

The System of the French Property and its Impact upon the Tribes of Sidi-bel-Abbes (1863-1920)

- A. Hacene Ahmed ¹,
B. Laouedj Isardine ²
C. GOURARI Zihad ³,
1- University of Sidi-bel-Abbes
ahmedhacene37@gmail.com
2- University of Sidi-bel-Abbes
yobi_salah@yahoo.fr
3- Universty of Tlemcen
zouhad.gourari@gmail.com

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Abstract: - The concern of the French was to eradicate the tribal regime because it was social network that supported the popular resistance. The tribal regime tried to build on the military force in order to face occupation. However the French ambitions were too big to leave the tribes with the freehand to act in their vast properties. Therefore, the idea of using the legal arsenal emerged under the motto: “*the lands belong to the French state and the tribes do not have the right to exploit them as they wish*”. This leads to promulgate laws of lands confiscation that were applied without any prohibition. The region of Sidi-bel-Abbes is one of the first areas in which real estate legal procedures were applied. Accordingly, our study of the system of the French property and its impact upon the tribes of Sidi-bel-Abbes (1830 to 1920) will deal with the operating procedures of confiscation laws through the French archive, and their impacts upon the inhabitants of the Beni-Amer tribes via studying a set complaints that were submitted to the general governor at the time.

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Hacene Ahmed

ahmedhacene37@gmail.com

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عنوان البحث: المنظومة العقارية الفرنسية وأثرها على قبائل منطقة سيدي بلعباس (1863 - 1920م)

حسان أحمد¹، لعوج لصر الدين²، قوراري زهاد³.

المخلص: تمثلت أولويات الاستعمار الفرنسي في القضاء على النظام القبلي بحكمه الشبكة الاجتماعية الرئيسية التي ارتكزت عليها المقاومة الشعبية، فحاول النظام العسكري في المرحلة الأولى من الاحتلال الارتكاز على القوة العسكرية لأجل تحقيق ذلك، غير أن الأطماع كانت أكبر من أن تترك للقبائل حرية التصرف في ممتلكاتها الواسعة، فظهرت فكرة استعمال الترسانة القانونية شعارها أن الأراضي ملكا للدولة الفرنسية ولا يحق للقبائل التمتع بها كيف ما تشاء وهذا ما يفسر إصدار ترسانة من القوانين لمصادرة الأراضي وتطبيقها دون حواجز.

ومنطقة سيدي بلعباس من أولى المناطق التي طبقت على أراضيها الإجراءات القانونية العقارية، وعلى هذا الأساس جاء موضوع دراستنا حول " المنظومة العقارية الفرنسية وأثرها على قبائل منطقة سيدي بلعباس 1830-1920" التي سنتناول فيها الإجراءات التطبيقية لقوانين المصادرة بالمنطقة وهذا من خلال الأرشيف الفرنسي بولاية سيدي بلعباس، وكذلك أثر المنظومة على سكان قبائل بني عامر من خلال دراسة مجموعة من العرائض والشكاوي الفردية والجماعية التي تم رفعها إلى الحاكم العام لرفع الظلم عنهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستيطان ؛ الإدارة الفرنسية؛ مصادرة الأراضي ؛ قبائل بني عامر ؛ العرائض؛

Introduction : The French State was among the countries that were seeking to obtain a strong position within the European regional system. The occupation of Algeria will,

therefore, contribute according to France standpoint to enhance its economy (Ben Kherf Allah.T.,1995 p140). Simply put, the French politicians have unanimously agreed that Algeria will compensate France for much of what it lacks. This has been declared by the French Minister of War, General Gerard. “*Keeping Algeria brings to France a wide surplus for its company that replaces its products with foreign products.*” (Abad.S,1870--1900 p.6). General Peugeot in turn, wrote to the governor-general of Algeria in 1842: “*Algeria can tremendously supply the necessary metropolitan industry.*” Napoleon the first also considered Algeria as a necessary market for the growth of the French industry, which viewed English industry as its strong competitor (Abad.S,1870--1900). The defeat of the French in September 1870 by the Germans also brought about a tragic event for the French reputation and prestige. This has led France to reformulate its policy in order to get back its position and strengthen its diplomatic and economic authority. To fulfill this achievement the land of Algeria will, therefore, constitute the material and moral compensation for France’s losses and failures. Doubtless, the incentives that pushed to write this article is the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes in which most of the real estate laws were applied in order to wean the Algerian people from their identity with all its religious , cultural and political grounds, as well as destroying society by spoliating the lands of Algerians with unjust laws. More simply put, the period (1863-1920) witnessed a wide application of the real estate system that encompassed all forms of communal property, therefore, dismantled them by creating individual property and removing legal barriers in order to facilitate real estate deals and creating favourable conditions for settlement expansion in the region. In order to dive into this survey the following research question is used a spring board.

