

RESEARCH ARTICLE	The French Psychological Warfare on Algerians During the Liberation Revolution 1955-1962: The Concentration Camps as a Model	
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Abstract This study aims to analyze the psychological warfare strategy adopted by the French colonial authorities against the Algerian people within the internment camps, following their realization of the profound support the Algerians extended to the national liberation movement. The research seeks to uncover the psychological and social repercussions of this strategy on the camp detainees and to assess its overall effectiveness. The study is guided by a central research question: how was the internment policy utilized as a tool of psychological warfare, and to what extent did it impact the psychological and social condition of the Algerian population? To address this, the study employs the historical method to trace the evolution and implementation of the internment policy, in addition to using descriptive and analytical approaches to examine the various psychological mechanisms employed by the French and to evaluate their outcomes. The findings reveal that, although France succeeded in forcibly concentrating large numbers of Algerians in these camps and subjected them to ongoing psychological pressure, it ultimately failed to achieve its intended objectives. The suffering endured by Algerians in the camps became a catalyst for strengthening their national consciousness and deepening their belief in the justice of their cause.		
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Introduction

After the outbreak of the Algerian War of Liberation on November 1, 1954, and its subsequent expansion, which saw it surpass the French military forces, the occupying power resorted to a range of repressive measures to regain control and break the will of the Algerian people, having recognized them as the primary supporters of the revolution. In response, France devised a profound strategy, with the policy of concentration camps emerging as one of the harshest and most impactful means. A large number of Algerians were forcibly transferred to these closed camps under the pretext of false security claims, when, in fact, the main goal was to isolate the Algerian people from their revo-

lution. This policy was part of a comprehensive plan aimed at facilitating psychological warfare designed to weaken and disrupt the morale of the Algerians, destabilizing them both psychologically and socially in order to weaken their resistance.

The psychological warfare waged by France against the Algerians involved the concentration camps as one of its most violent tools. The internees were subjected to deplorable conditions, which can only be described as inhumane, in an attempt to dismantle the unity of the Algerian people and undermine their support for the National Liberation Army. The internees were placed under constant surveillance and deprived of the basic necessities of life, creating a new environment dominat-

ed by ongoing psychological pressure.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the psychological aspects of the colonial war waged by France within the concentration camps, by highlighting the psychological tools used to break the spirits of the Algerians and to make them doubt the possibility of their revolution's success. The study also seeks to provide a true picture of the daily reality experienced by the Algerians in these camps, its impact on the psyche of the internees, and how the camps, in their miserable state, became a force for enhancing the awareness of the internees regarding the importance of the revolution, thus pushing it forward and thwarting the colonial plan.

Thus, the research problem posed is: How did the French authorities conduct their psychological warfare within the concentration camps, and to what extent was it successful?

To answer these questions, the study is divided into the following sections:

1. Theoretical Framework: "Psychological Warfare" and "Concentration Camps"
2. French Concentration Camps in Algeria: Origins and Objectives
3. The Life of Algerians Inside the Internment Camps
4. The Psychological Repercussions of Psychological Warfare on Algerians in Internment Camps
5. The Revolution's Approach to the Concentration Camps (Methods and Outcomes)

Although many studies have addressed the topic of psychological warfare in the context of French colonialism in Algeria, such as Professor Djamel Kendel's article titled "French Occupation Approaches in Dealing with the Algerian Revolution - Psychological Warfare as a Model (1954-1962)", and the doctoral dissertation by researcher Mohamed Ben Dara titled "French Psychological Warfare and the Algerian Revolution's Reactions (1955-1960): A Study of the Psychological Warfare Activities of the French Army's Fifth Bureau in the Tenth Military Region", in addition to Professor Mohamed Mohamedi's article "French Colonial Psychological Warfare and Its Impact on the Algerian Revolution: The La Bleuette Conspiracy in the Historic Wilaya III (1958-1959) as a Model", and others, as well as several studies that examined the impact of internment camps on the Algerian population—most notably Professor Rachid Kassiba's article "French Internment Camps in the Algerian Sahara During the Liberation Revolution Through Oral Testimony, Professor Bakhtaoui Kassmi's article "Internment Camps and Torture Centers: Living Testimonies from the Sabra Region (Tlemcen)", and Professor Abdelkader

Fkaiyer's article "Algerians in Prisons, Internment Camps, and Torture Centers During the Liberation War".

there is a clear research gap in connecting these two topics, as no previous study has addressed the psychological warfare within the concentration camps as a colonial psychological tool. This gap is of great importance, as the impact of implementing the concentration camp policy went beyond the concept of physical imprisonment of individuals and extended to the systematic psychological assault aimed at breaking the morale of the Algerian people, weakening them, and distancing them from their revolution.

This study adopts the historical method to trace the development and implementation of the concentration camp policy. It also employs both descriptive and analytical methods to study and analyze the various French psychological tools used in the camps and assess their effects.

