

Algerians And The Pre-World War I And Forced Recruitment Project In The Oranian Department: 1907-1914

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Abstract:

The study reviews the situation of Algerian Indigenous people in the Oranian department before the First World War, 1908-1914, and their reactions to the application of the Conscription Law, 1912, including protests, delegations, petitions, complaints, uprisings, the Beni Chougrane Uprising of 1914, and migration to Arab and Islamic countries, including Syria, such as the 1911 Tlemcen migration. In light of the colonialist manoeuvres to exploit the youth for its military purposes, given that Algeria is a French colony, at a time when the general situation was characterized by deteriorating economic and social conditions and the persistence of repressive laws, including the law of the people, the elites of all spectrums played an important role in expressing the aspirations of Algerians expressing rejection and the desire for reforms in exchange for recruitment.

Key Words: Recruitment, Oranian Department, Tlemcen, elite, migration.

Introduction:

With the development of events at the beginning of the 20th century imposed by the European countries that were seeking to find their spheres of influence, especially Germany, whose arsenal was in a state of alert to fight a possible war, the crisis in Morocco was among the reasons that could explode the war due to the ambitions of all European countries in this western

part of North Africa, Germany and France, particularly the latter, sought to benefit from recruiting Algerians into the French army without their consent, as Algeria was a French colony, and its nationals were required to defend the Metropol. The years 1907 to 1912 marked an important shift in colonial political policy as the idea of forced conscription of Algerians was introduced, characterised by colonial manoeuvres and attempts to lure them. We took the Oranian Department as a sample for the study in an effort to reveal the most important measures taken and their social and political repercussions; in particular, they refused to participate in the war against Morocco following the Agadir crisis of 1911 and to fight their co-religionists outside Algeria's borders.

What were the procedures used to recruit Algerians for the First World War in the Oranian department, and what were the reactions to the census and conscription processes that affected Algerians during the years 1907-1914?

Through this study, we will try to answer this question using the methodology of collecting, reading, drafting, and analysing historical scientific documents.

1. The situation of Algerians before the First World War 1914 :

The general situation of Algerians before the First World War was characterised by the colonists' domination over the wheels of government through the law of 19 December 1900, which gave Algeria autonomy and enshrined the idea of French Algeria as the colonists' real authority because it gave them the right to manage Algeria's financial, social and economic affairs¹. It empowered them to control financial programmes to serve their interests and monitor the Algerian budget, making the situation of Algerians worse than it was before. It gave full power to the colonists over the indigenous, which was a fatal blow to the settlers². This affected even the political decision-makers in France itself, as evidenced by Algerians' complaints about the neglect of their economic and social needs, including the lack of technical training, vocational schools, few if any, education in Arabic, agricultural loans,

¹ -Budget Spécial d'Algérie, Afrique Française 6^{ème}, Arr, Paris Janvier 1901, P : 11.

² -Bernard, Augustin : L'Afrique du Nord pendant la Guerre, Paris, PUF, 1927, P :104.

health care, and hospitals³. At a time when Algerians' voices in parliamentary representation were not heard except in rare cases, they were usually chosen by the French administration. They had to prove their devotion to France and were generally selected from those who had done years of military service in the French army⁴.

In addition, Algerians were subject to the indigenous Law issued by the French after the failure of the 1871 uprising. This law strengthened and expanded its powers with the 1881 uprising, as Algerians were collectively required to bear collective responsibility for any material loss or forest fires, with imprisonment, seizure, and fines. The settlers took a hostile stance against any reform of the Algerian situation. They were against education, the end of the Indigenous law, the abolition of various fines and taxes, the naturalisation of the Algerian elite and even advocated for other arbitrary measures to maintain the status quo of the Indigenous people to ensure tranquillity in Algeria.⁵

2. Obligatory recruitment of Indigenous people into the French army:

The idea of recruiting Algerians into the ranks of the French army dates back to the beginning of the French occupation. Governor-General Jonnart declared before the Senate War Committee that there is a good reserve of men on the Mediterranean coast, and we are mistaken if we do not deeply exploit it, as you can register thousands of Algerian volunteers in the popular circles of the people whenever you want⁶. Military commanders, including General Mollier, had recommended exploiting Algerians and using their courage and love of war to achieve unity and integration between the Algerian and French peoples⁷. This was also expressed by one of the colonisers in the sessions of the financial commissariats, saying: 'The veterans are mainly farmers, and their mentality is

³ - Abbas, Farhat : *La nuit Coloniale- Guerre et révolution d'Algérie*, Paris, Juillard 1962, P : 105.

