



Colonial Policy Strategies of the French Occupation and Their Effects on Algerian Society (1830-1962 CE)

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Abstract ;

Algerian society witnessed profound transformations during the period of French occupation from 1830 to 1962 CE, as a result of several factors, most notably colonization and settlement. Prominent aspects of this occupation included negativity, looting, land and property confiscation, killing, torture, exile, and forced displacement. These events constituted significant occurrences in the lives of individuals and the community, leaving deep and destructive effects on Algerian society. Did these effects persist and continue to impact successive generations? To answer these questions, we adopted a historical methodology in our research, which involved gathering historical material related to the subject, reading and analyzing it, while employing a comparative approach to the information drawn from the sources.

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1. Introduction

The Algerian people endured the most heinous crimes committed by the French occupation army for over a century and a half, and their effects still persist despite more than half a century passing since independence. These effects and consequences determined the fate of this people, subjecting them to a long period of domination, resulting in a collapse of values, civilization, and intellectual defeat due to the chaos and pressure of colonial policies.

Since today's events can only be understood through the context of the past, and the current struggle is the result of a multifaceted and multi-stage conflict, understanding the reality of contemporary Algerian society can only be achieved through studying the era of French colonization and its assimilationist policies, which constituted a decisive turning point in Algeria's history compared to the various transformations that preceded and followed it, and the lasting effects it left on the reality of Algerian society, which negatively impacted the society over time.

The significance of this topic lies in shedding light on the most oppressive policies of the French occupation towards Algerians and the extent of their suffering during the period of occupation from 1830 to 1962 CE. It also reveals to us the effectiveness of the conditions and transformations brought about by assimilation in reshaping the social life in order to eradicate the Arab and Islamic components of the Algerians, as well as the hidden aspects of that.

Many studies still question the extent of the colonial impact on the individual and Algerian society. To what extent was the French colonizer able to influence their personal circumstances and components? And what are the most significant enduring effects on the individual and society?

To answer this central issue, we followed a historical methodology that involves collecting historical material related to the subject, reading and analyzing it, while employing a comparative approach to the information drawn from the sources.

In this research, we aim to reconnect parts of the past with the present without confining ourselves to temporal and cognitive boundaries, unlike approaches that acknowledge the existence of radical breaks in the course of history, creating arbitrary limits to confine it to the contemporary period and a narrower present. We do not intend to claim that everything that happened during the history of French colonization in Algeria across its stages is the same past that is still present. However, our intention is to find, beyond the different events, conceptualizations, logic, and practices that alone allow us to understand the profound effects they left on society.

2. The Strategy of French Occupation to Control the Population

Algeria witnessed significant and comprehensive disturbances and chaos following the French invasion as a result of colonial policies, especially after the destruction of state institutions, infrastructure, and the confiscation of Algerians' lands.

When France realized that it had no future in Algeria, it resorted to employing means that enabled it to achieve its imperialist policy. This was manifested through repressive and deterrent measures against the Algerian population, which were utilized by the first military government in confiscating their lands, institutions, and social structures.

2.1 Dismantling and Changing the Social Structure

The French occupation of Algeria targeted both the land and the people, aiming to undermine the elements of national identity and individuality, particularly religion, language, history, and civilization. This policy sought to establish permanent and eternal colonization in Algeria to fulfill imperialist ambitions.

As Algerian society was based on tribal affiliations as a political and economic framework, the first issue that the colonial rule targeted was the social structure. Popular resistance drew strength from this structure, which initially hindered the occupiers. General Bugeaud even declared before the Parliament, "If the inhabitants of Algeria were a different people than the Arabs, or if they resembled the eunuch-like Indian people, I would never recommend spending colossal sums of money on the construction of barracks and soldiers. But with the presence of this strong and prepared nation fully ready for war, superior to the European elements we intended to introduce into the country, all of this compels us to choose the strong elements among the Europeans to settle them alongside and behind these Arabs" (C. R. Ageron, *Muslim Algerians and France* 258).

In order to fully occupy Algeria, the French authorities attempted to eliminate the tribal system, which formed the basis of social organization in Algeria. They issued property laws that aimed to dismantle the Algerian social structure. This arbitrary policy had severe and lasting effects on Algerian society, which still burden people's lives to this day. From the beginning, the French administration worked to fragment the tribes in order to eliminate the traditional social organization in Algeria. This became evident with the issuance of the famous "Sénatus-consulte" decree on April 22, 1863, which aimed to dismantle the tribes as their continued resistance was attributed to them.

