



The Fan Affair and the conquest of Algeria¹

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ABSTRACT

The study analyses the domestic political background of the conflict that resulted in the French conquest of Algeria. The author begins at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries when the Paris government bought grain from Algerian merchants. Subsequent economic cooperation, including the provision and collection of loans, negatively affected mutual relations. Deteriorating relations were negatively affected by the appointment of Hussein Pasha as governor of Algeria in 1818, and they further worsened after a diplomatic insult against the French ambassador in April 1827. The article analyses developments in both countries, the gradual escalation of conflicts and their response in the European powers and presents the reasons that prompted the French government to intervene.

KEYWORDS

France, the conquest of Algeria, Charles X, Jules Prince de Polignac, 1830

INTRODUCTION

The tense political and social climate in France at the end of the second decade of the 19th century reflected the citizens' dissatisfaction with the regime of the returned Bourbons. King Charles X (1757–1836) promoted absolutism and restrictions on the press and relied primarily on the Catholic Church and the pre-revolutionary nobility. Together with the Prime Minister, Prince Jules Auguste Marie de Polignac (1780–1847), he tried to divert public attention from the negative response of extremely conservative domestic policy measures to foreign policy, and use the age-old dispute with Algeria, a vassal of the Ottoman Empire, to achieve easy victory and thus raise the prestige of the army and the regime.

The study analyses Franco-Algerian economic and political relations after 1818 when Hussein Pasha became Algerian governor. The analysis will focus on business

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negotiations and subsequent debt collection in the early 19th century and then assess the impact of economic relations with Algeria on the domestic French political scene. Last but not least, it will evaluate French policy towards Great Britain and Russia in the context of Algerian-French relations.

The analysis was based on sources of a personal nature. Former Prime Minister Viscount Jean-Baptiste Martignac³ commented on Prince Polignac's views and political thinking in his memoirs. Interesting details were also provided by the memoirs of Alexander Mazas,⁴ commander of the Ham prison where Polignac was placed after the coup in 1830. The study also used the memoirs of General Louis Bourmont,⁵ Admiral Victor Duperré⁶ and an anonymous participant⁷ in the desert battles in Africa. Statements by members of the government, new laws in Algeria and articles in the French daily press meant to influence public opinion were also analysed.

The study develops some of the conclusions of the still fundamental monograph of Sixte de Bourbon⁸ from the interwar era, as well as a more recent adaptation by Jennifer Sessions,⁹ whose work presents the circumstances of the development of French society and the growing position of the press in the post-Napoleonic era. Although the authors of the sub-studies, Charles Ageron and James McDougall,¹⁰ commented very marginally on this issue, they provided key information for commenting on the elections in France and for the situation in the occupied Algerian territory. Combined with a description of the volatile situation in the military, the study presents a picture of the continuous deterioration of French society, culminating in complete exhaustion in July 1830 and the subsequent fall of the Bourbon regime.

The sources were analysed by the inductive method, i.e., assessing how the individual actions of the characters affected events in both countries. The diachronic method was used mainly to analyse the rift between the two countries, from causes (purchase of grain) to consequences (bombardment of Algeria). The study also used the biographical method to analyse the changes in French politics resulting from the clash of two personalities, Prime Minister Polignac and Algerian Governor Hussein Pasha, and the probe method for contributions from the pro-regime newspaper *Le Moniteur*.¹¹

The pivotal methodological approach was modern political historiography, which compares the relationship between politics, the economy and society, i.e., the relationship between the political manoeuvring of France between the powers, the possibility of using a trade dispute to one's advantage, and the tense domestic political

3 M. Le Vicomte de MARTIGNAC, *Défense de M. le Prince Jules de Polignac*, Paris 1830.

4 A. MAZAS, *Ham: Aout 1829-Janvier 1834*, Paris 1834.

5 G. GAUTHEROT, *Un Gentilhomme de Grand Chemin: Le Maréchal de Bourmont*, Paris 1926.

6 R. P. LECANUET, *L'Amiral Duperré: discours prononcé*, Paris 1891.

7 S. de ZOUAVES, *La Conquête d'Alger*, Paris 1850.

8 S. de BOURBON, *La Dernière Conquête du Roi: Alger 1830*, Paris 1930.

9 J. E. SESSIONS, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria*, London 2011.

10 C. R. AGERON — M. BRETT, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present*, Ithaca — New York 1991; J. MCDUGALL, *A History of Algeria*, New York 2017.

11 Due to the transfer of information between continents, reports of troop movements did not reach Paris until 6th July; the last mention of the fall of the Algerian governor appeared on 10th July 1830. *Le Moniteur*, 6th–8th July and 10th July 1830, issues 187–189 and 191.



scene. It was important to follow the negotiations at the European level and the proactive behaviour of the French cabinet, i.e., to use the history of international relations which assessed the causes of mutual tensions between Paris and Algeria, consolidating the French position between the European powers and the successful takeover of power in a foreign vassal state.

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The Bourbon restoration in 1815 did not ease domestic political tensions in society. After a partial release between 1816 and 1820 there was a shift to anti-liberal measures. It was initiated by the “ultras”, a group of conservative aristocrats which included Polignac, to return to the pre-revolutionary regime. In the second decade of the 19th century they had even managed to diminish the electorate and install “royalists who manipulated elections in favour of the king’s followers”¹² in districts, which provided the royalists in Paris a lengthened hand to rule in every corner of France.