⁴ -Aron, Robert : *Les Origines de la guerre d'Algérie*, Fayard, Paris, 1962, P :53.

⁵-Julien Charles André : P : 107.

⁶- Ageron, Charles Robert : *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France 1871-1919*, T2, Paris, PUF, P :106.

⁷ -Hanotaux, G: *Histoires des Colonies Françaises*, T2, Paris, 1930, P : 455.

strong and must be exploited in favour of France⁸. All the debates that took place in 1907 and 1908 in the French National Assembly until 1912 dealt with the issue of compulsory recruitment, and the Algerian elite in all directions took advantage of this to demand political and civil rights, parliamentary representation, equality in taxation, and the abolition of punitive laws. The Committee for the Defence of Muslim Interests organised petitions and delegations and pushed demonstrators to raise the national flag as a means of political pressure to obtain demands and create space under the sun for the Algerian people ⁹ in order to get political, military and social gains in favour of Algerians.

3. The positions of the Algerian population on the forced recruitment project:

For the elite group, forced conscription was a favourable position on the condition that those who graduated from military service received civil rights. As one of them put it, " The rights should be clear in advance so that we get rid of any bargaining later on¹⁰. As for the Algerian Indigenous, the forced recruitment project raised their fears, so many of them thought of emigrating to escape conscription in the ranks of the French army, and the whole country became in a state of frightening turmoil¹¹. Algerian society has its customs and principles derived from the values of Islam, so it is believed that soldiers who were released from military service were people who disregarded Islamic values... The concept of military service was associated with the meaning of those who are like atheists and immoral people¹². The Algerian people expressed their rejection of the military conscription project through street riots, petitions and delegations, in addition to the propaganda campaigns carried out by Algerian newspapers such as *Al-Haq al-Wahrani* and *Islam* and leaflets distributed in cafes and markets calling for fierce opposition and accusing France of violating the Treaty of 5 July 1830¹³. In one of his letters, Mohammad Ben Rahal commented: 'There must be a lot of preparation for this project before it is implemented, and Muslims must be provided with political rights in their own

⁸ - Le Petit Oranais, 10 Juin 1915.

⁹ -L'Algérie : In A.F , Juin 1912, PP : 225, 226.

¹⁰ -La dépêche Algérienne du 01-01-1908.

¹¹ -Ageron, Robert :Ibid, P : 61.

¹² -Ageron, Ibid, 164.

¹³ -L'Algérie In A.F, Octobre 1908, P :342.

countries to accept the idea of standing by their side.¹⁴ In 1908, spontaneous and peaceful demonstrations against forced conscription took place throughout the country against the French presence in Algeria, calling for a revolution against France. In response, in 1908, Governor-General Charles Jonnart issued a circular defending France's policy in Algeria, admitting that the July Agreement promised the Muslim population respect for freedom, religion, property, trade and industry but never military service, adding that the renunciation of sovereignty necessarily leads to forced recruitment¹⁵. In 1909, delegations from Remchi and Nedroma demonstrated in front of the Tlemcen Circle headquarters. They refused to appear before the review committee and roamed the streets of the city until the military committee left. The army intervened, besieging popular quarters and arresting several notables, while the Algerians continued their propaganda in villages and cities. Note that in that year, forced conscription was not established as an executed law¹⁶; in the same year, a delegation of Tlemcen residents complained to the chief of the circle that it did not make sense to implement the military service project for peasants because of their miserable situation and that this measure would aggravate this situation even more as it deprives peasant families of their main support, which is the youth." Enlisting in the French army necessarily means certain death, as it means killing Muslim brothers, especially after the Far West crisis and the threat of the possibility of a European war, and in Ain Temouchent, residents signed a petition "that the principle of compulsory military service is unacceptable and that the authority should limit itself to recruiting the people by volunteering. In Ain Temouchent, residents signed a petition stating that 'the principle of compulsory military service is unacceptable and that the authorities should be content with recruiting the population through voluntary enlistment.' This prompted the French authorities to establish a special committee to study how to enforce military conscription on the Algerian indigenous population in order to be able to issue a law regulating this process¹⁷. Fears among Algerians increased with the French government's approval in 1908 of the application of the law of forced recruitment, as stated by Prime Minister Clemenceau in a letter sent to the Governor-General of Algeria,

¹⁴ -Le Petit Tlemcenien 12 Avril 1914.