Thus, their dismantlement and complete destruction became necessary for the French authorities to easily suppress the resistance. This also served the goal of European settlers in obtaining more fertile lands.

The implementation of the "Sénatus-consulte" law in 1863 resulted in radical changes to the structure of tribes and major clans. They were fragmented and transformed into small administrative units called "douar-communes" (Hemmara 276). 656 "douars" were established in the three Algerian provinces at the expense of dismantling the tribes (Dahha 25), with the aim of bypassing any barriers that could impede the transfer of land ownership from the locals to the settlers. It also aimed to tighten control over the population and monitor them.

Furthermore, Arab bureaus were established after 1844, serving as intermediaries between the military authority and the locals. Their mission was to provide information to the authorities

about the locals and manage tribal affairs (Tocqueville 111) to monitor the movements of the population and attempt to penetrate the depths of Algerian tribes.

In addition to that, a directive was issued by Prince Joseph Napoléon, the Minister of Algeria and the Colonies (1858-1859), in December 1858, instructing the supervision of the movement of the Algerians employed by Europeans, exempting them from paying taxes to the tribe and redirecting them to the French administration instead. This directive stated, "It has been said that the tribe is the basis of the social organization of the Arabs. We must enable the French organization to include various gatherings of the locals in our town. You should prefer the natural tendencies that, with the presence of our superior civilization, will cause the tribe to disintegrate as we merge them into our administration. Through these means alone, we will achieve the rupture of tribal cohesion and replace it with our administrative organization" (Napoléon 76).

This policy had a significant impact on Algerian society, as the tribes were fragmented into "douars" due to the demarcation of their lands and their subjugation to sale. Consequently, rural Algerians lost the suitable framework that regulated their lives and ensured their livelihood. Individuals, no longer protected by the tribe, became isolated and vulnerable in the face of the oppressive measures of the French administration (Saïdouni 32-33).

2.2 The destruction of the identity and personal components of the local population

The French colonization of Algeria was not just a military aggression, but it went beyond that. It was a systematic and comprehensive process of control, based on diverse knowledge and ideological concepts that exploited material superiority and the imbalance caused by the industrial revolution.

This is what was implemented in Algeria after the situation stabilized under the occupation. A massive campaign of assimilation was launched against Algerian society, its economic and political institutions, and its cultural and social components. The aim was to exert influence and halt the progress of intellectual and cultural advancements through intellectual and cultural invasion. The French colonial administration deliberately sought to distort the Algerian character, relying on policies of obscurantism and erasure of historical memory and civilization, as they recognized their importance and value among the Algerian people.

The occupation targeted education and knowledge in Algeria, as it believed in the significance of this sector in enlightening and opening up societies. The French administration demolished and destroyed all educational institutions of that era, including mosques, zawiyas (religious schools), and kuttab (Quranic schools). They confiscated endowments (awqaf) and exiled many scholars abroad. Mosques were converted into churches, such as the case of the Ketchaoua Mosque in the capital, which was transformed into the Saint Philippe Cathedral. Other Algerian cities suffered similar fates, with their mosques being converted into military

barracks, police stations, and stables for horses and livestock. All of this was done to erase the idea that there were emerging generations of Algerians. Additionally, the French administration implanted the notion in the minds of students that Algeria was part of France. They worked to replace Algerian history with French history, and also targeted mosques and zawiyas, as well as combating imams and scholars and burning libraries.

There are several French books that confirm these facts and the impact on Arab-Islamic education after the occupation. One of them stated that traditional education had ceased to fulfill its mission due to the conditions of war, the seizure of endowments, and the migration or exile of teachers. High schools were destroyed, and learners moved away from the zawiyas near the centers of occupation. Teachers were limited to performing religious rituals. The French administration intentionally obstructed and undermined Arab-Islamic education in various ways (Saadallah 25).

The destruction of cultural, Islamic, and heritage institutions was only a part of the occupier's plan, as they sought to spread illiteracy and ignorance among the Algerian population. They confiscated endowments, making education unfunded, and waged a war against the Arabic language through various means, turning it into a foreign language through official laws. For example, the 1834 law declared Algeria as French territory, and the Council of State decision in 1835, as well as the Chamtemps decision in 1838, stated that the French language became the only official language of Algeria. Thus, the Arabic language was replaced by the

French language, which became the official language in education and administration. In this way, France implemented its assimilationist policy in all areas.

