bukhari Hamana says: “the revolution is not improvised; it is a long continuity that contains what precedes the revolution, the revolution itself, and what comes after it,”³ and thus the real starting point of the revolution is viewing it as a comprehensive historical process, not as a momentary event. Accordingly, the success of the revolution is linked to self-awareness that comprehends realities in all their dimensions, political and social, and in Hegel’s expression history is the progress and awareness of freedom, meaning that the revolution does not require leaps or chance but requires linking paths and governing them over realities and outcomes.

For Bukhari Hamana, optimism is the first foundation upon which the philosophy of November was built, which he called the philosophy of hope, represented in its conscious view of man and the universe, and it is the path for the Algerian people’s desire for liberation: “This hope, for the philosophy of November, is closer to a firm belief in the possibility of that freedom, which generations of the Algerian people longed for and sought to regain... unlike all pessimistic philosophies, man is not the product of what is... but rather, above all, the result of what he wants and can be.”⁴ Thus, man according to the philosophy of November is the product of his will and belief in what he can become, meaning he can shape his destiny and overcome all constraints. In other words, the November Revolution did not begin from despair or submission to reality but from belief that freedom is possible and optimism of the Algerian people in restoring it through their will, as Hamana says: “Such an optimistic view of man is what enabled this philosophy on the eve of November 1st, 1954, to trust in the ability of the Algerian people, drowning in darkness of poverty, ignorance, and disease, to enter into armed struggle with the colonizer, not ignoring its costs, and to achieve final victory despite the overwhelming material superiority of the enemy.”⁵

In this statement, Bukhari explains how the optimistic vision of man adopted by the philosophy of November was the basis for giving confidence to the revolution’s pioneers in the people’s ability, despite difficult conditions, to fight and win liberation. He also confirms that the Algerian people’s uprising to regain their rights can only emerge from an optimistic human philosophy that rejects surrender to despair and believes deeply in the ability of peoples, regardless of circumstances, to overcome hardship and achieve victory, and sees them as qualified to lead liberation movements in the Third World.⁶

At the end of his idea, Bukhari responds to critics of violence by saying that the revolution was aware of its human costs but was not arbitrary; rather, it was planned and purposeful: “We prepared a dignified document for discussion with the French authorities.”⁷ Thus Hamana means that revolutionary violence was legitimate and necessary in the face of

³ Boukhari Hamana, *Philosophy of Revolution*, p. 10.

⁴ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, Ibn Nadim Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 1st ed., 2012, p. 215.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 215–216.

⁶ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, Ibn Nadim Publishing and Distribution, Algeria, 1st ed., 2012, p. 216

⁷ Ibid., p. 216.

violent colonialism, and that the Algerian people had no other choice but armed struggle to achieve freedom and assert existence, especially against an enemy that rejects dialogue and negotiation. The people proved their ability to restore their entity by force, especially since various national parties, despite their efforts, failed to achieve independence due to their misunderstanding of the harsh colonial reality.

Second: Clarity

Clarity is the second foundation after optimism. Clarity is a characteristic attributed to an idea or statement when it is free from ambiguity. The word clarity in the philosophical dictionary of Jamil Saliba is not treated as an independent term under the title “clarity,” but is explained under the entry “explicit,” where it states: “the explicit meaning is the clear, apparent, and evident meaning, and the explicit person is the one who expresses what is within himself with complete clarity, and frankness is purity and clarity, and that a person shows what is inside him with sincerity and honesty,”⁸ and some philosophers consider clarity a fundamental criterion of truth. Everything clear in the mind is considered correct.

For Descartes, clarity is “a perception that is present and evident to a keen mind, such that there is no opportunity to doubt its truth and value... and he also called it distinct.”⁹

What is meant here is that clarity for him is one of the essential conditions of certainty in knowledge that contains no contradiction or ambiguity, as the mind perceives it immediately as if it is clearly present.

Clarity is one of the central foundations in the philosophy of November according to Bukhari Hamana, as he sees that the revolution cannot achieve its goals without clarity, as it is a basic condition for every sincere revolutionary philosophy. He says: “The bitter experiences of the Algerian people with the colonizer have confirmed to this philosophy, and undoubtedly confirmed to other revolutionary philosophies, that peoples cannot hope, let alone interact or demand, except what they clearly perceive, i.e., with awareness and thought deeply embodied in the realities in which they exist and their behavior toward them at the same time.”¹⁰ This means that clarity is the aim of revolutionary will, and ambiguity or ignorance of reality prevents peoples from interacting or hoping for change. Clarity is evidence of sincerity of revolutionary intentions.

