The Impact of French Policy on Waqf Institutions in Algeria, 1830–1936

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Abstract
Endowments (waqf) in Algeria during the Ottoman era were diverse, reflecting the diversity of donors from most social classes at the time, foremost among them the Ottomans, local inhabitants, and Andalusians. Waqf institutions were diverse in all cities, particularly the major ones. Among the most prominent were the Institution of the Two Holy Mosques, the Institution of the Endowments of the Great Mosque, the Institution of the Muslim Treasury, the Institution of the Endowments of Zawiyas and Shrines, the Institution of the Andalusian Endowments, and other institutions that played several religious, social, economic, and military roles. With the entry of the French occupation into Algeria, it undertook several measures and enacted a series of laws to undermine this multifaceted waqf system because it conflicted with the objectives of the occupation. Therefore, it sought to take control of all institutions and properties in order to achieve several economic, political, and social objectives.
Keywords: Waqf institutions, Algeria, French era, endowments, local inhabitants.

Introduction

Waqf expanded in Algeria during the Ottoman era as a result of encouragement from the general population, particularly some Ottoman rulers who contributed to the proliferation and spread of endowments throughout the cities. Among them was Salah Bey, who ruled the province of Constantine and endowed several real-estate properties for his descendants and for the poor and needy. He also expanded their presence and provided them with immunity and protection, keeping them away from the attention of those seeking to appropriate them and from all forms of confiscation by the Muslim Treasury, which had begun to take properties that had no heirs or properties whose ownership was disputed. He also played a role in exempting the population from taxes. This enabled waqf properties to include lands, farms, houses, shops, and *akwas*, and they subsequently became organized charitable institutions that performed social, economic, religious, and educational functions.

Since its entry into Algerian territory, the French occupation was committed to extending its colonial policy, which encompassed all parts of the country. It seized religious sanctities, including mosques, zawiyas, and schools, restricted the Arabic language and national identity, and confiscated most of the endowments existing in the country. It realized that control over these sacred institutions meant control over the Algerian people. Hence, the issue of Islam and

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its struggle against Muslims emerged, leading to a conflict between an Islamic society committed to its religion and faith and a colonial state employing all means to eliminate the latter and to revive the Christian and Crusading spirit in all regions.

The French administration took control of all real-estate properties, whether immovable or movable, and converted them to serve its own interests. All of this led to numerous changes affecting many aspects of the population's daily life. It followed a legal and legislative arsenal to control waqf institutions, which subsequently imposed a social, cultural, and economic reality different from that which had existed before the arrival of the occupation. The objective was to establish a new model of a colony aimed at regulating the processes of dispossession, ultimately working to register the transfer of property from its owners to settlers arriving from Europe. The French authorities viewed these institutions as the backbone that nourished Algerian society and therefore sought to undermine its foundations by enacting various decrees in order to eliminate it through various methods and means.

First: The Status of Waqf Institutions in Algeria during the Ottoman Era

The Maliki school prevailed in Algeria during the sixteenth century AD. With the arrival of the Ottomans in Algeria, there was coexistence between the Hanafi and Maliki schools. The Hanafi school was the official school of the ruling authority, while the indigenous population retained their Maliki school. This coexistence between the two schools emerged in the fields of judiciary and issuing legal opinions, education, and matters of general concern to the population. Most Algerians were keen to follow the Hanafi school in all their affairs, particularly in the field of waqf, because it offered several facilities compared with the Maliki school. Because of these facilities, Algerians were encouraged to endow their properties according to this school.

This enabled them and their descendants to benefit from them thereafter, even though they were originally followers of the Maliki school. The difference between one endower and another was good intention and wealth (Fouial, 2010). This is confirmed by most documents and texts concerning waqf dating back to the Ottoman era. For example, a man might own a house in which he lived and then wish to perform a charitable act. According to the Maliki school, this act would be considered invalid, whereas according to the Hanafi school, he could continue to enjoy his residence throughout his lifetime, after which the house would be transferred to one of the charitable institutions (Khodja, 2005). Endowments spread throughout all Algerian cities, and their revenues expanded, particularly during the final period of the Ottoman era. This was attributable to the religious commitment of the population and their desire to draw closer to God Almighty by endowing their properties or part of them for the sake of God.

Some may also have endowed their properties in an attempt to escape the arbitrary measures to which the authorities resorted during this period. This was done through the confiscation of lands and properties by the Institution of the Muslim Treasury, which had the right to undertake such actions. No other institution had the right to carry out such confiscations or to increase the value of taxes when the owner had not endowed his property. This was naturally intended to remedy the deficit suffered by the Ottoman state (Saidoun, 1984). However, it is noteworthy in this regard that the treasury did not confiscate women's property; therefore, the Dey and senior officers kept their wealth in women's property. The best way to preserve properties in the absence of children was to purchase the properties and register them in favor of the waqf (Abbad, 2011).

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The Turkish authority maintained it as a school responsible for dealing with local and political issues concerning the inhabitants, Ottoman rulers, and local affairs in the country. Judicial responsibility for endowments was assigned to the Scientific Council, whose members met every Thursday to examine waqf matters. It also included a group of scholars from both the Maliki and Hanafi schools, in addition to a number of officials. From the early years of the occupation of Algeria, the French praised the importance of this body and the ability and competence of Algerian scholars, which led some people from Tunisia and Morocco to consult them regarding their cases (Helaïli, 2008). Waqf varied among the local inhabitants and those who had settled in the country, and some of the indigenous population and rulers contributed to it. These individuals possessed wealth, reputation, and prestige. Among them were the class of pashas and some beys, who occupied positions of rule and authority.

Among them was Hassan Pasha, who established the mosque in the capital in 1795, known as the Ketchaoua Mosque, and appointed the administrator of *Souboul al-Khairat* as its supervisor. This endowment document demonstrates the extent of waqf in Algeria and the generosity and munificence of the endowers and their willingness to spend their wealth for the sake of God (al-Jilali, 1995). Abdi Pasha also contributed to the construction of a congregational mosque and endowed waqf properties for it. Almost every pasha, Dey, or bey who remained in power for a considerable period built mosques and established endowments for them (Allah, 1998). Among them were the Kouloughlis, who came to hold local authority and were responsible for the administrative and economic affairs of the state, as well as the urban population, who engaged in trade and industry.