The colonizer realized the significance of these fundamental components, particularly the Arabic language, and consequently aimed to eliminate Islam. France considered the periods of Algeria's history before the occupation as dark ages.

2.3 Imposition of taxes, confiscation of lands, and properties

Since the early months of the French occupation of Algeria, the occupying authorities initiated decrees and laws that allowed them to seize agricultural lands. From that time onwards, the French rulers consistently sought to appropriate land (C.-R. Ageron 134). Examples of this include the decisions of Count Clausel on September 8th and December 7th, 1830, which resulted in the annexation of beylik (governorate) properties and endowments. Additionally, the decision made on June 10th, 1831, concerned the confiscation of lands belonging to deys, beys, and Turks who had left the country.

Consequently, waves of settlers arrived in Algeria, with one of the most significant waves occurring in 1832, which settled in various regions of the country. Within one year, these new settlers seized thousands of hectares of fertile land belonging to Algerians and established farms and ranches, ranging in size from 120 to 2,500 hectares.

General Bugeaud, the governor of Algeria at the time, made "the sword and the plow" the motto of his policy (Saadallah 331). He proceeded to forcefully seize land and incorporate it into

the state's property, in preparation for distributing it to settlers who had arrived in Algeria from various European countries.

Under the administration of the occupation, between 1844 and 1846, numerous lands were confiscated under the pretext of being uncultivated, thanks to laws enacted for that purpose. After verifying ownership contracts for over 200,000 hectares, which were subjected to looting and plunder, the French authorities managed to seize 95,000 hectares out of the original 168,000 hectares in the province of Algeria. Meanwhile, the settlers benefited from 37,000 hectares, leading to the establishment and expansion of 27 settlement villages in the coastal and Mitidja regions (C. R. Ageron 21).

One of the most significant land confiscation operations carried out by the French occupation authorities in Algeria was the one following the 1871 revolution. It resulted in the enactment of the Law of Collective Responsibility as part of the Criminal Tribes Law, which allowed for the collective seizure of Algerians' properties. Through this law, the authorities forcefully confiscated 500,000 hectares of land from 315 tribes.

In addition to acts of robbery and land confiscation, the occupying authorities introduced laws and regulations that imposed heavy taxes on Algerian locals, burdening them and indirectly forcing them to withdraw. The colonial administration excelled in creating various and multiple taxes. Alongside regular taxes, indirect taxes, and levies imposed on various activities, they subjected them to what became known as "Arab taxes," which included Zakat (alms) and 'Ushr (tithe).

They also imposed the "Lazima" tax on mountainous regions and oases. As part of this special section of Arab taxes, they added "additional centimes" initially imposed to cover emergency expenses, but starting from 1863, they allocated them to cover personal land ownership expenses. Despite all these taxes, the settler deputies proposed imposing new fines on Muslims (Qannan 41).

The taxes paid by many Algerians in 1862 led them to emigrate for fear of being subjected to the obligations. As a result, Tlemcen witnessed significant poverty, to the extent that some tribes had nothing to sustain themselves except the roots of plants, leading to people dying of hunger. This agricultural situation compelled farmers to neglect their cultivation and livestock, while the demand from settlers for these resources increased (Goldzeigur 170).

The policy of plunder, looting, and confiscation perpetrated against Algerian locals resulted in deadly famines that Algeria had never experienced before. According to some historians, these famines claimed the lives of over half a million Algerians, or one-fifth of the indigenous population at that time. During this period, the grain reserves of the settlers remained intact, and no attempts were made to provide relief to the locals. In fact, many settlers rejoiced at the demise of Muslim Algerians (al-Ashraf 14). Additionally, the Jews contributed to the tragedy of the Algerians, exploiting every opportunity for quick profit. In a letter to Napoleon III on May 15, 1865, a European in Oran stated, "I would like to inform Your Majesty that the local Jewish population

pays them four times the amount they pay to France in taxes" (Bouaziz 168). Furthermore, during the famine between 1868 and 1869, the Jews took advantage of the situation to enhance their wealth by providing loans to the destitute population, with high interest rates ranging from forty to one hundred percent for only two or three months a year. This caused many Algerians to lose their properties and fall into destitution.

The settlers relied on Algerian locals as cheap labor in all sectors. They exploited them in an inhumane manner to the extent that farmers worked long hours for meager compensation, even during times of crisis, including the famine. Moreover, many of them worked without any compensation, as testified by deputies from the French parliament.

