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**The national role of sporting activities in Algeria
during the colonial period (1900-1954)**

الدور الوطني للنشاطات الرياضية بالجزائر
خلال الفترة الاستعمارية (1954-1900)

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Abstract: During the period between 1900 and 1954, Algeria witnessed profound transformations in its struggle against French colonialism. The Algerian people moved from armed popular resistance, which failed to achieve independence to widespread political resistance. This political resistance expressed a significant national consciousness and a strong will to liberate the country and oblige the French authorities to submit to its legitimate demands. One of the manifestations of this political resistance was the establishment of cultural associations and sport clubs, as well as the formation of political parties, collectively known as the Algerian National Movement.

One of the most prominent means of political resistance at that time was the different sports activities, serving as a method of political and national expression of the Algerian cause. These activities represented the national identity of the Algerian society, promoted national choices and highlighted the name of Algeria on the international stage. Thus, the historical dimension of the national role of sports activities had multiple implications within the national movement.

Sports activities joined social, developmental and political activism that Algeria experienced since the beginning of the twentieth century and took an important role and place in the history of the national movement and Algerian sport to unite in the struggle hand in hand. Sport clubs and their various associations contributed in making sport activities in

repeated football matches competitions and events in stadiums and stands, a means of struggle and dedication to all aspects of national pride and solidarity, struggling for freedom and independence. Despite the effort of French colonialism to obstruct the course of these activities by enacting laws and prohibiting the practice of many of them in belief they had become a project of resistance and struggle (jihad).

Keywords: angles, Sports, Algeria, colonialism, struggle, clubs, associations, games, activities, patriotism, competitions

الملخص: شهدت الجزائر في الفترة ما بين 1954/1900 تحولات عميقة في مسارها النضالي ضد الاحتلال الفرنسي، انتقل فيها الشعب الجزائري من المقاومة الشعبية المسلحة التي فشلت في تحقيق الاستقلال، إلى مقاومة سياسية واسعة عيّرت عن وعي وطني كبير وإرادة قوية في تحرير البلاد وإجبار السلطات الفرنسية للرضوخ لمطالبه المشروعة، ومن مظاهر هذه المقاومة السياسية إنشاء الجمعيات والنوادي الثقافية، وتشكيل الأحزاب السياسية، والذي اصطلح عليه باسم الحركة الوطنية الجزائرية.

تعتبر النشاطات الرياضية المتنوعة من أبرز وسائل المقاومة السياسية آنذاك، كوسيلة تعبير ونضج سياسي ووطني بالقضية الجزائرية، حيث كانت تعبر عن الهوية الوطنية للمجتمع الجزائري، وتبني الخيارات الوطنية وإعلاء اسم الجزائر في المحافل الدولية، فكان البعد التاريخي للدور الوطني للنشاطات الرياضية له دلالاته المتعددة الجوانب في الحركة الوطنية. لقد أصبحت النشاطات الرياضية ضمن الفعاليات، والحراك الجمعوي النهضوي، والحزبي السياسي الذي عايشته الجزائر منذ بداية القرن العشرين، لتضع لنفسها مكانة ودورا هامين في سجل تاريخ الحركة الوطنية والرياضية اللتان التقتا وعملا جنبا إلى جنب، في تعريف الجزائريين بوطنهم ورموزه وهويته، ولقد عملت النوادي الرياضية وجمعياتها المختلفة إلى جعل الرياضة وسيلة من وسائل الكفاح والنضال وتكريس كل مظاهر الاعتزاز بالوطن وحبه، والمطالبة بالحرية والاستقلال أثناء المنافسات واللقاءات الكروية المتكررة في الملاعب والمدرجات، رغم كل محاولات الاستعمار الفرنسي في عرقلة المسار النضالي لتلك الأنشطة بخلق القوانين ومنع الممارسة للعديد من تلك النشاطات لاعتقاده أنها أصبحت مشروع للمقاومة والجهاد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرياضة، الجزائر، الاستعمار، الكفاح، النوادي، الجمعيات، الألعاب، الأنشطة، الوطنية، المنافسات.

Introduction: the world began to get to know each other better with the emergence of various human activities: political, cultural and sporting ones, especially at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. These activities formed waves of liberation led by associations, parties, and various forms of journalism, through which people were called to liberation, spreading national consciousness and thought and exposing European colonial powers that sought to obscure and combat them, despite claiming to uphold humanitarian principles. Sporting activities, amongst others constituted the revival collective movement intellectually and culturally, experienced by Algeria at the beginning of the twentieth century, marked itself a significant role and place in the record of the national and sporting movement history. They met and worked together to define Algerians' homeland, symbols and identity. Sports clubs and their various associations worked to make sports a means of struggle and activism promoting all aspects of national pride and nation love calling and shouting for freedom and independence during football competitions in stadiums and stands. They made it, for a sensitive period a means for Algerians to express their identity, belonging and culture.