1. Theoretical Framework: "Psychological Warfare" and "Internment Camps":

1.1. Definition of Psychological Warfare:

Psychological warfare falls within the disciplines of social psychology and military psychology. It involves the use of propaganda, rumors, and various psychological techniques to influence the enemy's psyche and morale. The objective is to evoke specific emotions among the masses, undermining their confidence in themselves, their leaders, beliefs, history, and identity. Additionally, it aims to weaken their resolve and determination, fostering divisions among them to distract from their primary cause, thereby making them more vulnerable to control and submission without resistance. (Kendel, 2018: 225)

Psychological warfare¹ is considered one of the most dangerous forms of warfare, as it directly targets the minds, thoughts, and emotions of individuals on the opposing side. Its goal is to destroy their morale, push them toward psychological collapse, and erode their trust in their institutions. At the same time, it seeks to create admiration for the power, capabilities, and efficiency of the opposing force. Ultimately, the primary objective of psychological warfare is to eliminate the

¹Psychological warfare, like other forms of warfare, is subject to both success and failure. Its success can be overwhelming, even though it is difficult to measure quantitatively. Similarly, its failure can be fatal, even if intangible—yet it can still be detected and understood. See: (Mogaddem, 1997: 145)

enemy's will to fight and cultivate a readiness to accept defeat. (Bousna, 2016: 318)

It can be said that psychological warfare is part of total warfare, as it is waged before, during, and after the conflict. Its effects may appear in the short, medium, or long term. It is more comprehensive and broader in scope because it targets both fighters and the population simultaneously, aiming for the desired impact. Unlike military battles, it does not rely on direct confrontation but resorts to indirect methods that are more enticing and attractive (Kendel, 2018: 225). Therefore, psychological warfare encompasses all non-military tactics aimed at defeating the enemy, contributing effectively to his subjugation and influencing him through moral and psychological means. (Mohamed, 2021: 52-62)

"Linberger" defines it from two basic perspectives: In the narrow sense, it is "the use of propaganda against the enemy along with practical measures of a military, economic, or political nature that propaganda requires." In the broader sense, it is "the application of certain aspects of psychology to assist efforts in the political, economic, and military fields." (Dabbagh, 1998: 16-17)

-The Importance of Psychological Warfare

Psychological warfare clearly encompasses various non-combat activities and operations that transmit ideas and information to the enemy. Its primary objective is often to influence the enemy's strategies and military actions in order to thwart their plans, weaken their morale, and diminish their will to fight. By doing so, confronting and defeating the enemy through both military and non-military means becomes significantly easier. (Mohamed, 2021: 54)

Psychological weaponry holds a significant position not only due to its reliance on modern technologies, but also because it is the only tool capable of measuring and evaluating outcomes achieved in the field. For this reason, it remains the primary instrument that informs decision-making regarding the conditions under which other operations and activities are to be deployed. (Ben Dara, 2008-2009: 14)

While modern states consider moral strength to constitute 50% of a nation's overall power, Napoleon believed that it accounted for three-quarters of total power-approximately 75% of the strength utilized in military efforts. Naturally, moral strength does not operate in isolation; it must be supported by material power. The former functions as a set of levers that remain ineffective without a solid material foundation to rely upon. (Dabbagh, 1998: 47)

The French occupation administration was determined to push psychological warfare to its furthest extent in a frenzied attempt to secure victory in this domain. At the time, psychological warfare had become a prevailing topic due to the high hopes placed on its potential to create a decisive rupture between the Algerian people and the revolution. On one hand, it aimed to sever ties between the population and the revolutionary movement; on the other, it sought to destabilize the revolution from within by igniting internal divisions-an aspiration shared by both French politicians and military leaders, as well as the enemies of the revolution. (Kendel, 2018: 228)

Based on the above, it can be concluded that psychological warfare was one of the most dangerous colonial tactics employed by France against the Algerian Revolution. It would not be an exaggeration to assert that it functioned as a parallel strategy to the military approach that France heavily relied upon. Its significance lies in the impact it achieves when successful-it is a lethal method designed to crush Algerian morale and isolate the people from their revolution.

1.2. The Concept of Concentration Camps

1.2.1. Definition of "Concentration Camp"

- **Linguistically:** The word "concentration camp" is derived from the verb to concentrate, meaning to gather, assemble, or bring together a population in a specific area. The plural form, concentrations, refers to the act of collecting people within a relatively confined space. From this root, the term concentration camp emerged, signifying a site of assembly or congregation. (Hamaoui, 2000: 288)

- **Terminologically :** A concentration camp is a newly established settlement that houses nationals who have not been judicially convicted, surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by soldiers. (Murtad, 1983: 106) The camp¹ is enclosed by three circles of barbed wire, with