• What are the effects of French real estate legislation on the tribes of Sidi-bel-Abbes?

To leap into the dark and try to switch on the light the following hypotheses are set:

- The French administration enacted real estate laws to eliminate the tribal system and replace it with administrative units *douars* (an area smaller than a village) and integrate them into the municipal system.
- Breaking ties of kinship and brotherhood among members of the same tribe by eliminating communal property of land.
- Facilitating land sales deals will inevitably lead to the loss of the region's residents of their source of income, therefore live in misery and poverty.

This research utilizes the historical method, because it permits to do a sequential study of the settlement phenomenon during this period, by collecting multiple and diverse sources and references, and then presenting some critiques about the settlement phenomenon, reformulating and synthesizing it, and finally draw historical facts.

Development of French settlements in the Sidi-bel-Abbes region in the light of real estate legislation.

The communal property of the lands of the Beni Amer tribes has been an obstacle to the French settlement policy which was based upon the confiscation of lands, thus secure the transfer to European immigrants ownership of property. This pushed administrative officials to think of a policy that exceeds the existing provisions based on inviolability of property and pushes the Algerians to retreat from what they were entrusted, without expelling their people or exaggerating in striping them from their property by force. The French authorities, in this respect, took the initiative to

issue decisions and decrees by which land was obtained without the use of force (Ahmad Hassan. A, 2014-2015 p.45).

Applications of the law of the 22 April 1863

The implementation of this legislative law started in the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes shortly after its issuance. It came out to calm the tribes who were threatened to be restricted to specific areas, and to re-consider them as owners of lands that they traditionally enjoyed, regardless of their possession status (Girauld. A,1924 p.385).

The imperial letter dated 06 February 1863 stated that the provisions of this law will not have any retroactive effect. Article 2 of the document also stipulates the rights of the state as follows: “The contracts, all the partition decisions and all previous land expropriations that were concluded between the state and the people regarding land property remain applicable. On the other hand, the state’s rights remain inviolable in relation to the property of the public property specified in Article 2 of the Law of June 16, 1851, as well as property belonging to the state sector such as timber and forests according to Article 4 of the same law (Official Bulletin of Algeria. 1863 pp106-108). In fact the imperial law did not bring new things apart from regularization of the illegal possession of property of the population.

Doubtless, the study of the Presbyterian’s decision is not complete unless some examples of its application procedures in the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes are provided, because on March 7, 1867, the imperial law was applied to most of the Beni Amer tribes. The implementation of the decisions of this law required the initiation of delineating the territorial boundaries of the tribal lands and identifying its new borders, and then the final procedures of this process which are the establishment of the *douars* within each tribe and the creation of individual property within each *douar*, in addition to the

real estate reserve to preserve properties of an urban nature (DAWO Box 368 No. 1. 1863 p.13).

The tribe of *Ouled Suleiman* is a model of the tribes to which this law was applied. It is located 25 km east of the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes. It is crossed from the north by a *Oued Mekkerra* and from the south by the Road of Sidi-bel-Abbes Mascara, and from the west by *Oued of Malghigh*. This tribe includes two groups; *Ouled Suleiman* of Arab origin and *Ouled Suleiman* of Almoravid.

The committee in charge of applying the Senatoros consult Law gave importance to this tribe. It contains an area of 7465950 hectares; it was divided into 44 divisions, with a population of 5621 inhabitants. It comprises 20 houses and 1057 tents, 742 horses and mules, 1794 cows, 19264 sheep, 13121 goats and 2743 French Francs.