Most of them were craftsmen from the Andalusian community or Jewish merchants. Among the endowers were also civilians and members of the military. Their motivation was to provide for the poor and needy among the inhabitants of the country or the residents of Mecca and Medina. At times, their motivation was a love of charity, enthusiasm for religion, and the dissemination of knowledge among the people. For some rulers, their concern was their reputation and good remembrance during their lives or after their deaths. Waqf institutions became numerous throughout the country. Among them was the Institution of the Two Holy Mosques, which was considered one of the most important waqf institutions in terms of the number of its endowments and revenues. It ranked first, particularly toward the end of the Ottoman era. Devoulx, who worked for many years with Algerian documents, mentioned that the Institution of the Two Holy Mosques controlled three-quarters of the endowed properties in Algeria (Saidoun, *Algerian Papers*, 2000).

It was followed in second place by the Institution of the Endowments of the Great Mosque, in terms of importance and the number of its endowments. This may primarily be attributed to the role played by this mosque in various aspects of life (Namir, 2001). It was also considered a semi-official institution, as it supervised all endowments related to serving the Hanafi school, including schools, mosques, and employees. It was followed by the Institution of Souboul al-Khairat, which supervised all endowments related to serving the Hanafi school, including schools, mosques, employees, and the poor. It administered nine mosques and paid the salaries of eighty-eight students, and it was managed by a group appointed personally by the pasha (Mansouri, 2011).

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Next came the Institution of Souboul al-Khairat, which supervised all endowments related to serving the Hanafi school, including zawiyas, schools, mosques, and employees, making this institution one of the wealthiest waqf institutions in the city of Algiers. It was ranked third after the Institution of the Endowments of the Two Holy Mosques and the Institution of the Endowments of the Great Mosque (Zahra, 2007). This institution had an impact on the cultural and religious life of Ottoman Algeria, demonstrating the concern of the Turkish and Kouloughli elements with endowing their properties for the public benefit. It was followed by the Institution of the Muslim Treasury, a charitable institution whose activities were limited to managing properties belonging to orphans and absentees and ensuring the state's share of inheritances in accordance with Islamic legal provisions. Thus, the Institution of the Treasury acquired a degree of independence from the waqf institution and became responsible for assisting wayfarers, orphans, the poor, and prisoners, as well as disposing of booty belonging to the state.

It also dealt with matters related to land taxation, ensured the purchase of equipment, supervised the establishment of public facilities such as roads and bridges, and constructed places of worship such as mosques and zawiyas (Saidoun, *The Financial System of Algeria at the End of the Ottoman Era*, 1984). This was followed by the Institution of the Endowments of the Andalusian People, which became one of the important waqf institutions during the Ottoman era. It was no less important than the endowments of saints and sharifs. Despite the modest number of its endowments and their limited returns, it illustrates an important aspect of social life in the city of Algiers. The Institution of the Andalusian Endowments was subsequently strengthened through the establishment of a cultural, educational, and religious complex known as the Zawiya of the Andalusians (Hamouche). This Andalusian association and its numerous endowments continued to exist until the French occupation, which abolished the association and seized its endowments.

Then came the Institution of the Endowments of the Saints and Sharifs, which was concerned with the endowments of saints and marabouts in zawiyas and shrines. The endowments of the marabouts multiplied in the city of Algiers. Likewise, in the other regions of Algeria, the waqf institution assumed responsibility for meeting the needs of those engaged in education, schools, shrines, and zawiyas. It also performed a social role by providing accommodation for the poor, the elderly, and strangers, in addition to protecting fugitives who sought refuge there, including criminals and political figures who had fallen out of favor, and receiving students studying in neighboring mosques (Allah, A., 1998). It was supervised by the representative of the marabouts, and its revenues were allocated to the care and maintenance of the shrines of these saints, whose numbers increased and whose waqf revenues expanded, particularly during the nineteenth century (Saidoun, *The Financial System of Algeria at the End of the Ottoman Era*, 1984).

There were also endowments for public facilities such as roads, springs, irrigation channels, and bridges. These facilities received numerous endowments from both local inhabitants and some Ottoman rulers in order to alleviate hardship for the people, either by providing drinking water or facilitating people's movement. Several properties inside and outside Algeria were endowed to finance public facilities such as roads, aqueducts, irrigation channels, and water conduits. All these facilities benefited from numerous endowments and were managed by administrators and guards known as the trustees of roads, springs, and irrigation channels

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(Saidoun, *Historical Studies in Property, Waqf, and Taxation*, 1986). These facilities were established for religious motives, out of the desire to obtain reward and recompense from God Almighty, as well as the desire to provide water to travelers, especially the poor and needy. These endowments played a role in managing and maintaining roads and springs against natural factors.

Endowments of soldiers and barracks also played an important role in protecting the country from external threats from the West and East. The origin of these endowments goes back to soldiers who advanced through the military ranks. This institution had waqf administrators who supervised endowed properties in the capacity of agents or trustees. They also enjoyed an exemplary status within society. Numerous endowments were allocated to providing assistance to the needy, constructing barracks, and building fortifications and castles (al-Qadir, 1965). We also find the category of Janissary officers, including the ranks of Agha and Bulukbashi, who had priority in occupying the position of agent within the Institutions of the Endowments of the Two Holy Mosques. Some employees and groups of Janissary soldiers were appointed by the authority of the pasha, the *Diwan*, and the beys in the capacity of agents.

Second: The Status of Waqf Institutions in Algeria during the French Era

Since entering Algeria, the French occupation worked to usurp the national identity and the land. It was keen to employ all means and methods to inventory and register individual properties in Algeria. It then resorted to official legislative methods such as decisions, decrees, and laws requiring real-estate properties to be subjected to the laws governing property transactions. This was considered the most effective method for achieving its objectives, as no land or waqf was left without these laws being applied to it. However, the French administration was not satisfied with merely seizing the lands; it wanted to incorporate them into the state domain, but Islamic law prohibited this (Miyassi, Issue 1 – First Semester – 2001). Islamic endowments were therefore among the first institutions that French colonialism sought to control.

The occupation also destroyed as many land ownership documents and waqf deeds as it could, and proceeded to confiscate and nationalize lands and transfer their ownership through a series of publications, legislation, and implementing measures, with the aim of taking control of the properties of waqf institutions. The French authorities considered these institutions to be an obstacle to the colonial policy aimed at seizing real-estate properties, and this pretext was used to develop the areas that had been brought under their control by force of arms and transformed into a genuine colony. In the view of the occupation authorities, the waqf system was incompatible with the economic principles underlying the French presence. This was acknowledged by some of them, as stated by al-Madani: “We seized private properties without paying any compensation whatsoever, not even a franc. We forced them to pay the expenses of demolishing them, just as we forced them to pay the expenses of demolishing a mosque. We violated, without any regard, the sanctity of shrines, zawiyas, and mosques, as well as private houses that are considered sacred by Muslims” (Madani, 92–93).