In this respect, we discuss the question of the impact and role of sporting activities in the national struggle against French colonialism and the position French colonial administration. Through this research paper, we attempt to approach an answer by explaining the history and circumstances of the establishment of various clubs and their sporting activities and addressing attempts by French authorities to counter these activities enacting laws to hinder Islamic sports clubs fearing they would become another front for resistance and jihad. However, these Islamic clubs quickly gained independence from colonial sports clubs, starting by the foundation of the Algerian People's Sporting Club on August 7, 1921. Algerian sports and athletes found themselves within Algerian popular hopes during sports events and outside in public squares, popular neighborhoods, club headquarters, Algerian Islamic scout headquarters and art and theater houses.

They quickly became the incubator of nationalism and nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s, carrying the aspirations of the Algerian people as a step towards independence by moving away from colonial associations and clubs. In this manner, they emphasize the principles of struggle and sacrifice against a colonizer who tried to kill and eliminate any symbol of the existence of Arab-Muslim Algerian component. Thus, sports activity became the cradle of nationalism and nationalists, and the fertile environment for the national project against French colonial schemes.

1. sports Activities in Algeria 1867-1914: sports activities in Algeria began in 1867 with the introduction of rhythmic and physical games by the colonial army and European sports associations. The interaction between Algerians and Europeans led to the establishment of sports fields in Algiers where the first appearance of sport clubs occurred in 1885 with the creation of the club "Talía'at Al-Hayat Fi Al-Hawa Al-Kabir" (Vanguard of Life in the Open Air) in El Harrach, the capital's district..¹

In 1887, in the El Darb neighborhood of Oran, the first football team was established under the name "Club Athlétique d'Oran". In addition to that, in the Saint Antoine district, the "Club des Joyeusetés d'Oran" was founded on April 14, 1894, marking the beginnings of sports activities in Algeria and the Maghreb region. This development occurred in a region subjected to intense colonial influence, specifically in the western Algerian province of Oran..²

In Constantine, another club emerged with encouragement from Europeans in 1896 with red and black colors. In 1897, another club appeared in Oran, known as "Sporting Club Oranais" (S-C-O), offering various specialties like gymnastics, shooting, and military preparation. Sports activities included competitions supervised by Europeans, such as those in Algiers (1902), Blida (1904), Batna (1905), Constantine, and Chéraga in 1910 and 1911, respectively. These competitions featured

1- ديديه راي، زمن التعليمات أو تناقضات كرة القدم الكولونيالية في الجزائر 1928 م-1945م، دفاتر إنسانيات، العدد 34 أكتوبر-

ديسمبر 2006 م، ص. 69

2- Mostapha Mabed, sport A El HARRACH, TALED impression, Editions 2016, P09

multiple sports clubs, including Jewish, Muslim, French, Spanish, and Italian clubs.¹

The sports clubs continued without interruption until 1921, the year of the establishment of the first Muslim club, "Mouloudia Club Algérois" (M-C A).² Islamic associations, such as the one in M'Sila in March 1913, which rejected mixing with Europeans, also emerged. Algerians did not limit themselves to existing sports associations; they established purely Islamic clubs like the Muslim football team in M'Sila in 1912 and the Oran team in 1917. Sports, initially a justification for entering cultural, educational and sports associations, eventually became a revolutionary movement, especially with the legal establishment that was facilitated by the Associations Law of July 1, 1901, which gave Algerians their particularity in certain domains for Algerians³ Some studies suggest that the first Islamic club, "Al-Najm Al-Riyadi," appeared in Algiers in 1910, playing with players wearing green jerseys. Apart from football, other activities included physical sports like gymnastics. Notably, the club "Étoile Musulmane de M'Sila" (E-M-M) in 1908 remained unknown to colonial authorities despite strict administrative measures. Despite administrative restrictions, the founding of clubs persisted, spreading to various regions such as Tlemcen, Khemis Miliana, and Islamic Blida.⁴

The Algerian youth movement at the end of the 19th century was influenced by the European patterns in sports through social, cultural associations, and sport clubs before World War I in 1914. Mixing with their European counterparts, Algerians gained initial experiences in technical and sports management within their legal framework. Then, colonized Algerians perceived sports as a psychological event within their culture, creating a cultural overlap that resulted in political awareness and methods of struggle which became an effective tool to express identity and belonging, the primary demands of Algerians at that time. The Associations Law of 1901 constituted the reasons for awareness and consciousness and their development⁵.

1- Le ministère des moudjahidine, jeunesse, sport et revendications Algérie (1940/1962), op.cit.P14.

2- Serge pautot , France algérie, L'harmattan, Alger 2009, P.190.

3- IBID, P .191.

4- Mostapha Mabed, op cit, P12

5- Le ministère des moudjahidine, op.cit.P 18/19/20.