The backstage power of the ultras was so mighty that they had succeeded in overthrowing the cabinet of ruling doctrinaires, which was replaced by convinced royalists whose reactionary acts led to the July Revolution. The ultras further welcomed a change on the French throne when a weak King Louis XVIII, brother of the former executed King Louis XVI, died in September 1824 and his younger brother, Count d’Artois, became a king under the name Charles X. The penultimate Bourbon king had not given up his far-right opinions, which he had advocated before the Revolution, and therefore became a symbol of the upcoming rigid regime. After 1815, one of his contemporaries described him as “a man who enchanted the people with his good manners, behaviour and speech”.¹³

The collaboration of Charles X with Prime Minister Jean-Baptiste Count de Villèle (1773–1854) led to an intensification of the conservative restoration policy, which, among other things, led to a purge at universities, tightening of press censorship and the further return of emigrants and Jesuits.¹⁴ The laws granting emigrants compensation of one billion francs and allowing for the inclusion of Jesuit representatives in the government, effectively giving them the power to oversee public life and education in the country, caused great resentment in liberal circles.¹⁵

Villèle’s stint did not last long. The Prime Minister’s entreaty that the King dissolve the Chamber of Deputies resulted in his fall in January 1828. Jean-Baptiste Sylvère Gay, 1st Viscount de Martignac (1778–1832) took over the government and tried to keep his policy in the centre yet Charles X disliked the new liberal government because it forbade religious orders to teach.¹⁶ Therefore, in August 1829, the King turned to the

12 F. B. ARTZ, *Reaction and Revolution 1814–1832*, New York, London 1939, p. 225.

13 F.-R. de CHATEAUBRIAND — A. POHORSKÝ, *Paměti ze záhrobí*, Prague 2011, p. 597.

14 SESSIONS, *By Sword and Plow*, p. 23.

15 ARTZ, pp. 225; 227; 22; J. HARSIN, *The Escape to Vincennes: Public Narratives and Political Meanings in the Ex-Minister’s Trial of 1830*, In: *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 2009, pp. 258; P. PILBEAM, *The Growth of Liberalism and the Crisis of the Bourbon Restoration, 1827–1830*, in: *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1982, p. 355 and SESSIONS, p. 24.

16 ARTZ, pp. 232–233.

then ambassador to Great Britain, Jules August Armand Marie Prince de Polignac,¹⁷ to appoint him Prime Minister. Polignac continued to take a restrictive approach to opposition deputies' in the Chamber of Deputies and stopped the easing of press censorship. He was seen as an emigrant, an ultraroyalist, a "Prince by the grace of the Holy See" and a friend of Great Britain who had even married a British woman.¹⁸ Together with Charles X, thanks to Article 14 of the Charter of 1814, they ignored the decision of the Chamber of Deputies because the king could "issue the ordinances necessary for the security of the state and the implementation of laws"¹⁹ and thus circumvent the opposition.

Polignac's government²⁰ faced growing opposition and found itself in a difficult situation. The Prime Minister therefore tried to divert attention from domestic to foreign affairs, anticipating that diplomatic success in the international arena could prevent the fall of his government. After the intervention in Greece in 1827,²¹ the government needed to divert the nation's attention from domestic problems to foreign success, and therefore it decided to conquer Algeria.

THE FAN AFFAIR

North African Algeria was a part of European history, as it had been the target of unsuccessful crusades on several occasions. In 1516, the territory was occupied by the Ottomans and became their vassal for three centuries. In the 19th century, the Bourbon regime used the disputes between France and Algeria to control the country.

The beginnings of the diplomatic rift date back to the end of the 18th century, when the French Directory sought, after the failure of the Egyptian campaign, an alternative grain seller in order to be able to feed its citizens. It found a taker on the African continent, when the Algerian *dey* (title of the governor) Mustafa VI offered to sell the Directory grain for a million francs and assigned two merchants to negotiate with France on behalf of the ruler — Nephtali Busnach, nicknamed the "King of Algeria" for his immense wealth, and Joseph Bacri, both of whom already ran an Algerian monopoly on the grain trade.²²

However, no one had any idea that they were unscrupulous speculators — a unit of grain (about 15 kg) was normally sold for 42 francs at the time, while Bacri and Busnach sold it to the French government for 100 to 120 francs per unit. They did not hesitate

17 *Charles the Tenth and Louis Philippe: The Secret History of the Revolution of July 1830*, London 1839, p. 16; MAZAS, pp. 77; 101–102. For members of government see J. MAVIDAL — E. LAURENT, *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860: Recueil complet des débats législatifs & politiques des chambres françaises*, tome 61, Paris 1886, p. 516.

18 B. de SAVIGNY, *The Bourbon Restoration*, Philadelphia 2016, p. 420.

19 The king could use the article whenever the homeland was "in danger." ARTZ, pp. 234; 264; HARSIN, p. 254; SAVIGNY, pp. 427; 430.