Also, the greatest promises raised by revolutionary movements such as freedom, justice, and democracy lose their value and become mere words if not based on a clear and specific content. Therefore, the philosophy of the Algerian Revolution since its inception adhered to the principle of clarity and made it a fundamental criterion by which any revolution is named.¹¹ Clarity is the goal of liberation after the people’s long suffering.

Bukhari also confirms that people cannot make a real revolution or sacrifice themselves unless they clearly understand why they are doing so and what their goals are, as he says: “Realizing

⁸ Jamil Saliba, *Philosophical Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 726

⁹ André Lalande, *Lalande Philosophical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, Oueidat Publications, 7th ed., Beirut, 2001, p. 173.

¹⁰ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 217.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 217.

that the philosophy of November that the people cannot die except for clear and defined goals and means.”¹²

Revolutionary clarity, courage, and honesty are not limited to the liberation of the Algerian people only, but extend to the liberation of all colonized peoples. The Algerian Revolution was part of a broader African resistance as explained by Bukhari: “Indeed, that clarity and courage that necessarily emerge from it have reached the point of publicly declaring that its goal is not limited to working for the independence of Algeria alone, but also the independence of all colonized peoples.”¹³

This means that the goal of the revolution goes beyond Algeria’s independence to include dismantling colonialism across Africa and supporting other peoples’ resistance, making it a comprehensive liberation movement.

Thus, clarity is a defined, necessary, and essential goal for the success of the revolution, guiding revolutionary action and giving it strength.

Third: Work

“Work is action, profession, and craft. It is said: he worked, meaning he acted intentionally. Ibn Khaldun also says (works are the basis of gains), meaning that the value of gains increases with the increase of work. When work is used for human activity, it indicates moral or mental effort exerted to overcome selfishness. In short, work is close to action, influence, activity, and effort.”¹⁴

“Philosophy of work is the doctrine of the primacy of work and the precedence of will over reason. Work in this philosophy means all human activity involving thought, will, and practical realization.”¹⁵

In Bukhari’s thought, work is a philosophical position reflecting the transformation of collective awareness toward action on the ground for liberation, as he says: “This means that what matters for the philosophy of November and its early men is not stopping at mere theorizing about the revolution, but also working at the same time to embody it on the ground.”¹⁶ In simple terms, revolutionary leaders were not interested only in speech or theoretical planning, but sought to apply it in reality and turn it into tangible actions through struggle and independence. The revolution was therefore a practical project rather than abstract ideas. Bukhari also explains that despite the simplicity of applying the principle of action, its implementation faced major difficulties. The colonizer would not leave through words or peace; thus armed struggle was the only solution.¹⁷

He shows that the revolution had to face French propaganda abroad claiming Algeria was part of France: “It also had to destroy before French and international public opinion the lie of French Algeria, and practically refute all positions of national political parties which concluded

¹² Ibid., p. 218

¹³ Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁴ Jamil Saliba, *Philosophical Dictionary*, op. cit., pp. 104–105.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁶ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 220.

¹⁷ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 221.

on the eve of November 1954 that the Algerian people could not succeed in any armed confrontation with the colonizer.”¹⁸

Thus, the principle of work has the power to change reality and destroy lies. Algeria had to enter an unequal war against a massive colonial power: “It had to enter a fierce and unequal war with a colonizer that had accustomed the Algerian people only to oppression and violence.”¹⁹

Bukhari sees that the revolution had no choice but confrontation, and work here means movement and resistance regardless of sacrifices.

Finally, he notes that the revolution adhered to ethical, religious, and human principles: “To achieve such a goal without violating its religious, moral, and human principles, which it committed itself to before others imposed them on it, believing that a revolution is either ethical or it is not.”²⁰

It means that the revolution was convinced that a just cause must be fought in an ethical manner, and this is what gives it a human and moral dimension despite the revolutionary violence practiced by colonialism against the Algerian people. What the Algerian Revolution did was only a natural reaction to the terrible injustice it experienced; it did not begin with war and violence, and what resulted from it in terms of uprising was a response to the brutality of the enemy against it and is considered a moral justification because it is self-defense, dignity, and the recovery of the self. Therefore, it presents itself as an example for all colonized peoples against oppressive colonialism.

Finally, Hamana considered the November Revolution the first successful armed Arab and Islamic revolution, which succeeded in uniting peoples around it not only politically but symbolically as a source of inspiration in liberation, as he confirmed in his statement: “And no one also denies that the First November Revolution was the first Arab and Islamic armed revolution that practically unified the Arab and Islamic world.”²¹

Thus, through focusing on the principle of work, Bukhari sought to highlight the practical dimension of the revolution. Liberation is not achieved through words, but through organized and planned action as embodied in guerrilla warfare and revolutionary conferences (such as the Soummam Conference). He emphasized that the revolution went beyond individual and chaotic violence and relied on collective struggle based on work and coordination. Finally, work is a necessary philosophical foundation for achieving the goals of the revolution and the success of the national liberation project.