2. Associations, Sports Clubs and Colonial Restrictions: associations and sports clubs are social phenomena that reflect maturity and the response to the requirements of modern civic life. In Algeria, living under the oppressive Indigenous Law of 1881, which deprived Algerians of citizenship status and their rights in the basic law including the freedom to join cultural and artistic associations¹, became a challenge. All these associations were subject to arbitrary law enforcement. Various cultural and social activities emerged in the early 20th century, driven by Algerian youth who were not organized into any political party but were educated in French and had political awareness that allowed them to engage in discussions on issues such as naturalization.

In 1907, they were labeled "Turkish Youth," reflecting their political engagement. These young Algerians formed clubs and associations, such as the "Association of Al-Rashidia" in 1902 in the capital, "Club Athlétique de Salih Bey" in Constantine in 1907, and "Club des Jeunes Algériens" in Tlemcen and "Association Fraternelle" in M'Sila. The emergence of numerous cultural associations and clubs contributed to raising intellectual and cultural levels, resulting in a broad and noticeable political activity that swept away mental dust for the improvement of cultural and social standards through political work, even in a modest manner²

Notable contributions came from cultural organizations such as the "Tawfikiya Association" in 1912, which organized scientific lectures in 1911. In the midst of political events³, numerous clubs and associations appeared between 1890 and 1914, functioning as schools, social meeting places, sports, first aid, scouting and political activity centers, as well as studying religious sciences.⁴

The names, slogans, and symbols of clubs faced various forms of restriction, limiting the scope of their activities. For instance, "Racing Club Maison Carré"⁵ (R-C-M-C) requested the removal of the letter 'M,' which stands for 'Muslim,' to allow Muslims to play and train in the

1- أبو القاسم سعد الله، تاريخ الجزائر الثقافي 1830-1954 م ، ج 5، عالم المعرفة للنشر والتوزيع، الجزائر 2009 م، ص.313.

2- أحمد الخطيب، حزب الشعب الجزائري، ج 1، المؤسسة الوطنية للكتاب، الجزائر 1986 م، ص.55

3 - محمد بلعباس، الوجيز في تاريخ الجزائر، دار المعاصرة للنشر والتوزيع، المحمدية الجزائر 2009 ، ص.12

4 - أبو القاسم سعد الله، الحركة الوطنية الجزائرية، ج 2، ط 3، الشركة الوطنية للنقل والتوزيع، الجزائر 1983 م، ص.44.

5- Mostapha Mabed, op cit, P, P12/13/14

Zivaco Stadium. There were other clubs that are not given in details in this study, such as "Athletic Oran Club" in 1901, "Capital Sports Club" in 1902, "Nadi N'Ga Algeria" in 1902, "Oran Club" in 1903, "Sports Club Blidi" in 1904, "Galli Algeria Club" and "Galli Oran Club" in 1905-1906, "Star Sports of Ain Defla" in 1910, "Sports Club of M'Sila" in 1913, and "Nagi Capital" believed to be the first step toward founding the "Mouloudia Club of Algeria." 1. In addition to clubs that emerged later, such as Jeunesse Tiaret in 1943, and Olympique de Chlef in 1947, alongside Mouloudia Saïda.

Concerning French projects towards sports activities, there were restrictions on practicing various sports except football, rugby, tennis, athletics, basketball, iron ball and noble art, while other sports like judo and shooting were banned as they represented a threat to colonialism being primarily combat sports.²

The "Mouloudia Club of Algeria" and football sport, in particular, became the first channels for Algerians to demand change, advocate for emancipation, and get rid of all forms of oppressive colonialism. The 7th of August 1921, the night of the Prophet Muhammad's noble birth, marked the first steps towards independence and liberation from colonial oppression. This led to an increase in demands and forms of struggle by the establishment of Islamic clubs between the 1920s and 1930s, ultimately resulting in the suspension of sports activities in 1956 in response to the National Liberation Front's call. Later, the Front established its team in 1958 and finally Algeria gained independence after 132 years of colonization.

3. The relationship of the Islamic Scouts with sports: sport, with its diverse activities, is considered a fundamental pillar of scouting activities and work. In many priorities of scouting, it relies on youth and sports exercises to enhance the technical and physical abilities of the young scouts. Therefore, sports activities have been a crucial focus and a foundational element in implementing and solidifying the vision pursued by Mohamed Bouras in his project, which turned scouting into a broad platform involving both scouting and sports. This emphasized national

1 -Hamid Grine, *El MANACH DU SPORT ALGERIEN*, Editions ANEP Rouiba, janvier 1990, p. P12.

