

French Psychological Warfare and Its Repercussions on Popular Resistance in Southern Algeria During the 19th Century

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Abstract:

The pens that documented the trajectory of popular resistance in Algeria through their observation and contemporaneous witnessing of events were French pens. By virtue of this contemporaneity, they became the primary source that no researcher of resistance history can do without it. However, what is notably observed about these writings is their focus on the military and political aspects, the blatant distortion of facts, and the premeditated disregard for the media and psychological warfare against all things Algerian. Hence, we see that the Algerian researcher must reconsider these psychological aspects, as they contributed profoundly to the colonial war. In this scholarly paper, I have chosen to address this type of warfare that focused on psychological influence on Algerians in their resistance, while examining the most important methods employed and their principal theorists, leading to an illustration of manifestations of this warfare. In conclusion, we arrive at a set of findings that we hope constitute a successful attempt to study this type of warfare against resistance in southern Algeria.

Keywords: Psychological warfare, Popular resistance, Colonial policy, Southern Algeria, 19th Century.

1. Introduction

Since French colonialism took root in Algeria, it combined military warfare with psychological tactics to weaken the Algerian people. This approach arose from the understanding that a significant part of the nation's strength comes from its spiritual and psychological sides, which military force, massacres, and genocide could not destroy. In fact, these actions only increased the determination and resilience of the Algerians. Each time France silenced one resistance fighter, new ones would rise, guiding the Algerian resisters who opposed the French presence. The French colonial psychological warfare targeted the basic pillars of Algerian society. It aimed to dominate the Algerians and snuff out their spirit of resistance, allowing for the control of both the land and its people. This effort included attempts to erase Algerian national identity and disrupt the sense of belonging. The goal was to create a generation of Algerians who felt alienated and lost, easily influenced by the metropole while disregarding their own identity. French intellectuals tried to keep up with the Algerian resistance through their theories that framed this psychological warfare. Their writings detailed various harmful and destructive techniques aimed at the psyche of the Algerian people. They aimed to defeat the resistance without physical confrontation, as past battles had shown that the French suffered significant losses despite their military and technological edge. They believed this was due to the spiritual strength that set the Algerians apart. So, what were the signs of French psychological warfare against popular resistance in southern Algeria, and what were its effects?

2. The Concept of Psychological Warfare:

Psychological warfare is a type of unconventional combat that focuses on influencing minds rather than bodies. Its main goal is to undermine the confidence of people resisting authority in their abilities and national values. It also aims to diminish their morale through the spread of hostile ideas and distorted self-image. Propaganda serves as a media tool used by those in power to deliver targeted messages that achieve political or social goals.

The understanding of this type of warfare varies throughout history, but it is generally acknowledged as non-military and unarmed. Its purpose is to negatively impact the morale of the opponent. It mainly involves conveying negative ideas and harmful information that weaken the adversary's willingness to fight. Colonial powers often used this method in their colonies, with effects that could exceed those of military conflicts in terms of immediate and long-term consequences (Mohammadi, 2021, p. 53).

Psychological warfare is seen as a less expensive alternative to using armed forces. It is applied both during war and in peacetime to enhance effectiveness in military confrontations. The result of war is simply defeat or victory, both of which are psychological states. The winner feels superior and successful, while the loser experiences despair, submission, humiliation, and a loss of confidence (**Muqaddam, 1997, p. 141**).

Thus, it is clear that psychological warfare plays a key role in boosting the morale of both populations and armies while simultaneously eroding the enemy's morale and convincing them of their defeat. If the enemy accepts their defeat and the futility of resistance, then the war's goals are met and victory is achieved (**Harizi, 2015, p. 29**). The psychological aspect, whether affecting soldiers or civilians, serves as the foundation of a nation's strength (**Al-Khajjah, 2013, p. 11**). This form of warfare is often more dangerous than traditional military action. A bullet loses its effect once it is fired, regardless of its target. In contrast, ideas persist; they renew themselves and spread even after battles are over, often disguised as religion, education, journalism, publications, rumors, and even humor (**Muqaddam, 1997, p. 146**).

