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The Role of Prince Khaled in Founding and Reviving the Activity of the Young Algerians Movement in the Early 20th Century

دور الأمير خالد في تأسيس وبعث نشاط حركة الشبان الجزائريين مطلع ق 20م

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Abstract :

This study aims to analyze the nature of the decisive stage of the political history of the struggle of Prince Khaled, as well as to stand on the mechanisms of change and its mechanisms in the process of unique transformation as a pioneering experience at the beginning of the 20th century AD, which carried many transformations in the political and demand fields of the Algerian people, especially under a colonial authority that did not know mercy or appeasement. On the contrary, Algeria suffered from genocide, oppression, starvation, terror, Christianization, and a system of legalized ignorance and methods and attempts to eliminate the Arabic language and the Islamic religion, under this policy that glorified and feared for the interests of the settlers in light of the economic, intellectual, scientific and health development that this class of French society enjoyed.

Keywords: Algeria, France, colonialism, Prince Khaled, equality.

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة على تحليل طبيعة المرحلة الحاسمة من التاريخ السياسي للنضالي للأمير خالد وكذا الوقوف على آليات التغيير ومكانزوماته في عملية التحول الفريد كتجربة رائدة مطلع القرن 20م حملت الكثير من التحولات في المجالات السياسية و المطلبية للشعب الجزائري ، لاسيما في ظل سلطة استعمارية لا تعرف الرحمة أو المهادنة ، بل على العكس من ذلك فقد عانت الجزائر من الإبادة والقهر والتجويع والترويع والتنصير و منظومة التجهيل المقنن و كفاءات و محاولات القضاء على اللغة العربية و الدين الإسلامي ، في ظل هذه السياسة التي كانت تمجد و تخاف على مصالح المستوطنين في ضوء التطور الاقتصادي و الفكري و العلمي و كذا الصحي الذي كانت تنعم به تلك الفئة من المجتمع الفرنسي .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الجزائر، فرنسا، الاستعمار، الأمير خالد، المساواة..

INTRODUCTION

Algeria underwent a radical transformation in its resistance against French occupation at the beginning of the 20th century, shifting from popular resistance movements to peaceful resistance, as the former had failed to achieve their goals due to the imbalance between the aggressor and the aggrieved. This phase marked a healthy awakening in Algerian consciousness, as political reformist currents emerged, advocating for equal rights between Algerians and the French. Although these currents were not yet structured under any partisan or legal organizational framework, they laid the fertile groundwork for the birth of political life and national parties after World War I, particularly with the return of Algerian youth who had been conscripted into the war. These youth would bear the burden of the first organized political movement, with Prince Khaled, the grandson

of Emir Abdelkader, standing out as one of the pioneers of this political work. He is rightfully considered a pivotal figure in the early history of contemporary Algerian politics. Numerous studies have examined Prince Khaled's personality and his remarkable ability to rally Algerians in a colonial context, as well as his skill in formulating and selecting realistic and genuine demands for Algerian society while striving to persuade the French side of the necessity of engaging with them. His awareness and approach in dealing with the French authorities were also noteworthy.

- The Emergence of the Young Algerians Movement:

- Introduction: At the dawn of the 20th century, Algeria witnessed a radical shift in its resistance against French occupation, adopting political resistance instead of popular resistance, which had failed to penetrate the French military system due to

its lack of organizational foundations, armament mechanisms, and strategy. This phase represented a unique phenomenon and marked the beginning of Algerian awakening, as reformist political currents advocating for equal rights between Algerians and the French began to emerge. Despite their limited legal and partisan vision, these currents created the fertile ground for the birth of political life and national parties after World War I, especially with the return of many Algerian youth who had been conscripted into the war. These youth would carry the burden of the first organized political movement, with Prince Khaled, the grandson of Emir Abdelkader, and Messali Hadj emerging as pioneers of this political work. By 1927, Prince Khaled was openly calling for Algeria's independence, making him a crucial link in the early history of contemporary Algerian politics.

The rise of the Young Algerians Movement in the early 20th century marked a new phase in Algeria's national resistance against brutal colonial presence. It represented the most significant Algerian political current at the time and a unique starting point for national awakening, as well as a new direction in building genuine opposition to French occupation. It was one of the first precursors to the idea of emerging political resistance in Algeria. Many of its members had received French education and grew up under its influence, believing in achieving equality with the French. This led to the spread of intellectual clubs, calls for publishing newspapers, printing old books, and supporting the idea of religious reform, which had begun to appear in the Arab East. To understand the truth of this theory, we must refer to the demands presented by the Algerian delegation to the French government, headed by Jules Ferry in 1898, which included the following points:

- Reducing the burden of taxes and abolishing some taxes imposed on the natives.
- Addressing the rights of the poor and disabled and restoring endowments to their owners.