¹⁵ - Ibid, P :342.

¹⁶ -Revue des deux Mondes, Janvier-Avril, 1909, P : 21.

¹⁷ - L'Algérie In A.F, Octobre 1908, P :342.

Jonnart, saying: 'The decrease in births in France and the decrease in the number of conscripts in the army have forced the state to resort to forced recruitment of the Algerian population as in France, confirming the government's approval of its application ... which necessitates a census of the indigenous that meets the necessary conditions for recruitment in 1909¹⁸. The first census took place from 10 to 25 September 1908, with resistance from the population from the first day in Tiaret, Arbaa, Fouka and Bougara (formerly Rovigo). Algerians shouted that 'Muslims do not fight their brothers in Morocco.' This prompted Governor General Jonnart to announce on 14 September 1908 that the census did not mean forced recruitment of the Indigenous but simply information-gathering¹⁹. The census operations continued during the summer and autumn of 1908, along with demonstrations, such as what happened in the municipality of Rovigo, where about 3,000 people from the town and its environs gathered, and some threatened to revolt against France. Mr Bisenbono, one of the settlers in charge of recruiting the indigenous, responded to calm the situation and told them that he refused to hand over the statistical list related to recruitment to the Governor General's administration and convinced them that France would not recruit them or transport them to fight their brothers in Morocco. The French authorities, fearing for their interests, including those of the settlers, became increasingly fearful, as a member of the General Council of Oran province stated to the Governor-General: ' All the inhabitants in all regions categorically reject the compulsory conscription project and may take up arms against us in the form of gangs because they do not accept fighting their brothers in Morocco, so the council asks the government not to implement forced recruitment, and to look for other ways to improve the effectiveness of the recruitment system.

The mayor of Chlef also rejected this by saying: 'I know the people; I have been living with them for 20 years, and they refuse any change that affects their religion or their existence.²⁰ Indeed, many young Algerians joined the mountains, forests, and jungles, and life in Algeria became a real danger, according to the estimates of the French

¹⁸ -La Conscription des Indigènes : In AF, Octobre, 1908, P :343.

¹⁹ -Ageron, P :1072.

²⁰ -Rouanet : Le service militaire des Indigènes In La Dépêche Algérienne, Samedi 4 Janvier 1908.

administration. Some colonists began to leave the country out of fear for their lives²¹.

4. Forms of Algerian resistance to the forced recruitment project in the Oranian department (1907-1912):

The Algerians strongly opposed the work of the Census Commission, which began on 10 to 25 September 1908, even though the French tried to keep it secret until the completion of the work. This prompted the Algerians to resist it in all forms, as it added to their suffering in what is known as the blood tax that pushes them to fight their brothers in religion and gender, so they considered it necessary to resort to political resistance led by the elite group and the conservative bloc to respond to the project of forced recruitment. On 13 May 1912, even pro-French Algerians voted in the local financial delegations on a list calling on the French government to cancel, even partially, all projects related to Algerians' compulsory military conscription and to improve the conditions of Algerians who voluntarily entered the French army²².

As a French reaction to enforce public calm, in 1912, France sent two military divisions to the Oran province to suppress any uprising or rebellion due to the deterioration of the generally unstable situation that characterised Algeria during this period. As a result of the decline of the generally unstable situation that characterised Algeria during this period, in the city of Nedroma, more serious incidents took place as thousands of Algerians demonstrated in front of the French governor's office to protest and presented the governor with a petition. After the meeting, which was without result, the Algerians shouted hostile and dangerous cries and clashed with the security forces, who used sticks and pistols against them²³.

A- Migration :

The migration was a reaction to the colonial policies pursued in Algeria, including the draft conscription law, in which the Algerian people believed that a Muslim could not fight under the banner of the infidels and that a Muslim could not fight under the banner of the infidels. Especially in 1907 with the

²¹ -Les troupes Indigènes In R.P, 15 Septembre 1912, P :296.