3. The Means of French Propaganda and Psychological Warfare Against Algerian Resistance in the South:

French psychological warfare and propaganda played a vital role in the colonial strategy against Algerian resistance in the South. Their aim was to dominate the population and weaken the morale of the resisters and their supporters among various tribes. This propaganda used several forms and methods, especially given the lack of a common language between the occupiers and the Algerian people. Some approaches were soft and subtle, while others were direct and aggressive. The key strategies France employed in southern Algeria included:

3.1. Arabic-Language Newspapers:

Arabic-language newspapers were an important tool for psychological propaganda used by France. The newspaper *Al-Mubashshir* (The Herald) was launched in 1847 by a royal decree from Louis-Philippe, implemented by General Dumas, with its first issue released on September 15, 1847. It was later managed by Baron Deslions, then Arnaud, followed by Labordère, and finally Jean Mérant (**Bouziid, n.d., p. 19**). Though it officially published in French, it was translated into Arabic to reach and influence the native population (**Lounissi, 2013, p. 46**). It mostly used colloquial dialect to communicate effectively and to gain the affection of the audience through their own language, often relying on misleading slogans like "The sunrise dispels darkness, and reading the news dispels illusions" (**Saadallah, 1998,**

p. 225). Its main goal was to divert Algerians from the resistance cause and instill fear and admiration for France. The newspaper worked to distort the actions of the resistance and its members, presenting them as bandits or "outlaws," focusing on exaggerated incidents to justify repression (**Lounissi, 2013, p. 48**).

This newspaper was printed by the government until 1864. It was sold in markets by agents of the Arab Bureaus, and subscription was made mandatory for Algerian government employees, including judges, qa'ids (tribal leaders), and imams. This requirement was extended to the general Algerian population, who often refused to buy it, even when it was forced upon them. The number of printed copies remained below 1,000, with about 300 copies sent to each province (Algiers, Constantine, Oran). In the 1850s, the number increased to 1,500 copies. Under Pélissier in 1861, it became available for anyone who wanted to buy it (**Saadallah, 1998, pp. 225-226**).

The colonial authorities were not satisfied with Al-Mubashshir, as it had effectively contributed to psychological warfare against the Algerian resistance. They launched additional newspapers such as Al-Muntakhab (The Selected) in 1877 in Constantine. This publication targeted Arab culture and language while promoting the integration of Algerians into French culture (**Saadallah, 1998, p. 232**).

3.2. Use of Religious Figures:

France sought to use certain zawiyas (religious lodges) or sheikhs loyal to colonialism to promote "legitimate" messages urging obedience to French authorities while banning "fitna" (sedition) and "disobedience to the ruler." This effort aimed to weaken the revolutionary spirit. Numerous examples exist, with one of the most famous being the fatwa issued by the qadi (judge) of El Bayadh, Muhammad bin Atallah, at the start of the Bouamama revolt (1881-1883) at the request of French authorities (**Hashilafi, 2013, p. 120**). The military commander of El Bayadh asked the judge to issue a fatwa that misrepresented the resisters as outlaws and denied them the title of mujahidin (freedom fighters). The poet Muhammad Belkhir replied to him with verses:

**He who loves Paradise opposes the unbelievers,
And he who loves comfort loves sedition.
Say to Atallah: What drove you, O sorrowful one?
Do not gloat over those whose life is resistance.
The world played with you; its days are fleeting.
Are you better, or the dogs of Rahman?**

This poem spread widely enough that the judge grew fearful and regretted his actions. He left for the Mashriq (Arab East) and died in Mecca (**Belsayeh, 2007, p. 35**).