¹The external appearance of internment camps took two main forms. The first type was surrounded by barbed wire, with watchtowers at each of the four corners, and had a single guarded entrance with a small gate office equipped with a stamp for marking documents. Near the entrance, there were several barriers made of stones or iron beams. This was the most common and recognizable form. The second type was enclosed by a wall topped with barbed wire and glass shards. These were often either former military barracks repurposed as camps or were established on top of cemeteries. A third form existed in the Algerian Sahara: camps located in remote desert areas, guarded by French soldiers or "goumiers" (auxiliary troops), making entry and

the outermost layer consisting of an iron wall 3 meters high, supported by electrical poles. Around the camp, at specific intervals, there are watchtowers reaching a height of 15 meters, from which armed guards with machine guns and electric lights point toward the camp throughout the night. Additionally, armored vehicles patrol the area. (Azoui, 1996 : 147)

Concentration camps are unnatural settlements where Algerians, forcibly displaced from their land, are confined in areas declared forbidden (Murtad, Guide to the Terminology, 2001: 76). Locally, these camps were known as "the wire" due to the barbed wire that surrounded them. (Kassmi, 2012 : 221-222)

Abdelhamid Mehri defines a concentration camp as: "A French military center, established in strategic locations chosen by the enemy, where the population is forcibly relocated to create a protective belt around French centers, in exchange for the complete destruction of their lands, particularly housing and sources of livelihood, such as farms." (Mehri, 1979 : 83)

2. French Concentration Camps in Algeria: Origins and Objectives:

2.1. The Emergence of Concentration Camps in Algeria:

The idea of concentration camps in Algeria emerged in response to the French authorities' desire to monitor the Algerian population and limit its support for the liberation revolution. The roots of this policy can be traced back to 1844, when France sought to gather the population in specific areas in order to stabilize the situation. (Fkaiyer, 2018: 423) During the period between 1846 and 1847, a number of people were gathered in specific locations where they were forced to build their own dwellings. (Carnaton, 1998: 45). With the outbreak of the liberation revolution in November 1954, France began establishing assembly centers for Algerians, particularly in active areas such as Batna, where aircraft and artillery were used to force the population to relocate by force (Boumali, 2003: 275)

During In 1955, the Governor General issued a decree regulating the concentration camps, with strict instructions to monitor correspondence and suppress any attempt at rebellion or escape by force. (Ayada, 2017-2018 : 47-48). With the escalation of French repression between 1955 and 1956, Algerians were subjected to mass displacement towards cities or forced relocation in areas under strict military surveillance. This period was marked by the emergence of the scorched earth

exit extremely difficult for the population due to the harsh terrain.
See: (Kassiba, 2015: 260)

strategy, which relied on clearing vital areas of their population. (Naili, 2024 : 451)

On April 8, 1955, the General Governor issued a directive to the administrative heads for implementation, and on July 7, 1955, an instruction was issued concerning the organization of the various internment centers. One of the most significant aspects of this was the surveillance of all communications, and Article 10 stipulated that any attempt by the rebels to escape would be suppressed through the use of public force and all available means. (Ayada, 2017-2018 : 47-48)

Between 1955 and 1956, with the intensification of French repression in the Aurès, the northern Constantine region, and the Kabylie area, the Algerians experienced widespread displacement, with some migrating to urban areas. Those who remained were concentrated around the various French military centers, located along main transportation routes and on the slopes of mountains. By 1956, the assembly operations took on a different nature, as the evacuation of areas frequented by the revolutionaries was carried out to turn them into forbidden zones, applying the scorched earth policy. (Naili, 2024 : 451)

The year 1958¹ witnessed a massive expansion of the concentration camps, with a large budget allocated for their construction. The number of camps reached 1,500 during this period, housing around 740,000 Algerians. By the end of 1959, the number increased to one million detainees, and by the eve of independence, it reached nearly three million Algerians. (Lounissi, 2012 : 18)

2.2. The French Objectives Behind the Establishment of Internment Camps:

The French authorities justified the establishment of the concentration camps with humanitarian objectives, claiming that they aimed to protect the population and improve their social conditions. (Graoui, 2010-2011 : 119) .However, the real objective was to isolate the National Liberation Army from its popular base and cut off its logistical and supply routes. (Carnaton, 2013: 92). Other objectives of this policy included: (Mekdder, 2022 : 14-15)

¹During the same year, when the concentration camps spread widely, a large budget was allocated to ensure their successful establishment. The Directorate General of Political Affairs reported that the budget allocated for this purpose reached 2,904 million French francs in October 1958. The number of detainees increased annually, peaking in 1958, when the number of camps in the capital alone reached 66, housing around 40,000 Algerians. See: (Naquet, 2001: 140-142)

- Using the detainees as human shields to protect their military barracks.
- Disrupting the family and social ties among the Algerians.
- Depriving the displaced people of their property and land to weaken them economically.
- Creating psychological barriers between the detainees and other populations to sever communication between them.