Fourth: Democracy

“Democracy is a word composed of two Greek terms: ‘demos’ meaning people and ‘kratos’ meaning authority and sovereignty. Thus, democracy means the authority and sovereignty of the people, and it is a political system in which the people are the holders of power without

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 221.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 221.

²⁰ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 221.

²¹ Ibid., p. 224.

distinction among individuals in terms of origin, birth, or any other affiliation.”²² This means that the democratic system is based on the agreement of members of society to transfer their natural freedoms and rights to an elected authority that represents the general will and ensures the protection of citizens’ security, rights, and civil duties.

It is also stated in another concept of democracy that it is: “a social system in which the people are the source of authority, exercised by their deputies or representatives through legislation they decide upon, through which the judicial system rules, and through which public officials manage the state’s administrative apparatus, organizing the relationship between ruler and ruled, and between individuals themselves.”²³

That is, democracy is a system of governance in which the people participate in decision-making either directly or through freely elected representatives, and it is based on principles such as freedom of expression, respect for human rights, and peaceful rotation of power.

Bukhari considers freedom to be the basis of the revolutionary human being’s existence, and it cannot be achieved except through actual independence, through which the people sacrifice to restore their independence, transforming it into a real democracy expressing their will. In his book, he spoke about the feeling of freedom as the deepest feeling connected to human existence, a feeling expressing the desire for sovereignty and perfection, using Greek myths to illustrate how ancient peoples expressed their innate desire to be free from constraints. He said: “That is, the peak of the feeling of power of freedom and complete sovereignty, a feeling that ancient Greek myths narrate as arising in anyone who tastes the fruit of the lotus flower that grows on the northern coasts of Africa, which made Odysseus and his companions, after their maritime adventure that led them to those coasts, like its inhabitants, the Lotophagi, no longer desire after tasting its fruits freedom and sovereignty.”²⁴

Here Bukhari wants to confirm that man is born with an innate inclination toward freedom.

Bukhari also presents a deep philosophical critique of Western democracy as portrayed by Fukuyama, which he reduced to “Isothymia,” meaning the desire for equal recognition. Francis Fukuyama considered that democracy represents the end of the evolution of political systems, as stated in this passage: “Thus democracy in that philosophy was transformed from merely ‘isothymia,’ meaning the desire for equal or balanced recognition, the recognition that (F. Fukuyama) believed to be the missing link of Western democracy, into a revolutionary mass act, concretely embodying such equal recognition in practice.”²⁵

Bukhari sees that democracy is not a given goal or individual aspiration for recognition as Western philosophers imagined, but rather a practical exercise of popular sovereignty, as the Algerian people embodied democracy through revolution and struggle, turning the idea of recognition into a concrete reality achieved by force.

He also argues that democracy was embodied in the Algerian revolutionary project as a comprehensive popular practice and collective leadership without religious, regional, or class

²² Jalal Eddine Saeed, *Dictionary of Philosophical Terms and Quotations*, Dar Al-Janoub Publishing, Tunisia, 2004, p. 197.

²³ Abdel Moneim Hanafi, *Comprehensive Dictionary of Philosophical Terms*, op. cit., p. 357.

²⁴ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 230.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 230.

distinction. It affirmed collective leadership, rejected personality cults, and relied on active participation respecting freedom of opinion without violating its fundamental principles. The democratic model was characterized by the ability to self-correct, achieving people's unity and independence. It also shows that democracy was not limited to political aspects as in the French Revolution, nor purely material as in some socialist revolutions, but was a complete experience combining the social and political, thus achieving integration and success in the philosophy of the revolution.²⁶

Finally, Bukhari concludes that the Algerian Revolution was not merely a local national liberation movement, but a living embodiment of a universal human principle: the right of peoples to freedom and independence, and their ability to confront and break colonial constraints and achieve sovereignty, as he says: "Thus the Algerian Revolution was one of the few human revolutions that succeeded in practically embodying the principle of peoples' right to freedom, not only on its own land, but on every land struggling for that freedom."²⁷ In addition, the Algerian Revolution became a model for every colonized country seeking liberation.

Fifth: Integration

Integration is defined as: "the inclusion of a new element into a pre-existing psychological system, meaning that the interconnection of organ functions, the diversity of structures, and the organic solidarity that results from them all constitute the unity and identity of the living organism, called integrated unity. Integration may be mental as the joining of scattered mental elements, or practical as the joining of a new employee into an administrative system."²⁸ Thus, integration is the fusion of diverse parts whether in the psyche, the body, or society into a harmonious unity that achieves perfection, identity, and stability.