3.3. The Arab Bureaus:

The Arab Bureaus were an extension of the position of Agha al-Arab (Agha of the Arabs), created by colonial authorities to govern and control the local population. They employed individuals skilled in Arabic who understood the customs and traditions of Algerians and were familiar with their religious beliefs. Officer Lamoricière was the first to take on this role. This organization excelled in propaganda, sharing information, and communicating with tribes to better understand them for control purposes (**Habbash, 2013/2014, pp. 51-52**). Besides gathering intelligence, it recruited local leaders and placed them in significant roles under the supervision of the Arab Bureaus to challenge resistance leaders. This put the local leaders under the authority of French officers and presented them as examples of political and administrative integrity. The goal was to gradually win the trust of the native population by showing that French commanders, who held more power than local leaders, offered refuge from the injustice and tyranny of those leaders (**Ringel, 1903, pp. 29-30**). Agents were also recruited to fulfill social or religious roles (faqih - religious scholar, student, judge) to gain trust and further infiltrate the social fabric, making this tactic even more dangerous.

3.4. Direct Psychological Warfare:

France practiced terrorism and collective punishment such as burning oases, poisoning wells, deporting families, and destroying property with the aim of breaking the will of the mujahidin and intimidating them from continuing, as well as terrorizing the popular base that supported the resistance. Hardly any region was spared from these practices, as occurred during General Cavaignac's campaign, where soldiers would set fire to forests and brush, for no reason other than to satisfy their instinct for destruction, enjoying the sight of burning trees as if they were fireworks (**Jacquot, 2013, pp. 32-34**). Cavaignac adopted in his campaign a military strategy based on plunder, pillage, burning, and destruction in the ksour (fortified villages) of Touat, Asla, Moghrar Tahtani and Foukani, and Ain Sefra (**Habbash, 2013/2014, p. 37**). His soldiers went to extremes in terrorizing the inhabitants of the oases, as happened with the residents of Moghrar ksar, where their oases and orchards were destroyed by cutting down palm trees and various fruit trees, burning homes and grain silos, and even mosques were not spared from

destruction. This was accompanied by regret at not knowing which male palm trees pollinated the oasis in order to cut and burn them, so that the most heinous revenge would be achieved by condemning the oasis to sterility (Jacquot, 2013, pp. 175-180).

4. Manifestations of French Psychological Warfare Against Resistance in Southern Algeria:

It is perhaps needless to say that we reiterate writing about French colonial methods based on all forms of brutality against Algerians, which combined criminal violence founded on committing various acts of genocide and persecution against anyone who dared to defend his land, himself, and his religion, as well as the malice with which legions and armies labored to dismantle the bonds of the Algerian people. Historians of the colonial program were keen to interlink two ideas: casting doubt on social cohesion (the unified society), and denying civilizational agency. The Algerian society, in their view, was a society lost civilization ally, with no identity uniting it and having no civilizational existence whatsoever on this land before the arrival of the French (Malki, 1993, p. 110).

France focused its psychological propaganda warfare against Algerian resistance on three pillars controlling the formation of Algerian society. Foremost among these was the religious aspect, through casting doubt on the role of Islam in forging the components of society and working to distort it. The second foundation was political unity, through planting the idea of political sterility and the incapacity of these tribal groups to build entities and states, and attempts to sow sedition and division between tribes and regions. As for the third foundation, it was casting doubt on the ethnic unity of cities and regions (Malki, 1993, pp. 114-115).

4.1. Psychological Warfare Through the Islamic Component:

France attempted to use the Islamic religion as a psychological tool to influence Algerians. Through the French propaganda machine, which worked to present itself as "liberators" of the Algerian people from "backwardness," while simultaneously seeking to divide Algerian society by co-opting some leaders of Sufi orders and enticing them with privileges in exchange for their support of colonialism. This resulted from the French colonizer's recognition of Islam's position in the colonial conflict between the occupier and Algerian resisters, considering it the greatest obstacle before them (Saadallah, 1998, p. 130), and its role in confronting the Christianization mission it brought with it. Islam was the primary crucible that had forged the tribes of this land since the Islamic conquest, and it was the fuel that ignited resistance. Therefore, the necessity emerged to

undermine it in order to create a rift within society that would lead to questioning belonging and civilizational and national unity. In this regard, several examples stand out (Malki, 1993, p. 117).