Waqf itself constituted an administrative apparatus and an effective economic, social, and cultural means in Algeria. This prompted the leaders of the French army to monitor, liquidate, and seize waqf institutions, considering them one of the obstacles hindering the development of the areas under occupation. It was not long before, in some Algerian cities, they issued laws

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and decrees facilitating the liquidation of endowments, which they viewed as a system incompatible with their colonial project. They also regarded them as one of the factors preserving the cohesion of Algerian society and maintaining its traditional framework, enabling it to resist colonial plans aimed at eliminating its economic resources, social foundations, and cultural and spiritual resistance. France therefore embarked on its colonial project aimed at destroying the foundations of the Algerian state (al-Mahdi).

The occupation became convinced that the waqf institutions in the country had become one of the difficult issues restricting its colonial policy and conflicting with the economic principles upon which it was based. France therefore proceeded to seize Islamic endowments, which had been the primary source of funding for various religious, educational, social, and charitable activities in Algeria, despite its pledge on July 4, 1830, to respect the Islamic religion, its endowments, and its institutions (Bellah, 2006). As a result of these new measures undertaken by the French authorities, the poor received only part of the revenues of these institutions, while the remainder was paid into the State Property Fund. Such a measure changed the intended destination of those endowments and constituted a violation of human rights.

These unjust and immoral measures also caused despair among the inhabitants of the Regency and made them resent Europeans in general (Khodja, 2005). Their objective was to liquidate waqf institutions and bring waqf properties within the scope of commercial transactions and real-estate property so that Europeans could easily acquire them and incorporate them into their own real-estate holdings. The French occupation inventoried agricultural waqf lands, which were estimated at 2 million hectares, equivalent to 66% of the total real-estate and agricultural endowments, with their revenues estimated at 40 million francs in 1830 (Kharfi). The French administration began supervising those whose revenues were easy to manage, thereby obtaining enormous sums of money within a short period of time (Allah, A., *The Cultural History of Algeria*, 1998). The authorities appointed new agents whom they trusted and also sought to distance individuals associated with the Ottoman era. They instructed them to retain the financial funds containing waqf revenues on the condition that they did not spend from them. They also established an office to monitor and supervise every property.

The occupation authorities knew that waqf institutions were the primary source of support for scholars, imams, and students. They therefore attempted by every means and method to exert pressure on Muslims through control over the waqf and its expenditures. However, the seizure and confiscation operations carried out by the administration left various social and economic effects that negatively affected Algerians, particularly with regard to targeting their properties, including places of worship, shops, and schools. Colonialism was aware of the role played by endowments in building nations and preserving the unity of Algerian society through its cultural, social, and economic institutions, which worked to develop society in all its dimensions at that time.

Third: French Occupation Projects to Eliminate Waqf Institutions in Algeria

The French occupation was keen to enact a set of decisions and provisions in order to seize endowments, which enabled the administration to reduce their number from the beginning of its entry into the principal cities. Among the most important of these decisions and decrees are the following:

1. De Bourmont Decree of September 8, 1830:

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This was the first French decision concerning the issue of endowments and defining state ownership. It was among the most important laws and decisions that contributed to the seizure of Ottoman properties and their incorporation into the Domain Administration established during the time of De Bourmont. It provided for the seizure of the properties of Turkish families (Bouaziz, *The Policy of Colonial Domination and the National Movement, 1830–1954*, 2007). This arbitrary decision specified a particular period for the process of producing and proving ownership, and stipulated that the authorities would punish anyone who challenged them without delay. It was based on the French government's claimed right to administer endowments by replacing the Algerian government in managing the affairs of the country. In practice, this process was carried out for the benefit of the French government, which plundered waqf properties and spent their revenues for purposes other than those for which they had been endowed.

The decision confirmed that all individuals under whose control these properties fell had to come forward, including rulers and senior officials, whether inside or outside the country. Among them was Hussein Pasha, who had become an exile, as well as some ministers and Janissaries who had reached Anatolia. They were required, within three days, to submit statements containing the nature, condition, and quantity of the properties in their possession, the amount of income derived from them or the rent generated by them, and finally the date of the last payment. In order to attract certain individuals, the official decision promised that anyone who informed General Clauzel and his associates of the existence of property that its owner had not declared would receive half of the fine imposed by Clauzel on the concealed owner. All these unjust fines were deposited into the French army fund (Allah, A., *The Algerian National Movement, 1830–1900*, 1992).

De Bourmont did not remain long before issuing a second decision by which he granted himself freedom to dispose of real-estate properties in all Algerian cities. This included most transactions, such as leasing, exchange, and other transactions, on the assumption that the French government had authorized him to conduct such transactions, that it had become primarily responsible for waqf properties, and that it was responsible for them and for distributing their revenues to the beneficiaries. Unfortunately, however, this operation was not carried out for the benefit of the parties for whom these lands and properties had been endowed, but rather for the benefit of the French government (Remoul, 2004).

2. Decree of December 7, 1830:

Clauzel issued a decision requesting that muftis and judges submit their accounts concerning endowments, as well as their registers and documents, to the Director of the Domain Administration. He also threatened violators with severe punishment and promised them that the Domain Administration would pay them from the waqf accounts whatever they needed on a monthly basis (Allah, A., *The Algerian National Movement, 1830–1900*, 1992). However, he retained the agents who had been responsible for collecting their revenues and delivering them to Mr. Girardin, who had been appointed director of the State Property Administration and selected for this position because he was proficient in Arabic. Given the importance of this position, civil officials were assigned to work alongside him and assist him in this function (al-Salabi, 1979). This decision was accompanied by a statement containing the nature, condition, and quantity of the properties in their possession, the amount of income derived from them or

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the rent generated by them, and finally the date of the last payment. In order to attract certain individuals, the official decision promised that anyone who informed General Clauzel and his associates of the existence of property that its owner had not declared would receive half of the fine imposed by Clauzel on the concealed owner. All these unjust fines were deposited into the French army fund.

Article 4 of this decree also required those responsible for administering the endowments to submit the annual contracts to the Director of State Property, together with the relevant documents and a list of the properties with the highest revenues and the amounts of state rents. According to the investigation into endowments conducted by some French officials in 1936, the number of waqf properties reached 1,499 properties. During this period, the French disposed of 188 buildings, some of which were used for their administrative services while others were demolished (Mansouri, F., 2008). This decision was fully implemented in the cities of Oran and Annaba, whereas it was implemented only partially in the city of Algiers. The authorities proceeded to seize and transfer endowments to several entities. The endowments of springs were transferred to French engineers, and the military endowments were taken on the grounds that they were Ottoman endowments and that their remaining in the hands of the local population would encourage them to revolt. As for the endowments of roads, they were transferred to the Bridges Department on the grounds that the trustees were weak and incapable of performing this role (Remoul, 2004).