The colonial administration continued to oppress all Algerians, as the taxes remained unchanged. Moreover, the Algerian government implemented exceptional administrative measures through the "War Council" to monitor the situation, considering any beggar or food seeker as a criminal (Saadullah 155).

Despite the crises Algeria faced, such as droughts, famines, crop failures, especially in the 1860s, the occupying authorities did not address the situation adequately. The taxes remained the same and sometimes even increased, exacerbating the suffering of the locals.

2.4 Migration and Displacement

Since the occupation of Algeria, France adopted a settler colonial policy, aiming to displace its original inhabitants and replace them with European immigrants. The law of land confiscation and the appropriation of the locals' wealth and properties by the

settlers were just a small part of the policy of forced displacement, which left the Algerians living in extreme poverty and misery (Milika 75).

This aspect has been overlooked by many French historians who focused on Algerian migration, as they did not mention the real reason behind this migration. This is a significant indication for us of the attempt to achieve the colonial settlement policy, which was embraced by General Bugeaud under the slogan "the sword and the plowshare," where the sword represents killing the Algerians and the land represents the settlers. This was aimed at creating a situation in Algeria similar to the situation of the indigenous population in South Africa.

France realized the importance of having French and European civilian settlers in Algeria, as they would support the occupation (Fatma 13). This was done by seizing agricultural lands from their legitimate owners and handing them over to Europeans, thus making their settlement in Algeria at the expense of the Algerians. This turned the Algerian economy into a colonial economy that served the interests of the occupation throughout its duration. The colonial administration does not mention this point or the neglect that befell the locals. This indicates the interconnectedness of the French policies in Algeria and the need for colonization to acquire more land through coercive measures implemented through decrees, laws, and artificial orders. General Bugeaud, who was notorious for his violence (Blah 60), affirmed this before the deputies in 1840 when he said, "You must settle the settlers where there is fresh water and fertile land, without paying attention to

those who originally owned these lands" (Lwessif 11-19).

In accordance with this, the French authorities implemented a tax policy to burden the Algerians and compel them to meet the requirements of the colonial project in Algeria, despite the fact that these taxes were not assessed based on the financial and material capacity of the Algerian individuals.

However, World War II turned Algerian migration into a political phenomenon due to the heroic positions taken by the Algerians with France and their active role in liberating it from Nazi occupation. France abolished all laws that hindered Algerian migration to its territories (Mohammed 194). Nevertheless, Algerian migration remained theoretically constrained by administrative restrictions and colonial pressures until the issuance of the law on September 22, 1947, which guaranteed freedom of movement and theoretically equalized all citizens, including Algerians. This led to a significant migration to France. The purpose of this decision was to serve the French economy and rebuild what was destroyed during the war (Sari 155).

A new phenomenon emerged after the war, which was family migration, but it was not permanent migration. Movements of going back and forth were always monitored during this period (Buhush 140).

This policy opened the door for migration, and a large number of Algerians joined, reaching approximately 67,000 workers in 1947. The importance of these numbers becomes evident when compared to the number of Algerians who returned to

Algeria in the same year, which was around 22,300 workers. Thus, the number of those who remained in France was approximately 45,000, which represents the largest number of immigrants who settled in France in one year (Buhush, Political History of Algeria from the Beginning until 1962 140). In 1948, the population pressure began to manifest, as noted by Ammar Buhush, and it became evident that the number of immigrants exceeded the number of returnees by at least 265,000 workers. The increase in the number of migrants was due to the lack of industrial projects in Algeria and the spread of illiteracy. For this reason, many Algerians were compelled to seek livelihoods elsewhere. As a result, many young people who faced political and economic difficulties in all fields sought opportunities to improve their social and economic status. They began to seriously contemplate the plight of their people. Migration to France was seen as a means to support its economy, and thus, the duration of the French occupation of Algeria was prolonged (Buhush 142).

There was another aspect to the workers' desires to obtain jobs that would ensure a living for themselves and their families. Then, as the days passed, it became clear that this last category bore the great burden of financing the revolution because they were in a good financial position and could contribute donations and subscriptions to support the revolutionary struggle. In 1949, the increase in migration paralleled the continuous increase in the population. The number of migrants did not fall below 83,000 until the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution (Buhush 143).