3. The Life of Algerians Inside the Internment Camps

France relied on psychological warfare as a response to the liberation revolution, aiming to seize the initiative from the revolution and combat it with the same weapon, engaging in the same field it had chosen: the population. (Ben Dara, 2008-200 : 14). France imposed the internment camp system as a means to control and subjugate the Algerian people. These camps represented a tragic reality where Algerians lived under harsh conditions, stripped of their freedom and deprived of their most basic rights. These places served as a mirror reflecting the extent of French policies aimed at suppressing the revolution by all possible means. Through this section, we will explore the details of Algerians' lives inside the internment camps.

3.1. Shortage of Basic Needs

-Deliberate Starvation: The internment camps did not provide Algerians, who were forced into them, with even the most basic daily necessities. Upon arrival, civilians and their families were immediately registered by officers of the Indigenous Affairs¹ Bureau in lists that were then sent to the French military command overseeing the respective camp. Based on these records, the army determined and dispatched the necessary supplies according to the number of internees. Once the provisions arrived, they were distributed by the Goumiers under the supervision of a French officer. Each individual received a daily ration of 125 grams of grain, which women had to grind using a *rha* (a traditional millstone) to produce flour for baking bread. (Filali,

1994: 89). However, the allocated food rations were often incomplete, as *SAS* officers (Service des Affaires Algériennes) would withhold a portion for the Goumiers to ensure their loyalty and facilitate their recruitment as informants within the camps. As a result, internees lived in a constant state of hunger. Additionally, *SAS* officers exploited these grain supplies as a source of income by compelling farmers to cultivate land for their benefit, selling the harvested crops at prices they dictated. (Kalil, 1999 : 40)

It is worth noting that the *SAS*² was established after "Guy Mollet" took office as Prime Minister on February 1, 1956. This organization waged psychological warfare in villages, towns, camps, and prisons, working to recruit informants among detainees by preying on those who had been subjected to torture before their arrival. (Fkaiyer, 2018 : 438)

The concentration camps prevented Algerians from their livelihood, which was often based on subsistence farming and livestock herding. Their farmland and pastures became forbidden areas, where orders were given to open fire on anything that moved. (Ben Dara, 2008-2009: 199)

According to the French journalist "Pierre Maquinet", residents of the regroupment centers were unable to cultivate or plow their lands, as they were located within restricted areas, leaving them entirely without resources. (Fkaiyer, French Torture of Algerians..., 2012: 35)

Regarding food, journalist Pierre Maquinet states "It consists of distributing 120 grams of semolina per person per day... Half a liter of milk is distributed twice a week to 250 children selected from among the most in need, while the remaining 1,610 children live without milk... For the past eight months, fats have been removed from the diet, and for a year, no sugar, chick-peas, or soap has been distributed." (Fkaiyer, French Torture of Algerians ..., 2012: 36)

The newspaper El Moudjahid reports that the regulations of the camps forced detainees to attend roll calls three times a day, salute the French flag, and remain standing for long hours. Moreover, prayer was not

¹Among the tasks assigned to the SAS teams in the administrative field were: identifying and registering individuals by issuing various documents for the displaced, such as registration cards, travel permits for domestic and international travel, exit permits from the camps, accommodation permits, permits for the transportation and storage of food supplies, and others. This process was part of the surveillance operation affecting both the camp's residents and its surroundings, involving tracking and monitoring the movement of individuals and identifying both the residents of the camps and those arriving to them. See: (Mathias, 1998: 110)

²According to the decree issued on July 28, 1957, which granted the status of judicial police officer to these same officers, all matters related to the camps fell under the jurisdiction of the officers of the Specialized Administrative Sections. Their responsibilities extended from the relocation phase to the selection of regrouping sites, and ultimately to the supervision and management of the camps. See: (Mathias, 1998: 27)

permitted. At 11 a.m., they were served a small amount of what resembled boiled meat in metal containers, along with 150 grams of bread. In the evening, dinner consisted of a small round piece of pressed dates, two or three tomatoes, and a single onion. (Moudjahid, 1958 : 08)

In the same context, French journalist "Pierre Maquiné", writing in *Le Figaro* (21-07-1959), describes one of the internment camps: "In some regroupment centers, the residents do not find enough to sustain themselves. I will not easily forget those hands, so emaciated that they resembled thin sticks, those fearful faces, and the sunken cheeks." (Fkaiyer, French Torture of Algerians ..., 2012: 35)

Le Figaro further explains the reason behind the French authorities' approach to food distribution: "The French authorities distribute food in meager and extremely limited quantities to ensure that the revolutionaries receive no assistance from these inhabitants. This is the reason why nearly two million Algerians were subjected to slow death in the regroupment centers—or more accurately, in death camps." (Fkaiyer, French Torture of Algerians ..., 2012: 36)

-Medical Neglect: In reality, the internment camps were collective prisons where Algerians lived lives of misery and deprivation. Bishop "Jacques Beaumont" described the dire conditions endured by children in these camps in a booklet he wrote in October 1959: "I saw children whose bones were clearly visible beneath their skin. They were children exhausted by fever and cold, their growth stunted, their bodies pale and emaciated, ravaged by various diseases without even a tablet of quinine to stop the fever. I saw them shivering from fever, lying on the ground without a blanket. I visited many centers where not a single blanket was available. In some cases, there was only one blanket for thirteen people, who all shared it inside a single tent." (Zghidi, 2004 : 234)