- The issue of land ownership and distribution.
- Ending administrative plunder resulting from forest laws.
- Establishing a credit bank to free the people from usurers. Additionally, on the social front, the demands included generalizing education, teaching Arabic in schools, abolishing penal courts, and returning to Islamic Sharia courts... (1).

Many researchers attribute the emergence of the Algerian national movement to the 1920s, but a closer look at its historical development reveals that it crystallized when an Algerian delegation presented its demands to the French government in 1912, which later formed the political program of the Young Algerians Movement. Its origins, however, date back to 1900, when a group of enlightened and educated individuals, often referred to as the "intelligentsia" or elite, began to emerge. The intelligentsia first appeared in 1900 under the leadership of Sheikh Ben Badis, though it was initially a weak and fragile movement. The term "intelligentsia" was first used in Russia in the 19th century to describe those who received university education and held professional positions. This group differed fundamentally from thinkers, who played a significant role in generating ideas, as it consisted of writers, artists, philosophers, and others.

The Young Algerians' admiration for Western European civilization, shared by some natives who had access to French education, did not stem from a desire for subjugation or assimilation. They were fully aware that they were not and would never be French. Instead, their appreciation for French culture and enlightened modern thought was driven by the value of civilization, science, and knowledge, which had accompanied all previous religions and civilizations. They also highlighted the pioneering role of Islamic civilization as a guide and inspiration for many intellectual and scientific concepts in Western civilization, citing numerous examples from the Quran, the Sunnah, and the efforts of scholars in various fields.

Algerian intellectuals were also influenced by the Young Tunisians Movement, particularly through the activities of Tunisian institutions like the Khaldounia School, established in 1896, and the Sadikia School. Credit is also due to two French figures, Denis and Marcais, who were well-versed in Arab culture and played a role in uncovering the Young Algerians Movement (2). Historian Ageron agrees with the views of Sarfi and the American historian Lothrop, who emphasized the role of the French in the emergence of most cultural and political movements in the Maghreb. These movements were imbued with the principles of science and ethics and influenced by ideas of freedom and self-governance.

Examining the French and Algerian press of that period reveals several journalistic activities, including the first media outlet in French, **El Misbah** (The Lamp), published in Oran in June 1904, thanks to the efforts of the Tlemceni teacher "Arabi Fekar" and his brother "Ali Fekar," who was then a professor in Lyon, France. The newspaper's slogan was "For France and with France," and its goal was to revive intellectual awakening and denounce the exceptional measures and harsh socio-economic conditions endured by Algerians at the time. Another newspaper, **El Haqq El Ouhрани** (The Oran Truth), appeared in 1911 and played a significant role in exposing French colonial policies aimed at imposing compulsory conscription and assimilation on the Algerian people (4).

The leaders of the movement adopted a new approach, primarily relying on petitions, gatherings, lectures, and strikes—methods they had acquired through interaction with European civilization, especially after some of their members participated in France's foreign wars. They brought these new ideas and gains back to their homeland and sought to apply them in the social, economic, and political spheres. This interaction and engagement shaped the civil aspects of the national movement (5). From the outset, the movement clashed with the French administration in Algeria and its affiliated

press. However, it also received strong support from France, particularly from liberal political figures, due to its demands, which contrasted with the exceptional measures imposed by the **colons** in Algeria. The movement consisted of doctors, lawyers, administrators, teachers, and French army officers. Below is a closer look at some representatives of this educated elite:

- Medicine:
- Dr. Ben Arabi
- Dr. Ben Brahimat
- Dr. Ben Tami
- Dr. Mersali
- Dr. Takash
- Education:
- Teacher Ben Sedira
- Teacher Ben Chelb
- Teacher Ben Khelfat
- Teacher Fettah
- Teacher Soualah
- Teacher Bouzareah
- Justice and Islamic Culture:
- Abou Bakr Abdessalam
- Ben Chaib
- Ben Hocine
- Ben Nahami
- Hassan Ali
- Military:
- Prince Khaled Ben El Hachemi
- Ahmed Brahimat
- Abdallah
- Ben Daoud
- Cherif Kadi

The movement's demands can be summarized as follows:

- French citizenship rights under Islamic personal status laws.
- Abolition of electoral laws for Algerians.
- Participation in the French Parliament (7).