2- Mostapha Mabel, *op cit*, P 14 .

identity before and after its establishment. Scouting activities was closely intertwined during outings and camps held at the Scout Center in Algerian cities across various regions, including forests and different activity sites. This integration involves not only the standardized uniform, assistance in movement and exercises but also the inclusion of sports as a priority in the scouting project.¹

The spiritual father and the first founder of Algerian Islamic Scouting, the martyr Mohamed Bouras was a high-caliber athlete and his involvement in sports began in his early years before moving into scouting activities.²

He was an excellent player for the Mouloudia Club of Algiers (MCA) and a supporter. He was also an activist and a founder of the sports association called "L'Avant-garde" (The Vanguard). He was member of the "Taraqi" Club and supervised various social cleansing campaigns against societal ills. He contributed to the rise and the encouragement of the "Kawkab" theater in "La Lierre" hall. The proof of his sporting inclinations and passion for excellence is evident in the letter he sent to Mr. Al-Qawl Al-Sadiq, the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Scouts Federation. In this letter, he requested resignation with full regret, justifying this famous decision due to reasons he saw preventing him from continuing scouting activism.

He mentioned being under the guidance of Mr. Engineer "Dokounou" since 1922, passing various tests, and participating in shooting and military preparation at a young age. He engaged as a goalkeeper in the football association, gaining the admiration of the locals. In 1926, his family settled in Algiers and in 1930, he joined the first team of the popular Algerian Mouloudia Club (MCA), gaining fame with seventeen additional points compared to other supportive teams.³

He left this association to prepare for the B.P.M.E certificate but refrained due to an injury of his right foot, compelling him to abandon it.

1- IBID Mustapha MABED ,p.27

2-Mohamed DEROUICHE, LE SCOUTISME, ECOLE DU PATRIOTISME, entreprise nationale du livre, Alger1885, P.42

3- الكشافة الجزائرية الإسلامية، دراسة وبحوث الندوة الوطنية الأولى حول تاريخ الكشافة الإسلامية الجزائرية، المركز الوطني للدراسات والبحث في الحركة الوطنية وثورة أول نوفمبر 1954 م، الجزائر 1999 م، ص.37.

No need to mention his numerous participations and winning many long distance marathons in sports federations. Noteworthy are his courageous swimming actions, risking his life to rescue three European girls and boys and three Muslims. In 1935, he began moral and physical education for the youth, which was behind establishing the Islamic Scouts.

He excelled in playing football throughout his career with the Mouloudia Club and his achievements with it testify to his dedication to serving Algerian sports and youth.¹

4. The National Role of Sporting Activities Between the Two World

Wars: in parallel to Colonial schemes that aimed at halting any aspect of the Algerian renaissance and calling for liberation and freedom, sports activities took on a significant role in the national movement. Awakening consciences, igniting nationalist sentiments and nurturing a sense of national identity became a valuable and virtuous goal for revolution against colonial reality and its administration. The latter worked to establish deceptive projects in various fields, using different platforms and setting specific timeframes, with the intention of obstructing and nullifying the national project. Their aim was to prolong French presence on Algerian soil, exploiting resources, subjugating people and enslaving both people and land. In response, key figures within the national movement, including associations, political parties, leaders, sports, scouting and cultural entities, displayed quick-wittedness and vigilance.

They used sports centers, clubs, stands and training halls to promote nationalism. Secret political meetings were held to propagate the national project and enhance national awareness. The influential and dynamic national movement made continuous efforts during the 1920s and 1930s to infiltrate and navigate through various currents. It capitalized on religious occasions within Islamic clubs to promote the national project, emphasizing the values of Algerian identity anchored in Islamic faith and the Arabic language. These two pillars were fundamental components of the national project and were reflected in symbols, slogans and colors of sports teams.

Various factions within the national movement, such as the Algerian People's Party, the Association of Muslim Scholars, and the Algerian Islamic Scouts, alongside with other political movements, used sports as

a tool. Regardless of political and intellectual differences, they shared a common goal of using sports to raise political and athletic awareness, ensuring the success of national efforts and objectives..Sports clubs and 1 their administrators, in collaboration with scouting activities, seamlessly integrated with cultural and intellectual associations. They prioritized the higher interests of Algerian society, ignoring differences and eliminating obstacles that could impede unity. The ultimate goal of these diverse activities was to achieve freedom and complete independence, despite political differences during that sensitive period in the history of the Algerian national movement.²

The various sports activities, both individual and collective, did not need to prove or affirm their effective role and distinguished performance, both in sports competitions against colonial athletes and teams and in their national role. The different sports activities provided Algerians with a new perspective and an additional platform that supported national unity in various aspects. The collective efforts of sports activities turned them into a powerful platform and a primary setting cultivating and nurturing leaders and prominent figures. These leaders included Larbi Ben M'Hidi, Souidani Boudjema, Ahmed Ben Bella, and Mohamed Bouras, the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Scouts.³

In addition to participating in sports, other figures contributed through practice, management, and encouragement. The National Sports School played a crucial role in attracting revolutionary ideas. Its pace increased and its nerve strengthened due to political activism. Consequently, a strong collaboration and clear unity emerged among Algerian audiences during sports competitions. The sports base, represented by associations and clubs, became a vessel for political messages where politicians conveyed both clear and hidden messages, which translated into the exchange of roles and diversifying confrontation methods against the colonial administration. This was especially evident in the 1930s after the demands of the North African

1- العربي الجديد: تاريخ الكرة الجزائرية، أندية رياضية بأهداف سياسية، جيل شبابي عربي، الحلقة الأولى، 2، جوان 2014، ص 1.

