The French Campaign against Algeria in 1830: A Study of Selected Historical Sources

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***Abstract*—In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Regency of Algiers faced serious political and military difficulties. Internal uprisings occurred in the eastern and western regions and deep in the Sahara. Other major events included the destruction of much of the Algerian fleet and the naval blockade imposed after the disputed Fly-Whisk Incident. These developments preceded the French campaign against Algiers in 1830. The campaign had several domestic and religious motives, as well as external justifications discussed in contemporary historical sources. These sources also described the advantages that France expected from occupying Algeria. The French government prepared the invasion through successive plans and studies. Its consuls and intelligence agents provided information. Military preparations intensified, and French forces sailed from Toulon to land at Sidi Ferruch. Algiers was then bombarded. Rather than continuing resistance, Dey Hussein Pasha, his troops, and his entourage initiated negotiations before the occupying army entered the capital. The surrender agreement was signed by Dey Hussein and General de Bourmont on the afternoon of 4 July 1830. The city fell, and French troops entered it on 5 July 1830.**

Keywords*—*Algeria; Dey Hussein; France; occupation; surrender; treaty

I. Introduction

Algeria's political, social, and economic circumstances before the French invasion were unfavorable. The Regency was ill-equipped to confront Europe's industrial progress, economic growth, improved transport, and scientific advances. European industrial powers were seeking new sources of raw materials and markets for manufactured goods[1]. In these circumstances, the fall of Algiers on 4 July 1830 was made easier by Dey Hussein's concentration of political authority[2]. He relied heavily on a small circle of soldiers and relatives. Most Algerians remained excluded from government. They therefore had little incentive to defend the dey's authority when it came under threat[3].

French plans to occupy Algeria had a much longer history. Several expansionist proposals appeared during the fifty years preceding the invasion. Napoleon Bonaparte's government asked its consul in Algiers for a detailed report on the feasibility of an occupation. The consul identified Sidi Ferruch as the most suitable landing site[4]. Major Vincent-Yves Boutin[5], a military engineer, was then instructed to prepare sketches and surveys in July 1818. The studies concerned Algiers, its forts, and its defensive positions. They produced a detailed report that later informed the 1830 expedition[6].

France used the Fly-Whisk Incident[7] to justify its actions and formally declared war on Algeria on 16 June 1827[8]. On 30 January 1830, the French Council of Ministers met for four hours and decided to launch an expedition against Algiers[9]. Most historical accounts of the campaign describe this decision.

These developments lead to the central research problem.

Many historical accounts presented the French army as the force that had liberated Europe and the wider world from Algiers. In such narratives, Algeria appeared as a center of piracy, unrest, and disorder. Earlier Spanish and British attacks had failed to conquer it. The French therefore claimed the distinction of defeating the supposed pirates of the Mediterranean.

Was the French invasion of Algiers a response to reasons and pretexts advanced by the French government? Or was it the realization of a colonial project long envisioned by French leaders, particularly Napoleon Bonaparte?

How did the French army prepare for the expedition? Was Dey Hussein aware of these preparations?

II. Circumstances Surrounding the French Campaign against Algeria

France occupied Algiers on 5 July 1830. The campaign drew on internal motivations and external justifications, most notably the Fly-Whisk Incident. It culminated in a treaty of surrender. After the French landing at Sidi Ferruch, General Gérard declared: "This expedition is based on pressing needs of the greatest importance. They are linked to the maintenance of public order in France and even in Europe." He explained that those needs included "opening vast spaces for our surplus population, finding outlets for the products of our industries, and exchanging them for products foreign to our land and climate." These remarks reveal the broader economic logic of colonial expansion[10].

French sources frequently discussed the economic gains expected from the occupation of the Regency of Algiers. Since the French Revolution, successive governments had commissioned studies on the subject. The consul in Algiers was asked to assess the prospects of conquest. One expected benefit was the cancellation of French debts owed to Algeria. These debts

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were said to amount to seven million francs, down from an earlier figure of twenty-four million. French officials also anticipated recovering the expedition's cost by seizing the Regency's treasury. It was believed to contain substantial quantities of precious metals and foreign currency[11].

Almost all European governments reportedly responded favorably to French announcements of the planned expedition. Many offered assistance if it became necessary. The British ministry headed by the Duke of Wellington was concerned about Britain's commercial interests. It sought to determine what France intended to do with Algeria after the occupation. France, however, maintained that it did not require foreign help to avenge the insult it claimed to have suffered. Nor did it consider consultation with other powers necessary for the invasion[12].

Before 1830, France was among the European states most active in portraying Algerian maritime power as piracy that had to be suppressed. It repeatedly threatened the dey and imposed naval pressure on the country. It also mobilized European and Christian public opinion against Algiers. French officials encouraged the beys of Tunis and urged Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt to undertake a conquest. Plans for an invasion had been discussed since the early eighteenth century. The occupation project developed in stages, although circumstances delayed its execution until 1830. From this perspective, the Fly-Whisk Incident served as a pretext. French officials also knew of the financial controversies and alleged bribery involving their consul, Pierre Deval, whose reputation was disputed[13].

The Fly-Whisk Incident occurred after French authorities had learned that most of the Algerian warships taking part in the Battle of Navarino in 1827 had been destroyed[14].