However, this did not prevent an increasing number of Algerians from returning from France to their homeland, and many of them joined the ranks of the revolution. It was observed through statistics that in some years, the number of returnees nearly equaled the number of Algerians who migrated to France (Saadi 13). In 1954, their number exceeded 200,000, and in 1956, 85,640 people migrated to France while 81,874 people simultaneously returned to Algeria. Throughout the years of the war, the number of migrants was almost equal to the number of returnees. However, in the following five years, the number decreased and did not exceed 93,088 migrants in any year from 1956 to 1960. These were crucial years in the history of the revolution, driven primarily by the working class of workers and peasants, who provided the main energy to confront the French occupation forces. But their numbers began to increase when the Algerian War of Independence was on the verge of ending. In fact, this increase came as a result of President de Gaulle's desire to engage in political negotiations with the leaders of the Liberation Front and end the war. This policy meant, for a significant number of Algerians who collaborated with the French administration, that France recognized the reality of ending its control and recognized the right of Algerians to manage their own affairs. As the pro-French elements had tied their fate to the presence of the French administration in the country, some of them decided to migrate to France in 1961 and 1962 (Buhush 142). Therefore, the number of migrants decreased during the second half of the 1950s and did not exceed 100,000 in

any year. This was because many young people had tied their future to the fate of the revolution in the country. However, their numbers began to steadily increase, surpassing 122,000 individuals before the signing of the ceasefire agreement on March 19, 1962 (Buhush 142).

2.5 Torture, Killing, and Exile

The fate of those who remained in Algeria under the rule of the occupation authorities was either enslavement by the settlers or being hunted down to the mountains and remote isolated areas. The destiny of those who clung to their land was either death or exile, all with the aim of emptying the land of its people and then rebuilding it with European settlers.

Threats, torture, expulsion, and killing were all permissible and available means for the occupier to eliminate the Muslim population.

According to Algerian authorities, the number of Algerians deported from their land was 3 million, with 2 million concentrated in camps in the central region until 1962.

These methods were employed in Algeria and included the systematic torture (even against civilians), a surveillance system for neighborhoods and suburbs (four observers were assigned to each neighborhood), and unlawful operations such as executions and forced disappearances, later known as "death flights."

These methods were documented to become the basis for counterinsurgency strategies, as outlined in the book "Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency" written by Colonel Roger Trinquier in 1961. It is one of the references in the fields of

"counterrevolutionary warfare" and psychological warfare.

Although the use of torture by the French Republic became widely known, with even the left-wing opposition in France opposing it, the state consistently denied employing torture during the war. Furthermore, in metropolitan France alone, more than 250 books, newspapers, and films addressing this issue were censored, and 586 Algerian media outlets were also banned from discussing the topic.

Torture was carried out on orders from the French government, as confirmed by retired General Paul Aussaresses. These confessions came after the testimony of former activist in the National Liberation Army, Louise Ighilahriz, who was tortured by the French forces at that time. Her testimony was published on July 20, 2000, in the newspaper *Le Monde*, just three days after the visit of former Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to France. Louise stated that she had been subjected to torture for three months and named General Massu as the person responsible, as he was the commander of the French armed forces at that time. Massu took the opportunity to express his regret for the torture operations that could have been avoided.

General Paul Aussaresses admitted in his book "Special Services, Algeria (1955-1957)" published in 2001 that he participated in torture and extrajudicial executions under direct orders from General Massu. Aussaresses also stated that the torture was carried out under direct orders from President Guy Mollet's government to combat what he called the

"terrorism of the National Liberation Front."

3. Effects of the Policy of Subjugation on Algerian Society

The deliberate and calculated policy of French colonization in Algeria had devastating negative effects, both material and psychological, on every individual in Algerian society. It plunged them into the depths of poverty, famine, and migration. Many people lost their lives and properties, and their families were subjected to eviction and exile after the settlers seized their fertile lands, turning them into serfs working for the same settlers on those very lands. As a result of this policy of subjugation, the standard of living for the Algerian individual declined, making it impossible to secure their daily sustenance. Their health deteriorated due to the spread of diseases and epidemics, as well as poor nutrition. Additionally, the educational level of Algerians deteriorated and declined.

Much of what happened in the post-independence period was an inevitable outcome of the policy pursued by the French occupation against the Algerian population. This policy affected all aspects of life, especially the political, economic, and social spheres.