Religious figures and some notables considered this an act contrary to the provisions of Islamic law and inconsistent with the agreements stipulated in the aforementioned Treaty of Capitulation. Among them were the two muftis, Muhammad ibn Mahmoud ibn al-Annābi and Ibn al-Kababti, who had previously opposed interference with endowments, as well as Hamdan Khodja and Boudharba, who recognized the danger of this decree after the civil administrator Pichon seized 81 endowments, including 55 belonging to the Two Holy Mosques and 11 belonging to the Great Mosque, in addition to some endowments allocated to public facilities such as roads and springs (Saidoun, *Historical Studies in Property, Waqf, and Taxation*, 1986).

3. Decree of October 25, 1832:

The Director-General of State Property, Mr. Girardin, submitted a general plan for the organization of endowments to the Civil Intendant. This plan received the support of Panti-Dubois, which prompted Mr. Blandel to accept and develop it so that it took the form of a detailed report on religious institutions at the end of 1834. The African Commission, the body responsible for examining the situation in Algeria, evaluated it at the beginning of 1835. Thus, the French administration resorted to taking control of endowments through their administration and management (Qenane, November 2020, Issue 6).

4. Decree of March 23, 1843:

This decision was ordered by the French military authorities in Algeria through the Minister of War, the Duke of Malakoff, who instructed the authorities of the French occupation to incorporate the expenditures and revenues of waqf and religious institutions into the colonial budget. It also defined the lands to which the legislative provisions would apply, particularly those relating to expropriation, which would make settlement at the expense of the tribes a legally sanctioned act (al-Houari, 1983). The issuance of the decision in March 1843 was essentially a challenge to the authority of the Mufti and the administration representing the local

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population and an open act of resistance to government orders. It also incorporated the French administration in Algeria into the general French regulations (Allah, A., *The Algerian National Movement, 1830–1900*, 1992).

Mustafa al-Kababti opposed this at the time. This decision constituted a challenge to the will of the Mufti and the will of those whom he represented among the local population. Accordingly, the French administration in Algeria seized the opportunity and subjected the endowments and employees of the Great Mosque to general French regulations and seized the archives of the Great Mosque. This was pursuant to a decision issued on June 4, 1843, which ordered the incorporation of the endowments of the Great Mosque into the Property Department of the occupation authorities. The Boujo decision stipulated that all buildings whose revenues belonged to the Great Mosque and its employees would remain under the control of the Colonial State Property Department and that their revenues would be incorporated into the colonial budget. All charitable and religious institutions belonging to the endowments were also incorporated, including mosques, particularly the major ones, zawiyas, Qur'anic schools, and houses. Some specialists in this field estimated that the financial value of the endowments in the capital during the early years of the occupation exceeded forty million gold francs. As a result of this colonial policy, the colonial authorities closed and demolished numerous mosques in the capital (Amoura, 2009).

5. Decree of October 1, 1843:

This decision definitively incorporated all waqf properties belonging to mosques, zawiyas, marabouts, religious institutions, shrines, and their associated cemeteries into the properties of the colonists and established an administration to manage them. It was not long before the functions of this administration were reduced, which allowed Europeans to seize many waqf lands that constituted half of the agricultural lands located on the outskirts of the major Algerian cities. Consequently, endowments declined and their revenues diminished, reaching no more than 293 endowments in 1843, including 125 houses, 39 shops, 3 bakeries, 19 gardens, and 107 public facilities, whereas before the occupation they had been estimated at 550 endowments (Saidoun, *Studies and Research in the History of Algeria (The Ottoman Era)*, 1984). Under this decision, the occupation authorities succeeded in incorporating the revenues of the waqf institutions that had fallen under their control into the general budget. These measures also enabled the French State Property Administration to continue managing waqf institutions in Algeria.

6. Decree of October 1, 1844:

This decree explicitly stipulated that the waqf no longer enjoyed immunity and that, as a result of this decision, it became subject to the provisions governing transactions involving real-estate properties. This allowed Europeans to seize many waqf lands that constituted half of the agricultural lands located on the outskirts of the major Algerian cities (Saidoun, *Historical Studies in Property, Waqf, and Taxation*, 1986). This law sought to introduce French law into real-estate transactions in order to create new mechanisms for transferring real-estate ownership from Algerians to Europeans. Under this law, the legality of purchasing land through the previous methods was abolished, along with all issues and disputes resulting from the transfer of land between 1830 and 1844 (Remoul, 2004).

7. Decree of July 1, 1846:

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This decision required every indigenous citizen to possess title deeds and used these documents as the basis for determining ownership. Lands without title deeds were attributed to the state and transferred to state ownership, while those for which no one could prove ownership were also transformed into state property and handed over to the French occupation. The measure also affected uncultivated lands, on the assumption that they had no owners, while lands without title deeds were to be placed under the control of the local administration in Algeria. The task of examining these deeds was assigned, pursuant to an order issued in 1846, to a commission at the level of the Governor-Generalship that did not include a single representative of the population primarily affected by this measure (Qenane, *Issues and Studies in the Modern and Contemporary History of Algeria*, 1994). Real-estate properties were taken from the indigenous population for the benefit of the occupier, and under this measure 132,000 hectares were seized, on which 27 settler villages were established in the Mitidja and coastal regions (Bouaziz, *The Policy of Colonial Domination and the National Movement, 1830–1954*, 2007).

8- Decree of June 16, 1851

This law determined land ownership in Algeria and recognized the rights of landowners and their obligations toward the occupation. It claimed to refrain from defining these obligations, particularly in areas inhabited by tribes. However, this law included strict conditions concerning these obligations. It also provided for the expansion of the concept of the domain and the expropriation of all real-estate properties, including waqf properties, for the sake of public utility. For its part, the occupation administration emptied the customary laws governing real estate in Algeria of their substance, and exerted pressure on the tribes by gathering them in specific areas and recognizing ownership therein on the condition that they relinquish the communal lands they did not need (Zoubiri, 1984). Thus, this decision brought the process of freely taking land from the local inhabitants back to the forefront in order to once again embody the idea of exploitation and settlement in Algeria. It is considered the first law to distinguish between the private domain and the public domain, in the service of the colonists. This law therefore included the principle of the alienability of the state's private property, into which a large amount of wealth was incorporated, and subsequently transferred to the colonists.