2- Mostapha Mabed, op cit, P.27

3- Le ministère des moudjahidine, jeunesse, op.cit.P 443.

Star in 1933 and later, the Algerian People's Party in 1937, which confirmed the call for independence.

During this period, new facets and diverse forms of struggle, resistance, and national awareness surfaced. The Islamic slogans of sports clubs, stirring nationalist sentiments, along with the vibrant colors symbolizing freedom, life, and Islam, played a vital role in advancing the national project. These symbols were carefully chosen to push the national project forward, achieving the aspirations of the Algerian people after a century of marginalization, exclusion, and enforced poverty by French colonial strategies to eliminate any nationalist idea. The formidable force behind sports activities lies in the youth, particularly the young age group characterized by flexibility and swiftness². They are capable of facing challenges, meeting the requirements of sports, politics and other fields. Therefore, French colonial efforts, employing various plans, sought to eliminate Islamic sports associations, considering them social meeting points that carried out their activities with various functions, much like schools. This was similar to other associations such as scouting organizations and headquarters of political activities for influential national parties and religious reform associations in particular.

5. Harnessing Sports in Service of National Goals: political figures, reformist leaders and scout leaders have recognized the importance of sports in its various forms and have not excluded it from involvement and participation in the challenging period that Algeria faced, especially in the 1930s. The activities of party leaders, in addition to their political role intertwined with the establishment of clubs and Islamic football teams, such as Ferhat Abbas with the Islamic Union of Sétif (U.S.M.S) in 1936, Tayeb Al-Oqbi, and Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis with Mouloudia Olympique de Constantine (M.O.C) in 1939. The relationships of Tayeb Al-Oqbi and Mohammed Boudia with the dean of Algerian clubs, Mouloudia Club Algerois (M.C.A), were significant. Ben Badis, a pioneer of the reformist school and president of the Association of Muslim Scholars, despite his strong religiosity, recognized the importance and impact of sports, cultural and scout associations. He

1- يحيى بوعزيز، السياسة الاستعمارية من خلال مطبوعات حزب الشعب الجزائري 1930-1954- م، دار البصائر للنشر والتوزيع، حسين داي، الجزائر 2009 م، ص. 104.

2- محمد بلعباس، المرجع السابق، ص. 12.

made use of every means and any domain that he believed would benefit and enrich the national project, working to enhance and establish it within his comprehensive strategic approach.¹

On this basis, Sheikh Ben Badis directed these energies against colonialism to thwart its racial projects in all fields. While focusing on teaching, preaching, and various lectures, he also showed special interest in the intrests of youth, sports, and arts. He directly contributed to the establishment of sports clubs, encouraged and supported successful Algerian athletes. Simultaneously, he attended artistic and musical events, as described in an article in the February 1930 issue of the "Ech-Chihab" newspaper, where he discussed the importance of art in Islam, the arts in Islamic history, and the nation's need for knowledge and art, expressing it through eloquent artistic styles.²

Sports, especially football, became a wide field with its activities and competitive schedules during matches and competitions, serving as an essential component of the Arab-Islamic Algerian personality. It represented its existence, performance and expression. Algerian supporters encouraged their local players by chanting phrases like "Forward, brothers! Show them who we are, a people of six million," reflecting the impact and concern that began to affect the Algerian popular classes due to the contradictions of the colonial policy.³

The activity of the Algerian political league, along with the intellectual awakening of Algeria at the end of the 19th century, was flavored and supported by various factors that contributed to the crystallization of national awareness. Cultural associations, the emergence of the press, and migration were some of these factors. With them came the first signs that would later free Algerians from the domination of the Western Christian element, represented by French imperialism, which sought, by all means, to eliminate Islam in the land of Islam. These activists established sports clubs with political goals aimed at deceiving French colonialism. The creation of associations, whether modest in the early stages of sports formation, rapidly progressed in later stages, where sports and athletes became prominent actors on the national

1- محمد الميلي، ابن باديس وعروبة الجزائر، ط2، الشركة الوطنية للنشر والتوزيع، الجزائر 1980 م، صص. 68، 69.

2- عليوان سعيد: فلسفة ابن باديس في الإصلاح، جامعة الأمير عبد القادر قسنطينة، العدد 42 جوان 2017 م، ص. 350.