France used the incident to notify European ambassadors that a naval blockade would follow unless Dey Hussein met French demands within twenty-four hours. The demands were exceptionally severe. The dey was initially required to board the French vessel La Provence and apologize personally to Consul Deval. Other European consuls were to witness the apology. The French government anticipated his refusal. It therefore authorized Colly, the officer commanding the blockade, to present two alternatives[15]:

• Dey Hussein would receive Deval at his palace in the presence of foreign consuls and apologize to him for the incident.

• Alternatively, he would send an official delegation led by the minister of the navy to request Deval's pardon. Acceptance of either proposal would also require compliance with the following conditions:

• Algerian artillery would fire a salute of one hundred rounds in honor of the French flag.

• The French flag would be raised over all Algerian forts and defensive works.

• The dey would compensate France for damage to its property and commercial establishments.

• Algerian corsair captains would be punished for attacks on French vessels.

• Compensation would be paid for damage to the French consular residence in Annaba.

• France would receive guarantees that Algerian sailors would no longer board or inspect French ships.

• The French government would have the right to arm the fort at El Kala and its other establishments.

• Algeria would relinquish its claim to the debts associated with Bacri and Busnach.

• France would be granted consular precedence over the other European powers[16].

Hussein Pasha replied in unequivocal terms: "Conditions such as these cannot come from responsible, intelligent, and farsighted statesmen. Such language resembles the meaningless speech of madmen in their asylums. If you want clarification, send a man to investigate the truth. He will discover that this wicked consul is unworthy of either us or you. Until a reasonable consul is appointed, we shall pay no attention to words of this kind. They contain insults and abuse before the truth is established. If you send such a man within twenty-four hours, the situation may become clear. Otherwise, we shall be in a state of actual war." France responded by formally declaring war on Algeria on 16 June 1827[17].

French forces succeeded in obstructing Algeria's maritime connections. European imports fell sharply, and residents complained about declining earnings. Rumors also spread in Algiers about a conspiracy against the dey. The effectiveness of the blockade reflected the loss of Algeria's former naval superiority during the eighteenth century[18].

The French Council of Ministers met on 30 January 1830. After four hours of discussion, it approved an expedition against Algeria. King Charles X endorsed the project on 7 February. A royal decree appointed the Count de Bourmont[19] commander-in-chief and Admiral Duperré to command the fleet. The French monarchy sought a military victory with a wider symbolic purpose. The defense of Christianity was invoked, while the incident involving the dey's fly-whisk supplied an immediate pretext[20].

The Algerian position remained unchanged throughout the crisis. The authorities viewed Deval's conduct as a provocation intended to create a dispute that would serve French objectives. They argued that an independent and sovereign state had no obligation to apologize for the behavior of a foreign consul who had insulted its ruler. Dey Hussein instead demanded satisfaction for the affront and compensation for the losses caused by France's declaration of war[21].

III. Preparations for the French Expedition against Algiers

On 18 April 1830, Charles X issued instructions to General de Bourmont concerning the expedition against Algiers. Polignac oversaw the War Department. He later visited Toulon to inspect the assembled forces. He found them well trained, particularly in infantry tactics against cavalry. Preparations were proceeding rapidly, and the minister of war had ordered that all necessary equipment be made available at the ports[22].

Admiral Duperré also ordered the construction of fifty boats at Toulon. According to the account, each could carry 120 men and 120 artillery pieces. They were to be ready by approximately 30 April. Supplies were assembled to feed between 30,000 and 35,000 men for four months[23]. On 3 April 1830, a list of forty-eight Royal Navy vessels was also drawn up. They were to reinforce the blockade off Algiers. The projected landing fleet included the following vessels:

• 60 transport boats, each carrying 150 people

• 40 island-type boats, each carrying 130 people

• 52 barges, each carrying 150 people

• 40 large rowing boats, each carrying 120 people

• 35 small craft, each carrying 40 people

• 12 additional boats. The account gives the smaller vessels a combined capacity of 28,200 men. By the end of April, the essential preparations were complete. The Dauphin was assigned to review the naval force before departure[24].

News of the campaign spread rapidly through the army. Charles X's plans soon became known throughout Europe and attracted the attention of several governments. The forces were ready to depart, and anticipation among the soldiers continued to grow[25].

The French forces headed toward the Sidi Ferruch peninsula, west of Algiers. Military surveys and maps prepared by intelligence agents had identified this location as a weak point in the Algerian defenses.

French leaders tailored their message to different audiences. They promised their own people revenge for an insult to national honor. They told the pope that the cross would replace the crescent in Algiers. To European commercial interests, they promised an end to piracy and freedom of trade. They also claimed that Algerians would be liberated from the so-called Turkish yoke[26]. Yet the invasion brought many forms of oppression to tribes and nomadic communities. Some came to regret the loss of Ottoman rule and the advantages they had enjoyed under it. They were disillusioned by the reality of French claims about civilization and liberty[27].

The expedition reached Algeria in successive waves. The first comprised 200 vessels that arrived off Algiers from 13 June 1830. Troops landed immediately and occupied the Sidi Ferruch headland and a nearby small fort. The landings continued with little resistance. A second wave of 110 vessels of different sizes anchored on 16 June. These ships unloaded troops, food, and ammunition. They then returned to France for further supplies.

More warships subsequently moved between Toulon and Algiers. They brought additional troops and sustained the force ashore. Its strength was reported as 35,000 combatants. This included 25,000 infantrymen, 5,000 artillerymen and engineers, 1,500 cavalrymen with their horses, and 3,500 riflemen, gendarmes, and other light troops[28].