9- Decree of December 5, 1857

This decision aimed to appoint a charitable committee entrusted with the administration of waqf properties. It was composed of ten members: the two muftis, who were to be scholars or jurists, in addition to eight prominent figures from the country, selected by the municipality and confirmed in their positions by the governor. One of the French officials was appointed as a royal commissioner to this committee and was required to be among those who knew Arabic so that he could oversee all its affairs. His task was to inspect the central treasury every six months. He was also ordered to prepare three copies of the revenues and expenditures, which he would sign alongside the administration, and the copies would be sent to the governor, the Civil Intendant, and the mayor. The purpose of establishing this office was to compensate for the damage inflicted by the French state on the Algerians following the confiscation of waqf properties. However, the French motivation was political, namely to deprive Muslims of weapons and money (Allah, A., *The Algerian National Movement 1830–1900*, 1992).

Hamdan Khodja states that the reason French officials advised the French government to seize these institutions was, first, to obtain a means through which they could acquire immense wealth

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as quickly as possible, even at the expense of humanity and the honor of the nation; and, second, to influence people and encourage France to retain the Regency for itself. They did so by showing it that the revenues were substantial, without concern for whether those rights were legitimate or illegitimate (Khodja, 2005).

Effects of French Projects on Waqf Institutions in Algeria

The occupation's objective in confiscating properties was its fear that Muslims would retain their real-estate properties, which provided them with considerable revenues that could make them economically independent of the occupiers, or that they might use these funds to mobilize the local inhabitants with weapons. The occupation also worked to distance the population from scholars, muftis, and religious men, who had become opponents of the French presence and constituted a force that the French had not taken into account. The objective of the colonial land policy from the outset in confiscating waqf real-estate properties was to subject the Algerian land system to French law. During Clauzel's administration, the policy of free and official settlement became active, as Clauzel encouraged this process and began distributing land freely to settlers in order to encourage settlement in Algeria (Bouaziz, *The Policy of Colonial Domination and the National Movement 1830–1954*, 2007).

The French authorities worked to destroy religious, waqf, and cultural institutions and to establish French laws. From the very beginning, the occupation worked to erase the national identity by replacing the existing system in Algeria, which was based on Islamic Sharia and custom and tradition, with an arsenal of oppressive French laws and decrees issued directly from Paris. These measures aimed to establish their presence in Algeria by seizing the real-estate properties of Algerians in order to encourage the French to migrate from France to Algeria and settle there, by providing them with facilities, guarantees, and resources. Consequently, waqf properties were brought within the provisions governing private transactions, leading to the almost complete liquidation of the waqf institution (Kanaza, 2006).

The French did not content themselves with taking real-estate properties from the local inhabitants without right; rather, they worked to alter the features of Islamic society in order to consolidate their roots and make Algeria French. They did so by combating the Islamic faith and eliminating its various institutions. They were particularly concerned with confiscating Islamic waqf properties, followed by reducing the role of the Islamic judiciary and obliging it to follow French laws. As a result, these French laws concerning waqf properties of all types had devastating effects on Algerian society in all its social groups, because waqf constituted the principal source and financier of all areas of economic, social, cultural, and religious life.

1- Cultural and Religious Effects

This field was subjected to a fierce attack by French colonialism through various methods and means, as it was considered an obstacle to achieving the objectives of French colonialism. It began by officially and extensively violating the sanctity of mosques. The occupation then began the process of keeping Algerians ignorant by confiscating waqf properties dedicated to religious institutions, which provided the funds necessary to finance education, various religious activities, and those responsible for them. As a result of these measures, scholarly life came to a standstill, and mosques, schools, and zawiyas became vacant, while some religious figures became employees of the French state and were paid fixed salaries. In the city of Algiers, which lost dozens of mosques and zawiyas, shrines were desecrated and cemeteries were

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removed, while Qur'anic schools and zawiyas, together with their associated properties, were closed on the pretext that their trustees had links with the revolts (Bouaziz, *With the History of Algeria in Conferences*, 1999).

A- Liquidation of Waqf Institutions

The French administration began supervising waqf institutions in all cities. This included the endowments of Mecca and Medina, the endowments of the Great Mosque, the Andalusian endowments, the endowments of the Muslim Treasury Institution, and the endowments of the Souboul al-Khairat Institution directly, because the revenues of these institutions generated substantial returns. As for mosques, zawiyas, and domes, they were entrusted to temporary Muslim agents, in order to silence the group of scholars and marabouts, and because the revenues of these endowments were relatively low compared with the revenues of the general endowments. To ensure the success of this policy, it imposed numerous decisions and decrees aimed at seizing and confiscating properties and easily stripping their owners of them. The Institution of the Endowments of the Two Holy Mosques, whose waqf properties numbered 1,585 in 1830, had only 952 waqf properties remaining in 1835. The remainder were demolished and destroyed, while some were converted into public shops and public administrations, and others were turned into temples and churches (Saidoun, *Studies and Research in the History of Algeria (the Ottoman Era)*, 1984).

The confiscation of waqf properties and the restrictions imposed upon them had a profound negative impact on Algerian society because they diverted many religious institutions and mosques and their associated facilities from their actual functions. They were transformed into churches, barracks, weapons depots, and accommodation centers for the French army, in addition to those that were demolished under various pretexts. The occupation also deliberately killed teachers of the Arabic language and sought to prevent the opening of schools and Qur'anic schools, while freezing and demolishing mosques and zawiyas.

B- Elimination of Religious Institutions

Many religious institutions in Algeria were directly demolished and destroyed during the French occupation, and their contents were seized. For example, the Sidi Mosque in Algiers was ordered to be seized with all its contents, while some institutions were converted into churches, such as the Casbah Mosque and the Ketchaoua Mosque. Others were transformed into weapons depots and hospitals, such as the Great Mosque of Muhammad al-Kabir, Sidi al-Houari Mosque, and Hasan Pasha Mosque in Oran. Some mosques were converted into military barracks, such as Sidi Ammar al-Tunsi Mosque and Ali Khodja Mosque. Finally, some mosques were converted into health centers and pharmacies, while some religious and educational institutions were prevented from performing their functions and remained exposed to natural elements without restoration or repair.