In this context, Prince Khaled emerged as one of the most prominent leaders of the Young Algerians. His broad education, fluency in Arabic and French, noble lineage, strong personality, and courage earned him a distinguished place among them, gradually making him the official spokesperson for their movement. This role allowed him to transition into politics and express his stance against the colonizer.

His strategy was also aimed at filling the political leadership vacuum at the time, particularly as he worked to bridge the gap between the masses in Algeria and the elite (8). He took on the task of promoting the movement, especially through his activities in Paris starting in 1913, where he explained to the French public the political and social conditions faced by Muslims in Algeria. During his lectures, he presented the program of *Young Algeria*, in which he highlighted the deprivation of Muslims from education and the exceptional systems imposed on them.

- Prince Khaled's Call for Equality:

Prince Khaled sought to frame these demands in a new way, focusing on the issue of equality between Algerians and Europeans living in Algeria. He advocated for increased representation in the French Parliament while preserving their Islamic personal status. Unlike later movements, Prince Khaled did not call for outright independence but limited his demands to equality, as he recognized that Algeria was not a protectorate but a French province, unlike Morocco and Tunisia, which retained their national identities under French protection. In those cases, demanding equality was tantamount to demanding independence (9).

Another key concern for Prince Khaled was parliamentary representation. Alongside his colleague Hadj Ammar, he called for allowing some non-naturalized natives to hold positions in the Chamber of Deputies. He drew a comparison with the status of the *Chauds* in Martinique (10) and the *Gouadeloupeans* (11), who had representatives in the French Parliament, while the five million Algerian Muslims had none.

Later, Prince Khaled urged the French administration to allow the establishment of Arabic schools. He wrote several articles in the newspaper *El Ikdam* about Arab-Islamic civilization, calling on Muslim intellectuals to defend their heritage, stating: "Open the doors of knowledge to us, help us as much as you can in times of peace, share

your prosperity and justice with us, and we will stand by you in times of danger" (12).

Prince Khaled took a firm stance against advocates of assimilation and naturalization who did not support national demands and denied Algeria's national identity. For instance, the representative of the Kabylie region, Mr. Aït Mahdi, who was then a coordinator in the Financial Committee before the French Senate, declared:

"The Algerian nation no longer exists, materially or morally, since the Phoenician era" (13).

Regardless, the assimilationists sided with France and openly expressed their disdain for religion, despite the similarities in their reformist program with other currents (14). The assimilationist party included several elite figures such as Dr. Ben Djelloul, Dr. Ben Nahassi, and Ferhat Abbas, among others.

Overall, Prince Khaled's involvement in the Young Algerians Movement was a significant boost for them. Within five years, they achieved what had seemed impossible. Some historical studies suggest that the movement remained self-representative until 1914, as it did not express clear national positions and continued to operate under the name "Young French Muslims." Despite their accomplishments, such as the emergence of daily newspapers and periodic reports, the leaders of this movement failed to secure positions in municipal, financial, and general elections until 1914, even though natives constituted 68% of Algeria's population (15).

• Prince Khaled's demands included:

1. Proportional representation of Algerians in the French National Council, equal to that of European Algerians.
2. Complete abolition of exceptional laws, penal courts, and administrative surveillance (Bureaux Arabes), with a full return to common law.
3. Equal duties and rights for Algerians and the French regarding military service.
4. Promotion of Algerians to all civil and military ranks based solely on merit and personal capabilities.

5. Full implementation of compulsory education for Algerians, with freedom to disseminate education.
6. Freedom of the press and assembly.
7. Application of the law separating church and state to Islam.
8. General amnesty.
9. Extension of social and labor laws to Algerians.
10. Absolute freedom for Algerian workers to travel to France, regardless of their rank.

It is noteworthy that the program of the *North African Star* closely resembled Prince Khaled's expanded demands for North Africa, as outlined below:

- Confiscation of large agricultural properties owned by *colons* and feudal companies.
- Respect for medium and small properties of the French.
- Restoration of lands and forests seized by the French state to Algeria.
- Immediate abolition of the Indigenous Code and all other exceptional laws.
- General amnesty for Algerians who had been imprisoned, exiled, or placed under French surveillance.
- Freedom of the press, assembly, and association, granting political and union rights equal to those of the French in Algeria.
- Replacement of the Financial Delegations with a National Algerian Council elected by universal suffrage.
- Increased agricultural loans for small farmers.