4.1.1. Spreading Superstitions and Promoting Falsehoods Among Resisters:

The city of Laghouat is considered one of the most formidable fortresses that confronted the French colonizer due to its civilizational and social weight, and as the gateway of the South toward the Sahara, which France could not subjugate without controlling this important center. Among the manifestations of psychological warfare employed by the French enemy was the exploitation of one of the city's religious figures and the promotion of a superstition claiming that the righteous saint Sidi El-Hadj Issa, who around 1700 attempted to unite its inhabitants and foster brotherhood among them, was refused submission and obedience; rather, he was subjected to harm and mistreatment from them, which made them subject to his curse. He threatened them with a curse and the coming of the French (a century and a half before the French occupation of the city). This superstition was circulated after the arrival of General Marey-Monge, who reconnoitered the city and entered it in 1844 without any notable resistance, benefiting from this malicious propaganda. He appointed Ahmed Ben Salem as *khalifa* (governor) over it in the name of France (Rinn, 2001, pp. 426, 428). However, the city's inhabitants quickly declared their support and *bay'a* (pledge of allegiance) to the Sharif of Ouargla, Muhammad bin Abdullah, and joined his resistance. Such claims aimed at shaking their faith did not affect them, which prompted General Pélissier to storm the city on December 4, 1852 (*'Am al-Khaliya* - Year of the Cell), committing the first massacre in history using poisonous gases after destroying it with artillery (Delacour, 2020, p. 13).

The Laghouat massacre itself constituted psychological warfare against anyone who dared to stand in France's face, which caused many regions after this heinous massacre to retreat into submission and surrender, or to avoid direct confrontation with French armies. This was perhaps an extension of the scorched-earth policy pursued by General Bugeaud in his expansions in northern Algeria.

4.1.2. Fighting Sufi Orders and Distorting Their Role:

In order to eliminate Algerian resistance in the South, which was led by leaders of Sufi orders, the French followed multiple methods to distort them and tear apart their unity, pursuing a policy of intimidation and enticement. They also accused them of religious and ethnic fanaticism. To contain the danger of these orders, French policy undertook numerous studies by experts and officers of the Arab Bureaus and Native Affairs, such as Louis Rinn and Marcel Emerit, who stated: "Despite the religious role of Sufi orders, they functioned as political parties based on an obscure system; they were like

secret organizations that stoked hostility and mobilized people." This was confirmed by Charles Richard, who traced the causes of popular uprisings and highlighted the important role that Sufi orders played in igniting them (**Charouik, 2019/2020, p. 159**). Consequently, the French became firmly convinced of the leadership role of these orders, and all agreed on the necessity of co-opting these orders and directing them to serve France (**Charouik, 2019/2020, p. 141**).

Among the examples of psychological warfare against Sufi orders is what appears in the book "Les Khouan: On the Foundation of Islamic Religious Orders in Algeria" by its author Charles Brosselard (1816-1889), commander of the Arab Bureau in Tlemcen, who mingled with its people and knew their social life, exploiting his mastery of the Arabic language, which he used to examine manuscripts in zawiyas, mosques, and homes. The author presents a portrayal of Sufi rituals (such as dervishes) as "barbaric" practices, particularly regarding collective dhikr (remembrance), which he depicts as hysterical screaming with a focus on violent bodily movements and exaggerated chants. He also portrays awrad and adhkhar (litanies and invocations) as superstitious rituals that affect the psyche and mind (**Charles, 1859, pp. 8, 13**), while ignoring the role of these rituals and acts of worship in preserving Arab-Islamic identity against attempts at Francization and Christianization. This reflects the author's Orientalist vision, which views Islamic rituals as strange phenomena, while he amplifies the "threat" that these groups pose in order to advance a colonial agenda (**Rinn, 2001, p. 303**).