Ahmed Bey recalled an exchange with the pasha concerning the French landing site. He wrote: "When I appeared before the pasha, he said to me: 'You still have enough time to go out and confront the French, who will land at Sidi Ferruch. I know the landing place from letters that reach me from their country and from a book printed in France, which my agents in Malta and Gibraltar sent to me.'" The pasha added that letters arrived continuously from France and that he knew what was happening there[29].

On 30 July 1829, the warship La Provence anchored about four miles from Algiers under instructions from Paris. The following day, Dey Hussein received Captain La Bretonnière. The captain presented the French demands and insisted that they be accepted. He warned that refusal would result in a tighter blockade. These measures, he stated, would be only the beginning of a decisive expedition that France was preparing[30].

The French landing at Sidi Ferruch was therefore not entirely unexpected. The Algerian authorities had long known that the area was a likely landing site. Before Napoleon's fall, the British had provided them with a copy of Boutin's report on the fortifications of Algiers and other towns. Information also arrived from Marseille while France was preparing the expedition. Nevertheless, the authorities failed to establish an effective defense in this sector. Their inaction exposed weaknesses in operational management and military planning[31].

The circumstances of the invasion suggest that the Ottoman officials in charge of political and economic affairs lacked the will or capacity to resist effectively. The French encountered limited resistance during the landing at Sidi Ferruch. The defenders were poorly prepared for an undertaking of this scale[32].

Accounts of the blockade and occupation also reveal a growing division between Ottoman rulers and the population. This differed from earlier conflicts, when both groups had often mobilized together in the name of jihad[33].

IV. The Capture of Algiers

The French fleet bombarded Algiers from the sea for several days. Many houses were seriously damaged and subsequently collapsed. On elevated ground opposite the fortress, French troops erected earth-filled defenses and positioned artillery. Heavy guns then maintained a continuous bombardment. The garrison, commanded by the Khaznadji Effendi, offered determined resistance. Several thousand defenders were stationed in the Staoueli area[34].

The garrison received reinforcements from the beys of Constantine, Oran, and Titteri. Information collected later by European consuls suggested that the Khaznadji commanded five or six thousand Turkish soldiers. Some estimates raised the figure to forty thousand[35]. After seven hours of shelling, much of the fortress wall had collapsed and half the garrison was reportedly killed. The Khaznadji scattered gunpowder along the route between the fortress and the city gate. On reaching the gate, he ordered a Janissary to fire his pistol. A large part of the fort then exploded with a tremendous noise. The blast frightened residents who had not known what was happening. The Khaznadji had hoped the falling masonry would crush the French troops. According to this account, however, no French soldier was injured[36].

Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, the naqib al-ashraf of Algiers (representative of the descendants of the Prophet), recalled: "When the enemy reached the entrenchments above the Moulay Hassan fort, fear entered people's hearts. The situation became grave for the Muslims. The French completed these entrenchments and strengthened their position. Late on Saturday night, they placed more than two hundred cannon there. They bombarded the fort until after sunrise on Sunday. After fierce fighting, the fort was destroyed, and many people were killed on both sides. Conditions became unbearable for those inside the fort, including the Khaznadji. He promised one hundred gold sultani coins to anyone who set fire to the gunpowder magazine. A man took a small container of powder and spread its contents little by little, making a continuous trail away from the fort. He then lit the powder and fled. When the fire reached the magazine, it exploded. The surrounding buildings were blown apart, and stones fell across the city. Artillery fire stopped for an hour"[37].

Thousands of wounded people were suffering. Women and children climbed onto rooftops and wept, while men hurried to the Casbah to urge the dey to negotiate. Hussein Pasha initially refused their pleas. He told them: "Hussein Pasha will not negotiate with the French as long as the Casbah stands. I would rather blow up the Casbah and the entire city than take such a step"[38].

Ottoman troops, together with members of Arab tribes and nomadic groups, had assembled at Staoueli. Their number was reported to exceed 55,000. On 19 June, they decided to attack, but the French were prepared. French forces captured the camp, and the defenders retreated toward Algiers. Hussein Pasha closed the city gates. On 24 June, Ottoman and Arab forces reportedly renewed their efforts but were again repelled. The French advanced to within a few kilometers of the city. On that day, the commander-in-chief lost one of his sons[39].

C. Fallet wrote: "On 26 June, a violent storm arose. It threatened our ships [the French fleet] and gave our enemies [the Algerians and Ottoman troops] fresh hope. On the twenty-ninth, our soldiers resumed the attack. The Turks and Arabs had withdrawn to very steep heights. The French advanced, but only with considerable effort. The naval position was then left to them. From there, they saw Algiers, with its white walls and houses set against green expanses. Many country houses were surrounded by vegetation. Several palaces stood to the left of the army. The calm blue sea extended to the horizon, while the Mitidja Plain stretched opposite"[40][41].

Ministers, officials, officers, merchants, and religious scholars called for an urgent meeting. They agreed that negotiations with the French should begin. The official responsible for external affairs sent an envoy by boat under a white flag to the approaching French fleet. The French commander refused to negotiate and demanded immediate surrender. He threatened to resume the bombardment if the dey declined. Under pressure from his ministers, scholars, and senior officials, the dey eventually relented. A second messenger was sent to seek guarantees for the ruler and the city[42].