²² -L'Algérie : In AF, Juin 1912, P : 226.

²³ - Ibid.

Messimy project, the first signs of which began with the implementation of the census of young men aged 18, which caused the country to experience turmoil, especially after the La Commission Rodier declared that recruitment could be applied in Algeria. The 1908 census on recruitment caused turmoil in Algerian circles, as 321 applications for travelling neighbours poured in from Tlemcen and Mostaganem, preceded by the exodus of 140 immigrants accompanied by two presenters (مُقدمان) from the Darkaouia Zaouia, including 75 mureeds and 3 families from the wealthiest Tlemcen population. Between 1910 and 1912, the Oranian department witnessed numerous immigrations to Syria, with 32 migrants from Mascara, 01 from Mostaganem and 4 from Sidi Bel Abbès²⁴.

There was no choice but to leave Algeria, especially for the people of Tlemcen and its environs, from which the migration started towards Syria, passing through Moroccan territories, and the newspaper Al-Haq El-Wahrani advised them to migrate in order to avoid the forced recruitment law, and about a thousand young men wanted for recruitment migrated from Algeria²⁵. Algerians were leaving the country in droves, as confirmed by the Committee to Investigate the Causes of migration in its report to the Governor-General: 'Immigration was renewed in 1908 immediately after the promulgation of the decree of 7 July of the same year, as 321 applications for immigration passports were deposited at the office of the administrative governor-general of Tlemcen on the day of the local protest on 19 December 1908.'²⁶ Most of the migrants were followers of the Chadhiliya Derkaoui order, especially those who sold their property and jewellery to cover the costs of travelling. The Tlemcen migration was led by Cheikh Mohammed Ben Yelles (1854-1927), who played an important role in it in 1911 based on a Fatwa issued by him, as he migrated in a regiment of 25 people to join other regiments, the period was known as the period of fugitives or the migration of the Telamçanians. Ben Yelles chose Syria, but the French government did not allow him to do so; he travelled secretly on 13 October 1911 by way of Saïdia, then Hajra in the

²⁴ - إبراهيم، مهديد: مقاومة الجزائريين بالهجرة إلى الديار الإسلامية، عمالة وهران نموذجاً، مجلة عصور السنة 3، العدد 4، 05 ديسمبر 2003، ص، ص: 140، 142.

²⁵ -Ageron, Robert : Ibid, P :62.

²⁶ -Commission d'Enquête sur l'exode de Tlemcen, Rapport à monsieur le Gouverneur Général, Alger, 01 décembre 1914.

Moroccan Rif, which was under Spanish authority, then Tangier, from where he boarded a ship that brought him to Syria, accompanied by his wife Bastaoui Mansouriya and his son Ahmed, who was of military age, and among the migrants with him were Cheikh Mohammed ben El Hachemi, Mohammed ben Abdallah, Sayyid El Ghaouthi Belhaj, his brother Mohammed Belhaj, and Sayyid Daoudi ben Gazi ...

He succeeded to the Tlemcen Zaouia, Sayed Larbi Boursali, and served it well until he died in 1920. However, the French authorities arrested him and his son Ahmed during the Syrian Revolution of 1925, and El-Ghouthi Belhaj, who was in the Cheikh's service, was released, and his son was tortured severely, accusing him of participating in the revolution. The charge was confirmed by the Cheikh's positions on the forced recruitment in Algeria and not abiding by the decisions of the French state, especially teaching in the zaouias and leaving Algeria without a passport. Still, the friends of the Cheikh in Syria, among Syrians and Algerian migrants, defended him and sought his release, including the Grand Muhaddith of Damascus, Cheikh Badr el-Din al-Husseini (the Grand Muhaddith)²⁷.