The environment within the camps was highly conducive to the spread of various deadly diseases and epidemics, particularly affecting children and the elderly. Diseases such as typhoid, cholera, whooping cough, skin infections, and respiratory illnesses (Azoui, 1996: 40) were rampant due to the contamination of drinking water with sewage and the proliferation of insects such as mosquitoes and flies. These conditions resulted in frail and malnourished bodies, with bones visibly protruding. (Naili, 2024: 459) The suffering was not limited to physical illnesses but extended to severe psychological distress as well. (Azoui, 1996 : 40)

Regarding the spread of tuberculosis among children, Bishop "Jacques Beaumont" noted:

"In all hospitals, doctors and nurses observe with alarm that tuberculosis, which had been under control for the past ten years, is now spreading again at an alarming rate due to malnutrition, particularly among children." (Zghidi, 2004 : 234-235)

Furthermore, *El Moudjahid* newspaper affirmed that the French authorities did nothing to combat these diseases and deliberately withheld essential medicines as part of their policy of genocide against the Algerian people.

-Inadequate Shelter: Journalist "Pierre Maquiné" describes the Bismbourg center near the town of El Kala in an article published in *Le Figaro*: "One-third of the population, or 923 individuals, now live in houses built with stones, thanks to aid from the Rural Housing Service. This means that in this center, 47 houses accommodate an average of twenty people each. As for the rest of the population, they live in 123 tents and 157 huts, meaning that each tent and hut shelters more than ten people. Among the residents of this center, there are 1,860 children, many of whom cannot attend the office because each child possesses only a single shirt that barely covers their body." (Fkaiyer, French Torture of Algerians ..., 2012: 36)

Thus, it can be said that France deliberately sought to humiliate the detainees and foster a sense of defeat. Even children in the camps were not spared from this oppressive policy. These conditions led to feelings of helplessness and marginalization, negatively impacting their psychological and social development. The extreme deprivation and constant lack of privacy created persistent feelings of frustration and despair, fostering a sense of insecurity and reinforcing social isolation and severe psychological distress.

By the autumn of 1958, life inside the camps had become a living hell. With the complete absence of decent living conditions, the shelters consisted merely of tents, which were quickly destroyed by the autumn winds, leaving their inhabitants exposed. This dire situation forced them to gather wood and reeds to construct makeshift huts for shelter. (Zghidi, 2004 : 235)

3.2. Surveillance and Daily Repression

Entering and exiting the internment camps was extremely difficult due to the intensified searches conducted at the gates. Daily attendance was strictly enforced, requiring individuals labeled as "dangerous" by France and its collaborators to sign a designated

card. Even shepherds were not spared from strict surveillance; the French authorities dictated their daily grazing routes to ensure they remained under constant watch and to prevent any contact with the freedom fighters. (Kassmi, 2012 : 224)

France also used the pretext of attempted escape as a justification for killing whomever it wished. It became evident that its goal was the extermination of Algerians, leading it to devise various methods to achieve this. The camps were equipped with facilities dedicated to practicing all forms of torture—physical, psychological, and emotional—without any regard for the category of victims. (Naili, 2024: 460-461) Algerian women were not spared from these brutal policies; they were subjected to torture, abuse, displacement, and even rape, exposing the deeply disturbed mindset of the colonial forces and the violent criminal nature of their actions. (Belghith, 1978 : 47)

Since the Algerian woman represents half of Algerian society and is a key factor for peace and stability, she was specifically targeted with focused psychological operations to serve the colonizer's objectives. This was done through the intensification of the mobile social medical teams, which traveled through rural areas and villages, visiting the population in the concentration camps. These teams used medical and social aid as a means to reach Algerian women, blending it with extensive psychological propaganda and intelligence work against the revolution. The teams exploited the misery of Algerian women to undermine their morale, conveying messages and content to their relatives involved in the revolution, urging them to stop resisting and surrender. One team was assigned to each village, hamlet, or concentration camp, with a population of between 1,500 to 3,000 women. (Ben Dara, Psychological Operations on Algerian Women..., 2009 : 127-141)

As part of its psychological warfare within the camps, the colonial administration set up surveillance towers equipped with floodlights and loudspeakers that continuously broadcast threats and propaganda aimed at brainwashing detainees. It also deployed "communal guards" tasked with ensuring the comfort of French soldiers while intensifying the repression of Algerians, engaging in psychological warfare that defied all ethical and humanitarian values. (Graoui, 2010-2011 : 123)

Additionally, France sought to reshape the mindset of the detainees by leveraging its media apparatus. It banned Arabic-language foreign newspapers while allowing Algerians to purchase and read French publications. Moreover, detainees were compelled to listen to speeches by General de Gaulle and his collaborators, further reinforcing the psychological

manipulation efforts within the camps. (Naili, 2024 : 458)

