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An overview of the documents of the Algerian Liberation Revolution: Their status and main issues.
Aperçu des documents de la Révolution de libération algérienne : leur statut et leurs principaux enjeux.

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Abstract:

This paper aims to highlight the need to pay attention to the reality of national history documents and the prospects for future work on them, because we are required to pay attention to documenting the history of the events and processes of the Algerian Liberation Revolution, as it is an excellent opportunity to discuss ways to prioritize these issues within the national history project of Algeria. In this paper, we also discussed. What these documents are and the extent of their contribution to the history of the Algerian Revolution.

Key words: Algerian Liberation Revolution; Historiography of the Revolution, Documents of the Revolution, Algerian Liberation Revolution, Archives.

Résumé:

Cet article vise à souligner la nécessité de prêter attention à la réalité des documents d'histoire nationale et aux perspectives de travaux futurs sur ceux-ci. En effet, nous devons nous intéresser à la documentation de l'histoire des événements et des processus

de la Révolution de libération algérienne. C'est une excellente occasion de discuter des moyens de prioriser ces questions dans le projet d'histoire nationale de l'Algérie. Dans cet article, nous avons également abordé la nature de ces documents et l'étendue de leur contribution à l'histoire de la Révolution algérienne.
Mots clés: Révolution de libération algérienne ; Historiographie de la Révolution, Documents de la Révolution, Révolution de libération algérienne, Archives.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Since France began its occupation of Algeria in 1830, we find that the Algerian people did not resign themselves to French colonial domination. On the contrary, they showed a categorical rejection of the French presence on their land, and expressing this through a series of armed revolts and uprisings, through which they made the French occupier taste bitter defeat.

The jihadist project in Algeria did not stop at certain limits; the desire for independence and the expulsion of the French occupier was a priority for every honorable Algerian.

This desire was embodied in the liberation revolutionary project on November 1, 1954, which was the final nail in the coffin of the French occupation. He crowned his jihadist March by achieving independence and expelling France from Algeria.

Since the stage of the national liberation struggle has gone through a long period of time, it has undoubtedly multiplied its documents. Therefore, it was decided to focus on the period of the Great Liberation Revolution (1954-1962), as it is the most active phase of the history of the Algerian armed struggle as a whole, and the most relevant to international forums.

One is left puzzled by the quantity and quality of the documents from this stage? And wonders to what extent it is possible to identify them, or at least determine their location, contents? , how they relate to each other, and how to handle with them?.

To answer these questions, we emphasize that the documents of the history of this period are many and numerous, in addition to being scattered among the archives of the countries that paid attention to its events, wether negatively or positively.

01- Documents:

Source documents play a major role in historical studies. Indeed, documents are the basis for writing history, as it is not possible to write previous historical events without relying entirely on original documents of the event to be written about[1].

However, despite the apparent importance of source documents, these documents alone may not be sufficient for writing and understanding history. This is because, as we believe, it is impossible for a person to live in the past; each of us is a child of our time and a product of our era, as Hegel[2] states. Nonetheless, the analytical study of history, which began with the renowned scholar and educator Ibn Khaldun in his famous Muqaddimah (Introduction), emphasizes the need to scrutinize and analyze source documents before accepting the events and news they contain, in order to avoid falling into falsehood[3], As Ibn Khaldun says, 'People tend to approach those in high positions with praise, flattery, and the enhancement of their status, spreading news that is not necessarily true. Souls are

inclined toward the love of praise, and people are eager for worldly gains such as power and wealth[4]..

Ibn Khaldun refers to another factor that underscores the necessity of scrutinizing and analyzing documents: the factor of 'rumors of opinions and doctrines[5], as he calls it." He argues that 'this inclination and radicalization serves as a cover over the eye of insight, preventing criticism and scrutiny, and leading to the acceptance and transmission of lies".[6]

For all these reasons and others, document writers – whether they are contemporary historians or people involved in creating these events – often deliberately omit some events or overlook the causes of others, and even Ibn Khaldun himself, at least as one of His contemporaries points out, was not without the love of Riyasiyah[7]. , which « managed to get him out of his country, »[8]. and some even explicitly described him as having a troubled personality. In addition to all of the above, the psychological aspect of the author of the event « document » is important for analyzing the real historical event, and this is something that Ibn Khaldun himself emphasized.