It is interesting to note that at the end of 1910, the French authority recorded the sudden migration of one of its administrators, El Kaid (القايد) Lakhdar, from the Oued Chouli roundabout in the municipality of Sebdo, accompanied by 27 members of his family, who managed to reach Syria via Melilla, Tetouan and Tangier in Morocco, indicating that even its agents were fed up with its tyranny and injustice, which prompted them to migrate²⁸. The 1908 migration was not confined to Tlemcen but spread throughout Algeria. The decree of 19 September 1909 concerning the census of 18-year-olds capable of performing military service in the coming year led to widespread unrest throughout Algeria, especially in Tlemcen, where around 6,000 people demonstrated in front of the local authorities, while the newspaper Al Akhbar published pacifying pamphlets, It is as follows: 'With the information we have received from the Honourable Chef Captain Chardini, we inform you that the time for recruitment has not yet arrived. The census being conducted in the country is only a means of finding out which young Algerians are capable of performing

²⁷ - The website of the followers of Cheikh Ahmed Al-Alawi, https://alawi1934-ar.blogspot.com/2017/12/blog-post_72.html.

²⁸ - إبراهيم، مهديد : مقاومة الجزائريين بالهجرة إلى الديار الإسلامية، نفسه، ص : 142.

military service, and even if recruitment takes place, only four or five per cent of these young men will be recruited if the matter is correct and consensus is reached, so Algerians should not be alarmed by a matter that has not yet been decided²⁹.

However, public opinion in Algeria was aware from what was published in the press about the Rodier Commission that forced recruitment was an inevitable reality. This is why a large migration was recorded in 1910 due to the dire social conditions and punitive laws, including the blood tax represented by compulsory conscription, as well as the aridity and drought that affected the country in that year³⁰. The French administration deliberately opened the borders to immigrants and their opposition to French policies. For example, the administrative governor of Tlemcen encouraged people to immigrate in exchange for paying a travel tax, and the process became a trade, with 4,000 or 5,000 people immigrating and each one paying 20 francs, bringing the total to nearly 100,000 francs³¹.

The year 1911 was the most turbulent through the issuance of the decree of 28 February 1911 on the census of 18-year-olds. This measure coincided with the appointment of Messimy as Minister of War on 27 June 1911, so the committees began their work in cities and villages to find many difficulties. Some notables warned them against starting their work, such as Sayy Mohammed Ben Rahal, who stressed the danger of this, especially with the increase in migration of people in the Tlemcen region, stating: '1800 people have immigrated, and demanded that the administration correct the situation and address it'³². The report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Causes of migration stated that the decree of 28 February 1911 had a direct impact on the people, and as soon as it was issued, immigration to Syria increased³³. Migration intensified, especially with the development of the Agadir crisis in Morocco in 1911, in which the French government rejected the German foreign minister's proposals on Morocco's internal policy; the

²⁹ -Ageron, Ibid, 1070.

³⁰ -Ageron, Ibid, 1083.

³¹ -محمد الصالح، بجاوي: إسهامات الأهالي في الحرب العالمية الأولى 1914-1918، ط1، المكتب العربي للمعارف، القاهرة، ص: 43.

³² -Ageron, Ibid, P :1072.

³³ -Commission d'Enquête sur l'exode de Tlemcen, Rapport à Monsieur le gouverneur général, Alger, 01 Décembre 1914.

crisis made Algerians certain that forced recruitment into the French army would be implemented after France launched a military campaign against Fez in April 1911. Many Algerians decided not to confront their Moroccan brethren and preferred to emigrate after selling all their savings and property. The newspaper Al-Haq Al-Wahrani commented: 'They left everything behind after they sold their property, said farewell to the town after praying at Sidi Boumediene Mosque, and then left for Agadir, Morocco, with tears in their eyes from the intensity of the impact and the difficulty of parting'³⁴. Many Algerians decided not to confront their Moroccan brethren and preferred to emigrate after selling all their savings and property.

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In the city of Relizane, many Cheikhs and followers of the Zaouias were forced to leave Algeria to escape forced recruitment, such as Cheikh Badr Adda Ben Ammar (1890-1975), a follower of the Alawiya order, who left Algeria for the Morocco city of Oujda, where he continued his studies³⁷. Similarly, the position of Cheikh Abd al-Baqi al-Chouaii (1857-1927), the Cheikh of Zawiya El-Derkaouia al-Habriyya El-

³⁴ -El Hack: L'Exode, Le 28 octobre 1911.

³⁵ - عمار، هلال: الهجرة الجزائرية نحو بلاد الشام 1847-1918، دار هومة، الجزائر، 2007، ص: 137.