3- أبو القاسم سعد الله، الحركة الوطنية الجزائرية 1930/1945 م، دار الغرب الإسلامي، بيروت لبنان 1992 م، ج3 ص38/39.

stage. This period, between 1921 and 1939, historically known as the interwar period, many internal and external factors changed the Algerian reality, impacting Algerian society and negatively influencing the French side in terms of the penetration of national slogans by athletes into various strata of Algerian society, especially the youth.¹

Researchers have noticed the performance, role, and active participation of sports activities after the end of World War I in 1918. Muslim teams and clubs emerged immediately after the war. In the first half of the 20th century, between 1923 and 1924, about 18% of the total sports clubs were purely Islamic. The establishment of the first Algerian Islamic club, Mouloudia Club Algerois (M.C.A), on August 7, 1921, with its nationalistic colors, slogans and symbols (red and green, the star and crescent, Islam and Arab identity) leads us to believe that the issue was beyond sport to become a significant means of struggle and resistance in a disguised form. This is what the founders and managers aimed for in the early days of establishing sports clubs between 1921 and 1939, a period historically known as the interwar period. This era witnessed significant changes internally and externally that affected the Algerian reality and society and influencing badly the French side by introducing national slogans through sports into various segments of Algerian society, particularly the youth..³

Football could serve as a powerful means to convey and reinforce identity orientations. Quickly, sports competitions, especially those between colonial teams and Islamic clubs, took on the character of violent confrontations, particularly in the stands among fans. This highlighted one of the major contradictions that accelerated persistent critical issues to the French authorities. These authorities sought to develop sports as a means of controlling the population. General Giroud, the military commander of Oran, expressed this perspective, stating that sports should be a unifying force for both French and Muslim populations as an attempt to domesticate sports for the benefit of the

1- أبو عمران الشيخ، محمد الجيجلي، الكشافة الإسلامية الجزائرية، ط 1، دار الأمة للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، الجزائر 1999 م ص.ص. 13.12.

2- ديديه راي: المرجع السابق، ص، 70.

3- BELKHEIR LOUNES dit Abdenour M.C.A, cette légende vivante, Editions maison des livres 2004 , P.1.

French project. He advocated for the effective elimination of any religious or racial conflicts.

Some Algerian clubs resisted French instructions. Notably among them were Hilal Sigois (Croissant Club Sigois) and the Muslim Sports Union of Oran, a major club with 900 members, established on October 9, 1932. This club was affiliated with the French Federation (F.F.B.B) and gained significant fame for its participation in North African competitions between 1933 and 1935¹

The contradictions in the French approach were evident when some matches were banned due to their political and racial sensitivity, while others were allowed to proceed. For example, the match between U.S.M.O (Muslim team from Oran) and Saint-Doujin Athletic Association in February 1931². was with no restrictions. The French authorities aimed to control the sports scene by integrating European athletes into Islamic clubs starting in 1932 for surveillance and intelligence.

However, these practices did not deter the determination of activists. They used various forms of sports to express opposition to French colonialism. This resistance evolved through different phases, responding to the needs of the struggle for independence from the late 19th century to the 1930s. This included the establishment of the Islamic Scouts in 1935³, and the violent events associated with the Mouloudia Alger team in 1956.⁴

Algerians resisted the colonial policy, which motivated activism in various fields, including politics, reforms, sports, and scouting. The leaders in this period devised new and innovative plans to escape the surveillance of colonial eyes. They integrated nationalist activists into sports clubs as part of the national movement. For example, football players like Ibn Siam and Tayyar played a crucial role in directing sports activities to serve the national movement. In 1937, Muhammad Abdoun

1- Ibid, P.3.

2- Hocine Seddiki, Rachid Makhloufi, société nationale d'édition et de diffusion, Alger, 1982, P 15.

3- Mohamed Hassaine, Mokhtar Djazouli (fils), Le Doyen conte le Mouloudia De l'époque coloniale, Edition dar El Farouk Editions et diffusion, Alger 2009, P57.

4- عمر بوداود من حزب الشعب الجزائري إلى جبهة التحرير الوطني، ت ر أحمد بم محمد بكري، دار القصة للنشر، الجزائر 2007م، ص.127.

met with members of the P.P.A (People's Party of Algerian Muslims), including Mufdi Zakaria Hussein Lahoual, to establish Carna¹.

The atmosphere during sports competitions between Algerian and colonial teams was characterized by great patriotic enthusiasm and nationalism. This fervor continued as long as sports served as a means to convey and establish identity and national orientations².

The competitions, especially in football, became a platform for mutual violence within stadiums and outside during the events. Algerians began to understand their nationalism through sports, especially football, which the national movement used as a powerful tool for struggle and resistance. The movement benefited from several positive factors in exploiting sports activities as a weapon and a means of struggle. This included the headquarters of Islamic clubs within popular neighborhoods, as well as cafes where secret and public meetings were held. This was effective in promoting and reinforcing the national project and encouraging activists, both in the educated and popular classes, across neighborhoods like Bab El Oued and Kasbah in Algiers, and similar events relevant to Mouloudia Club Alger.³

Different sports activities have begun to assume pioneering roles, especially in the social and political domains, through various means such as awareness, fostering national identity, demanding independence and breaking free from colonial influence. Beginning of the year 1937, 4activists and members of the Algerian People's Party (P-P-A) which was founded in March of the same year, began to mobilize effectively, exploiting various spaces such as educational institutions and sports clubs to convey political messages, gather national support, and intensify awareness and educational activities. Thus, sports activities, represented by athletes and clubs, transformed into a solid foundation and a robust platform for expressing different forms and advocating true freedom..⁵ Objectives and programs shifted from their ordinary sports nature to broader areas and wider dimensions, where the presence and influence of

1- جريدة المجاهد، ج. 1، العدد 20، السبت 15 مارس 1958 م، ص 295.