20 The composition of the government itself did not inspire much confidence. SAVIGNY, pp. 420–426, 430.

21 M. ŠEDIVÝ, *Krvavá odysea: řecký boj za nezávislost 1821–1832*, Prague 2011, pp. 150–151.

22 MCDUGALL, pp. 50–51; C. ROUSSET, *La Conquête d'Alger*, Paris 1879, pp. 21–22; SAVIGNY, pp. 434–435.



and went even further: the dey's offer of one million francs for the sale of grain to the Directory was increased by both traders — without the dey's knowledge — to the amount of two million francs, and they retained a significant amount of the money.²³

Nevertheless, the Directory didn't intend to pay, and the amount of the debt first reached five and later eight million francs, of which three million were initially paid into the hands of both traders; after the conclusion of the additional contract, another one million two hundred thousand francs were paid.²⁴ For the rest of the amount, the French government borrowed money from both merchants, to be repaid later. In France, however, the Napoleonic Wars broke out, and in Algeria, numerous revolts of the Janissaries, which resulted in the overthrow of several deys.²⁵ The French government's payments to Algeria were thus delayed.

The turning point came after Hussein Pasha (1764–1838) came to power in Algeria in 1818. After the British fleet shelled Algiers in August 1816²⁶ he, as an imam, had the British consul expelled from the country.²⁷ He also got involved in the dispute between Busnach and Bacri and France. He himself demanded that the merchants pay him the owed amount of seven million francs, which they borrowed from Algeria. However, Bacri and Busnach said that they did not have enough money to repay and that they were waiting for the French government of Charles X to pay them the rest of the amount owed.²⁸

The dey therefore sent a letter in August 1826 to the French Consul General, Pierre Deval, to explain the whole situation: “*We ask you for the amount owed which France must pay. When the entire amount is ready, send it to us immediately, including any interest attached to it.*” He also threatened the diplomat that “*if he does not send any money or does not sufficiently justify a possible postponement, the regency will take the position that seems most appropriate for it to achieve its goal,*”²⁹ which was tantamount to declaring war. The dey put himself in the role of negotiator, relieved Bacri of all obligations to the state and deprived him of his property, and the merchant had to flee to Livorno because of the pogroms; his companion Busnach was assassinated.³⁰ Hussein Pasha could thus demand the French instalment only for himself and his court.

Mutual tensions escalated. At the end of October 1826, the French diplomatic mission had arrived in Algeria to seek reparations for the raided merchant ships. The dey's hope for the appearance of a French ship importing money was replaced by anger: Hussein accused the consul of treachery and of being “*an infidel mediator*

23 BOURBON, pp. 17–18.

24 Ibid, p. 19.

25 The authors add that “*the deys were either murdered, strangled, lost their heads or were poisoned*”. BOURBON, p. 15; MCDUGALL, pp. 46–48; ROUSSET, pp. 5–10.

26 The British Viscount Exmouth negotiated the release of Sardinian and Sicilian prisoners. However, when the Algerian government opposed the proposal, the British shelled Algeria and demanded the complete abolition of slavery. MCDUGALL, p. 48.

27 ROUSSET, pp. 15–16.

28 The remaining amount was two million and almost three hundred thousand francs. BOURBON, p. 19, 25; MAVIDAL-LAURENT, pp. 61, p. 205; p. 220; p. 594.

29 BOURBON, pp. 26–27.

30 MCDUGALL, p. 46.

between him and the French king".³¹ Instead of Deval he demanded the appointment of a "brave man" to his position, but Charles X did not respond to the dey's rebukes. The last attempt at reconciliation took place on 30th April 1827 when Hussein invited Deval to his residence. The dey asked about unanswered letters: "Am I some sort of a bumpkin, a ragbag or a scrounger? Why didn't I get an answer? You are a mere scoundrel, infidel and idolater!"³² Deval only replied that Hussein Pasha would not get an answer because it was useless.

At that moment, the dey made a fatal mistake that deprived him of the throne and subjected the country to the will of the French. He ordered the French diplomat to leave the residence; he didn't do so, and the dey, full of anger, rose from the throne, approached Pierre Deval, and struck him three times in the face with all his might with the fan in his hand. Deval commented on the diplomatic scandal: "I want to assure Your Highness that I am afraid only of God and not of people. His Excellency Baron de Damas answered with my mouth. The damage suffered does not affect me, but the King of France."³³

The consequences were not long in coming — in June, a French special diplomatic mission was sent to Algeria. The situation was complicated: the dey could either humbly repent to the French representative and thus endanger his life or wait for all the ships to leave and his country to come under fire. The French gave Hussein one day to rectify the situation by sending his deputy on one of the ships, apologizing and hoisting the French flag over Algiers. The dey did not respond to this humiliation and said to his entourage that he was "surprised that they did not ask for my wife, too".³⁴

Hussein had merely told French envoys that he was declaring war on France.³⁵ The day after, on 16th June 1827, all the French in Algeria boarded ships and sailed back home, while the Algerians on the mainland destroyed their property and French trading posts. French battleships then began a three-year blockade of Algerian ports and the French government cut ties with Algeria.³⁶

THE ISOLATION OF ALGERIA

The conquest of Algeria was the only possible way to subdue the whole country and, in a way, take revenge for the insult that the dey, through the ambassador, had inflicted on Charles X himself. "Bombarding of Algiers will be ineffective, assault from the sea impossible, disembarkment probable,"³⁷ enumerated Aimé Marie Count de Clermont-Tonnerre, the Minister of War at the time. Planning began as to how many

31 Ibid, p. 28.

32 BOURBON, p. 32; ROUSSET, p. 31.

33 In this context I must point out that the French ambassador spoke inconsiderately about the dey and his faith, so Hussein's behaviour can be partially understood. For comparison see AGERON, p. 5; S. BLONDEL, *Histoire des éventails: chez tous les peuples et a toutes les époques*, Paris 1875, p. 44; BOURBON, pp. 31–32; MCDUGALL, p. 51; ROUSSET, pp. 29–31.