The philosophical and social meaning of integration is further clarified by Bukhari Hamana through his vision of the Algerian Revolution as an integrated system and collective harmonious action that incorporates individuals into a collective project aimed at liberation and independence, just as organs of a single body integrate to achieve the goal of life. Thus, integration becomes one of the essential foundations for achieving revolutionary unity and national independence. For Hamana, integration is: "totality and comprehensiveness... and that precise interconnection between the various aspects of the revolutionary project of the philosophy of November, and the extent of its saturation with the values of its Arab-Islamic nation and its integrated theory of man and life."²⁹

He means that integration was coherent and interconnected in all its dimensions, and its goal was to build a free human being and a society preserving its values, as the philosophy of November was saturated with Arab-Islamic values.

He further adds: "Thus integration is achieved in this awakening between religion and worldly life, between present and past, between authenticity and modernity, between particularity and universality, between form and content, because the awakening we seek is one we want to be

²⁶ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 232.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 233.

²⁸ Jamil Saliba, *Philosophical Dictionary*, op. cit., p. 332.

²⁹ Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 233.

integrated, so that it is capable of carrying us strongly and authentically over centuries of backwardness and stagnation, and connects us with the strength of our reality while rooting us deeply in our past. Through such an awakening alone can the Islamic nation overcome its divisions, restore its glory, and achieve its life through a clean, strong, integrated, and solidaristic Islamic society.”³⁰

Bukhari confirms that integration is achieved through an Islamic awakening that unites the nation and enables it to restore its civilizational glory and build a strong conscious society that is authentic in its roots and capable of confronting backwardness while engaging with modern reality without losing identity. Thus, he emphasizes that the awakening must be comprehensive and integrated.

He also says in his article: “What kind of revolutionary are you, Muhammad (PBUH)”: “Because revolution in the concept of your message can only be integrated if it is spiritual, moral, and material at the same time, your revolution does not know terrorism or violence as known in other revolutions.”³¹

Bukhari means that true revolution is not limited to material aspects, but must be comprehensive and integrated, based on moral and spiritual values that elevate human dignity and establish sovereignty and self-building.

“Such a holistic and integrated vision is what enabled this philosophy to make all those foundations, principles, values, and actions meet, interact, and integrate within that liberation revolution.”³²

The revolution was not random or fragmented but integrated and inclusive of all principles and values, which shows that its success was not only through armed struggle, but through an organized moral system leading the people toward liberation with clear objectives.

The Algerian Revolution also did not separate the people from the revolution but integrated the people within it. Despite colonialism and violent oppression, the revolution succeeded because it embodied the aspirations and suffering of the masses, as seen in the armed national movements in Algeria. These movements were characterized by their ability to unleash the hidden energies of the people and unify them in a single revolutionary path, overcoming political, social, ethnic, regional, and tribal differences, moving toward a unified and integrated national revolutionary action.

The Algerian Revolution also did not separate the people from the revolution; rather, it integrated the people within the revolution. Despite colonialism, its violent attacks, and its oppression, this did not succeed because the revolution embodied the aspirations and suffering of the masses, and this is clearly evident in the armed national movements that Algeria witnessed. These movements were characterized by their ability to unleash the latent energies within the people and unify their ranks in a single revolutionary path. Thus, the revolution was

³⁰ Boukhari Hamana, *Reflections on Religion and the World*, Laboratory of Value Dimensions of Political and Intellectual Transformations, Oran, 1st ed., 2012, p. 156.

³¹ Ibid., p. 211.

³² Boukhari Hamana, *The Philosophy of the Algerian Revolution*, op. cit., p. 234.

able to overcome political, social, ethnic, regional, and tribal differences, moving toward a unified, integrated, and comprehensive national revolutionary action.³³

Conclusion

In conclusion of this analysis, it becomes clear that the November Revolution was not merely a military confrontation with French colonialism, but a comprehensive philosophical and human experience that embodied a profound awareness of freedom and human dignity. Boukhari Hamana was able, through his vision, to reveal the intellectual dimension of the revolution, emphasizing that its success was not a matter of chance, but rather the result of a harmonious interaction between a set of philosophical foundations that were transformed into effective practical applications.

Optimism emerged as a driving force of the revolutionary will, clarity as a condition for awareness of liberating action, work as a mechanism for embodying principles, democracy as a horizon for achieving popular sovereignty, while integration constituted the unifying framework that brought together all these elements within a comprehensive liberation project. In this way, the Algerian Revolution presented a unique model in the history of revolutions, as it succeeded in reconciling thought and practice, values and interests, as well as national specificity and the universal human dimension.

Accordingly, it can be said that the philosophy of November, as formulated by Boukhari Hamana, remains a fundamental reference for understanding the dynamics of liberation revolutions, and a theoretical framework that can be drawn upon in building contemporary development projects based on awareness, unity, and collective action.

³³ Ibid., p. 235.