Thus, we conclude that the current that produced the North African Star shared overlapping demands with Prince Khaled and Messali Hadj's national movements, representing an extension of these two deeply rooted national currents.

Prince Khaled's role in reviving the movement was fundamental and strategic. He confronted the colonial administration, focused on Algerian demands, and defended their interests and national identity.

- Prince Khaled's Participation in Elections:

Prince Khaled was known for his boldness in addressing political issues and demanding rights. He recognized that the vast majority of

Algerians rejected naturalization and assimilation, unlike the assimilated Algerian elite. Therefore, he called for leveraging French citizenship while preserving Islamic personal status. In doing so, he demonstrated a deep understanding of political trends before and after the war. His financial independence undoubtedly helped him delve into politics and dedicate himself to it, revealing his national orientations rooted in Islamic identity. He opposed the assimilated elite led by Dr. Ben Tohami, highlighting the emergence of two currents: Prince Khaled's reformist current, aligned with the conservative elite, and Ben Tohami's liberal, Francophile current, which was nurtured by France's intellectual and material offerings. These divergent trends were reflected in the electoral campaigns led by each side. Prince Khaled entered the local elections in December 1919 and defeated his political opponents, the advocates of naturalization, assimilation, and Westernization. During his campaign, he urged Algerians to vote for the list of non-naturalized Muslim candidates, telling his opponents:

"If you want the paradise of Islam, vote for us Muslims, for we are its guardians" (17).

These local elections marked a turning point in the history of the Algerian elite, which split into a national faction led by Prince Khaled and Hadj Moussa and an assimilationist faction led by Ben Tohami and Ould Issa. The national faction secured 925 votes, while the assimilationists received only 340 votes (18).

Prince Khaled's victory in the elections was a blow to Ben Tohami's assimilationist project and a triumph for Algerian Islamic identity. Many historians, including Ageron in his study on the first elections for Algerian Muslims, considered Khaled's victory in Algiers a victory for all of Algeria (19). The following table illustrates the votes won by each faction:

Assimilationist Faction	Number of Votes
Type of Elected Council	Number of Votes
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----- ----- -----	-----

| Ben Tohami's Group | 332 |
Municipal Council | 925 |
| 256 | General Council
| 2505 |
| 2500 | Financial
Delegations | 7000 |

Dr. Saadallah viewed these elections as a precious opportunity for Algerians to express their grievances through the ballot box, despite the restrictions imposed by the February 1919 reforms on Algerian electoral participation. Similarly, Wortham highlighted the Algerians' electoral prowess, stating:

"Algerians have proven to be skilled and brave manipulators of the ballot box, specializing in the art of demagoguery" (20). There is no doubt that the Algerians' ability to maneuver and choose the most important lists in these elections was a result of Prince Khaled's electoral campaign, which drew inspiration from historical references and the specificities of the Algerian people. He often reminded them of their ancestors' struggle, led by Emir Abdelkader, against invaders, urging them not to forget their heritage of resistance.

Although Prince Khaled's frankness brought him many troubles from assimilationists and the French administration, his perseverance enabled him to win the elections again in January 1921. His political and social program mirrored the one he had championed in the 1919 elections, which marked the beginning of his political career.

His Islamic Program:

Prince Khaled's political activism after World War I was not coincidental but a logical continuation of the jihadist mission initiated by Emir Abdelkader at the beginning of the occupation. Prince Khaled often referenced this in various occasions, as seen in his statement in *El Ikdam*:

"Our ancestors waged a fierce war for over 15 years, and though victory was not theirs, their bravery and heroism are undeniable facts that the victors should not deny, just as I, the grandson of Emir Abdelkader, should not remain silent, unlike many elected officials."

Prince Khaled's political prominence was not an isolated phenomenon on the national political scene. He was preceded by other elites, such as the assimilationist faction led by Dr. Tamzali and the conservative faction led by Sheikhs Mouhoub Ben El Mouhoub and Abdelhalim Ben Smaha, though these groups faded after World War I. This vacuum was one of the factors that facilitated Prince Khaled's entry into politics, making him the official spokesperson for the Algerian national movement and its leader, not only in Algeria but also in the Islamic world (21). Consequently, France viewed him as a defender of religious fanaticism and a significant threat to its interests in Algeria and beyond.