³⁶ -خير، بوسعادة: نشاط النخب الجزائرية في عمالة وهران ما بين 1919-1954، أطروحة دكتوراة جامعة وهران، 2012، ص: 265.

³⁷ -محمد، مفلح: مراكز التعليم العربي الحر في مدينة غليزان من الاحتلال الفرنسي إلى غاية الاستقلال 1962، منشورات قرطبة للنشر والتوزيع، ط1، الجزائر، 2011، ص: 24.

Yashrutiya, in the city of Oran in Oued Dejmaa in Relizane, as a result of his political stance on forced recruitment. He migrated to Syria, specifically to Nablus, in 1910. When he returned, he was imprisoned in Boukhnifis prison (Sidi Bel Abbès), and after his release, he was exiled for five years to Zahana and then imposed under house arrest in the officers' neighbourhood in Oran³⁸. According to the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Causes of migration, in 1911, 200 houses were sold in Tlemcen alone after the people migrated to Maghnia, then to Tangier and then to Syria, to which their brothers had preceded them and were encouraging them to do so, such as the Kaïd of Ouled Chouli Lakhdar in the municipality of Sebdou, Tlemcen, who wrote to a friend urging him to migrate to Syria, that 'the Ottoman state gives a reward of 30 ha for every migrant who reaches the age of 18 years³⁹.

The migration contagion spread to the Oranian department, and families from Nadroma, Sabdou, and Remchi left towards Morocco. It almost affected a significant number of the population if not for the intervention of the French authority in September 1911, when the Governor General of Algeria issued an order to the civil and military authorities prohibiting everyone from leaving the country and monitoring the borders day and night⁴⁰. As a result, on 30 September 1911, the Governor-General issued an order stopping the fleeing movement and preventing them from leaving in recognition of the colonial authority's awareness of the disruption that mass and individual migration would cause to social and economic life in Algeria. In 1911, Tlemcen was the source of mass migration, with 1,200 people leaving the city for Syria, leading one journalist to describe migration as a serious epidemic that affected the region from which this huge number of migrants had gone⁴¹ and the real panic is on the verge of becoming a moral epidemic⁴². As a precautionary measure, the French authorities ordered the cessation of migration and the closure of the borders. Nevertheless, immigration continued in the form of individual adventures. The Governor-General,

³⁸ - محمد، مفلح: من تاريخ الطريقة الشاذلية في منطقة غليزان وضواحيها، دار القدس العربي، 2016، ص، ص: 95، 96.

³⁹ - Ageron, Ibid, P :1087.

⁴⁰ -Marchand (H) : L'Exode des musulmans Algériens in Q. D .C, 16 janvier 1912, N° :33, P : 86.

⁴¹ -Echo d'Oran, 14-10-1911.

⁴² - Démontes (V) : L'Algérie in (AF-Bull) Janvier 1912, N° 1, P :38.

therefore, appointed a commission of inquiry consisting of four high officials, including no Algerians, in response to a telegram from the head of the Tlemcen Circle under the chairmanship of Mr Barbedette. After a five-day inquiry in which they listened to several people, the commission came up with the following report : ‘ The migration took place due to the threat of forced recruitment after the indigenous had experienced the bitterness of the grievances summarised by the Commission in 15 chapters⁴³. Syria alone had 20,000 Algerian migrants in 1911, Morocco had about the same number in 1907, and the French writer Tebbal estimated that Egypt had between 20,000 and 30,000 people⁴⁴. In the Arabian Peninsula, between 10,000 and 15,000 people, while their number reached between 05 to 06,000 in Palestine and the same number in Silesia and Anatolia⁴⁵ ; however, neither migration nor changes in the French government prevented a forced recruitment law from being passed in February 1912.

b. Petitions and complaints against the forced recruitment law in the Oranian department:

Documents indicate that the first petitions submitted to the French authorities by the inhabitants of Tlemcen on 7 April 1897 to the Minister of War and the President of the French Republic in Paris, signed by the Muslims of Tlemcen Province, including city officials, religious leaders and judges, related to two projects prepared by Martino, one concerning naturalisation and the other subjecting the population to compulsory military service⁴⁶. Due to the acceptance of the two projects in the French National Assembly, which referred them to special committees for research and study, the people of Tlemcen expressed their rejection due to its impact on Islamic principles despite the privileges offered in obtaining public jobs and scientific degrees and handing over weapons and calling for their use. The residents expressed their rejection of this because of the danger to themselves and their religion, which does not accept the sacrifice of faith for the sake of worldly privileges, in addition to the loss of sons. Their justification for this was that it was not suitable for them due to the ignorance prevalent among them, which made them

⁴³ -Démontes, V : L'Algérie in AF, Janvier 1912, P :39.