What we referred to regarding source documents, we can say that it also applies to oral narratives, although we must point out that in oral narratives, the collector can ask the narrator to explain to him what he wants to know, especially if the collector has determined what he wants to know from the narrator and put appropriate questions for this matter, so we believe that oral narratives in this matter are more useful and can be a helpful

factor in making history an interesting subject that students love in schools and universities.

Oral history from the national side played an effective role when recording oral accounts from the Algerian mujahedeen, who in turn contributed to the history of the events of this period[9], as well as excavations, battle sites, and the social, economic, and cultural activity that was caused and directed by the circumstances of the Algerian Revolution at the time. It constituted an important part of the relevant documents.

02- The Contribution of Relevant Documents in Documenting the Algerian Liberation Revolution:

First of all, we must ask again what these documents are, and then how they contributed to chronicling the events of the Algerian Revolution ?.

It would take too long to answer the question of what documents are, so we must limit it, as much as it means what we want to ask.

Documents for any historical event are divided into primary sources and secondary sources, as primary means what chronicled the historical event at the time, while secondary sources rely on the material of primary sources, either by mentioning them or by interpreting them, and researchers and historians have put forward several opinions on this point, and most of them agreed on something specific, which is to refer to primary sources that are directly related[10] , which are as follows:

1- Official records and documents:

This topic includes official correspondence, such as telegrams, letters, etc. that are recorded about the mujahideen's activities and movements. For example, the documents of the

Soumam Conference, the documents of the Algerian Provisional Government, and the documents of the National Revolutionary Council. Some of these documents are currently preserved at the National Archives Center in Bir Khadem, Algiers, as well as the archives of the National Center for Studies and Research on the National Movement and the Revolution of 1 November 54, others at the Algerian National Library (Documents and Manuscripts Department), and others are scattered in many libraries or public libraries in Arab and foreign capitals, in addition to a number of Private documents and records, which are currently locked away in private cabinets and are the property of the families of martyrs and mujahideen.

Despite the importance of the document in the study of contemporary history in general, the issue of its sensitivity and difficulty of access is still being raised at the present time with great intensity. While Algerian researchers have been able to benefit from the documents of the national and French archives in a selective manner, the official archives of the three Maghreb countries are still closed to researchers[11] .

The relevant official documents, which were intended for a specific purpose rather than for history, are therefore, in fact, more truthful and accurate than others. They also constitute an important part of the precise information related to the history of this period, due to the commitment of the official authorities involved to ensure their accuracy and documentation.

2- Press reports:

It is clear that a large number of foreign military attachés came to Algeria with the French occupation forces, in return for the arrival of a large number of journalists, most of whom wrote many reports on the events of battles and military movements in

different regions of Algeria, sending them to the authorities who had sent them to Algeria, whether they were politicians, military personnel, or journalists[12] .

3- Eyewitness reports:

These are those who came from inside and outside the country to the battlefields who participated with the mujahideen, such as doctors and collaborators with the mujahideen or the French, as well as soldiers and volunteers, who in turn contributed Alongside the mujahideen. It is difficult to count them, but their reports chronicled the events of the battles of the Liberation Revolution.

Personal correspondence between soldiers and officers and their families also gave great importance to the military situation, whether between the Mujahideen or the French occupation forces. This correspondence included both the French side and the national side, and many of them were collected in some books and published, while others were kept secret.

4- Oral Narrative:

The oral source is suitable for studying human societies of all kinds, and it reaches the general population in their various residential and productive settings. In order to better know the history and development of human societies, the oral source can be utilized to study various social and economic relations, and the prevailing opinion now is that the adoption of the oral narrative as a primary source gives an Opportunity to explore and record the opinions and views of the defeated, expelled and disenfranchised, who have been neglected in most studies related to the past[13].

This aspect has given it good historical value, especially from a national perspective in documenting the history of the National Liberation Army's battles, the National Center for Studies and Research on the National Movement and the First November Revolution54 has recorded numerous interviews on audiotapes and CDs with valuable accounts from living mujahideen who participated in the same phase, and reported what they did and what they witnessed.

The oral source (the document) is obtained through an interview conducted by the historian, which at that moment turns into an investigation, with an informant who tells him about his memories of the events he lived through during the revolution, and the major events that Algeria went through at the time.

The researcher, while utilizing the oral narrative, must obtain information from the mujahideen who lived through the revolution in the first place, but this information can also be obtained from other parties, such as relatives.

Despite the diversity of the historical events that took place, the circumstances in which these interviews were recorded, and the time that separated them from the event itself, they are considered extremely valuable, if compared to other documents[14] .