3.1 Emergence and Spread of Chaos and Insecurity

The French occupation of Algeria resulted in the collapse of the system and the spread of chaos and insecurity due to the destruction of all infrastructures, the looting of state properties, and the oppression of its people. This policy of subjugation adopted by the occupying administration had negative implications

for Algerian society in the political arena. It deprived Algerian individuals of all their rights and prevented them from participating in any political activities, despite being considered French citizens. Their rights were only granted if they abandoned Islamic principles and their personal identity. (Al-Madani 132).

In terms of administrative representation, France relied on the settlers, despite their small numbers, to integrate Algeria into France. As a result, Muslim Algerians were marginalized and deprived of political representation and high-ranking government positions (Al-Madani 104).

Power and governance in colonial Algeria were reserved exclusively for the French, even though their numbers were few. They monopolized most of the significant positions for themselves (Al-Madani 107).

The consequences of these measures were detrimental to Algerian society. The tribes fragmented into smaller groups due to the demarcation and sale of their lands, leaving Algerians in rural areas without the traditional support and protection of their tribes. As a result, individuals faced isolation when confronted with oppressive French administrative measures (Saïdouni 32-33).

3.2 The Spread of Poverty and Famine

The policy of colonization by the French occupiers had a direct negative impact on the Algerians, affecting their lives in various aspects and contributing to the destruction of the economic structure of Algerian society and its balance. These impacts manifested in linking the Algerian economy to the French economy, where the lands and properties were seized and subjected to French law based on

individual private ownership. This led to the disposal of religious endowment lands and their seizure, especially the sacred lands (Blah 158).

Algeria witnessed severe famines during the years 1866, 1867, and 1868 due to the deterioration of the economic situation and agricultural drought that affected Algerian lands during that period (Bouaziz 170).

Many Algerians lost a significant portion of their property and livelihoods due to the seizure of lands by the colonizers. By 1866, around 6 million hectares, including 508,000 hectares of agricultural land, were taken by the colonists. By 1917, the settlers had acquired 55% of the total lands in Algeria, and many Algerians became laborers or unemployed on their own lands after being its owners (Shwaitam 209). As a result, living conditions and health deteriorated due to diseases, drought, and famine, particularly during the years 1866-1868 (Belarbi 135).

France focused on industrial crops such as tobacco, vineyards, and winemaking, with European workers separated from Algerian laborers, enjoying better conditions, higher wages, cleaner and easier jobs (Blah 161).

The colonial authorities relied on the exploited labor force to serve colonial agriculture and industry (Al-Madani 131).

As a result of the seizure and reservation of Algerian lands by the colonial authority, the material foundation on which Algerian society relied diminished (Amirawi 58). Moreover, taxes were imposed on agricultural land and livestock, totaling 9 million francs, to increase the wealth of the settlers and expand their lands at the expense of

Algerians. All of this led to the rise in food prices and essential commodities while income declined, weakening the purchasing power of Algerians (Bouaziz 52).

The policy of colonization negatively affected the three economic sectors:

Agriculture: The colonial administration worked on granting lands to settlers and changing the crops from wheat to vineyards for the production of wine, which became a significant economic resource for the colonizers. However, this policy resulted in agricultural deterioration and famine, while in the years of rain, local agriculture met the needs of all the inhabitants (Amirawi 58).

Trade: The settlers controlled trade, both internally and externally, which led to impoverishing the locals (Tamimi 93) and worsening the economic conditions.

The colonial settlement policy negatively impacted the Algerian locals in all aspects, while benefiting the settlers (Lounisi 94). It caused the disintegration of tribes into small clusters, as their lands were designated for sale, leading Algerians in rural areas to lose the suitable framework that organized their lives and provided them with a source of livelihood. Consequently, they became isolated and faced the oppressive measures of the French administration (Saïdouni 32-33).

The French policy of dispossessing farmers from their lands and turning them into laborers on others' lands caused them to work long hours, from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m., for very little pay (Lounisi 85). Their agricultural lands were depleted, and they had to buy crops from others. Meanwhile, local agriculture used to meet the needs of

all the inhabitants (Hawari 125). Consequently, the income of Algerian families reached extremely low levels, with daily wages barely reaching 4 francs in 1920, 8 francs in 1935, and 12 francs in 1954 (Blah 45). The deteriorating economic situation caused by the dispossession of properties became the most significant issue faced by Algerian society, pushing the poverty rate to around 90% (Omar 64).