⁴⁴ -L'Algérie in AFS, septembre 1921, P :201.

⁴⁵ -Tebbal, in AF, September 1921, P :201.

⁴⁶ - جمال، قنان : نصوص سياسية جزائرية في القرن التاسع عشر 1830-1914، ديوان المطبوعات الجامعية، الجزائر، 2009، ص: 211.

ineligible to enjoy the privileges of integration and inability to exercise electoral rights⁴⁷.

The Algerian press also organised another campaign against recruitment law through the newspaper Al-Haq Al-Wahrani, along with the newspapers Al-Islam and Al-Rahidi. Al-Haq Al-Wahrani attacked the content that forces young people to serve three years of military service instead of two years like French recruits ⁴⁸, at a time when complaints and petitions were filed in the various provinces of Oran, Saida and Sebdou.

With the promulgation of the law, the notables of Ndroma sent a petition through a delegation negotiating on their behalf with the deputy governor of Tlemcen, expressing their strong dissatisfaction and absolute rejection of the issue of conscription of their sons and demanding a solution to this issue⁴⁹. Another petition came from Ghazouat, signed by Hamza Ben Saleh, with the signatures of the tribes of Beni Mounir 57 signatures, and Souahlia 51 signatures, rejecting forced military service and stating: " : ' The present situation makes us inferior to Israelis and foreigners residing in Algeria, and considering that we are equal before the military service after performing it ... We will not be inferior to them and in an inferior position until we continue to be burdened with our taxes ... and to appear before the criminal courts and be treated by the law of the people and the criminal court⁵⁰". The notables of Saida demanded political rights through a number of petitions sent to the French government: 'We will never accept recruitment without specific reforms that grant them political rights in their own country⁵¹; in an article, the newspaper Al-Haq Al-Wahrani asked that a delegation be sent to Paris to protest against the recruitment law and the second demanded that the recruitment be replaced with some reforms. It was not long before associations were formed from Nadroma, Mostaganem, Mohammedia, Ghazaouet, Oran and

⁴⁷ - نفسه، ص: 212.

⁴⁸ -- الحق الوهراني: العدد 11، 18 ماي 1912.

⁴⁹ - Nouschi, André : La Naissance du Nationalisme 1914, 1954, Paris, Ed, Minuit, 1962, P : 23.

⁵⁰ - إبراهيم، مهديد: الجزائريون في القطاع الوهراني ما بين 1900-1940، الجذور الثقافية الهوية الوطنية والنشاط السياسي، أطروحة دكتوراه دولة، وهران، 1999، ص: 207.

⁵¹ - Meynier (Gilbert): L'Algérie révélée, le guerre 1914-1918, et le premier quart du XX^{eme}, siècle, 1^{er} Ed, Genève, Libraire Droz, 1981, P :97.

Tlemcen. The delegation decided to travel on Thursday, June 27, from the capital to Paris⁵².

C-Popular uprisings in the Oranian department:

With the approval by the French National Assembly on 03 February 1912 of the conscription law, the entire country of Algeria experienced unrest, spontaneous demonstrations and clashes with the French police and gendarmerie when Algerians found themselves alongside arbitrary laws, including the blood tax that forces them to fight their brothers in religion and race or die outside the Algerian territory. The general rejection after the competent committees started their work in May 1912, where they found a great void in terms of the number of Algerian youth present, and almost no one came forward to register themselves. The French authorities were forced to use force and violence to bring them by force to the offices to register their names, especially since the Oran province knew a difficult health situation, as the Maghnia region witnessed several serious diseases in 1911, including a yellow fever epidemic that killed many Algerians⁵³. In fact, Mohamed Ben Rahal formed a delegation of notables from the deputies of Algeria and went at their head to Paris to defend the Algerians; the members of the Oranian delegation were distinguished by wearing the traditional Algerian costume and not the European costume. The delegation consisted of the fathers of families who refused to recruit their sons at the age of 18 for the war, so seven representatives were chosen from Nadroma and Nimour (Ghazaouet), all of whom had made the pilgrimage to Mecca⁵⁴.