34 BOURBON, pp. 35–36; MCDUGALL, p. 51.

35 MAVIDAL-LAURENT, p. 217.

36 BOURBON, pp. 33–36; ROUSSET, pp. 33–34.

37 MAVIDAL-LAURENT, p. 554.





troops would be sent to North Africa, how large a fleet would be needed, how high the cost of the entire expedition would be and most importantly — whether European powers would allow intervention in another country.

The Minister of War needed to gain a supportive attitude from Russia and, above all, from Great Britain because “*England is in principle unfavourable to our African interest*”.³⁸ At the same time, however, he coined the theory that if Britain could operate in India and Russia in Asia, why couldn’t the French land in Algeria? His universal response had always been that “*none of the European powers has the right to intervene to prevent the king from retaliating for a bloody crime*”.³⁹ At the same time, he stated that he intended to make Algeria an example of how other states, who dared to offend the Christian country and the Christian faith in general, would be treated.⁴⁰

Russia’s position on the campaign was favourable from the outset, as the Russian government had been competing more intensely with the British government for influence in the Ottoman Empire ever since the struggle for Greek independence. By agreeing to the expedition, it hoped to weaken Polignac’s ties with London, strengthen its role in European politics and, above all, strengthen trade ties in the Mediterranean.⁴¹ For France, Russia became a welcome partner — the Eastern power persuaded the sultan to exercise restraint towards Algeria and its diplomats even managed to conceal all the information about the expedition from British and Austrian envoys.⁴² Prussia also joined with Russia in consent but Austria⁴³ and Great Britain remained in opposition; nevertheless, due to Polignac’s ties with the British Isles, his cabinet decided to negotiate mainly with this country.

The British Isles had objected to the possible creation of a French trading post by the Mediterranean Sea, which could potentially disrupt British trade. Nevertheless, it could not object when the French cabinet declared on 6th July 1828: “*It would be forgotten that England, the Lady of Gibraltar and the ruler of the Mediterranean, would have a direct interest in the dey’s downfall, with France also risking war with England.*”⁴⁴ Still, England was hesitant. At the end of 1829, its ambassador to Paris Baron Charles Stuart de Rothesay⁴⁵ recommended to the new Prime Minister Polignac that he explain the reasons for the expedition to the British government. However, the haughty behaviour of the Prime Minister could have caused a new rift: “*Offended France does not need*

38 BOURBON, p. 46.

39 Ibidem, p. 46; pp. 48–49; MAZAS, p. 179; ROUSSET, p. 83.

40 “*France’s honour must not suffer.*” V. de GUICHEN, *La Révolution de juillet 1830 et l’Europe*, Paris 1916, p. 66; MAVIDAL-LAURENT, p. 206. The newspaper *Le Moniteur* even called the intervention “*a nationwide war*”. *Le Moniteur*, 6th July 1830.

41 M. LARAN, Michel, *La politique russe et l’intervention française à Alger (1829–1830)*, in : *Revue des études slaves*, Vol. 40, No. 38, 1961, p. 121.

42 Ibid, p. 124.

43 Austria feared a decline in the sultan’s prestige and deterioration in relations between the European powers but eventually agreed. M. ŠEDIVÝ, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, Pilsen 2013, p. 409.

44 BOURBON, p. 60.

45 Charles Stuart, Baron Stuart de Rothesay (1779–1845) was twice the British ambassador to France (1815–1824 and 1828–1830) and to Russia (1841–1844).

anyone's help to take revenge; as for the English, we are not involved in their affairs so they should not interfere in ours."⁴⁶

All the motives for the intervention had been explained by the Minister of the Navy Charles de Longpré, Baron d'Haussez in 1830. Concerning the general interest of the European powers, Algeria was actively supporting piracy in the Mediterranean area, which was complicating trade. Furthermore, if ships wanted to sail along the Algerian coast, they were obliged to pay the deys an annual tribute.⁴⁷ The most crucial point was, however, trafficking with Christian captives, which was denounced by Russians, Austrians and Prussians.

Other reasons directly concerned France, as Hussein Pasha supported the raid of two merchant ships in 1828, had a peace ship fired upon a year later and deprived France of the privilege of fishing corals in favour of Great Britain.⁴⁸ However, the minister concealed that the cabinet had planned the campaign for the time when elections were to take place in France and that the government wanted to gain the favour of the army, buy voters and secure Polignac's strong mandate⁴⁹ in the upcoming elections after the Liberals had won a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, which was therefore dissolved.⁵⁰ However, studies from recent years also indicate the secondary goal was to fill the empty treasury with the dey's wealth.⁵¹