Thus, France devised a new method of torturing Algerians through slow death by confining them to internment camps where they endured the harshest forms of misery. This was expressed by *France-Soir* in an article published on April 15, 1960, about regroupment centers: "They are now in deadly misery in the true sense of the word. Many of them die frequently, especially children. Among those born here in the past two years, one in every two did not survive their first year." (Zghidi, 2004 : 235)

It is also important to highlight the policy of ignorance deliberately pursued by France within the internment camps. In the absence of facilities dedicated to educating children, they were deprived of their right to learn. However, the secret organizations of the National Liberation Front countered this by assigning nationalist intellectuals within the camps to teach people reading and writing. (Kassmi, 2012 : 225)

From the above, it can be concluded that the Algerians confined in these camps lived a tragic existence in wretched huts lacking the most basic necessities of a dignified life. These centers reflected the deliberate neglect and cruelty imposed by French colonial rule on the interned population. Their daily lives were subjected to a series of repressive measures designed to ensure complete control over them. They were deprived of freedom of movement, forced to remain within extremely restricted boundaries under strict surveillance. The daily reality of the detainees was dominated by systematic humiliation and continuous degradation. They were subjected to verbal and physical abuse by French soldiers, who intentionally sought to strip Algerians of their dignity in front of their families and children. The detainees were also forced to endure harsh inspections and constant violations of their personal privacy.

4. The Psychological Repercussions of Psychological Warfare on Algerians in Internment Camps

The establishment of concentration camps in rural areas represents a true implementation of what is known as the "emptying the basin" policy, aimed at suffocating the fish by draining the water in which it swims. This operation specifically targeted the Algerian rural population, who lived in isolated and scattered settlements, which served as stopping points for regrouping and resupply for the National Liberation Army soldiers. The process of gathering the population into camps near military camps was a means of monitoring the population and hindering the

movement of the liberation revolution. (Ben Dara, *The French Psychological Warfare and the Reactions of the Algerian Revolution ...*, 2008-2009 : 199)

The Algerians endured harsh conditions as the French authorities forced them to adapt to a life of submission and oppression within the confined space known as the "internment camp." These camps effectively became open-air prisons, severing social ties with the outside world. Faced with inhumane living conditions, they had no choice but to resist or break, and both options left a profound impact on their psyche and collective memory. The psychological effects of the various hardships endured by Algerians in the camps can be summarized as follows:

-Medical Neglect as a Means of Weakening Collective

Morale: France sought to destroy the morale of the Algerians and gradually strip them of their humanity through these camps. As previously mentioned, camp residents suffered from dire conditions, lacking even the most basic standards of hygiene and healthcare. This fostered a persistent feeling of neglect and marginalization. The widespread diseases among the detainees led to a severe deterioration in their health, not merely as a result of malnutrition and neglect but as a symbol of their helplessness and loss of hope. This deteriorating and disease-ridden environment deepened their sense of fear and despair, further intensifying their psychological distress.

-Sowing Discord and Its Psychological Impact on

Algerians: France attempted to create division and discord among Algerians to weaken their unity. It sought to recruit as many Algerians as possible into its ranks to distance them from the revolution, primarily using the *harkis* and *SAS* forces. (Nälaman, 2017: 56-57) Through this strategy, France aimed to destabilize the psychological unity of Algerians, leading to a state of distrust and fear. By deploying *harkis* and *SAS* agents to dismantle social bonds and pressure individuals into abandoning their support for the revolution, France created deep divisions among Algerians. The psychological consequence of this manipulation was a profound loss of security and collective identity, which significantly affected morale and instilled doubt among those in the camps.

-The French army exploited these concentration camps to disseminate its ideas and various rumors, employing a strategy of both inducement and intimidation to instill hatred and hostility among the population toward the National Liberation Army. The aim was to distort its image and portray it negatively by blaming it for the suffering of the Algerian people, thereby discouraging any cooperation with it. (Mokeddem, 1997: 167) The *SAS* teams inside the camps used various means, such

as broadcasting propaganda speeches and songs through loudspeakers in public squares and corridors, as well as screening wall films that celebrated France's glory and showcased its civilizational and military strength. (Mathias, 1998: 53-54)

-French Propaganda and Its Effect on Algerian

Morale:As mentioned earlier, internment camps were established near military centers to deceive international public opinion into believing that Algerians had fled the mountains, rural areas, and villages to seek security and protection under the French army, supposedly because they had grown weary of the revolution and its fighters. To reinforce this narrative, French authorities occasionally invited journalists to take photographs of large groups of Algerian civilians and publish them on the front pages of newspapers with captions such as: "Algerian civilians are tired of the revolutionaries and have come under the protection of security and peace forces." or "Pacification is advancing rapidly." (Loumissi, 2012 : 22-23)

It is evident that these measures made Algerians appear as if they were seeking safety under French military protection-a major falsification of reality. This media deception was not only intended to tarnish the image of the revolution but also to undermine the psychological confidence of Algerians in their struggle, planting doubt about the legitimacy of their resistance. By portraying them as weak and submissive, French propaganda sought to generate a collective sense of helplessness and despair in the face of the colonial media machine.