Brosselard continues with fallacies by drawing comparisons between Sufism on one hand and Christianity and Freemasonry on the other, exaggerating warnings against reducing these groups to an "Islamic Freemasonry"! He asserts that their goal transcends social reform to religious jihad, thereby revealing a contradiction between the humanitarian appearance and the military objective represented in resisting French colonialism (**Charles, 1859, pp. 17, 18**). These orders represented a cultural and religious shield against Westernization policies, and they also participated in armed resistance (such as the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya orders).

The French colonizer did not content itself with military force in confronting the resistance framed by Sufi orders, but rather sought to scatter their ranks and tear apart their unity by co-opting the weak-willed and buying loyalties, and controlling leaders and commanders.

Colonial propaganda also disseminated and promoted the idea of the inevitability of colonialism and that it was God's decree, that France's presence on Algerian soil was God's will, and that God alone was capable of expelling France. The colonial administration attempted to attach this idea to Sufi orders in order to distort them, distance people from them, and influence the weak-willed (**Chahbi, 2007, p. 93**).

4.1.3 .Proselytization:

French psychological warfare extended to the faith of Algerians, through distorting its image and attempting to divert them from their religion and *milla* (religious community) by spreading Christianity among their ranks and integrating them into French civilization (**Abu Imran, 1983, p. 247**). Islam represented one of the fundamental pillars that protected the Algerian personality from psychological disintegration (**Muqaddam, 1997, p. 152**). Christian missionary delegations raced ahead of French military columns penetrating southward in order to spread Christianity and win over the population to facilitate the mission of French armies in seizing the vast Saharan regions (**Saadallah, 1998, p. 130**), and to achieve Cardinal Lavigerie's dream of spreading Catholicism in Africa via the Sahara, through establishing the White Fathers (*Pères Blancs*) who were active in famine-stricken areas, sheltering orphans. The pioneering activity of this society was in Laghouat, with the dispatch of three White Sisters there in December 1870. Despite their failure due to difficulties adapting to natural conditions, another mission of Jesuit Fathers proficient in Arabic was sent, followed by the installation of Father Charmetant on October 17, 1872, as head of the Laghouat center, which would become a main launching point for missionary expeditions toward Black Africa. He succeeded in establishing strong relations with Saharan tribes such as the Sha'amba, which allowed him to penetrate society and attempt to influence and co-opt leaders to serve France, as happened with Si El-Ala, leader of Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh, to whom he offered to mediate with the Governor-General if he accompanied him to the city of Algiers. However, he declined and sent his nephew Si al-Din with him instead (**Lekehal, 2018, pp. 160-165**).

Another center was also established in Ouargla in 1873, staffed by four priests who ran an orphanage and a school attended by students and even adults. It had a clinic and workshops for weaving, embroidery, carpentry... and was developed over time until it held weekly cinema seminars for entertainment, guidance, and education that disseminated all kinds of poisons into the minds of the region's children. They utilized means of enticement such as artesian wells that supplied the region with potable water and palm groves, where they received all types of support and protection from the French government as they opened the way for it and provided it with necessary information about caravans, uprisings, visitors, and other movements in the region. All of this was under the banner of calling to Christianity, bringing the population out of backwardness, and connecting them to French culture (**Saadallah, 1998, pp. 130-131**).

4. 2. Distorting the Image of Algerian Resistance:

French authorities sought to portray Algerian resistance as barbaric rebellion or random movements lacking any political or legal foundation. This was accomplished through historical books and literary works published by

colonial institutions to justify their invasion of Algeria as a civilizing mission **(Rinn, 2001, p. 262)**.