A circular for French ambassadors in Europe ordered the intervention to be justified by "*the need to return all regencies to dependence on High Porta*", which meant that France would also control local governments in Tunisia and Tripolitania. The sultan's promise to take a neutral approach to the war against the regents and not intervene in their favour was obtained by Polignac⁵² after Russia did the same. The aggressive French policy bore fruit: because Britain wanted to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, "*the head of the Foreign Office clearly acknowledged our intervention in Algeria*,"⁵³ and the tsar said that "*whatever the king's decision is, he approves it*".⁵⁴ The European powers were acquainted with the decision of the French government on 4th February 1830, when Charles X resolved to "*destroy slavery and piracy along the coast of Africa*" while "*restoring freedom of navigation and trade in the Mediterranean*".⁵⁵

46 BOURBON, p. 125; GUICHEN, p. 71; ROUSSET, p. 84.

47 Spain paid Algeria 48,000 francs, Britain 40,000, France 200,000, the Netherlands 160,000 and Austria 200,000 francs. BOURBON, p. 16; MAVIDAL-LAURENT, p. 217; SAVIGNY, *The Bourbon Restoration*, p. 434.

48 BOURBON, pp. 14–15; LARAN, p. 120; MAVIDAL-LAURENT, pp. 220; 594.

49 In the next, June elections, Polignac eventually lost when 270 opposition deputies opposed his 145 supporters in the Chamber. A similar situation occurred in July. HARSIN, p. 254, PILBEAM, pp. 351, 365; SESSIONS, pp. 44, 47.

50 AGERON, p. 5; GUICHEN, pp. 64; 69, MCDUGALL, p. 51; SESSIONS, pp. 24–25; 27.

51 SESSIONS, p. 25.

52 LARAN, p. 122.

53 For the whole negotiation with the British ambassador see BOURBON, pp. 114–115; GUICHEN, pp. 65–72; MAZAS, pp. 179–182.

54 LARAN, p. 120.

55 BOURBON, p. 119; pp. 122–123; F. DUMASY, *Propriété foncière, libéralisme économique et gouvernement colonial: Alger, 1830–1840*, in: *Revue d'histoire moderne & contemporaine*,



THE ALGERIAN COUNTERATTACK

Preparations for the campaign culminated in January 1830, when the army was to begin to arm itself and prepare the fleet for an expedition to Algeria. Thirty-seven thousand Frenchmen, three thousand horses, 144 cannons and 675 ships, consisting of sixty-six battleships and five hundred boats that helped transport troops, cannons and supplies to the mainland, were to oppose Hussein's men.⁵⁶ The price of the whole expedition was debated for a long time until the deputies agreed on an amount of 25 million francs.⁵⁷ This unexpected expense was repaid in July with valuables and gifts valued at 43 million francs,⁵⁸ which also outraged the public because of looting and theft of French soldiers abroad.

On 11th April 1830, the court of Charles X appointed the Minister of War Count Louis de Bourmont, who commanded the ground forces, as leader of the expedition, and the Admiral Baron Victor Guy Duperré as commander of the naval fleet. Bourmont pledged that his only task would be to capture Algeria and "*in the case that Duperré jeopardizes the success of military operations*" he would take command of the entire expedition.⁵⁹ However, the Minister of War had no reason to doubt the Admiral because he "*has fought the most beautiful naval battles and will inspire confidence in the navy in all people*".⁶⁰ As it soon became clear, Duperré's fleet proved its worth many times during the bombing of the mainland.

The British ambassador Lord Stuart, the liberal opposition and most of the admirals rejected the whole project, as the campaign to "*an inhospitable land without an anchorage and harbour where wild winds are blowing*" was considered an act of madness.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the crews embarked in Toulon on 25th May, arrived at the port of Palma de Mallorca on 1st June, where they regrouped, and on 10th June sailed for the North African coast, where they arrived after four days and began to disembark.⁶²

The entire African expedition is brought to our memory by the *Zouaves*, members of the French light infantry in North Africa, since they landed on the Sidi Ferruch peninsula 20 kilometres west of Algiers.⁶³ The movement of provisions, people, and the breaking up of the camp, was been very soon disrupted by Algerian troops who sent a message to the dey of Algiers that "*Sidi Ferruch would become the*

Vol. 63, No. 2, 2016, p. 41; GUICHEN, pp. 67–68; LARAN, p. 123, MARTIGNAC, p. 141; ROUSSET, p. 85; SESSIONS, p. 33.

⁵⁶ BOURBON, pp. 49; 73–74; p. 130; M. FRANQUE, *Lois de l'Algérie: du 5 juillet 1830 (occupation d'Alger) au 1er janvier 1844*, Paris 1844, p. 1; GAUTHEROT, p. 382, MAZAS, p. 185; MCDOUGALL, p. 51; ZOUAVES, pp. 14–15.

⁵⁷ GAUTHEROT, p. 382; MAZAS, p. 183.

⁵⁸ Valuables amounted to 20 % of the income for 1829. MCDOUGALL, p. 51.

⁵⁹ Bourmont eventually fulfilled his promise not to negotiate anything with anyone. GAUTHEROT, p. 25.

⁶⁰ LECANUET, p. 23.

⁶¹ MAZAS, pp. 184–185.

⁶² J. H. BLOFELD, *Algeria, Past and Present*, London 1844, p. 375; ZOUAVES, pp. 10–12; 18. For the sorting of divisions, preparations and shipping see ROUSSET, pp. 95–97; pp. 101–103; pp. 119–120.