Le ministère des moudjahidine, op.cit.P. 256-259-260.2

3-.Ibid, P. 260.

4- Mohamed Hassaine, Mokhtar Djazouli, op. cit.P.169-173

5- ديديه راي: المرجع السابق ص.ص. 71.

national meaning extended into the political realm. The practice of sports and education along with the Islamic Scouts of Algeria, made Algerians of that era true nationalists inherently without pretense or affectation.

Algeria has always been a land of heroes and championships, a fact no one can ignore but just need to explore. Sports and politics being united, they became interconnected fields. The Algerian sporting elite abandoned various aspects and facets, where the Algerian component was seen as subservient and loyal to France politically, culturally, and athletically. On the first occasion, they eradicated aspects of sports mixing and mingling with colonial teams and clubs to foster national and patriotic sentiments. Many Islamic teams across Algeria rejected the presence of Jewish and European elements within Algerian sports entities. Hence, goals became clearer and behaviors changed, making sports a purely national and political issue..¹

There existed a close and consistent relationship between the national movement and the youth and sports movements, particularly within the social framework. One cannot overlook, neglect, or ignore the significant national role played by youth and scouting movements. Over time, they became institutions for training true nationalists. The growing importance of sports as a fundamental aspect of physical culture for decades became the subject of study in various sciences, known as sports sciences in general and sports history in particular. This form and approach took attention and asked for a proper understanding of the logic and motivations of sports in terms of national demands. The relationship between sports and politics, or sports and nationalism, carries many meanings for athletes and leaders as a tool for national identity and a principle for the community.

Wins and losses on the sports fields can create different sensitivities that go beyond ordinary life, propelling individuals towards revenge and turning into battles beyond stadiums and playgrounds. The ancient Greek writer Philostratus added significance to this idea, stating, "It was not far from the truth when he considered sports and competitions as preparation for war, and war as exercise for competition."²

1- Hamid Grine , op.cit.P 07.

2- Le ministère des moudjahidine, op.cit.pp 256-259-260.

6. French colonial reaction to the national role of Algerian sports: the French administration did not hesitate to impose its despotic logic throughout its presence in Algeria. It adapted its policies according to the circumstances, sometimes intensifying cruelty, issuing directives, and decrees and other times resorting to conciliatory policies, reforms and incentives. These fluctuations were a direct result of their fear of the expansion of nationalist ideas and projects that Algerians began to create and embrace, viewing them as expressions of resistance and popular agitation¹.

The colonial authorities treated sports projects with blatant obstinacy, displaying extreme avoidance. This manifested on the ground through a series of persecutions, arbitrary measures and systematic repression, especially targeting leaders and heads of sports and scouting activities. This harsh treatment was exemplified in the case of the martyr Mohamed Boudiaf, who was executed in a gruesome manner and Abdelrahman Aouf, in his project to establish the capital club, which the colonial authorities perceived as serious and effective attempts by Algerian entities, whether scouting or sports, to attract and guide the youth towards hidden goals².

Observing the series of colonial measures and their reaction to sports activities, particularly the confusion and contradictions, reveals the French authorities' struggle to deal with this growing and impactful reality in Algerian society. To suppress this vigor, the colonial administration, assisted by the European settlers and the police, worked to crush this enthusiasm. These promising semi-sports energies, driven by widespread awareness, managed to resist the fear and intimidation, creating Algerian sports spaces to contradict colonial sports presence.³

The Law of Associations (01/07/1901) was exploited to open doors for collective practices for Algerians. Initially, the authorities did not notice its significance, but Algerians gathered within it, finding a space for expression and awareness. However, the colonial umbrella remained loyal to its treacherous nature, directing its hostility towards Algerian

1- أبو عمران الشيخ، محمد الجيجلي، الكشافة الإسلامية الجزائرية، ط1، دار الأمة ك الجزائر 1999 م ص 16.

2- Mohamed Hassaine, Mokhtar Djazouli, op.cit. P P.169-173

3- يحيى بوعزيز، السياسة الاستعمارية من خلال مطبوعات حزب الشعب الجزائري 1830/1945 م، دار البصائر للنشر والتوزيع، حسين داي الجزائر 2009 م، ص. 105.

components. The colonial authorities executed elimination interrogations, imprisonments, and persecutions, affecting many sports and scouting activities¹.