The committee decided to divide this tribe into 9 *douars*, however the governor-general decided to divide it into 4 *douars* to ensure the conditions for the success of the operation. The following table shows the results of the division process (Official Bulletin of Algeria, 1867 p.422)

**Table 01: The Senators Consult Law April 22, 1863
Consequences on Ouled Suleieman Tribe**

Name of douar		Boudjebha6	Oued Alnabtoh	Telyoum	sfizef	Total
parties		-Ouled sid Ahmed -Boudjebha	Amour- Ouled Sidi - Mostapha Ben Kada	Al Tayeb- Kmamla Al Hadj Adda	Ouled AL - Alarbi Ouled Sidi -Bouras	/
Number of inhabitants		882	1324	1749	1666	5621
Property	Original	7388H40 r	8882H70 r	11870H24 r	14423H38r	42605H68-r 35c
	Concession	/	/	90H96-r25c	/	
Communal property		/	3241H14 r	/	/	3244H14r
Municipality	Reserve	1389H40 -r	3468H	1445H57-r	926H89 r	7256H39 r
	Cemetery	10H60 -r	6H56 -r	64r	8H73 -r	
Forests		6137H-	5188H-	7492H-	/	188177H
State land		180H 170A	1032H	395H58 r 65c	1128H	2736H28-r65c

**Official Bulletin of the General Government of Algeria
1867 N ° 144p422**

The statistics in the table above explain the imbalance that resulted from the application of the imperial law, the weakening of the aristocracy and the dismantling of the tribes in a regulated manner by replacing a new administrative system based on the *douar* and the municipality. The same view focuses on the concern of the political affairs officer in the committee in order not to give the names of tribes and clans that are newly established and prefer the geographical

designations instead which is the final aim of the imperial law with regard to its founders.

Applications of the law of the 26 July 1873

The cessation of work because of the law of April 22, 1863 coincided with the fall of the second empire, specifically on December 19, 1870, due to its negative results according to "De Mont" (Démontes (v) 1930 p307). The legislator, therefore, tried in that period to propose several projects for a new real estate law, hence the issuance of the law of the 26 July 1873 (Estoublon and Léfébure, 1898 pp395-414) whose aim is to allow settlement and activity of European capital Cambon (j) (1918 pp28-29).

This law came in three chapters divided into 32 Articles (Official Bulletin of Algeria 1873 pp.410-416). The articles of the first chapter dealt with the issue of establishing the property in terms of stability and continuous transition of real estate and its rights. Whatever their owners are, it should be managed by the French law. The articles of the second chapter concerned the particular procedures that are appropriate to establish individual property. The third chapter treats the problem of how to obtain contracts and their duration. It is worth noting that the objective of this law is to expand the contents of state property, hence dismantle all mortmains that transcend the circle of heirs involved.

The Law of July 26, 1873 was initiated in the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes, at the beginning of January 1874, that is, nearly 5 months after it went into effect. Four committees composed of an inspector governor, a geometer and a translator, were assigned to carry out this operation in 8 *douars* (Nouvion. M, 1878 p 79). We list some of them: *douar* of Amarna belonging to the municipality of Sidi-bel-Abbes and *douar* of *Al-Mahdid*. In view of the report of the administrative investigator George, *Ben Ouda Ould Salih* and *Miloud Ould Farraj* do not meet the conditions for obtaining

the property of the land called *Hamar Balaiqa*. As for the two women, *Fatima Bint Boumediene* and *Fatima Bint Mohamed*, it was ordered to hand them over the contract of land property called *Sidi Abdullah Al-Qabali*.

- In 1875, this law was applied to the *douar* of *Ouled Ghazi*. After the report done by the Detective Inspector Qirwa, and after the requests submitted by the residents of the *douar Qaddour Ould Haj Ben Ouda* and his sister *Qaradumah*, they were granted a contract of land property called *Nayza*. As for *Belarfah Ould Djelloul* and *Ben Azouz Ould Salih*, they were granted a land property of a piece called *Alawn* (AWO A 1480 p.34).