Among the examples of this is what Louis Rinn reported in describing the resistance fighter Sharif Bouchoucha. This national figure, unfortunately, was distorted by French historians in every way. Louis Rinn deliberately ignored mentioning most of his life; he concealed his origins, his youth, and the influences and talents that shaped this hero's character. Then Bouchoucha and his uprising did not escape the blatant and malicious distortion inflicted upon them by the French narrative. In their view, he was merely a vagrant rebel against their authority, a thief and highway robber and an instigator of the Saharan people against them, a fake sharif, a rough adventurer, and his movement was nothing but criminal acts carried out by the Madaganat gang, which was formed in 1868 in Tidikelt and took theft, crime, pillage, plunder, and bloodshed (murder) as its work in the Sahara **(Al-Mailaq, 2018, pp. 125, 126)**.

After this, we find "Louis Rinn" opening his book by insisting on pinning the charge of theft against Sharif Bouchoucha and making him one of the criminals who escaped from prison in his early life. "Louis Rinn" tells us that on December 22, 1862, he was brought before the disciplinary court in Mascara, which sentenced him to prison for theft. After his release from Bou Khenifis prison in 1863, he headed to Figuig and from there to Touat, where he began gathering supporters and preparing them for resistance. All this blatant distortion by "Louis Rinn" is to mislead any reader of his work into believing that Sharif Bouchoucha's resistance does not go beyond vagrancy and theft? This enables him to easily remove this hero's resistance from the womb of popular resistance movements, forgetting that it has the same characteristics and dimensions as other popular resistance movements that operated within two clear dimensions: the religious dimension and the patriotic dimension. After this accusation built on no evidence, the French narrative takes us even further in its description of the popular base with which and alongside which Sharif Bouchoucha fought the French: that they are nothing but malcontents, resentful criminals, and even describing them as Khawarij (rebels/heretics) **(Rinn, 2001, p. 139)**.

Louis Rinn also raised, while composing the introduction to his aforementioned book as we have seen, his denial of the matter of sharif status to Sharif Bouchoucha, where he emphasized the end of the "alleged sharif" after his arrest in 1874. The phrase "end of the alleged sharif" suggests that "Louis Rinn" aspires to something dangerous, which is to cast doubt even on Bouchoucha's truthfulness and integrity, since "alleged,"

"claims," "allegedly," and similar terms signify meanings of falsehood and the absence of truthfulness and integrity. Then we find him addressing a third point more distorted than its predecessors: that his movement was nothing but retaliation and revenge against those who imprisoned him only, that it was not directed toward the French in Algeria, but rather, according to "Louis Rinn," it was a settling of personal scores having no relation to popular resistance movements in the South. The late sheikh of historians, "Abu al-Qasim Saadallah," provided us with a description of the state of the South when it rivaled the North in recording its presence in defending national sovereignty, where it was boiling with revolution like the heat of its sun (Saadallah, 1998, p. 129).

This unjust claim never departed from the French description of any resister or opponent of their military, social, economic, and cultural policies. This claim extended to all leaders of popular resistance in southern Algeria; in their view, they were merely thieves, highway robbers, and murderers who emerged for pillage and plunder.

4.3. Psychological Warfare Through Planting Tribal Mentality:

The tribe was the fundamental unit of Algerian society, characterized by a solid social structure before and after the occupation. This system helped unify people to defend their land and honor, as shown by Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh. As a result, colonialism aimed to break this social unity using all possible methods.

French colonialism condemned Algerian society to chaos, arguing that its foundations were tribal, encouraging discord and division while using violence, theft, and plunder to justify its invasion and lure some vulnerable and misguided individuals to its side (Malki, 1993, p. 18). It claimed that this tribal structure was far from statehood and opposed its concept (Al-Hawari, 1983, p. 49). Algerians in the High Plateaus and the Sahara led a nomadic lifestyle in areas called 'arch lands,' moving two or three times a year for grazing. France worked to break this social unity by:

a) Supporting Loyalist Leaders and Tribes: General Bugeaud, the creator of the Arab Bureaus, chose to "rule Arabs through Arabs," relying on leaders and influential families. These leaders believed that their loyalty to France would secure their permanent position within the French administration, but they were sidelined once popular uprisings ceased. In southern Algeria, the French administration relied on various families and leaders (Bahouss, 2021, p. 94).