In this context, a statement came from one of the senior doctors of the African army, Marius Nico Laboul, describing the condition of the locals: "Everything that meets the eye here, when a person arrives, evokes sadness and sorrow. The people have become in a lamentable and miserable state of destitution and hardship. A large crowd of laborers thirsty for money has flocked to this city from all countries. As for the industrialists, they are trying to exploit the newcomers, and each person here, whether military or bourgeoisie, does whatever pleases them without any accountability or supervision" (Abbad 11-15).

The famines of 1866-1868 were the biggest humanitarian disaster experienced by the Algerian people in modern times. It resulted in the death of a quarter of the population of Constantine, around 400,000 people. The famines left a massive number of orphans and displaced individuals. Many people had to flee from the highlands and the edges of the desert towards the Tell region to escape the inevitable death (Bourgada 366).

Due to the terrible consequences that the famines left in the minds of Algerians, they remain ingrained in their memories.

They recall these events as historical incidents, with some years being remembered as "the year of famine" or "the year of calamity" (Dahha 15).

3.3 Social Impacts

The colonial policy had profound consequences on the Algerian population, leaving them with neither a comfortable life nor a good social standing. The real estate and economic policies brought significant changes to the Algerian society, which was subjected to exploitation and deprived of its lands. The social structures were disrupted during years of misery and hardship that struck deep into Algerian society. The colonial authority sought to erase Algerian identity by any available means, demolishing villages and displacing the native inhabitants from their properties. These harsh and criminal measures led to the spread of epidemics and famines, causing some villages to vanish entirely. The demographic, social, and economic fabric of Algerian life was altered (Al-Hasani 123).

Unemployment spread as people were dispossessed of their properties and driven to remote regions, turning Algerians from landowners and masters of their own lands into mere laborers or tenant farmers with meager wages that were insufficient to cover their essential needs (Saadallah 82). The number of unemployed individuals in Algeria reached 2,900,000 out of a total of 3,200,000 Algerians (Lounisi 93).

Between 1866 and 1868, the agricultural sector faced various disasters, such as famine and natural calamities, which caused widespread famine and deadly epidemics. The Great Famine resulted in the deaths of many Algerians,

estimated at around 500,000, or about 30,000 people (Shwaitam 20).

The living and health conditions declined due to the spread of infectious diseases like cholera, typhus, tuberculosis, and eye diseases. The life expectancy of Algerians dropped to 50 years. During two months, more than nineteen thousand Algerians died due to the spread of epidemics, lack of hospitals, and the scarcity of doctors, which numbered around 1,850, mostly concentrated in major cities, along with 660 midwives and 611 pharmacists (Al-Madani 134).

As a result of these dire conditions, a sense of misery and extreme suffering pervaded Algerian society. Algerians suffered the deep pain of losing their ancestral lands, which they desperately needed.

Germaine Agyron described the tragic state and appearance of the Algerian people since the occupation: "... we saw amid the forests cultivated patches and fields, wheat near cultivated plains for centuries with the ancient Arab plow; they were seized from the hands of Algerians by plunder and annexed to the property of the forests" (Abbas 61).

The misery of the locals was evident as they saw their enemies residing in luxurious houses in cities while they wandered in barren wilderness (Al-Madani 132).

The policy of colonialism dismantled tribal unity and scattered their traditional social formation. Algerians had maintained their balance through religion and common land (Dahha 28). Consequently, the land confiscation policy led to the collapse of the tribal system and the disintegration of

strong bonds among members of a single tribe (Farkous 337).

Based on the aforementioned, we can conclude that the real estate policies and colonial laws brought about a radical transformation in Algerian society, with the settlers forming the highest social class.

3.4 The Spread of Illiteracy, Ignorance, and Backwardness

The repercussions of the colonial policy of the French occupier were not limited to the economic and political aspects only; they also extended to the cultural field. The occupier aimed to assimilate Algeria into France and erase its Arab-Islamic identity. To achieve this, the colonial administration implemented an economic and cultural policy that involved spreading illiteracy among Algerians and emphasizing government schools and mosques. A decision was made to include these institutions as part of public property under its control, which affected the educational and scientific process in Algeria. Moreover, the teaching of the Arabic language was prohibited in schools, and no public schools were provided for Algerians to study in, except for a few schools that were sufficient for some of them, depriving thousands of their right to education.