The religious institutions of Béjaïa were also affected from the beginning of its occupation, as mosques and zawiyas were destroyed and demolished, and some were converted to military purposes. Among the mosques and zawiyas converted to such purposes were the Sidi al-Tawati Zawiya, Lalla Fatma Zawiya, which was converted into accommodation for the guards, and Sidi Ahmed al-Najjar Zawiya, which became a barracks for the French army (Allah, A., *The Algerian National Movement 1830–1900*, 1992). Waqf properties in Algeria had served as the principal support that provided scholars and their students with livelihoods, wages,

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accommodation, and the maintenance of scholarly institutions, including schools, zawiyas, mosques, Qur'anic schools, and prayer rooms. With the collapse of waqf properties and the displacement of their owners and the agents responsible for administering them, the basic infrastructure of culture and education in all Algerian cities was weakened.

The French administration destroyed religious institutions of various kinds, including mosques, which held a prominent place in the hearts of Algerians in particular and Muslims in general. It subjected them to various forms of destruction. In this regard, the German traveler Moritz Wagner expressed this reality most clearly, as he visited Algeria twice at the beginning of the French occupation. He stated that the colonial authorities had demolished many mosques in order to replace them with new structures used for military and civil purposes. A report by the French colonial theorist "Deli Mon" also stated that the Algerian capital contained 15 large mosques, 3 small mosques, and hundreds of prayer rooms before 1830, all of which were demolished by the colonial authorities immediately after their entry into Algerian territory (Al-Miloud, 2009, No. 2).

Among the mosques affected by the occupation was the Sidi Mosque, which was demolished by order of General Clauzel based on a deception devised by the Jews, namely that this mosque contained the Dey's treasures. This resulted from their knowledge of this general's greed for possessing the wealth of others without effort. In addition, the mosque was distinguished by its highly refined architecture and expensive contents, as it contained columns made of rare marble, enormous doors, and walls covered with Chinese porcelain imported from Spain, as well as beams made of Kersana wood from Fez, with the permission of the Sultan of Morocco, who agreed to its export only with difficulty. The cost of demolition did not exceed 10,000 francs (Khodja, 2005).

The occupation also proceeded to demolish educational institutions so that there would be no institution through which waqf revenues, whether in cash or real estate, could be spent. Subsequently, a series of decisions were issued to seize them. As stated in the decision of the Minister of War in 1843, the expenses and revenues of religious institutions were to be incorporated into the colonial budget. This was followed by a series of proclamations carrying the same meaning. The authorities also sought to distance scholars and muftis from the local inhabitants so that they would not become a cause for distancing them from French policy. Thus, the mufti of the capital, Mustafa ibn al-Kababti, and Sheikh Muhammad al-Annābi were exiled to the East. The French government claimed that it had lost the waqf deeds and that their registers had disappeared (Al-Jilali, 1995). The French colonial authorities monopolized educational institutions such as mosques and libraries and exercised absolute and direct control over their affairs. They became the ones who selected those responsible for these functions (Allah, A., *Wild Ideas*, 1986).

C- Pursuing a Policy of Keeping the Population Ignorant

During the French occupation, religious institutions in Algeria were subjected to suppression and restriction through various methods and forms. Many of them were demolished and destroyed and converted into civil centers serving the occupier. The authorities also sought to liquidate the waqf properties that had contributed significantly to educating and cultivating the local inhabitants. Many imams and sheikhs were subjected to restrictions and exile outside the country, and their cultural activities were brought to an end. Strict and permanent surveillance

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was imposed upon them and their children, and they were displaced to remote areas within the country. Some of them were forced to engage in espionage on behalf of the colonial police services. Waqf properties that generated the funds necessary to finance religious activities were also confiscated (Bouaziz, *The Policy of Colonial Domination and the National Movement 1830–1954*, 2007).

The occupier feared that education would lead Algeria to learn about the conditions of the world, resulting in the emergence of groups and parties demanding political rights. Thus, the teaching of the Arabic language remained a clandestine activity carried out by Algerians in their homes in the cities. During his visit to Algeria in 1901, the Egyptian leader Muhammad Farid described the deplorable situation experienced by Algerian society, stating: "The state of education in Algeria is very bad, and if the situation continues in this manner, the French language will replace the Arabic language in all transactions. Indeed, perhaps the Arabic language will not be taught at all, for the government seeks to preserve it neither does it allow the local inhabitants to establish associations to open schools. The French language has become the language of communication in the capitals, such as Oran, Constantine, Annaba, and others" (Al-Khatib, 1985).

Among the Qur'anic schools that France fought was the Qashash School, which was famous for the sciences it taught and was demolished along with the mosque to which it was attached. The school of the Great Mosque was also converted into a bathhouse operated by one of the colonists. The Andalusian School was likewise destroyed, as were the School of Demolition and Destruction and the school of the Sidi Maryam Mosque, which suffered the same fate as the mosque. The Khayr al-Din School was completely destroyed, as was the school of the Sidi Abd al-Rahman al-Tha'alibi Mosque, which was also demolished (Allah, A., *The Algerian National Movement 1830–1900*, 1992). Mosques and zawiyas were also demolished. The capital had a large number of mosques, prayer halls, Qur'anic schools, and zawiyas, but by 1862 only 9 large mosques, 19 mosques, 15 Qur'anic schools, and 5 zawiyas remained. In Constantine, the number of schools declined from 90 primary schools in 1836 to 30 schools, while the number of higher-education students during the same period declined from 700 to only 60 students (Bellah, 2006).

The occupation sought to erase the Algerian identity from existence by eliminating its fundamental components, namely Islam, Arabness, and the national identity. It fiercely fought Arab culture and sought to instill in the minds of the local inhabitants the idea that Arabic was a foreign language whose teaching in educational institutions was prohibited except with authorization from the French administration. It also sought to distort the history of Algeria and even cast doubt on its existence. French colonialism fought all the fundamental components of Algerian society at the time by combating its religious and national culture. The administration attempted to convince Algerians of Christian civilization and that Islam was a religion of fanaticism, whereas Christianity was a religion of tolerance (Mustafa, 1983).

2- Social Effects

Algerian society suffered greatly from the policy pursued by the French occupation toward the local inhabitants after the French administration succeeded in imposing various pieces of legislation affecting all aspects of this society's life, including its social and cultural conditions. These laws contributed significantly to creating disorder within Muslim society and to

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dismantling its social and cultural structure, which had negative repercussions upon it. Several effects consequently became evident in Algerian society, the most important of which include:

A- Deterioration of the Living Conditions of Algerians

This resulted from the decisions issued by the French occupier concerning the confiscation of waqf properties, particularly agricultural lands, which constituted a source of livelihood for most of the population. The colonizer pursued a policy of forcibly usurping real-estate properties from their owners and distributing them to the colonists. This occurred in many cities, particularly Algiers and major cities such as Constantine, Béjaïa, Annaba, and Oran, where settlement was intensified. The local inhabitants were forced to move to inland mountainous regions, and consequently most of the population lost their sources of livelihood. All these arbitrary French practices led Algerian society to cease establishing new waqfs because they knew that they would not benefit from them and that the sole beneficiary would be the occupation.