-The Psychological Impact of Siege and Deprivation on

Freedom Fighters:The deprivation of the revolution from essential supplies and food, along with the prohibition of any contact between the people and the National Liberation Army, was a deliberate strategy by France to suffocate the revolution through the internment camps, ultimately aiming to force many fighters into surrender.(Loumissi, 2012: 22-23) This blockade had profound psychological effects on the revolutionaries, as the deliberate siege contributed to a deep sense of anxiety and distress.

- The colonial administration deployed some of its agents within the concentration camps to spread rumors aimed at weakening the will of the Algerians inside. These included claims that the revolution had failed, or that certain individuals had been captured or killed. (Medarbal, 2024:105), These agents also worked actively to provoke discord and unrest among the Algerians, attempting to stir up regional tensions with the aim of creating division and disunity. Such efforts were part of a broader strategy intended to destroy the

Algerian individual from within, thereby undermining and ultimately aborting the liberation revolution.

-The Psychological Impact of Brainwashing and Control Over the Interned Population: France sought to manipulate the morale of those in the camps, gradually attempting to sway them to its side by making them abandon their nationalist beliefs. This was done through specialized lessons that praised the benefits and achievements of colonialism, a process that can be classified as brainwashing. Furthermore, France resorted to the use of internationally banned injections, posing a significant danger to human health, such as the administration of Pentothal. This substance was used to hypnotize individuals, rendering them completely submissive and turning them into obedient tools in the hands of the French authorities. (Lounissi, 2012 : 23-24)

-The Psychological Effect of Surveillance and Inspections on Camp Inhabitants: The strict restrictions on movement in and out of the camps created a constant psychological strain on the internees, reinforcing a sense of lost freedom and personal autonomy. This intense surveillance generated a persistent feeling of anxiety and oppression, as every individual felt they were under continuous watch, unable to move freely or communicate with others. Consequently, this state of fear and tension exacerbated feelings of helplessness and psychological isolation. The oppressive atmosphere was intended to break the collective will and diminish any potential support for the freedom fighters.

It is essential to emphasize that the policy of violence imposed on Algerians was not random; rather, it was a calculated and systematic strategy that clearly reflected the political philosophy of the French state. This philosophy authorized its agents to undertake any action necessary to suppress any form of resistance, framing their acts as heroic and patriotic endeavors in service of the nation. (Medarbal, 2024: 106)

5. The Revolution's Approach to the Concentration Camps (Methods and Outcomes)

The psychological operations directed at the Algerian people aimed to achieve three interconnected objectives: (Ben Dara, *The French Psychological Warfare and the Reactions of the Algerian Revolution* ..., 2008-2009: 137)

1. To separate the people from the revolution and sever their ties with it, including eliminating all forms of sympathy, whether moral or material, between them and the revolution.

2. To instill a deep conviction in them that their true interests lie with France, not with the revolution.

3. To work on bridging the gap between the Europeans in Algeria and the Algerian people to build what was called the French-Algerian group, on the basis of which the so-called "New French Algeria" would be established.

Through this study, we have come to understand that France's primary objective in establishing the internment camps was to isolate the revolution from its natural popular base, particularly the Algerian countryside, which had long supported the resistance. This was achieved by launching an intense psychological war aimed at weakening the spirit of resistance, instilling the idea of surrender among the interned Algerians, and even shaking their confidence in the revolution and its ability to achieve independence. However, the undeniable reality is that while the internment camps had a negative psychological impact on the detainees, they ultimately failed to achieve their intended goal, as the Algerian liberation movement successfully countered this psychological warfare through its own strategic approach.

At first, the camps seemed like a catastrophe for the Algerians, but the strategic insight of the National Liberation Front (FLN) turned them into a tool for spreading its principles and objectives. In a short period, these camps became sources of support for the armed struggle in both rural and urban areas. This transformation can be attributed to the rising level of awareness and consciousness among the Algerian people. (Zebiri, 1999 : 35) The camps, which brought together individuals from various segments of society, fostered greater interaction and solidarity among them. Forced to adapt to the harsh conditions they faced, the internees developed a unique atmosphere of cooperation to overcome their struggles. (Tass, 2008/2009 : 73) This psychological dynamic demonstrates how turning challenges into opportunities can strengthen collective willpower and enhance resilience in the face of adversity.