⁶³ AGERON, p. 5; SAVIGNY, p. 438; J. SESSIONS, p. 43; ZOUAVES, p. 20.

tomb of the infidels."⁶⁴ Rifle and cannon fire fell on the occupiers soon after they landed. The onslaught of enemies was so strong that Admiral Duperré had to summon two battleships to stop the Janissaries raids and push them back to the nearby Yasma camp.⁶⁵

In the evening the attacks stopped. The French took advantage of this, and the next day at three o'clock in the morning they hoisted a white flag in the port of Torre Chica in the west of the peninsula. The first division was also sent across the mountain pass to the east where it clashed with the wild Bedouins, or, according to the Zouaves, with "*African Cossacks on horses flying like the wind*".⁶⁶ The French troops responded to their shooting, pushed the Bedouins back to Yasma and gained control of the camp as well as the coast. The death toll rose to about 100 people, while the number of wounded was doubled.⁶⁷

French troops had been slowly moving east, and on the afternoon of 15th June set up camp on the Staouéli plateau. It was a good time to unload the cargo, but a strong wind stirred the sea so much that the barges broke against the cliff and the boats ended up below the surface. Hope emerged as the French captured a 70-year-old Algerian officer who revealed that a massive attack was planned for 19th June. The grateful French dismissed the officer but found the informant without a head a few days later.⁶⁸

The battle of Staouéli was to be decisive. As the Zouaves remind us, the plateau was the gathering place for all Algerian troops led by the Turkish officer Ibrahim, the dey's son-in-law. The beys, the Turkish tribal chiefs, led the Turks, who did not accept the sultan's decision not to interfere in the dispute between France and Algeria. A total of thirty to forty thousand Algerians, ten thousand Moors and Turkish Janissaries opposed the French;⁶⁹ half of the Arabs were in the saddle. Each side had an advantage: the French relied on fire support from ships and artillery, while the Arabs knew the terrain and were accustomed to hot weather.

According to the informant's statement, the indigenous inhabitants launched an offensive against the occupiers on 19th June. The Algerians and Moors attacked the French left wing, while the Bedouins with Turkish beys attacked the right wing. As the French colonel admitted, the onslaught of enemies could not be handled: "*Our front line was shattered, and the fortifications attacked. When Clouet's squad regrouped, he was immediately attacked by many cavalry and infantry who surged out of the valleys and dunes. The regiment was retreating to the camp but the scorching sun and sandy vortexes blinded it. The troops were firing blindly and soon ran out of ammunition.*"⁷⁰ The Janissaries approached the centre of the French camp but the French gathered under the white

64 ZOUAVES, p. 22.

65 ROUSSET, pp. 121–126.

66 ZOUAVES, p. 26.

67 Ibid, p. 26.

68 Ibid, pp. 34; pp. 36–37, pp. 132–133.

69 It is interesting to compare French and English authors: the French write about fifty thousand opponents, while the English write about "only" twenty to thirty thousand. BLOFELD, p. 376; GAUTHEROT, p. 384; MCDUGALL, p. 52; ROUSSET, p. 135; ZOUAVES, p. 38.

70 ZOUAVES, p. 40.



flag and repulsed the cavalry toward the coast where it was dispersed by the battle-ships.⁷¹

While the right wing was defending itself, the centre of the French army was under heavy cannon fire. From the redoubt on the Staouéli plateau flowed countless Arabs, on which the cannonballs of the French fell. However, the Arabs emerged from everywhere: they attacked from the hills, and suddenly appeared from behind the bushes or from the depths of the gorge. However, no clear order had yet come, as General Bourmont was waiting for the remaining pieces of artillery to be unloaded. The French seemed to lose the battle of the plateau.

Soldier dissatisfaction, command inaction, fatigue and exhaustion, excessive heat and lack of fluids — this could mean the destruction of a large occupying army. When Bourmont learned of a possible desertion he immediately ordered all the regiments to advance and eliminate the enemy offensive. The Bedouins were chased from the tops of the hills to their camps at the base of them, where the French appeared at the same time: panic ensued and the Arabs fled, leaving behind dead, wounded and ammunition. A total of four thousand enemies perished; the French lost eight hundred soldiers.⁷²

The defeated Ibrahim, who threatened the French that if they did not embark, he would push them to the edge of the cliff and throw them into the sea,⁷³ was received very coldly by his father-in-law. The dey called his son-in-law a coward and spat in his face; if Ibrahim didn't disappear immediately afterwards he would be murdered.⁷⁴ He and the Bedouins attempted a counterattack on 22nd June, but a massive explosion shattered their camp behind the plateau, and the offensive on 27th June at Mount Bouzaréah in the north was equally unsuccessful.⁷⁵ The French made their way to the capital in the east in a constant way.