Al-Zahar wrote: "When this fort was captured, the suffering of the city's inhabitants became severe. When the ruler saw this, he sent a message to the tyrant [the French expedition commander]. He asked for protection for himself, his family, and his property. They granted his request. The people of the city knew nothing of what he had done. When the messenger returned with the answer, he took it and remained silent"[43]. Hussein Pasha could no longer ignore the danger. He informed General Néral and the admiral that he was prepared to offer the satisfaction demanded by France.

De Bourmont and Duperré replied that it was too late. If Algiers did not surrender, French forces would take it by assault[44]. Hussein Pasha then sent representatives to de Bourmont to learn his terms. The Algerian delegation included the pasha's secretary, Mustafa al-Qadiri, the prominent city leader Ahmed Boudarba, and al-Hajj Hassan, a son of Hamdan ibn Othman Khodja[45]. After receiving the reply[46], the French envoy described his arrival at about five o'clock: "I found myself among the Janissary troops. A crowd of Maghrebis, Jews, and Arabs had gathered around me. As I walked along a narrow slope, I heard cries of fear and threats. They grew louder as we approached the fortress walls. Sidi Mustafa, who walked ahead of me, called out, 'Open the gates!' Once we entered, they were immediately closed against the surging crowd. I was led into the courtyard of the divan, which was filled with Janissaries. Dey Hussein was in his place. His ministers and some foreign consuls stood around him. The dey alone appeared calm, although he was sad and displeased"[47].

The French envoy carried the conditions dictated by de Bourmont. He reported that he greeted the dey respectfully and explained the purpose of his mission. He then read the terms in Arabic, taking care to speak clearly and with confidence: "The French army will take possession of the city of Algiers, the Casbah, all forts, and public property tomorrow, 5 July 1830, at

ten in the morning, French time. The religion and customs of Algerians will be respected. No soldier will be allowed to enter your mosques. The dey and the Turks must leave Algiers as soon as possible. Their personal wealth will be protected, and they will be free to choose where they wish to retire [go into exile]." Hussein Pasha then affixed his seal to the instrument of surrender and handed it to the interpreter-envoy[48].

De Bourmont signed the surrender agreement with the dey. It pledged protection of the ruler's life and the lives, property, and personal dignity of the inhabitants. It also guaranteed freedom of religious practice. In return, Algerian authorities were to surrender public buildings, castles, and forts[49]. De Bourmont sent another interpreter to explain that the French troops would not enter the city before noon. This would allow the pasha to remain in the Casbah with the commander-in-chief[50]. After the surrender that afternoon, the guns fell silent. French ships took control of the harbor, while soldiers occupied the surrounding heights and raised French flags. Within a few days, Hussein Pasha left for Naples. Ottoman soldiers and militia units later departed for the Levant[51].

Abou al-Qasim Saadallah wrote: "Their deportation on 11 July was a pitiful and distressing sight. There were then about 5,092 Janissaries in Algiers, including 891 artillerymen. Some were married, while others were unmarried. It seems that some married men were initially allowed to remain. The remaining Janissaries were taken together aboard French ships to Asia Minor [Anatolia]. The justification given was that most of them had been born there. One French writer claims that they themselves requested transfer to Anatolia. He also states that de Bourmont granted them two months' wages to live on, without their asking. This was hardly a great act of generosity, since the money came from the Algerian budget that he had seized"[52].

A dispatch dated 9 July 1830, at three o'clock, was associated with the minister of the navy and the prefect of Moselle. The account introduced the following announcement, which was intended for wide circulation:

The dispatch announced: "Algiers surrendered, by our estimate, at five in the afternoon. At two o'clock, the king's standard was flying over the dey's palace. There were 1,500 bronze cannon, twelve war machines, and military and naval arsenals supplied with weapons and ammunition. The dey has fallen into our power. It is an unforgettable day."

The dispatch is attributed in the source to the prefect and Count de Vandeuvre[53].

The agreement between Hussein Pasha and de Bourmont concerned the city of Algiers. Yet Hussein was ruler of the wider Regency. The author argues that he could have withdrawn from one beylik to another rather than surrendering after a battle for which adequate preparations had not been made. In this interpretation, the surrender betrayed Algeria's interests and left its people to correct a historical mistake, even a historical crime[54].

Joseph Cauvin wrote: "The state of brigands has become our Algeria"[55]. After spending some time in Livorno, Hussein Pasha recalled a promise to visit France and traveled to Paris in the summer of 1831[56].

On 6 July 1830, the victorious French troops celebrated in the streets of Algiers. Drums and military music accompanied their expressions of joy. The sounds echoed through a city that had not previously witnessed European soldiers marching through its streets or heard the hooves of their horses[57].

French officers and soldiers walked through the streets of Algiers with calm curiosity[58]. Algerians looked on in astonishment at the newcomers' weapons and uniforms. The author describes the invaders as "barbarian" and recounts how they entered the city. They removed Algerian flags from the forts and government towers and raised French colonial flags instead[59]. A Christian service was held, during which the expedition's senior chaplain addressed the French commander: "You have opened a door for Christianity on the coast of Africa"[60].

Al-Zahar wrote: "The Christians grew stronger and seized it. They made its elevated places stables for their horses. They turned its mosques into shelters for their sick and churches for their idols"[61].