As Regard the *douar Alhajz*, after having a look at the report of the Detective Inspector Qairwa, regarding the complaints filed by 78 people, 76 complaints were rejected, except for the two complaints that included the piece of land named *Sidi Abdullah Al-Qabali*. As for the application of this law in the *douar Talium*, the following table will display the results of the investigation Forest (Conservation Archives at Sidi Belabbes Box 1015 N ° 01).

Table 02: The Results of the Investigation in *Douar Talium* during the Application of the Law of July 26, 1873

Observations	Origin of the property	Area	Nature of the property	Name of the property	Place name	Plot number
-This property is claimed by Belkaem Bouguelmouna and his brother Abdelkader Habib bin Wiss says that it belongs to his ancestors This area is forested but they do not have proof that it is their property	unoccupied	168H	forested	Zlakinarnial	Qualamin	19
It is claimed by Bouguelmouna	Unoccupied	47H-	forested	Roumouna	Qualamin	77
/	Unoccupied	57H-	forested	Roumouna	Qualamin	81
/	Unoccupied	0.99H-	forested	Djnan Bouhamar	Ouled Shwaraf	116
It is included to the forest sector	Unoccupied	16H	forested	Louhradj	Shwaraf	483
It was claimed by the forest sector	Unoccupied	17H-	forested	Derqawa	Shwaraf	191
-It can be joined to the forest sector -it was claimed by one of the residents without proof	Unoccupied	7H	forested	Azelat Sid Ahmed	Dahlil	493

Archives of Forest Conservation in Sidi belabess Box 1015 N ° 01 Plot survey, Forest state, Moxi Forest Claim

region is not inhabited by the population, and if there are some requests for ownership of property, they were rejected because there is no document which proves that. This is a cunning trick used by the French administration because it knew that the indigenous people do not own property contracts. Consequently, it can be said that this law has found the legal means to spoliage all lands whose owners do not own property contracts (Ahmad Hassan. A, 2014-2015).

Applications of the law of the 22 April 1887

• To achieve the possession of property of agricultural lands with regard to the colonists and Europeans, and to complete the process of dismantling and fragmenting it among members of the tribe, the French authorities attempted to revise the Law 1873 and tried to amend it (Estoublon and Lefebure pp727-742), mainly after has been criticized in the Supreme Council of Government on December 14, 1880, where deficiencies were announced (Démontes (v) 1930 p21). Consequently, a committee was assigned to review it and finds an alternative mechanism that transcends the bad

application of the previous laws. The Law of April 22, 1887 was issued, in this respect, which will be subject to the same methods applied by the imperial law as long as Article 2 of this law stated the completion of the processes of demarcation and distribution between tribes (Official bulletin of the general government of Algeria1897 p.435).

Among the tribes that were affected by this law in the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes is the tribe of *Ouled Balegh*. This latter possesses an area of 158209 hectares and is classified within the lands of *arch (clan)*. The commission in charge of the investigation process has faced some problems because the lands belonging to the *Al-Owainat* area were seized by the Europeans before the application of the law of 1863. This pushed the committee to implement Articles 7 and 10 of the Law of April 22, 1887, in order to do an investigation about the consequences of sale commitments. According to Committee, there were 22 operations, 11 of which were followed by the delivery of administrative contracts over an area of 694 hectares, 63 Ares and 90 centimeters, and 11 operations of 846 hectares. The committee, thus, applied Article 2 of this law where the tribe was divided into 3 *douars* (Official bulletin of the general government of Algeria1897): without further ado here are the names and surfaces of these three places:

1- *Douar* of Mazawrou , with an area of 34199 hectares, 80 r 60 cm

2- *Douar* of Tajmout, covering an area of 64,719 hectares, 35 r

3- *Douar* of Mwilah, with an area of 52376 hectares, 10 r

• This process was protested, tremendously, by the inhabitants of the tribe of *Ouled Balegh*. The number of written requests in the French registry was 103. 100 of which were petitions that were ignored under the guise of its deadline, and two were rejected because there was no proof of property, and one request that was listed in the lands of

Qirawa claimed by the heirs (Forest conservation archives at Sidi-bel-Abbes Box N °1245 p.442). In the *douar* of *Mazwrou*, the *Dahmani* family submitted a petition in which they demanded a piece of land of 8 hectares, yet this request was rejected. In the *douar* of *Tajamot*, 99 complaints were registered, 88 of which were registered in the French registry and 11 in the register for Arabs. Only two requests were accepted from Mr. Seral and the heirs of *Qirawa*. As for the *douar* of *Muwaitih*, 87 complaints were registered in the French registry, four of which were refused because they did not meet the terms of the law of 1863 (Official Bulletin of Algeria 1897).