Among the tribes targeted by French colonialism's psychological warfare were the Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh, whose reach extended from southern Tripoli

to southern Morocco. Despite their significant influence, which allowed them to engage on equal terms with the Sultan of Fez, they were dangerously split into two groups: Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Gharaba in Figuig and Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Sharaga, whose center was in El Abiodh Sidi Shaykh **(Albert, 1901, p. 06).**

The French colonial administration began to divide these two branches of the Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh tribe early on. This effort was evident in the Treaty of Lalla Maghnia (1845), which aimed to define the northern borders between the French and Moroccan states. The treaty regarded Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Gharaba as part of the Moroccan Eyalet in terms of land and population, creating a deep rift within the tribe **(Al-Boushikhi, 2013, p. 110).**

As soon as French forces entered the Southwest, Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh rose up, driven by their tribal and religious passion. However, the colonial propaganda machine exploited traditional conflicts to disrupt unification attempts. It also manipulated both factions during its expansion in the Southwest and in eliminating the Awlad Hamza (Sharaga) resistance in 1845 after General G ery's campaign in April 1845 against El Abiodh Sidi Shaykh, which Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh confronted. Communication started between the French and Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh leaders, with the first contact between French authorities and Si Hamza ben Boubekeur on August 18, 1850. They tried to entice him with the position of khalifa, taking advantage of Moroccan Sultan Moulay Abderrahman ben Hicham's appointment of Sheikh ben Tayeb as khalifa over Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Gharaba in 1849. However, Hamza ben Boubekeur postponed discussions, wanting to consult with the leader of the Gharaba and allied tribes, which the French saw as a threat due to their fear of unified forces. Most tribes supporting him declined, choosing instead to resist the occupation. France detained him through General P elissier and used him in French campaigns against the Arbaa, Awlad Na il, and Hamiyan, tempting him into fighting Muhammad bin Abdullah in the Ouargla desert as a rival, which aimed to involve him in their schemes and make him a tool for their agenda. He ultimately died from poisoning in Algiers, with all his possessions confiscated and his position stripped on August 21, 1861. His son Boubekeur ben Hamza faced a similar outcome despite expressing loyalty to France, leading Slimane ben Hamza to declare jihad at the Battle of Aouinet Boubekeur. He was martyred on April 8, 1864, sparking one of the largest popular uprisings against the French after more than 30 years of manipulation of Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh leaders **(Al-Boushikhi, 2013, pp. 201-205).**

b) Recruiting Tribe Members Against Each Other: The French fueled discord among tribes by reviving old grudges and current feuds. From the moment they arrived in Algeria, the French propaganda machine exploited divisions and rivalries over leadership. The pretext for French authorities to win over the leader of Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Sharaga, Hamza ben Boubekeur, was the Moroccan Sultan Moulay Abderrahman ben Hicham's appointment of his rival, Sheikh ben Tayeb, as khalifa over Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Gharaba (**Al-Boushikhi, 2013, p. 203**).