The campaign exposed the political and military weakness of the Regency during the final years of Ottoman rule. It also helped generate a stronger commitment to resistance once the population recognized France's colonial aims[62].

V. Inventory of the Dey's Wealth and the Seizure of the Treasury

After occupying the capital, French troops seized the Algerian state treasury and public property. They also appropriated the dey's possessions, government funds, valuables, food reserves, and military equipment. The value of these goods was estimated at 150 million gold francs. Historians cited in the study claimed that officers of the expedition appropriated 100 million francs for themselves. They allegedly reported only 50 million gold francs to the French government, presenting this as the full amount found in the Algerian treasury[63].

The French military administration was assigned to inventory the wealth obtained after the surrender. The dey's treasure included gold, silver, ingots, precious metals, jewelry, gemstones, vases, and ceramic vessels. Much of it was stored in four connected rooms on the ground floor of the Casbah, behind a heavy wooden door. Rare medals and coins were also discovered and sent to the Royal Library under military supervision. Workers equipped with picks were employed to remove the treasure. The account gives a value of 1,800 million for the money recovered, excluding ingots valued at 48 million[64].

Many early historians of the occupation accepted the estimate of the special commission without independently checking it. They presented the total as the result of a precise calculation based on the value of gold and silver. The figure they reported was 48,684,527. Writers associated with this estimate included Carette, Genty de Bussy, Fillas, Roy, Harin, Garout, and de

Bourmont. Yet the accounts differ markedly. Estimates of the treasury's actual value range from 14 million to 200 million francs, with many falling between 50 million and 160 million. These conflicting figures make a firm valuation difficult[65].

Some French writers celebrated the Algerian expedition as exceptionally profitable. Other campaigns had involved considerable expenditure and financial losses, even when they succeeded. By contrast, they claimed that the gains from Algeria exceeded the cost of the expedition[66].

After the treasury, the artillery was considered among the most valuable acquisitions. The French army found substantial stores of gunpowder and more than two thousand artillery items, including projectiles and bronze guns. Some weapons appeared to have been captured from various European powers. The French fleur-de-lis was engraved on several cannon, suggesting a French origin. The account mentions artillery lost by Francis I at the Battle of Pavia and weapons associated with Charles V's unsuccessful campaign against Barbarossa on the Algerian coast[67].

Al-Zahar wrote that French forces attacked and captured the fort. They seized equipment, weapons, and money recovered from the rubble[68]. Some settlers later established permanent residences in Kouba and Dely Ibrahim[69]. These fertile areas were seen as possible sources of wealth and influence for France. One French author claimed that nearby tribes had gradually become accustomed to the settlers' presence. He insisted that France would not abandon its conquest[70].

VI. The Period of Uncertainty

The first stage of the occupation was a period of cautious assessment. French forces initially tested conditions in coastal towns and gathered information before moving into the extensive countryside and rugged mountains[71]. Hesitation, uncertainty, and conflicting opinions characterized French policy from the landing at Sidi Ferruch onward[72].

General Bertrand Clauzel[73] replaced de Bourmont in 1830[74]. He was appointed to command the French possessions in North Africa[75]. Soon after arriving in Algiers, he set out his views in response to questions from the ministry. Should France occupy only a few coastal positions? Should it colonize the whole country? Or should it relinquish Algiers?

Clauzel argued that France was free to occupy Algeria because this would best serve its interests. He understood the government to be seeking a lasting position of power in Africa[76].

Octave Teissier raised a similar question: what should France do with Algeria? Could it become a colony resembling the ancient Greek settlements? He emphasized the difficulties created by differences in language, customs, and religion. He also described the colonial economic model as one in which the colony consumed goods and produced resources for the metropolitan country[77].

Hamdan Khodja wrote: "My heart is broken by the news that reaches me every day from Algeria. It tells me that blood is flowing in torrents, that discontent is widespread, and that my country is heading toward ruin. With all my heart, I wish the French government to take care of the question of the Regency of Algiers. At the very least, it should instruct the commission it has sent to listen to the complaints and statements of the inhabitants. In this way, the truth may emerge and falsehood may be dispelled"[78].

At first, the French monarchy did not know how to manage Algiers, which was described as an expensive inheritance. In 1831, the ministry of Casimir Perier announced its intention to extend French occupation throughout the province. Uncertainty returned after that government left office. It continued until 1834, when a general administration of French possessions in North Africa was established. Algeria experienced widespread instability during this period following the end of Ottoman rule[79].

De Montrond reported that a commission arrived in Algiers in early September 1834 to inspect the colony and gather information. Other officials reached Algeria on 27 September. Their speeches emphasized that France would not abandon the territory[80]. This position was reflected in a decree issued in 1834 that formally incorporated Algeria into the French colonial administration[81].

The African Commission recommended a limited occupation. France would retain selected coastal centers, including Algiers, Oran, Bejaia, and Annaba. The interior would remain under tribal chiefs and local leaders, who were expected to cooperate with France while competing with one another. This approach was expressed in the Chamber of Deputies by Brosson on 22 May 1836. He argued that the war damaged French interests and that peace would serve them better. On 21 April 1837, deputy Pescadori likewise supported coexistence with Emir Abdelkader. He believed peace offered a more effective means of overcoming him. Governor-General Damrémont also favored gradual, limited expansion by peaceful means. He expressed this view in a letter to Guizot dated 10 December 1836[82].