Poverty spread throughout Algerian society due to several factors, including the continued seizure of fertile lands by the colonists, the reduction of agricultural and pastoral lands, as well as a 20% decline in grain production. This occurred alongside the doubling of the population on the European side and the allocation of areas for vineyards and grain cultivation (Daha, 2006). The objective of the colonial administration was to create a poor class of Algerians who would contribute their labor and physical strength to the development of the capitalist economy. It deprived many poor families who had received charitable assistance from the various waqf institutions. Even the charitable offices established by France were merely formal institutions and did not direct funds toward the bodies responsible for waqf. According to French procedures, the poor received only part of the revenues of these institutions, while the remainder was paid into the State Property Fund. This procedure changed the character of waqf and constituted a violation of human rights. These unjust and immoral measures brought despair to the inhabitants of the Regency (Khodja, 2005).

The occupation forced the population to pay taxes in cash instead of grain. These measures resulted in a doubling of what the peasants owned, while the warehouses became empty. Thus, the population became unable to confront drought and consequently found themselves without shelter, forcing them to sell whatever they possessed. They even sold their clothing and tents. The occupation adopted a policy of plunder, looting, and impoverishment as a permanent instrument at its disposal to exhaust the people, undermine their existence, and reduce them to the status of animals, had it not been for their faith and culture, which protected them from this painful fate. However, in 1867, we can observe the extent of the devastation to which the country had been reduced as a result of the spread of severe famines, which led to the death of half a million of the local inhabitants, impoverished many regions, and left most of the lands uncultivated (Madani, pp. 92–93).

Even where fertile lands existed, the concentration of the population in them was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of all inhabitants through agricultural production, which caused famine among needy people who were unable to provide their daily food. Since 1863, a radical agricultural transformation had taken place in Algeria pursuant to the Senatus-Consult, which destroyed the tribes' property that had been taken from them by force and coercion. In addition, Constantine, like the entire national territory, experienced the spread of famine, and the

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Algerian tribes suffered extremely severe hardship as a result of these crises (Bouaziz, *The Policy of Colonial Domination and the National Movement 1830–1954*, 2007). Poverty forced the local inhabitants to work for the colonists for meager wages. What is particularly noteworthy is that the occupation forcibly took agricultural lands from the indigenous peasants and then, as a result of poverty, forced them to work as farmers on those very lands. The French authorities also issued laws opening the way for the export of agricultural products, such as grains and fruits, to France, while the local inhabitants were dying of hunger and poverty.

B- Spread of Diseases and Epidemics

While Europeans were coming to Algeria from all cities, particularly vagrants, criminals, and fugitives from justice, Algerians were migrating from their cities, especially from the capital. The city of Algiers lost more than two-thirds of its population ten years after the occupation, and the same was true of some cities such as Oran, Béjaïa, Annaba, and Tlemcen. This migration occurred as a result of the new situation created by the occupation, which confiscated the waqf properties that had supported a large segment of the population, while the inhabitants were unable to resist. Poverty began to spread throughout society, particularly in the cities where the occupation had established itself. The famine of 1867 and the crises that followed it caused the death of tens of thousands of Algerian families. Between 1869 and 1870, locusts spread extensively, further increasing the misery of the local inhabitants. Deadly epidemics also spread, making it difficult to estimate the number of deaths and victims (Farkous, 2001).

Afterward, drought occurred, locust attacks took place, numerous epidemics appeared, and provisions and food became scarce. The inhabitants of the oases and the High Plateaus were forced to migrate toward the Tell region in the hope of finding something to satisfy their hunger. The French authorities also gathered and concentrated them in large shelters in Miliana, with at least a certain number of people, as well as in Chlef and Relizane. Half a million people fell victim to this famine, while some raised the number to four or five million people (Bouaziz, *The Policy of Colonial Domination and the National Movement 1830–1954*, 2007). Between 1867 and the spring of 1868, Algeria experienced a famine that affected all the tribes, particularly children and the elderly, and nearly led to the extinction of Algerian society. Djilali Sari states in this regard: “Crowds of silent, emaciated, and naked people advanced with difficulty, most of them heading toward the open graves. From the beginning of winter, corpses were scattered in the bushes and along the roads, accumulating inside cities and villages. Entire regions were almost wiped out, and population groups lost large proportions of their inhabitants, such as Miliana and Ténès... Biskra was also evacuated at the beginning of the summer of 1867, while Mascara broke all records” (Sari, 2008).

Tuberculosis also spread terribly throughout the countryside, villages, and urban dwellings. One specialized administrative physician stated in this regard: “The Algerian territory, with its ten million inhabitants, contains the same number of people suffering from tuberculosis as France, with its forty million inhabitants. The number of people suffering from this disease in Algeria is 400,000, whereas France has 900 health dispensaries for tuberculosis, while in Algeria there are only 28” (Madani, p. 134).

3- Economic Effects

After the occupation became established in Algeria, it succeeded in plundering lands from their owners and began driving the local inhabitants away from the main cities toward the desert and

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mountains. It confiscated their livelihoods and means of subsistence in order to achieve genuine settlement extending across time and space, which would subsequently enable it to extend its military, political, civilizational, and cultural influence and sovereignty. It also worked to dismantle the structure of Algerian society and was determined to destroy its network of social relations by fragmenting the unity of society through a series of decisions and decrees that had a broad impact on implementing its repressive policy toward the local inhabitants.

A- Confiscation of Lands

The occupation's intention from the moment it entered Algeria was to transfer real-estate ownership from Algerians to colonists, who enjoyed a large share of privileges that the occupation administration began granting them after seizing waqf properties under the pretext of organizing and preserving them. It resorted to several methods to seize what it wanted, either by imposing arbitrary laws or by taking the properties by force from the local inhabitants and distributing them among the colonists, with the aim of creating suitable conditions for the settlement of Europeans and attempting thereby to connect the European population to the land (Kherchi, 2009). Through the laws enacted by the French administration concerning land in all Algerian cities, the tribal system upon which Algerian social organization had been based was abolished. The local inhabitants were dispersed into douars as a result of determining the lands that had been usurped and making part of them available for sale. Thus, the individual became defenseless and exposed to unjust French laws.