THE CONQUEST OF ALGIERS

The main target of the expedition, Algiers, was surrounded by walls, a cluster of dwelling houses and the Atlas Mountains where pirate camps were located. Casbah, the seat of the dey, was the most guarded place in the country. The 200-metre-high fortress in the southwest of the city was protected not only by walls three meters thick and twelve meters high but also by the best artillerymen, fifteen hundred elite janissaries and several nearby fortresses.⁷⁶ The French took a defensive

71 ROUSSET, pp. 127, pp. 139–143; ZOUAVES, pp. 39–40.

72 ROUSSET, pp. 151–157; ZOUAVES, pp. 43–46.

73 ZOUAVES, p. 39.

74 ROUSSET, p. 163.

75 About five thousand Bedouins and five hundred French died. ROUSSET, p. 163, pp. 169–181; ZOUAVES, pp. 50–56.

76 BLOFELD, p. 376; S. D'ESTRY, *Histoire d'Alger: de son territoire et de ses habitants*, Tours 1841, p. 196; S. MESSIKH, *Les fortifications ottomanes d'Alger (1516–1830)*, in: *Defensive Architecture of the Mediterranean*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2015, pp. 126–130; ROUSSET, pp. 193–194; ZOUAVES, pp. 62–64.



position and waited in the trenches for five days before reinforcements and supplies arrived.⁷⁷

Early in the morning of 4th July 1830, soldiers besieged the capital. Since Algeria is located on the coast, Duperré's battleships also came in handy. After several firings, the Algerians fled and the soldiers gathered by the Casbah, where supplies of gunpowder were stored.⁷⁸ At ten o'clock in the morning it was finished, "all the carriages destroyed, all the cannons broken, all the bunkers covered with debris, all the protective walls riddled with bullets".⁷⁹ The debris buried all the non-commissioned officers and the remaining soldiers fled the citadel. The French concentrated fire on cracks in the wall so they could get to the fortress. They then hoisted the Bourbon flag on its tower.⁸⁰

Hussein Pasha had lost all his determination to fight back: "I would rather blow up the Casbah and the whole city than surrender."⁸¹ A massive explosion ensued, shattering the upper floors of the building. Dense smoke and debris prevented the dey from escaping so he blocked the way to the citadel and sent his deputy to the French. He interpreted his master's words: "I will give up everything France has ever owed me and I will pay all the expenses of the war, if you leave as soon as possible." Bourmont strictly refused under the threat of razing the entire capital to the ground unless all the gates — of the city, the forts and the Casbah — were opened.⁸²

The terms of the surrender were presented to the dey by the envoy Brassewitch: "The citadel of Casbah, all other fortresses belonging to Algiers and the port of this city will be given to French troops at 10 AM on 5th July 1830. The commanding general undertakes to leave His Highness the Dey of Algeria his freedom and ownership of all his personal wealth."⁸³ The general further pledged that the profession of the Mohammedan religion would be permitted, and that the dey could either stay in Algeria — and be under the protection of General Bourmont — or go to any country. Hussein Pasha decided on the second option, and on 6th July he left with his entourage for the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.⁸⁴

The French historian André Raymond⁸⁵ blames the unusually rapid conquest of the city (and thus the whole country) for all the highest administrative authorities being concentrated in one centre. The oversight of politics, economics, administration, the military and cultural and religious life was controlled from the Casbah and the seizure of all powers at the same time meant total collapse. With the defeat of Algiers⁸⁶ the other barbarian states also "renounced piracy, accepting tribunals for

77 Baron d'Haussez sent food, water supplies and spare anchors, along with chains to Admiral Duperré's ships several times a week. *Le Moniteur*, 7th July 1830.

78 MESSIKH, p. 128.

79 BLOFELD, p. 378; D'ESTRY, p. 199.

80 For the entire siege of Algiers see BLOFELD, pp. 379–380; C. ROUSSET, pp. 207–214; ZOUAVES, pp. 68–73.

81 D'ESTRY, pp. 199–200; ROUSSET, pp. 212–214.

82 ROUSSET, p. 214; ZOUAVES, p. 76.

83 FRANQUE, p. 1; DUMASY, p. 42; GAUTHEROT, p. 386; ROUSSET, pp. 217–218.

84 AGERON, p. 6; FRANQUE, p. 1; SESSIONS, p. 43.

85 A. RAYMOND, *Le centre d'Alger en 1830*, in: *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, Vol. 15, No. 31, 1981, p. 74.

86 For a celebratory song that was supposed to encourage the nation's enthusiasm see Dr. BOUSQUET, *Hussein, ou le dernier Dey d'Alger: Ode à S. A. R. Mgr. le Dauphin*, Marseille 1830.



navigation and enslaving Christians".⁸⁷ The symbolic subjugation of the country took place on the afternoon of 6th July 1830, when the French army⁸⁸ confirmed the possession of Algeria in Charles X's hands in a ceremonial parade, ending Ottoman rule after 314 years. In the north and west of the country, however, there were still rebel groups that either fought the conquerors or cooperated with them by establishing self-governing territories within the occupied state.⁸⁹

The ideas of colonization soon took over. The cruelty of the military governors was reflected partly in the failure to keep Bourmont's promises to respect the Muslim faith but mainly in cultural barbarism. McDougall portrays the tyranny of General René Savary, Duke de Rovigo, the commander of the army in Algeria: "In order to widen the roads, the Duke de Rovigo had ordered the route to be led through two cemeteries; he then used the excavated skeletal remains to fill the roads. It was also he who had the beautiful mosque rebuilt into a church and had the protesters evicted."⁹⁰ Three months later "he exterminated a small tribe of indigenes and seized their property".⁹¹ Savary's successors behaved similarly.⁹² The definitive conquest⁹³ of Algeria can be dated from 27th July 1834, when Jean-Baptiste Drouet, Count d'Erlon, became "the governor general of the French territories in North Africa".⁹⁴

News of the conquest had reached Paris on 10th July: "Algiers surrendered at noon on the 5th [July] and at two o'clock the royal flag was flown over the dey's residence."⁹⁵ To Charles and Polignac's surprise, the response in France was rather tepid; Adolphe Thiers' *Le National* spoke of "the greatest stupidity our government has invented"⁹⁶ and the opposition shared its views. Efforts to repel liberal attacks on water shortages, excessive heat, dirty air and the spread of disease in Algeria were in vain.⁹⁷ The liberal opposition increasingly attacked the absolutist government of Charles X, and when the King agreed to sign four new ordinances at the end of July to redesign the existing constitution in favour of far-right views,⁹⁸ a revolution broke

⁸⁷ MARTIGNAC, p. 142; MAZAS, p. 187.