Applications of the law of the 16 April 1897

After criticizing the two previous laws (1873-1887), where unsatisfactory results were achieved according to the colonial administration, several attempts were made to reorganize real estate property in Algeria again. Eventually, the legislator was convinced to make amendments to previous laws to expedite access to the lands of the clan, and indeed it was issued Law of February 16, 1897. Without let or hindrance here is its most important content (Estoublon and Léfébure, 1898 pp.67.68).

This law put an end, according to its first article, to the general and partial procedures that were approved by the second and third chapters of the law 1873, and was replaced by a single procedure found in Articles (05 and 08). It is a procedure that does not distinguish between the owners, whatever their nationalities and origins are (Article 04). Therefore, the requests become the right of both Europeans and Algerians. After completing this procedure, the interested party receives his property contract from the public administration (Article 09) as there is no complaint or protest or the request is rejected by a judicial decision. To better

understand the regulatory articles of this law, we find it advisable to provide some examples of applied procedures in the area of Sidi-bel-Abbes.

- The report (Archives des conservations des Forêts a Sidi-bel-Abbes Box 792 N2279) prepared by the forestry guard *Lanwar*, reveals that the Forestry Authority sent him a message to do an inquiry into 9 land parcels for Mr. Henry located in the *Sidi Khattab* in *Tawdmout* area of the municipality of *Tlagh*. After an investigation, and looking at reports, it was found that the land parcels (1.3.4) are parts of the forest sector. As for the remaining parcels, no observations have been registered and the property contract can be awarded (Ahmad Hassan. A, 2014-2015).

- Furthermore, the letter dated 26 May 22, 1900 (Archives des conservations des Forêts a Sidi-bel-Abbes Box 792 N2279) sent from the governor of Oran to the governor of the forests in Sidi-bel-Abbes, requested to open up an inquiry regarding the two parcels of *Bin Shiha Al-Zahra bint Yahya* and *Bin Shiha Zainab bint Yahya* in *Oued Tawrira* according to Articles 6 and 8 of the Law of the 1897 in the Lands of the *clan* in *Doman Amar Daraiseh* in the region of *Tawrira*.

Repercussion real estate legislation on the tribes of Sidi-bel-Abbes

Dismantlement of tribes and formation of douars

Not only did the French administration seize agricultural lands and form individual property, but also sought to dismantle the tribes and destroy their structures and establish the douars. The thing which was approved by the law of 1863. These dangerous transformations in the country had led to the reversal of the conditions of rural society (Mimoun. B, 2006 pp.5-10). So, the dismantlement of the tribes will allow France to achieve a political dimension by discarding the dominant old class. More simply put with the demise of the mutual interests that bring together the

members of the tribe, the ties between them will be broken. Consequently, the landowners will turn into serfs for the new owners (Sartre. J. P, (1956 p.63.)

The application of the Law of April 22, 1863 in Algeria led to the creation of 656 douars as a result of dismantling the tribes (M.P de MENERVILLE, Dictionary of Algerian legislation p.255). The tribe of Ouled Ibrahim is a good demonstration of the point. It is located in the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes and was divided into three douars; Masar, Sidi Yaqoub and Tirina (Official Bulletin of Algeria, 1867 p.402). Sidi Yaqoub then comprises a clan of Ouled Abid and the clan of Ouled Sidi Khaled and the douar of Trinet that consists of the relatives of Ouled Sidi Bittqa and the douar of Massar which entails the clan of Ouled Yebda and the clan of Ouled Bouzid (Daho D, 1850-1920) , while the Al-Hajiz tribe was divided into 4 douars (Mhadid, Al-Nmayasha, Awlad Ghazi and Ouled Al-Rayab), and the tribe of Ouled Suleiman was formed in four douars, which are as follows: Bodjebha, Oued Matboukh, Tilyoum, and Sfizef.