A second tendency supported the complete occupation of Algeria, even at the cost of a prolonged and expensive war. Many French officers favored this policy because they hoped to gain military distinction. Ambitious politicians also supported it. Thiers argued during a parliamentary debate on the Algerian budget that isolated coastal garrisons would remain vulnerable to attacks from the interior. In his view, a restricted occupation made little sense. France should either extend its control or withdraw altogether. This position reflected a strongly colonial outlook. Its advocates depicted Algerians as an inferior population to be displaced in favor of European settlers, as the writer A. Hain suggested[83].

Until 1834, the French government had no clear and consistent policy toward Algeria[84]. Divisions persisted within both the cabinet and parliament, especially after the findings of official inquiries[85]. On 7 July 1833, King Louis-Philippe approved

the formation of what became known as the African Commission. The decision followed a report by the minister of war, Marshal Soult. Its stated task was to collect information about Algeria's present condition and future prospects[86].

The commission's report acknowledged serious abuses: "We demolished nine hundred houses in Algiers without consulting or informing their inhabitants and without paying them compensation. We took possession of sixty mosques and used them all for the needs of the French occupying army. We demolished ten of them. We also violated the sanctity of cemeteries by exhuming and disturbing graves"[87]. Al-Zahar made a similar accusation: "They opened the graves of certain pious men, including the tomb of the city's saint and spiritual leader, the great scholar Sidi Abd al-Rahman ibn Makhlouf al-Tha'alibi, may God be pleased with him. They also disturbed Muslim cemeteries. Very few escaped"[88].

VII. Findings

• Limited Algerian readiness before the invasion. Before 1830, the Regency's political, social, economic, and military structures were poorly positioned to confront Europe's industrial and scientific advances. Dey Hussein's concentration of authority within a narrow group of soldiers and relatives further weakened political cohesion and public mobilization.

• A colonial project preceded the immediate pretext. French ambitions to occupy Algeria had developed over several decades. Consular intelligence, military studies, and surveys of possible landing sites formed part of this longer process.

• The Fly-Whisk Incident was used as a political justification. France cited the incident when announcing war and imposing a blockade. Its demands were difficult to accept and would have reduced Algerian sovereignty. The prior weakening of the Algerian fleet, notably at Navarino, also affected the balance of power.

• French superiority in operational planning and logistics. French commanders selected Sidi Ferruch on the basis of intelligence and maps. They assembled landing craft, troops, ammunition, and supplies. Successive naval movements supported the operation.

• Awareness of French intentions without adequate defensive action. Algerian authorities received reports about the probable landing zone but did not translate this intelligence into effective preparations. This exposed weaknesses in the defensive command structure.

• The relatively rapid capture of Algiers. Sustained bombardment and heavy artillery damaged the defenses. Military losses and the threat of an assault led to negotiations and surrender. The agreement formally promised respect for religion and local customs in exchange for the transfer of public property and fortifications.

• Political and psychological consequences. Awareness of France's colonial intentions strengthened popular resistance. The invasion was increasingly understood as an effort at permanent domination rather than a limited punitive operation.

• Seizure of public wealth and problems in the accounting of spoils. French forces took control of the treasury and state property. Historians offered sharply different estimates of their value, highlighting the difficulty of establishing a reliable total.

• Uncertainty in French policy after the first occupation. French leaders debated whether to retain limited coastal positions or pursue complete conquest. Investigative commissions were established to assess the situation, reflecting the absence of a settled early strategy.

• Control over religious, institutional, and symbolic space. The conversion and appropriation of mosques and other public buildings, together with violations of cemeteries and religious sites, demonstrated that the occupation extended beyond stated security objectives. It involved efforts to reshape Algerian institutions and promote colonial settlement.

VIII. Conclusion

The French occupation of Algeria in 1830 differed markedly from forms of colonization experienced by many other peoples. Before its occupation, Algeria was an independent, sovereign state. It was recognized by the states of the time, including France. The two countries maintained diplomatic representation and commercial relations. France did not invade merely to take revenge on the government of Algiers. Nor was the invasion simply a response to an act of aggression against France. Its objectives went much further. French colonial ambitions in Algerian territory had long been apparent.

French troops entered Algiers on 5 July 1830. This date marked a decisive turning point in modern Algerian history. It also opened a new phase in which surrender and political collapse gave way to sustained popular resistance.

IX. References and Bibliography

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3 Cauvin, Joseph. L'Algérie. Paris: Tinterlin et Cie, 1859

4 De Montrond, M. Histoire de la conquête de l'Algérie de 1830 à 1847. Vol. 1. Paris: E. Marc-Aurel, 1847

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7 Fallet, C. Conquête de l'Algérie. Rouen: Mégard et Cie, 1856

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NOTES

[1] Ammar Qalil, The Epic of New Algeria, 1st ed. (Algiers: Dar al-Ba'th, 1991), vol. 1, p. 20