French colonization turned Algeria into a nation of impoverished youth, witnessing Algerian youth wandering barefoot in the streets, often searching for menial jobs. To maintain its privileges. Colonialism resisted vigorously, employing all means to counter Algerian attempts to improve the status of the youth within sports clubs and Islamic scouting associations. Algerians faced numerous obstacles and the injustices were numerous in sports as it became a means of organization².

The continuous concern of the authorities led them to impose restrictions and control on sports associations. They often rejected any new sports association projects, fearing the spreading of forms of struggle and nationalistic sentiments³. Vichy: A region in France that collaborated with the Germans in 1940, led by General Petain.

7. Leaders and Historical Figures with Athletic Activity: the names and personalities, leaders and figures involved in the political struggle in Algeria have varied throughout the history of the national movement. This includes those who lived during the early stages of the national movement in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as those whose names shone brightly in the victorious era of the liberation revolution. Sport and various physical and scouting activities played a significant role and paved the way for many Algerians to resistance and struggle. A lot of sports facilities and halls have been named after these historical figures to honor and commemorate their national stances towards the Algerian people and their country, such as the stadiums of Martyr Hamlaoui, Martyr Ahmed Zabana, Martyr Ben Abdellah, Martyr Qaid Ahmed, Hall Harcha Hassan in Algiers, and Colonel Chabou in Annaba.

The names of militant and martyr athletes:

*Larbi Ben M'hidi: Born in 1923 in Ain M'lila, he joined the sports union "U.S.B" (Union Sportive de Biskra) in 1936. Later became involved in scouting and joined the Algerian party.

1- المرجع نفسه، ص 117.118.

2- نفسه. ص 104.

3- ديديه راي: المرجع السابق، ص ، 35.

*Hamou Boutlilis: A martyr without a grave, born on September 5, 1920, in Oran. He disappeared on October 22, 1956. He was a member of the Algerian People's Party in 1945. He played sports during a period of his life and joined the team E-M-O (Union Sportive Musulmane Oranienne).

*Ahmed Zabana: Born in 1926 in Oran, was a famous martyr who was executed on June 19, 1956. He was initially part of the reserve team A-S-M-O and later became a supporter of the team E-M-O.

*Imran Khalil: A boxer in C-S-B (Club Sportif de la Poudrière de Bône) and a member of the Islamic Scouts, he provided health services in his region of Ifri during his training at the semi-medical center. He passed away a few months before independence in December 1961.

*Harcha Hassan: A goalkeeper in E-M-S-J (Étoile Musulmane de Saint Joseph) in Guelma. He actively participated in the demonstrations on May 8, 1945, in Guelma and engaged in Islamic associations and political activities. He fell in the field of honor with three of his friends in the Hajar area on March 8, 1960.

*Meflah Awad: Born in 1927 in Mascara, he played for the city's team and later moved to Mouloudia Algiers. The stadium in Mascara is currently named after him, balancing between his sports and militant activities.¹

*Souidani Boujemaa: Born on February 10, 1922, in Guelma, he was a founding member of the team E-S-M-G (Étoile Sportive Musulmane de Guelma) and later became a player. He witnessed the massacres of May 8, 1945, and then joined the O-S organization.

*Ahmed Ben Bella: The first president of independent Algeria, he played football for Olympique de Marseille in the 1940s. Born in Maghnia in 1916, he was famous in history for scoring several goals with the team from the southern French capital.

*Mohamed Boudiaf: Born on February 26, 1908, the leader and founder of the Algerian Islamic Scouts in 1935. He began his sports career in his hometown of Khemis Miliana, and then served as a goalkeeper in the Mouloudia Algiers team between 1925 and 1932. He won several titles with the team but was executed by the French authorities in Hussein Dey

1- Le ministère des Moudjahidine, op.cit.P 443.

in the spring of 1941 due to suspicions of collaboration with the German side.¹

Conclusion: the ideological scope of the Algerian national movement expanded to encompass the entire spectrum of Algerian society. Its huge struggle provided opportunities for various non-political and reformatory activities and among them sports and scouting that played a crucial role in this respect. These activities pushed Algerians towards monumental steps in spreading national awareness and confronting colonial schemes. Sports activities, especially during the interwar period, played a vital and admirable role in the sports fields and stands that pulsed with nationalism and pride in the authentic Algerian identity. Alongside political parties and associations, sport organizations became a weapon, a hope, and a support for Algerians in keeping the national project.

They played a key role in defining the broad lines of the struggle after World War II, as evident in the following elements:

The collaboration of sports and Islamic scouting in rising Algerian people's awareness, educational level, and national aspects made them pioneers in their projects during a phase where sports were a another way of the expression of nationalism.

Algerian performance gained invaluable experiences and lessons concerning the national front in dealing with French policies and their reactions to sports activities.

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1-ibid., P.P. 453..469

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