The revolution was able to establish a structured council responsible for overseeing the internment camps. This council was usually composed of members from outside the camp, represented within the camp by one or more individuals. Their mission was to organize the internees, boost their morale, and encourage them to refrain from cooperating with the officers of the *Affaires Indigènes* under any circumstances. The individuals in charge of the camp were also tasked with gathering intelligence on any movements of soldiers from the military barracks or *Garde Nationale* and transmitting this information to the *moudjahidine*, especially regarding preparations for combating

operations in the mountains. These messages were often delivered by women, (Cheriet, 2007: 205) who played a significant role in establishing political cells and maintaining communication with the National Liberation Army (ALN) (Zghidi, 2004: 235-236). This mutual cooperation greatly contributed to raising the morale of the people and strengthening their determination to continue the struggle.

Despite the hardships women endured inside the camps, Algerian women actively resisted the siege and supported the revolution in every way possible. Women who were forced by the French army to wash soldiers' clothes managed to seize many garments, which were then sent to the ALN. They also smuggled food and ammunition continuously and played a crucial role in helping young men escape from the camps to join the National Liberation Army. Thanks to the relentless efforts of Algerian women, the National Liberation Front (FLN) was able to challenge all colonial strategies, infiltrate the camps, and organize the people within. (Zghidi, 2004: 235-236) This highlights the resilience and determination of Algerian women, who emerged as key players in breaking the siege imposed by French forces. They became symbols of strength and resistance, fostering a deep sense of pride and belonging within the community.

The FLN also succeeded in establishing specialized propaganda and media cells aimed at boosting the morale of the internees, assisting them in escaping from the camps, and inciting those who remained to rebel against French authority. (Daif Allah, 2013 : 352)

France failed to isolate the internees from their revolution, as they managed to organize themselves into cells, collecting funds, transmitting information, and transporting weapons and ammunition. They even infiltrated those collaborating with France and recruited informants from within the French forces, particularly among the Harkis and Garde Nationale, who were assigned to surveillance and guard duties in the camps. These informants supplied the revolution with intelligence on French troop movements, as well as with medicine, food, clothing, ammunition, and financial contributions (Fkaiyer, Algerians in Prisons, Detention Camps..., 2018: 432). This clearly demonstrates the strength of collective will and determination among the internees. The cooperation that emerged among them, despite the harsh conditions, reinforced their sense of belonging and identity and highlighted their latent power in supporting the revolution. This further confirmed that the revolution was ongoing and that France would not succeed in separating them from their objectives.

Thus, we can say that these internment camps produced entirely opposite results. Instead of isolating the population, they brought Algerian civilians closer to their revolution and facilitated the spread of the revolution from rural and mountainous areas to cities and villages. This became an opportunity for the FLN to strengthen its ties with the Algerian people even further. (Tass, 2008/2009 : 73)

In the so-called "forbidden zones" designated by France, the ALN intensified its operations to tighten the noose around enemy forces. Colonel Ali Kafi, commander of the Second Wilaya, described this situation by stating: "The enemy sought to separate us from the population, but the result was that they found themselves in a state of constant fear of sudden attacks and unexpected ambushes." The ALN launched attacks on several military centers where internment camps were located, particularly along the eastern and western borders. As a result, many internees managed to flee to the mountains or to Tunisian and Moroccan territories. (Naili, 2024 : 463-464)

This underscores the psychological impact of the ALN's continued resistance on the occupying forces. The persistent surprise attacks and ambushes instilled constant fear, weakness, and insecurity among the enemy. At the same time, they strengthened the sense of belonging and confidence among the Algerian internees, reinforcing their commitment to the revolutionary cause.

Conclusion: At the conclusion of this study, several key findings emerge regarding the nature of the psychological warfare waged by the French colonial authorities against the Algerian people within the concentration camps.

The study reveals the hidden dimensions of the colonial strategy, which aimed to separate the Algerian people from their revolution. Concentration camps were used as a tool to implement psychological warfare, intended to instill fear, destabilize the internal balance of the Algerian individual, and thereby dismantle the social fabric of the community. This was manifested in the creation of isolated environments known as concentration camps.

The psychological warfare targeting the internees was carried out through various methods, most notably the isolation of individuals in closed centers, the application of continuous psychological pressure through the dissemination of misleading rumors, the restriction of movement, starvation, and medical neglect, among other tactics. As a result, the camps became spaces that exceeded human endurance, combining both physical and psychological suffering to

form a comprehensive model of systematic psychological pressure. This reality confirms the failure of the French military solution in suppressing the Algerian revolution- a solution France had long relied upon. Thus, it turned to targeting the psychological resilience of Algerians as a parallel approach to the military option.

However, the undeniable truth is that the outcomes of implementing psychological warfare against Algerian internees were contrary to what the French authorities had planned. The harsh experience of the camps actually deepened the political and national

consciousness of the internees and instilled in them a spirit of resistance rather than submission. This was made possible thanks to the revolutionary strategy, which managed to infiltrate the camps and shift the balance in its favor. Consequently, the suffering of the internees turned into a unified collective memory that strengthened the spirit of revolution and solidarity, reinforcing the bond between the people and their revolution. Therefore, it can be concluded that the psychological warfare practiced within the camps failed to achieve its objectives and, instead, made the Algerians' determination for independence an irreversible and decisive choice.

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