[2] Some documents state that Hussein Pasha was born in 1764 in a place called Nderla, while others give 1773 and identify Izmir as his birthplace. He grew up in Istanbul and advanced rapidly. After receiving a severe punishment, he fled to Algeria and joined its Ottoman military establishment. He held several posts before becoming a minister and friend of his predecessor, Ali Pasha. Ali recommended Hussein as his successor in 1818. Hussein ruled for twelve years and

spent approximately eight years in exile before dying in Alexandria in 1838. See Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, The Algerian National Movement, 1830–1900, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1992), vol. 1, p. 19. Another account describes Hussein Pasha at the age of sixty-five. He was short in stature, but his manner had the dignity often associated with command. He wore elegant yet simple clothing. See Alfred Nettement, Histoire de la conquête d'Alger (Paris: Librairie Jacques Lecoffre, 1876), p. 504. M. J. S. Boubée writes: "Hussein Pasha, the last pasha of Algiers, was born in Furla in Asia Minor. He grew up in Constantinople at the school founded by Baron de Tott. He was recruited into the Algiers militia. Omar Pasha brought him into his council and made him director of the state's estates. He retained these duties under Ali V, who placed his trust in him. After Ali's death, Hussein found himself on the steps of the throne, with little remaining before he could ascend it. He was handsome, cunning, and firm in the exercise of power. He also protected privateering. When Lord Exmouth failed to invade Algiers in 1816, he became increasingly arrogant. He ordered the consuls of all countries to pay tribute and considered any country that delayed payment to be at war with the Regency." See M. J. S. Boubée, La conquête de l'Algérie (Paris: Imprimerie Witter Schein, 1847), p. 16

[3] Ammar Bouhouche, The Political History of Algeria from Its Origins to 1962, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1997), p. 90

[4] Ammar Qalil, op. cit., p. 21

[5] Vincent-Yves Boutin was born in Le Loroux-Bottereau in January 1772. See Farid Bennour, French Plans for Algeria, 1792–1830 (Algiers: Kouchkar Foundation, 2007), p. 355

[6] Charles-André Julien, History of North Africa, trans. Mohamed Mzali and Bachir Salama, 2nd ed. (Tunis, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 380–381

[7] According to the cited account, the French consul was present with his colleagues at Dey Hussein's residence on 27 March 1827. The dey asked whether he had received a message from the king of France to resolve the situation. Deval replied: "Your Highness knows very well that the king of France cannot place himself on the same level as the dey of Algiers." Hussein reacted angrily and directed harsh insults at the French king. The consul then left after the dey struck him in the face with the peacock-feather fly-whisk he was holding. See M. J. S. Boubée, op. cit., p. 16

[8] Jamal Fannan, Franco-Algerian Relations, 1790–1830 (Algiers: Museum of the Mujahid Publications, 1999), p. 367

[9] Bassam al-Assali, Algerian Resistance to French Colonialism, 1830–1838, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1986), p. 67

[10] Mohamed Ali Dahesh, The Contemporary Maghreb, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Arab Encyclopedia House, 2014), p. 14

[11] Issa Yazir, French Policy toward Land Ownership in Algeria, 1830–1914, master's thesis in contemporary history, supervised by al-Ghali al-Arabi (Algeria, 2008–2009), p. 6

[12] Boubée, op. cit., p. 16

[13] Mohamed al-Tayyib al-Alawi, Manifestations of Algerian Resistance from 1830 to the November Revolution of 1954, 1st ed. (Constantine: Dar al-Ba'th, 1985), p. 28

[14] Larbi Menouar, History of Algerian Resistance in the Nineteenth Century (Algiers: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 2006), p. 17

[15] Mohamed Zeroual, Algerian-French Relations, 1791–1830 (Algiers: Aleppo Press, 1994), pp. 89–90

[16] Ibid., p. 91

[17] Jamal Qannan, Franco-Algerian Relations, 1790–1830 (Algiers: Museum of the Mujahid Publications, 1999), p. 367

[18] Hanifi Hilali, Algerian-European Relations and the End of the Regency, 1815–1830 (Algiers: Dar al-Huda, 2007), p. 83

[19] De Bourmont, the commander of the French expedition, was born in 1773 and died in 1846. A general under the Empire, he later joined Louis XVIII. He signed the act of surrender and, according to the cited author, was the first to violate its promises to Algerians. See Hamdan ibn Othman Khodja, The Mirror, ed. Mohamed Larbi Zoubiri (Algiers: ANEP, 2005), p. 64

[20] Bassam al-Assali, Algerian Resistance, op. cit., pp. 67–68

[21] Jamal Qannan, Issues and Studies in the Modern and Contemporary History of Algeria (Algiers: National Museum of the Mujahid Publications, 1994), p. 96

[22] Prince Sixte de Bourbon, La dernière conquête du Roi: Alger 1830 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1930), p. 215

[23] M. de Montrond, Histoire de la conquête de l'Algérie de 1830 à 1847 (Paris: E. Marc-Aurel, 1847), vol. 1, p. 30

[24] Prince Sixte de Bourbon, op. cit., p. 219

[25] M. de Montrond, op. cit., p. 40

[26] Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, The Algerian National Movement, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 16

[27] Hamdan ibn Othman Khodja, op. cit., p. 77

[28] Bassam al-Assali, Algerian Resistance, op. cit., p. 73

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[31] Jamal Qannan, op. cit., p. 98

[32] Abdessalam Filali, Algeria: State and Society, 1st ed. (Algiers: al-Wissam al-Arabi, 2013), p. 108

[33] Slimane Qriri, The Development of Revolutionary and Unity-Oriented Tendencies in the Algerian National Movement, 1940–1954, doctoral dissertation in modern and contemporary history, supervised by Youssef Menasria (2010–2011), p. 16