*** Conclusion:**

In summary, our discussion of the leader of political reform in the early 20th century and a pioneer of the emerging national movement in Algeria highlights that his movement was a crucial link in building contemporary political experience. His demands were comprehensive, combining societal and political reforms in a revolutionary framework that appealed to minds, ignited emotions, and nurtured national consciousness among Algerians. They began to seriously consider achieving their various demands based on the principle of equality with the settlers. However, the advocates of naturalization, assimilation, and their collusion with the colonial administration forced Prince Khaled to leave Algeria after being accused of political extremism and fanaticism.

Yet, Algeria's issues remained on his mind even in exile, where he continued to expose the colonizer's inhumane practices and violations of international law and norms.

Research margins:

1-عبد الرحمان بن إبراهيم بلعقون، الكفاح القومي والسياسي، الجزء الأول، مرجع سابق، ص 132.

2- Ageron -(C.R) , Les Algériens Musulmans et La France, op .cit. , P.1032-1033.

"3- See Mr. Larbi Fekkar's intervention regarding the necessity of establishing justice in place of

colonial arbitrariness in media practices, in: El Misbah ; N°25 du 05 Novembre 1904 .

4- El Hack (Oranais) ; 08-15 Juin 1912

5- Djegloul (Abelkader) : Huit Etudes sur l'Algérie , Alger , Entreprise Nationale du Livre, 1986 , P.78.

6- Actualité :De La justice en Algérie, - Alger , Editions Fontana , 1880 , p180.

7- Collot (Claude) : Synthèse Des journées d'Etudes sur le Thème - Les Partis Politique Algériennes Entre Les Deux Guerres Mondiales - Paris, Editions non évoqué , 1970 , P.4

8- L'Emir (Khaled): journée d'ETUDES, op.cit , Rapport : Abd El Kader Boutaleb, .P.42

9- أبو القاسم سعد الله، مرجع سابق، ص 313

10-- Martinique: It is an archipelago in the Antilles that came under French control in 1635. Most of its inhabitants are blacks and Malays. Its capital is (Ford France).

11- The Caribbean: an archipelago in the Caribbean Sea that fell under French colonization in 1635. Its capital is Basseterre, and it consists of the islands of Rivière, Salé, and Saint-Martin. See :

- محمد حسنين: الاستعمار الفرنسي ، الجزائر ، المؤسسة -

الوطنية للكتاب، سنة 1986 ، ص 110

12- جريدة العالم السياسي: مقال خاص "بالذكرى (62) لوفاة الأمير خالد (1875م-1936م) ، بتاريخ 24 جانفي 1998 م ، ص 18.

13- L' Ikdam ; 16 juillet 1921.

"14- See: The program of the Liberal Party in The Book of the Algerian National Movement by Abu al-Qasim Saadallah: same reference, p. 375. In

this context, the researcher Octave Depont states: 'The time has come to lift the veil on the movement of young Algerians, whose leaders at times professed allegiance and loyalty to France, and at other times opposed the policies of the colonists in Algeria.' See:"

- Octave (Depont) : L'Algérie Du Centenaire , Paris , Librairie du Recueil ,Siery , tome, 02, 1928, p 97 .

- 15 بن عدة عبد الحميد ، جوانب من كفاح الأمير خالد ، الديني و الاجتماعي و الثقافي في الجزائر ما بين 1919-

1924 ، مجلة المبرز ، العدد: 07، جوان 1996، ص 09.

- 16 تقييم ابن باديس وابن نبي لإسهام الأمير خالد في الحركة الوطنية الجزائرية" مجلة الذاكرة : الجزائر ، عدد:

05 (شهر-أوت، سنة1998 ، ص 133.

-17 قداش محفوظ، الأمير خالد و نشاطه السياسي 1919-

1925 ، مجلة تاريخ و حضارة المغرب ، عدد: 04، جانفي

1968 ، ص 45.

-18 نفسه، ص 47.

- 19 دبوز علي ، نهضة الجزائر الحديثة أو ثورتها المباركة

، ج: 02، المطبعة العربية ، الجزائر ، 1969 ، ص 68.

-20 علال الفاسي ، الحركات الاستقلالية في المغرب

العربي ، القاهرة 1949، ص 115.

-21 دبوز علي ، مرجع سابق ، ص 19.