The Orientalist researcher Alexis de Tocqueville states in his work on the history of Algeria during the French occupation: “Many private properties were plundered, and a number of titles that had been delivered to us as evidence were distorted and destroyed and never returned to their owners. In the areas surrounding Algiers itself, fertile land was taken from the Arabs and given to Europeans. Because of their inability or unwillingness to cultivate it, they leased it back to the very Arabs who thus became merely farmers on lands that had belonged to their fathers. We accepted conditions that we did not respect and promised compensation that we did not pay, leaving our honor to suffer even more than these local inhabitants (Algerians). We have not merely taken much land from its former owners up to the present time; we have also planted in the minds of the Algerians this strange idea that land ownership and the status of its inhabitants represent, for us, unresolved questions to be settled according to need and in a manner unknown to them” (Tocqueville, 2008).

French settlement expanded and the settlers gained control over all sectors in Algeria, while the structure of the Algerian economy was distorted and integrated into the French economy. Algerians were also impoverished and their living standards fell to among the lowest levels in the world as a result of the destruction of farmers' properties. Wages declined, and the confiscation of their lands transformed them from landowners into workers, with wages ranging between half a franc and one and a half francs for 14 hours of daily work (Bellah, 2006). Landowners were transformed into slaves under the new owners as a result of the dismantling and disappearance of the interests that had linked members of the tribe. At the same time, the major rural families declined, and a local aristocracy emerged and was integrated into political relations, only to be subsequently destroyed.

The policy of free and official settlement became active, and there was a determination to transform the Mitidja Plain and its villages into a genuine homeland for European immigrants

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arriving from France and Europe. Numerous groups arrived, and Clauzel established the village of Boufarik west of Algiers and began distributing land, machinery, and animals free of charge to the new European settlers in order to encourage them to settle, remain on their lands, invest in them, and exploit them. Despite all these operations and plans, this policy did not achieve great success, and Bugeaud completed what General Clauzel had begun (Bouaziz, *The Policy of Colonial Domination and the National Movement 1830–1954*, 2007). Thus, French settlement expanded within the country, and the colonists extended their control over all the fertile agricultural lands in Algeria, particularly the Mitidja Plain, the Ghriss Plain, and other *haouchs* and *jnans*. The occupation's objective was to integrate the Algerian economy into the French economy, and the local inhabitants became farmers as a result of the destruction of their properties and their distribution among the occupation's soldiers.

The occupation also sought to subject the real-estate ownership system to new laws serving the interests of the colonists by enabling them to acquire the most fertile lands through surveying them and placing their administration under the control of the occupation administration. Subsequently, various types of property were offered for sale to certain parties. This also occurred with waqf properties, which were incorporated into the real-estate ownership system within the framework of buying and selling and became subject to French law. Consequently, in this situation, it was sufficient for one member of the tribe to claim his share of the land for the property to be transformed from collective ownership into individual ownership, after which it became easier to sell it to the colonists. Thus, the Algerian agricultural economy was linked to the French economic system for the benefit of the French economy (Abbad, 2011).

B- Imposition of Taxes

Among the most important laws adopted by the French occupation from its entry into Algeria to establish its control over the real-estate properties of the local inhabitants were taxes, which were used for this purpose. The occupation's objective was to differentiate between the local inhabitants and the colonists. It enacted laws applicable to all inhabitants, but wealthy Europeans began paying less than the local inhabitants, and this situation continued until 1919, when the Arab tax imposed on the population as a whole was abolished. Their contribution to taxes was also reduced, with reservations regarding the same year, in which it appeared to be considerably lower (Bouaziz, *Colonial Policy through the Publications of the Algerian People's Party 1839–1954*, 2009). The translator Saint-Arnaud, as quoted in his book *An Episode of the Conquest*, states: “We must burden them with exhausting taxes until life becomes impossible for them and they find nothing with which to satisfy their hunger. They will then have only two choices, with no third: either to revolt or to join the French army” (Bellah, 2006).

Even religious institutions were not spared from this. Al-Madani states in this regard: “We incorporated into the state's property all the real estate that had belonged to the waqf properties and seized the property of a class of the population whom we had undertaken to care for and protect... We went so far as to usurp properties and then force their owners to pay the expenses necessary for demolishing them, and we forced people to pay the expenses of demolishing mosques. We violated the sanctity of religious institutions” (Al-Madani, 1986). Even goods were not spared from these measures. Taxes were imposed on goods and public services provided by the local inhabitants, and the amount collected by the occupation in taxes reached 14 million francs to pay the fines imposed upon them. When a person was unable to pay the

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fine owed, the tax collector would go to his home and seize whatever valuable possessions he had (Qannan, *Issues and Studies in the Modern and Contemporary History of Algeria*, 1994). French persecution of Algerians thus became something witnessed by the population from time to time. The malicious intentions of Commander Drouet d'Erlon became apparent after his appointment as military governor of Algeria, as he burdened the local inhabitants with taxes and repression. A clear example of this is the Awfia tribe and the heavy taxes imposed upon it, which ultimately resulted in its complete extermination at the hands of this butcher (Hilal, 1986).

Conclusion

Through our study of the effects of French projects on waqf institutions in Algeria from 1830 to 1936, we reached a number of conclusions, the most important of which are:

- From the moment the French occupation entered the country, it turned its attention to waqf institutions and worked to destroy them and demolish what these institutions had built, as it regarded the waqf system as one of the obstacles preventing the implementation of its expansionist settlement policies, which it sought to apply by all means and methods.
- Waqf changed after the French occupation compared with the Ottoman era through decrees and legislation that sought to eliminate the protection and immunity that had characterized it in the past.
- The French administration was determined to confiscate waqf properties in order to incorporate their properties into the real-estate transaction system so that they could be easily acquired by the colonists.
- The occupation worked to implement a policy of keeping the population ignorant, Frenchifying education, and eliminating free education. However, Algerians regarded this as an attempt to erase the features of their culture, which led the population to reject it.
- The social situation in Algeria during the French occupation deteriorated, as reflected in the deterioration of the conditions of the local inhabitants, accompanied by the spread of poverty, famines, and epidemics that caused the death of one-third of the population.
- The occupation sought to combat the Arabic language in all regions. The French government closed educational institutions, many of which were demolished, and permitted only the teaching of French as an official language. Many teachers were also exiled, and many others were imprisoned.
- The occupation proceeded to confiscate the real-estate properties of the local inhabitants by exploiting the living conditions through which they were passing and distributing them to the colonists without compensation, with the aim of displacing the population to the desert and mountains.

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