[34] Simon Pfeiffer, Memoirs or a Historical Overview of Algeria, trans. Abou al-Eid Doudou (Algiers: National Publishing Company, 1974), p. 98

[35] De Montrond, op. cit., p. 60

[36] Simon Pfeiffer, op. cit., pp. 98–99

[37] Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, Memoirs of al-Hajj Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, trans. Ahmed Tawfiq al-Madani, 2nd ed. (Algiers: National Publishing Company, 1980), p. 174

[38] Simon Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 99

[39] C. Fallet, Conquête de l'Algérie (Rouen: Mégard et Cie, 1856), p. 54

[40] The Arabic source explains that Mitidja derives from the Arabic word mutawajjih. It describes the Mitidja Plain as a flat, elongated lowland basin surrounded by mountains on most sides and open toward the sea. Its area is given as approximately 130,000 hectares. It extends for roughly 100 kilometers from Oued Nador in the west to Oued Boudouaou in the east. The account discusses the distance between Larbaa, near the foothills of the coastal hills, and the northern edge of the plain. It adds that the plain narrows to about ten kilometers at its eastern and western margins. Major towns include Blida, Kolea, Cherchell, and Boufarik. See Bassam al-Assali, Algerian Resistance to French Colonialism, 1830–1838, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Nafa'is, 1986), p. 83

[41] C. Fallet, op. cit., p. 54

[42] Bassam al-Assali, op. cit., p. 100

[43] Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, op. cit., p. 175

[44] C. Fallet, op. cit., p. 56

[45] Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, The Algerian National Movement, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 18

[46] Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, op. cit., p. 175

[47] C. Fallet, op. cit., p. 56

[48] Ibid., pp. 54–58

[49] Simon Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 100

[50] C. Fallet, op. cit., p. 59

[51] Simon Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 100

[52] Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, The Algerian National Movement, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 20–21

[53] De Vandeuvre, Dépêche télégraphique de Paris, Svend à Metz (Paris: Chevronnais, n.d.), p. 4

[54] Bassam al-Assali, Algerian Resistance, op. cit., pp. 82–83

[55] Joseph Cauvin, L'Algérie (Paris: Tinterlin et Cie, 1859), p. 3

[56] M. de Montrond, op. cit., p. 95

[57] Simon Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 103

[58] M. de Montrond, op. cit., pp. 89–90

[59] Bassam al-Assali, Algerian Resistance, op. cit., p. 83

[60] Ammar Bouhouche, op. cit., p. 100

[61] Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, op. cit., p. 181

[62] Hanifi Hilali, Algerian-European Relations and the End of the Regency, 1815–1830 (Algiers: Dar al-Huda, 2007), pp. 96–97

[63] Bassam al-Assali, Algerian Resistance, op. cit., p. 83

[64] M. de Montrond, op. cit., pp. 89–94

[65] Nacereddine Saidouni, The Financial System of Algeria in the Late Ottoman Period, 1792–1830, 3rd ed. (Algiers: al-Basa'ir al-Jadida, 2012), p. 171

[66] Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, The Algerian National Movement, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 23

[67] M. de Montrond, op. cit., pp. 89–94

[68] Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, op. cit., p. 174

[69] M. de Montrond, op. cit., pp. 89–94

[70] Dely Ibrahim is now situated in the Cheraga district of Algiers Province

[71] Abdallah Cheriet and Mohamed Mubarak al-Mili, A Concise History of Algeria: Political, Cultural, and Social (Algiers: National Book Foundation, 1985), p. 268

[72] Mohamed al-Tayyib al-Alawi, op. cit., p. 29

[73] Bertrand Clauzel was born in Mirepoix in the Ariège department in 1772. He volunteered for military service in 1791 and served in the eastern Pyrenees from 1792 to 1795. In 1830, he replaced de Bourmont as commander of the Army of Africa. He was later promoted to marshal on returning to France. See V. A. Dieuzaide, Histoire de l'Algérie, 1830–1878 (Oran: Imprimerie de l'Association ouvrière Heintz, Chazeau et Cie, 1882), p. 9

[74] Ibid., p. 51

[75] Ibid., p. 9

[76] M. J. B. Flandin, Régence d'Alger: Peut-on la coloniser? Comment? (Paris: Féret, 1833), p. 1

[77] Octave Teissier, Situation économique de la France en 1835 et en 1856 (Paris: Guillaumin et Cie, 1857), p. 5

[78] Hamdan ibn Othman Khodja, op. cit., pp. 275–276

[79] Charles-Robert Ageron, History of Contemporary Algeria, trans. Issa Asfour, 1st ed. (Paris: Oueidat Publications, 1982), p. 21

[80] M. de Montrond, op. cit., pp. 192–200

[81] Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, Lectures, op. cit., pp. 62–63

[82] Nacereddine Saidouni, The Age of Emir Abdelkader of Algeria (Saudi Arabia: Abdulaziz Saud al-Babtain Prize Foundation for Poetic Creativity, 2000), pp. 211–212

[83] Ibid., p. 112

[84] Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, Lectures on Modern Algerian History: The Beginning of the Occupation (Algiers: Alam al-Ma'rifa, 2009), p. 63

[85] Mohamed al-Tayyib al-Alawi, op. cit., p. 30

[86] Abou al-Qasim Saadallah, Lectures, op. cit., p. 97

[87] Mohamed al-Tayyib al-Alawi, op. cit., p. 30

[88] Ahmed al-Sharif al-Zahar, op. cit., p. 181