Douar Tawrira also comprised three tribes: Mhamid, Awlad Ja`far, and the Ja`fara, Thuwamah Forest (Conservation Archives at Sidi-bel-Abbes Box 5 N 10.)

It should be noted here that some tribes did not form independent douars themselves, but merged with groups from other tribes (Daho D, 1850-1920 pp. 151-152.)

- the people of the douar Tifilas were rehoused in the douar of Massar on an area of 2055 hectares, and the people of the douar Tirinat were inhabited on an area of 800 hectares of the douar Tifilas, as well as several people from Tlagh, Talmuni, Tesala and Hasnah were housed on an area of 700 hectares from the municipality of Oued Sofyoun (AWO, H1480 / 9, 1903 p.6). It is crystal clear that the French administration has intentionally fragmented the tribe and separated the relatives and groups from the mother tribe according to an

organized plan, in order to break the basic and social bond of Algerian society.

Deprivation of the inhabitants from their lands

- The petitions and protests that farmers of Sidi-bel-Abbes submitted to the French administration during the period 1870 to 1900, show that they were all about the land (Forest Conservation Archives at Sidi-bel-Abbes, Box 792). This is the essence of the conflict between the Algerian peasants and the French administration throughout this period (Fatiha. S, 2007 p.177). The protesters have mentioned in their petitions the abuse of the colonial administration, the colonist and the leadership, in which they implicitly held the French administration responsible for the loss of their properties and the colon's injustice against them. To have a clearer picture about that, we find it advisable to cite samples of these petitions which reflect the misery of the residents of Sidi-bel-Abbes as a result of being deprived of their lands.

- On 16 June 1904, Mr. Abed Ben Mohammed submitted a petition to the Governor-General requesting ownership of three forest areas of 20 hectares in the forest of *Budans*, the latter of which has been at the disposal of the Forestry Department since the issuance of the decree of March 09, 1867 related to the application of the Law of April 22, 1863 to the tribe of *Ouled Suleiman*. Yet this request was rejected and was not taken into account by the French administration (Forest Conservation Archives at Sidi-bel-Abbes Box 1015 N°4111).

- Along the same line, a collective petition was submitted by the residents of the *douar* of *Al-Athamna* in the region of *Taurira* to Mr. the Wali of Oran demanding ownership of the lands of the *clan* consisting of two parcels; the first of which is an area of 181.38 hectares and the second is 375.06 hectares in the *Tendoumi* Plateau, which was seized by the Forestry Department and lied to the *Gaid* (Algerian citizen

who works as an agent of France) Mohammad Mnazala". These lands were the subject of a project exchange, however this latter has not yet been opposed by the Minister of Agriculture which led the residents of the *douar* to beg the governor of Oran in order to give them back the property of the land, that is the only source of livelihood for a large population but the administration rejected this request (Forest Conservation Archives at Sidi-bel-Abbes Box 2265N°4678. Petition of the Astammia members). Mr. Fizazi Al-Sheikh of the *douar Mazawrou* in his turn submitted a petition to the governor- general of *Tlagh*, (Forest Conservation Archives at Sidi-bel-Abbes Box 792 N2199: Claimed by Fizazi Al-Sheikh Ben Abdelkader), in which he complained to him about the confiscation of the French administration of his land adjacent to the *Selesan* Forest with a conspiracy with the group of the *douar*, yet this petition was rejected. The list of protests submitted by the residents of the region to get back their lands is numerous but cannot be mentioned. Additionally, there were many laws issued to confiscate peasants' lands that were legalized. Thus the French administration allowed the Algerians to sell their lands to the colonist without any hindrance. After a year of the application of the law of July 26, 1873, the region *Amarna* alone witnessed 85 concessions by selling to the Europeans (Nouvion. M, 1878 p.78) immediately after the individual contracts are delivered, in an area of 2197 hectares, which is equivalent to one-year sales for the entire Algerian country in 1865 (Charles Robert Agron, 2007 p. 166).