5- Economic documents:

They include what was written about the living conditions and the supply of the National Liberation[15], Army forces, as supplies began to come from some friendly and brotherly countries. Especially when the French occupation forces closed the eastern and western borders of Algeria with

electrified barbed wire, establishing no-go zones, planting mines and increasing the number of military posts, as part of the colonial strategy to eliminate the revolution.

It is worth noting that the November Revolution received widespread Arab attention and generated forms of revolutionary interaction and communication between the sons of the Arab nation. This interaction contributed in one way or another to raising the spirit of defiance of the Algerian fighter to withstand the French war machine and its allies. He documented this supply movement and found many of them. Whether in the form of donations or in the form of shipments coming from some countries that supported and supported the revolution, especially the countries of the Eastern Camp, where I found several documents such as correspondence confirming the supply of the mujahideen.

6- Social documents:

There are documents that represent the social aspect included[16] in the popular poems and remained circulated by people in their songs and conversations and suggest documentary meanings, which have important historical value, such as talking about the heroic positions of some people who performed outstandingly in some battles. Their role has been carried by oral history through generations and is still remembered by many[17] .

03- The issue of documents' status:

The types of documents related to the mentioned period have been identified, and it has been shown that they cover many historical aspects both quantitatively and qualitatively, some of which have been raised. A question has arisen: How

can these documents be classified and identified ? Or how can we determine which institutions hold some or many of them? The issue of the status of the documents is clearly emphasized, as it is difficult to overcome without a long search for their locations, whether inside or outside the country. What is clear is considered few, while what Remains unclear is expected to be much more.

In line with the basic rules of research, it is necessary to search and consult therelevant assets on which the research depends, but this is not possible to the extent desired, and in this proposal we cannot access all documents as much as we seek to know the status of the documents related to what we have mentioned earlier.

The issue we face also lies the distribution of these documents among the parties that contributed to the events of the period concerned with the study on one hand, and the countries that had a connection to it,on the other hand. Thus, according to our estimation, these documents are divided into:

- Documents relating to the situation of the revolution and its relations with the Maghreb countries.
- Documents prepared by the ministries of the Algerian provisional government and related to the Algerians themselves.
- Documents of the French land army, particularly reports by military officers.
- Documents related to the Revolution's correspondence and reports, linked to the archives of other countries.

However, the documents related to the archives of other countries are still kept secret for many reasons, and even if some of them are allowed, they do not meet the required purpose, and another issue is the language in which they were written, and the methods of keeping and organizing them. Such documents usually represent the official side, such as agreements and

treaties, and the contacts made by the French side, such as the Evian agreements, for example, where negotiations were resumed on March 7, 1962, and ended on March 18 of the same year with the signing of an agreement to stop fighting based on the recognition of the FLN's sovereignty, including the Sahara Desert. The agreement was put into effect at midday on March 19, 1962[18] .

- **We see the status of the documents of the Algerian Revolution in general as follows:**

1. Some of them were not properly documented from the national side due to the lack of educated and interested individuals among the mujahideen to record the events at the time, and this may be due to two other factors, or more the most important of which are:

A) - The multiplicity of national fronts along the Algerian coast, as is clear, and the difficulty of communicating with the leaders of the revolutionary regions.

B) - The movements of the mujahideen were sometimes spontaneous, and were caused by the movements of the French forces in many directions, which had a reflection of those movements.

2. The recorded or written personal interviews, especially the recent ones, tend to be generalized, due to the long period of time that separated them from the events, in addition to the fact that the leaders of the revolution who played a role in leading the Mujahideen in the first phase had passed away before recording their testimonies , and others did not leave documents that indicated their work.
3. In most cases, we did not get the original sources that some writers relied on in all respects, which, in my

opinion, are much more important than others. Such as the original reports of travelers, journalists, military officers, and soldiers who had special interests in the subject.

Finally, it is clear that many of the documents related to the period in question are unknown, and the main issue lies in accessing them, recognizing what they are, their characteristics, and how to deal with them .

This raises the question of the appropriate solution to the same issue, in terms of the possibility of contacting the entities that hold them, from all international, popular and personal levels. Such as knowing what is contained in their vaults, libraries, and archives, if you will. To get to the truth of their contents. And to correct and rewrite the history of the period concerned with the study, by clarifying its documents.

Since its establishment, the National Center for Studies and Research on the National Movement and the First November Revolution54 has adopted the documentary field in preparing to collect as many documents and manuscripts as possible, and searching for an appropriate way to solve this issue, as a team of researchers made a plan to record interviews with a number of living mujahideen within the national territory.