⁸⁸ According to Sessions, 409 died and more than two thousand French were injured; at the same time, she adds that another 700 men died at the end of August due to diseases. SESSIONS, p. 43.

⁸⁹ P. Ch. NAYLOR, *France and Algeria: A history of decolonization and transformation*, Gainesville, 2000, p. 27.

⁹⁰ MCDUGALL, p. 55.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁹² DUMASY, pp. 42, 45; MCDUGALL, pp. 55–56; RAYMOND, pp. 74–75.

⁹³ Sessions sees the conquest of the country as a legacy of the revolutionary and Napoleonic years. SESSIONS, p. 6.

⁹⁴ FRANQUE, p. 169.

⁹⁵ *Le Moniteur*, 10th July 1830.

⁹⁶ BOURBON, p. 142.

⁹⁷ The regime sought to alleviate the allegations, such as comparing the Algerian heat with the climate in Provence. *Le Moniteur*, 8th July 1830.

⁹⁸ The ordinances of 26th July 1830 ordered the dissolution of a predominantly liberal parliament, the announcement of new elections, the reduction of voters to a quarter of the wealthiest citizens and the banning of opposition newspapers. HARSIN, p. 255; PILBEAM, p. 365; SESSIONS, p. 59.

out during which Charles X was deposed and his cousin Louis Philippe, from the junior branch of the House of Bourbon-Orléans, ascended the throne as the “King of the French”.



CONCLUSION

France found itself in isolation after the abdication of Napoleon Bonaparte. The Bourbons returned to the throne and King Louis XVIII tried to preserve certain achievements of the former emperor. Public opinion gradually stopped adoring the Napoleonic era but it was not satisfied with the restored regime either. The constitutional monarchy had to deal with the consequences of coalition wars when, as part of the Second Treaty of Paris in November 1815, it undertook to pay compensation and allowed Allied troops on its territory. For three years, France had been separated from the Concert of Europe of Great Britain, Prussia, Austria and Russia.

After 1818, the prime ministers were unable to face the increasingly strong liberal opposition and there were frequent cabinet changes. Indistinctive Louis XVIII tried to assert France at the European level; however, the intervention in Spain in 1823 did not restore confidence in the regime. On the contrary, the popularity of his brother Charles Philippe and his clique, conservative aristocrats, rose. When Charles Philippe ascended the throne a year later, he sought to assert his absolutist stance and allowed the aristocracy and clergy to return to the country.

Increasingly restrictive measures resulted in the dissatisfaction of citizens, which the King, together with Jules Prince de Polignac, sought to silence by not entirely fair manoeuvring in the European political arena and then use the result in favour of domestic elections and tightening government decrees. Intervention in Greece wasn't a sufficient guarantee for the people of the quality of the French cabinet, so from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, unpaid liabilities to Algerian deys for grain supplies became the only political program of the Polignac government. The Ottoman sultan helped the situation by appointing Hussein Pasha Algeria's governor, who resolutely decided to resolve the unpaid French debt.

The governor's diplomatically unacceptable behaviour towards the French ambassador resulted in a scandal and the subsequent isolation of the whole of Algeria. The French cabinet sensed a chance to regain the prestige that the country had lost through the second abdication of Emperor Napoleon I, and declared itself the protector of Algerian captives, the enemy of pirates and the saviour of Christianity. This was followed by difficult negotiations with Russia and Great Britain, to whose ambassador France uncompromisingly showed that it didn't respect the system of balance of power. Thanks to behind-the-scenes games at the sultan's court, it eliminated the British-Austrian-Ottoman allies from the game.

The pressure of the liberals and society forced Polignac to strike quickly, and thus hastily and imprudently. The government wanted to defeat the liberal opposition in the Chamber with one triumphant expedition to Algeria: it focused all its activities on indoctrinating the citizens, enforcing its position at the European level and arming an unprepared army. Only thanks to the strategic and material superiority of the French troops did the army manage to conquer the capital Algiers on 5th July 1830.



The new — mostly military — governors applied compromise laws, but in an effort to suppress the defiant tribes the French often resorted to brutal reprisals.

The originally intended goal, to use a successful invasion to change public opinion, did not save the absolutist regime. The top French officials had the opportunity to turn the situation in their favour; the reluctance to cooperate with the European powers and to make certain concessions to their own citizens demonstrated not only the weakness of the ruling class but also a lack of political sense and a desire to return to the forefront of the European powers at all costs. However, without the knowledge of compromise and cooperation which nineteenth-century civil and interstate relations were based on, the regime could not succeed, and political survival was unthinkable.