• The following table shows the most important sales that took place between Algerians and Europeans in the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes (AWO A ,1480 p.59)

Table 04: The Algerian-European Sale Process

Sold Cost	Sold Area	Sellers	Sales	Douar Municipality	Municipality	Region
.81.252.90 FF	833.60.26.h	117	34	Amamas	Mixed municipality Sidi.bel-abbes	SIDI BEL ABBES
790.78 FF	14.16.20.h	2	1	Oueld-Ghazi	Mixed municipality Mekkara	
23.112.60FF	276.87.03.h	30	6	El-Otmania	Mixed municipality Mekkara	
115.526.58FF.	10.80.65.53.h	109	41	El-Mhadid	Mixed municipality Mekkara	
220.682.86FF.	2197.29.02.h	258	82	4	Total	

**AWO A1480/9rapport spécial sur la colonisation et sur la
constitution de la propriété individuelle**

Reading off this table, one can deduce that the Algerians' sale of their lands is mostly due to the desire to get rid of the burdens of their debt and taxes. Without neglecting the competitors of moneylenders and speculators to buy the lands that in their view became an important source for achieving the wealth they did not dream about.

Population impoverishment

The severe settlement policy of the French administration in the region of Sidi-bel-Abbes in destroying the agricultural production, sabotaging the industrial sector, closing grazing tracks, and imposing exorbitant taxes that exceeded the capacity of the Algerian population resulted in many painful economic and social disasters, and turned the population into a miserable and disadvantaged class. Consequently, people were dying because of poverty and starvation, and their bodies were thrown on the side of the road, as well as a large number of cattle was destroyed which forced many people to flee to the urban areas (Krim Ould Nbiya, (2005 p.370).

Misery has prevailed to the point that some people were forced to rob the property of others to escape starvation and death. In fact, all of these operations express the financial hardship that afflicted the population. A large number of them became vulnerable to diseases which increased in late June of the year 1867. The cholera epidemic appeared in the middle of July, which affected a large number of population and spread out due to the intense temperature, and then became an evil that takes lives every day. In the municipality of *Makkerah* alone, 319 deaths were recorded (Ainad. T, (R), 1999 p.113). The region of *Hassi Dahou* is no exception. It witnessed during the winter of 1867-1868, 37 deaths in only one night (Ainad. T, (R), 1999) due to hunger, cholera and typhoid, which have spread to in the country because of the travelers who came from abroad , therefore the Algerians suffered as a result of the lack of health protections and their poor economic and living conditions and the lack of attention of the French authorities to them, and with the spread of these serious diseases, the whole Algerians began dying in villages and public roads which led France to dig deep trenches to bury the dead.

- The local people became very distressed after having their materials being exhausted, therefore sold the remaining livestock as sheep that escaped death at the lowest prices. The rural residents began migrating towards the urban centers (AWOA1464 / 9 (1905 p.32) in search of food where many of them ate roots, weeds, and foliage (Ainad. T,(R), (1999). Some families committed murders and robberies consequently were arrested to ensure their daily living inside the prisons, where one of the residents committed a murder against a French citizen in the forest of *Hassi Dahou* (Echo D'Oran January 22, 1868).

It is worth noting that while the number of the local people was decreasing as has been mentioned previously, the

number of Europeans was constantly increasing every year due to their unaffectedness and their possession of good and irrigated lands in fertile regions, in addition to the help of French authorities in sponsoring them. The following table shows the evolution of the European population and the local people during this period:

**Table 05: European and Local Demographic
Development in Sidi-bel-Abbes Region**

Year	1862	1867	1872
Number of local people	1960	2349	2415
Number of Europeans	5101	6487	7100