The National Archives Center in Bir Khadem, Algiers, and the National Museum of the Mujahid have also worked to collect some national documents, as well as part of the Revolution's manuscripts, and they have succeeded to a large extent. However, what they have done is still at the beginning of the road due to the magnitude of the historical event in question, the extent to which its documents are linked to multiple entities, in different languages, and the difficulty of contacting the archives of the relevant countries to find out what documents they have about Algeria. The challenge is even greater when it

comes to identifying individuals and cooperating with them. This requires special means and calls for the urgent involvement of research laboratories in universities to collect these documents categorize them and make them available to scholars and researchers.

In conclusion, we would like to see a concerted effort to collect as many original documents as possible or to locate them, and to direct attention to preserving the documents, protecting them from damage and loss, and maintaining them as much as possible. As is well known, it is necessary to recognize the importance of taking care of the documentation of the documents of this stage, and also needs joint cooperation to overcome the difficulties in addressing the status of documents and other sources in order to achieve the desired benefit.

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11. Abdallah Maklati: Algerian-Maghreb relations during the Algerian Liberation Revolution 1954-1962, PhD thesis in Modern and Contemporary History, supervised by Prof. Dr. Abdelkrim Kassassaf, University of Constantine, 2007-2008, p. 5 of the thesis introduction.
12. David Hinge, Oral History, translated by Dr. Milad Al-Megrahi, Publications of the Center for the Study of Libyan Jihad against the Italian Invasion, Tripoli, 1991, p. 137 and following.
13. See for example: Ali Abdelkader al-Obeidi: Iraq and the Algerian Revolution: Support and Support, a lecture delivered at the seminar on the events of December 11, 1960, organized by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hassiba Ben Bouali University - Chlef on December 09, 2009. Ali Abdelkader Al-Obaidi:" Echoes of the Algerian Revolution in the Iraqi Press 1954-1962 ...,The Iraqi Boy's Newspaper as an Example", in: periodical Asur, University of Oran, September-December 2007, No. 8-9, p. 37.
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15. The Algerian National Liberation Front was able to build good relations with Libyan officials, especially with the head of the Libyan government Mustafa Ahmed Ben Halim and King Idris al-Senussi: Ibid, p. 348. This is what former Libyan Prime Minister Mustafa Ahmed Ben Halim talked about in his memoirs when he expressed his approval of President Gamal

Abdel Nasser's offer tosupport the Algerian revolution, and he even spoke to President Nasser about his Satisfaction with King Idris al-Senussi's position before he presented the matter to him. See: Mustafa Ahmed Ben Halim: Folded Pages of Libya's Political History, Al-Ahram Commercial Press, Egypt, 1992, pp. 351-352.

16. See: Abdelhak Zeriouh: "The Echo of the Algerian Revolution in Algerian Popular Poetry: Manifestations of the Social Dimension as a Model". Intervention within the book The Civilizational Dimensions of the Algerian Revolution, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Mohamed Majoud, the Maghreb Forum on 11 and 12 June 2003, Dar Al-Gharb for Publishing and Distribution, Oran, Algeria, 2005, pp. 243-247.
17. This phenomenon was clearly observed through interviews conducted with some mujahideen who lived through the Liberation Revolution and participated in the revolution, some of which can be heard, for example, in a recorded interview, which is the testimony of mujahideen Oulad al-Taher al-Eid, born in 1935 in the city of Berriane, Ghardaia province: 1935 AD in the city of Berrian, Ghardaia, and he joined the Liberation Revolution in 1957: 1957. As for the duration of the recording, it is around: 47:07 D.

The recorded document is taken from the annex of the National Museum of the Mujahid in Metlili, Ghardaia, and it tells the history of the jihad of the fighter Oulad Elaid El Tahir from the time he joined the revolution until independence, and this document is characterized by the following:

- The document is characterized by the eloquent speech of the mujahid despite his old age.
- His occupation of an important place in the revolution during his presidency of the 1165 Council.
- The accuracy of the mujahid's memory in remembering events and personalities.

18. The Sheikh of Algerian historians, the late Aboukacem Saadallah, says that Algeria then entered a phase known as the

transitional phase, which lasted until the announcement of the results of the referendum in July 1962: Compendium of the History of Algeria; Resistance and Liberation, 1830-1962, Volume 1, Dar Al- Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut, 1428 AH/2007, p. 187