In a letter to the administrative administrator on 8 June 1912, Si Mohamed Ben Rahal explained that the Algerian bears heavy taxes and is obliged to stand guard at night. In the words of an Algerian: 'Usury has bankrupted me, colonisation has ruined me, wherever I complain my voice will not be heard, and when I asked for migration as a last hope I was prevented from it, and now without opposition I have been asked for the only thing I have left, which is my son, is this justice ...'⁵⁵

⁵² - إبراهيم، مهديد: الجزائريون في القطاع الوهراني...، ص: 208.

⁵³ -D.A.W.O : Série 1.4471, Fiches Signalétiques (Elus) : exposé de la situation politique des indigènes en Oranié

⁵⁴ - الحق الوهراني، 12 جوان 1912.

⁵⁵ -Ageron, Charles Robert : Les Algériens Musulmans et la France, 1871-1919, 1^{er} Ed, Paris, PUF, 1968, 2 Tome, P : 1074.

C.1. Beni Chougrane Uprising 1914:

It was on the eve of the start of the First World War and was carried out by the tribes and Douars of the region in Mascara as a result of the accumulation of the deterioration of social and economic conditions, especially since sons were the support for their families, in addition to the role played by some leaders who demanded citizens to pay money in exchange for exempting their sons from military service and replacing them with other people⁵⁶. The residents of Sidi Dahou complained to the Minister of War that the commander of their area, Lakhdar Ben Chenan, had taken 1,500 francs from them and then forced their sons to be recruited and that since he became commander, he had eaten their flesh and digested their money⁵⁷.

The uprising, which began in September 1914, took place in the mausoleums of the saints, which may be why some French sources attributed the Beni Chougrane uprising to the Cheikhs of Sufi orders and Zaouias. The youth refused to register their names in the communes, which prompted the administrative official in Mascara to meet the notables of the region, warn them and threaten them with violence if they continued their refusal. However, the notables gathered in all the Douars of the region and decided to refuse forced recruitment. On the morning of 05 October 1914, the French military authorities began to count the adults in the Beni Chougrane area in the morning. When the civilian administrator entered the head of the battalion that started searching for the fleeing youths, the elders confronted him, expressing their refusal to be recruited, and told them that their sons had fled to the mountains, so they arrested six of their leaders. The people of the region called for jihad. Clashes occurred between the people and the soldiers of the military battalion, who withdrew by order of their commander and the administrative administrator.

Under the command of General Larry and a military force of 1,500 soldiers, some villages were stormed, many houses were burned, and they set off towards the mountainous areas, ordering them to shoot anyone they encountered on their way; the villages of Beni Nessig and Beni Khenis were besieged, and

⁵⁶-محمد صالح، بجاوي: إسهامات الأهالي الجزائريين في الحرب العالمية الأولى...، نفسه، ص: 54.

⁵⁷ -يجي، بوعزيز: ثورات الجزائر في القرنين 19 و 20م، ط2، ج2، منشورات المتحف الوطني للمجاهد، ص: 34.

searches continued until 20 October 1914, the French authorities tried 42 people, sentencing 13 of them to death and imprisoning the rest. In spite of this, the French administration continued to enforce forced recruitment of Algerians at a time when the number of attacks on settlers and the French authority, both collective and individual, increased throughout the country.

Conclusion:

The French authority rejected all protests calling for the cancellation of the project of forced recruitment into the ranks of the French army under the pretext that it conflicted with the orientations of the Islamic religion and took methods to break the opposition by using force to recruit young people, making social, political and civil promises, spreading propaganda for recruitment through its *al Kaidas* and *Bachagas*, and using French and local military teams to attack homes and take young people by force. However, the opposition campaign waged by Algerians against the forced recruitment project led to the emergence of new means in the Algerian political struggle, which sought to achieve a political presence after all popular uprisings against French colonialism had failed. Petitions, delegations and demonstrations emerged, and the Algerian press emerged, including the newspaper *Al-Haq Al-Wahrani* and *Al-Islam*.

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