French psychological operations aimed to weaken the resistance front after the intensification of the Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh uprising in 1864. They brought Slimane ould Kaddour from the Gharaba branch closer and appointed him agha over El Bayadh and Hamiyan—areas influenced by the Sharaga branch—in 1868. They tasked him with combating the revolutionaries from his own family. His power increased after Si M'hamed ben Tayeb took charge of Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Gharaba, remaining loyal to France. The French mobilized everyone to confront Kaddour ould Hamza, the leader of Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh al-Sharaga, in the Battle of El-Magoura on April 17, 1871. He faced a harsh defeat, losing his best fighters. His position weakened, especially after his brother Zubair decided to contact French authorities to arrange a surrender, as Trumelet noted (**Trumelet, 1879, p. 445**). The conflict with Si M'hamed ould Sheikh ben Tayeb continued, leading to a bloody battle between the two factions on August 3, 1871, at Oglet-es-Sedra, near Beni Mathar in Moroccan territory. Si M'hamed lost both his brothers, El-Hadj El-Arbi and Slimane. Later, Si Boubekeur escaped to Morocco, where the Moroccan Sultan pursued him (**Bouaziz, 1979, pp. 40-42**).

Despite Slimane ould Kaddour's failure to quash the uprising led by Kaddour ould Hamza and his loss of much influence, he continued to serve France. However, France ultimately abandoned him, even accusing him of threatening its interests by attacking peaceful tribes and engaging in extortion. They relocated him and his followers from Hamiyan to the plain of El-Mlamtha (near the salt lake of Oran), as Trumelet mentioned (**Trumelet, 1879, pp. 449-454**).

This demonstrates how French authorities used propaganda and enticement to set Algerians against each other, even if they were cousins or brothers, significantly undermining and dismantling resistance movements.

5. Conclusion:

By analyzing this article, we can draw conclusions about the psychological warfare executed by colonial France against the Algerian people, particularly in the South, and how these tactics were effective alongside military force in breaking down Algerian society and weakening its resistance.

1. Psychological Warfare as a Strategic Tool: It's clear that psychological warfare was not just a fleeting tactic but a key part of the French colonial strategy. France targeted the spiritual and psychological aspects of the Algerian people to undermine their self-confidence and erode the religious and social values that formed the basis of unity and resistance.

2. France used various methods in its psychological warfare, especially Arabic-language newspapers like "Al-Mubashshir," which employed colloquial language and misleading slogans to distort the image of the resisters and elevate France's reputation. France also enlisted religious figures to issue fatwas endorsing obedience to the occupier and condemning resistance, including the fatwa from the judge of El Bayadh against the Bouamama uprising. It relied on the Arab Bureaus network, employing agents skilled in language, religion, and local customs to penetrate the social fabric and shape public opinion. The colonial authorities also utilized direct intimidation tactics, such as burning and destroying oases and properties, and terrorizing civilians, as seen in Cavaignac's campaign, to instill fear in the population and deter them from supporting the resistance.

3. Targeting the Islamic Component: The Islamic faith was one of the primary targets of French psychological warfare. France attempted to distort Islam's role in building Algerian society, using methods such as promoting superstitions, enticing some Sufi order leaders, encouraging Christianization, and distorting religious rituals, all aimed at weakening Islam's spiritual influence as a driver of resistance.

4. Sowing Discord Among Tribes: France employed a divide-and-conquer approach by fostering tribal disputes and sowing division within Algerian society, exemplified by their efforts with the Awlad Sidi al-Shaykh tribe to deepen the rift between the Gharaba and Sharaga, which weakened their unity and made them more susceptible to colonial control.

5. Distorting the Image of Resistance: French authorities sought to portray Algerian resistance as "barbaric rebellion" or "random movements" through historical writings and literary works aimed at justifying the invasion as a "civilizing mission." For instance, they distorted figures like Sharif

Bouchoucha, branding him a thief and criminal to diminish his popularity and influence.

6. Long-Term Consequences: The impacts of psychological warfare did not end with the occupation; they left marks on the national and social identity of Algerians. France aimed to create a generation with alienated identities, easily manipulated toward its policies and interests.

In summary, French psychological warfare against national resistance in southern Algeria involved more than military campaigns. It formed a comprehensive system of cultural, media, social, and religious policies designed to crush the spirit of resistance within society. Still, the failure of this strategy is evident in the ongoing resistance for many decades, lasting until the early twentieth century.

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