**Rutt (goerger) Some Aspects of the Rural Economy of the
District of Sidi-bel-Abbes, typed document, 1935p39**

• The situation worsened dramatically in 1868. This can be deduced from the message of Bishop Cardinal Lafigri. "... *The scourge is growing wider day by day and is taking on more and more painful dimensions. I do not know that it is permissible to keep silent more. It is indeed, a truly famine which sweeps people then we kill them after two years of suffering with cholera and two years of drought and crawling locusts that killed crops. Since two months Arabs have lived only on the leaves of trees and grasses of fields, and so if they died of cholera in the summer of 1867, they will die of hunger in 1868, and according to statistics, the last six months of the year 1867 have witnessed the death of more than 1,000 people, and you can count the number widows, orphans, and elderly people who have become without a source of livelihood ...* " he adds " ... *these poor people come as groups to farms and to cities where we find children who are attached to the necks of their mothers who have died.* "And he adds again, describing the situation of the people:" *They*

are semi-naked, wearing shabby clothes, and rags, moving in groups by the roads near to the cities, and this is truly alarming as we find on the roads in the fields every day the bodies of these Arabs in groups of six to eight, ten and even twelve bodies ...” (Echo D’Oran January 12, 1868).

• The Parliamentary Committee that reached the area in late May 1868, led by Count Lahun, witnessed the magnitude of the humanitarian catastrophe that affected the region. The churchmen as well who have experienced the catastrophe of 1867, including Mr. Craigua, who worked on the ambulance team in the city of Sidi Belabbes, wrote a very attractive message saying that the miserable situation in which the Arabs live exceeds the limits of imagination in the centers of Sidi-bel-Abbes: *“Every day, we collect tenths of bodies due to hunger, let alone what happens far from the urban centers. We found dead bodies in the forests devoured by wolves and lions”* (Echo D’Oran March 31, 1868). He adds: *“I went last Sunday to Sidi-bel-Abbes and gave approximately the equivalence of 20 francs of bread for women and children in particular and my stay became impossible. Whenever I went outside, a group of hungry people followed me until I reached home”* (Echo D’Oran March 31, 1868). This is how the inhabitants of the region lived between the problem of hunger and epidemic, therefore their numbers decreases without a having any solution to treat this dangerous problem. The following table shows the evolution of the number of deaths of the local people during the years 1867-1868:

Table 06: The Evolution of Deaths Number of Local Inhabitants in Sidi-bel-Abbes Region during 1867-1868

Months	1867	1868	Months	1867	1868
January	6	37	July	8	22
February	8	119	Agust	4	28
March	8	106	September	8	11
April	4	67	October	34	8
May	5	33	November	16	6
June	5	32	December	21	7
Total	36	394	Total	91	82

**Aldjillali Sari, The Demographic Disaster, translated by Omar
Al-Maraji, National Foundation for Communication,
Publication and Publicity 2008, p. 149**

The numbers mentioned above do not transmit the real number of deaths because they are related to the deaths that occurred in the military hospital, because the deaths that occurred outside the centers are very many and cannot be counted. Mr. Leon Bastide has limited the causes of the frightening decline among the residents of Sidi Belabbes in the year 1867 in Typhoid and Cholera and the failure to store food in advance of the upcoming winter (Aldjillali Sari,2008 p.149), ignoring the role of settlement in this catastrophe (Bastide. L, 1880 pp.247-252), as a result of poverty that the population lived in at the end of the nineteenth century due to the colonial methods represented in the system of collection, taxes and other causes such as robbery of livelihood and properties.

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that the colonial administration was not satisfied with the properties provided by the public sector, which pushes it to search for various mechanisms and ways to look for new properties in order to expand the scope of both public and private domains. This is through bringing about a change in the prevailing real estate ownership organization. To reach those goals, major real estate legislation was issued. It can be said that it is proceeding according to a way which aims to establish individual ownership and eliminate collectivity and socialism, hence making the various properties subject to French law, i.e. the

process of plundering lands, to accelerate the pace of real estate deals, and the transfer of land from Algerians to Colonists. The most dangerous law was Presbyterian law of April 22, 1863, which hit the economic and social infrastructure of the inhabitants of Sidi-bel-Abbes. Finally, we hope that the subject of real estate legislation and its role in the settlement roots, will be an incentive for more academic studies and research, which may present an economic and social approach, that is real and objective for the history of the Sidi-bel-Abbes in particular and Algeria in general during the French colonial era.

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