The French occupier, through its policy of assimilation, sought to eradicate the concept of Islamic culture and civilization and the teachings of religion in various ways by excluding the Algerian people entirely from the Islamic world. It sent missionary groups known as "White Fathers" to Algeria to spread Christianity. The fierce occupier fought against the Arabic language, which was the vessel of Islamic culture and the language of the

Quran. It worked to eliminate it by issuing several laws prohibiting the teaching of Arabic and making French the only language of the country. These laws had a significant impact on Algerian society, as they transformed the language of administration and governance to French (Saadallah 208).

Colonialism played a significant role in spreading ignorance and illiteracy to create a generation saturated with French culture and language, emptying educational curricula of their cultural and intellectual content that would have prepared a qualified society for a real renaissance (C. R. Ageron 126).

The French colonialism in Algeria was distinguished by imposing the French language on Algerian society and spreading it among its ranks. It implemented a policy of Francization by providing French education to Algerian children and destroying most of the centers of Arabic culture. Western cultural institutes and mixed French schools appeared (al-Aqad 153-157). By 1870, the number of French-Arabic elementary schools was 36, with 1300 Muslim students. Three higher schools also existed, but they were closed by French Republicans residing in Algeria. By 1882, only 16 elementary schools remained open (Shwaitam 211). The French believed that creating a cultured, educated society in the country would not guarantee their loyalty to France, so they neglected the education and cultivation of Algerian generations, which resulted in the spread of illiteracy among Algerians (al-Aqad 153-157).

In addition to discriminatory treatment and immoral persecution, the colonial

power tried to eradicate Islam by seizing endowment properties and suppressing their activities as the primary source of funding for mosques and Sufi orders. The French also launched a project of Christianization, aimed at killing the Islamic spirit and eradicating the language of the Quran (Blah 152). The first attempts at Christianization were made by Cardinal Lavigerie during the years of famine (1867-1868). He had an antagonistic stance towards Islam and Muslims, preventing them from performing Hajj, stating, "Experience has shown that Muslims become more extremist after returning from Hajj, and less likely to submit to our control" (Shwaitam 212).

The result of this colonial policy was the decline in the number of religious and educational institutions, a decrease in the number of students and pupils, and a consequent decline in the educational and cultural level. Many mosques were converted into churches by the colonial administration, with 60 churches and temples and 16 religious institutions established between 1830 and 1845 (Shwaitam 212).

CONCLUSION

The French occupation of Algeria from 1830 to 1962 had far-reaching destructive effects on Algerian society. It affected both the land and its people, targeting elements of national identity and individuality, particularly religion, language, history, civilization, and overall unity. The primary aim of the French was to permanently settle in Algeria to achieve their imperial ambitions.

The policy of French occupation in Algeria was characterized by its exploitative nature. From the beginning,

the authorities sought to impose control over all lands and exploit all resources, including human resources, as they needed to build a large military force comparable to world powers and involve Algeria in wars both inside and outside the colony.

The effects of this exploitative policy were negative and had psychological and social consequences on the Algerian society. The harsh war waged by the occupiers against the Muslim population affected all segments of society. The French occupiers isolated Algerian families, seized their lands, expelled and forcibly displaced them. Those who remained in Algeria faced oppression, marginalization, displacement, and even genocide.

These tragic conditions had both material and psychological impacts, affecting various aspects of the inhabitants' lives. It led to the dispersal of Algerian farmers' properties, turning them into sharecroppers or tenants, while they were once the owners of their lands. As a result, the living standards of Algerians declined, leading to poverty, malnutrition, and the spread of diseases like cholera and plague, causing a serious demographic decline.

The policies of exploitation also had devastating effects on the cultural sphere. The French authorities conducted arbitrary actions against schools and Sufi shrines and suppressed the Arabic language and Islamic religion. This targeting aimed to erase the identity of the Algerian people and their personal elements of religion, language, culture, and history. The French policies of promoting French language and proselytizing led to a radical change in the mindset of individuals and Algerian society.

Despite the success of Algerians in reclaiming their homeland, the price paid was high. The exploitative policies caused a significant rupture in the social structure and an imbalanced society. Its effects and repercussions continue to impact successive generations. The French displacement caused a significant detachment between families and their ancestral lands, with intertwined and confused names and titles, and shattered tribes.

This work aims to connect multiple events in the history of contemporary Algeria to the roots that occurred in another time. The French occupation caused the destruction of a nation and was one of the most crucial phases in the history of contemporary Algeria. It brought about major events that changed the course of history and left a profound impact even on the lives of those who were not born during that period or did not experience it firsthand.

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