

THE SUFI ORDERS IN ALGERIA: STRUGGLE FOR POWER

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Introduction

In the period studied in the article, 18th-19th centuries, Algeria was in a deep economic and political crisis. The Ottoman rule for about 300 years, and later the French invasion of the country created serious problems, led to the polarization of society. Algeria was perceived by both powers as a colony where both the population and the country's economy were ruthlessly exploited by the authorities. This policy pursued by the Ottomans and the French inevitably provoked protests in the society. The only way to overcome this situation, to unite the Algerians, was through Islam, the ideology.

In the 18th-19th centuries Sufi orders with their philosophy and experience played an important role and also took an active part in the socio-political life of the country. They became an environment for the unification of different social strata, the generation of grievances and protest in them. This can be explained by the fact that the Sufi orders operated mainly in the inner regions of Algeria, were far from the center and had a relatively independent status. In addition, the orders were the only non-governmental organizations

that had a clear structure and content, which made them quite attractive to ordinary Algerians.

Referring to both the anti-Turkish and anti-French uprisings, we aim to show that the involvement of Sufi orders in the armed struggle was not unique. It was not conditioned by the demands of the time, but had a continuous nature; it pursued one goal - to put an end to foreign domination.

The emergence of Sufism as a mystic school of Islam

In order to better understand the growing role of Sufi orders in the context of historical realities in the region and their investment in the struggle for independence, we need to address not only the individual orders and their activities in Algeria, but also the main social tenets of Sufi philosophy became a source of such consolidation.

It should be noted that the emergence of Sufism (Arabic: Tasawwuf) as a separate stream of Islam is attributed to the late 7th century and early 8th century. At the initial stage of its formation, it appeared in the form of asceticism and was defined by the term *Zuhd*. The ascetics (*Zahids*) lived in isolation and avoided everything secular. They were devoted to God with all their being, their activity was aimed at the correct understanding of the Qur'an texts, and at following its messages in daily life, following the Sunnah of Muhammad correctly, and numerous prayers¹. The *Zahids* excluded any cooperation with the state-military authorities, they had very important role in distinguishing between *halal* (permissible) and *haram* (forbidden)².

Later, along with asceticism, the elements of mysticism and mystical knowledge of God appeared in Sufism. The idea of boundless, altruistic love for God (*mahabba*, *hubb*) became the driving force of Sufism³. In contrast to the orthodox (*adib*), which preached the terrible judgment of fearful God, the mystics (*arif*) preached the love to God for its absolute, impenetrable beauty. Later the above explained traits became the main principle of Sufism⁴.

Sufism stems from the basic principles and teachings of Islam, its teachings are based on the provisions of the Qur'an and Hadiths, giving them an

¹ Смирнов 1930, 42.

² Goldziher 1981, 120.

³ Бертельс 1965, 1.

⁴ Мухаммедходжаева 1990, 1.

allegorical interpretation. The path of mystical self-improvement in Sufism is divided into three stages: Sharia, Tarika and Hakika.

The first stage, Sharia, is obligatory for both Sufis and every orthodox Muslim. Only after mastering the basic tenets of Islam Sufis can reach the next stage - the path to Tariqah. The term *tarika*, which originated in the 9th century, is translated as a way, a path for a person striving for self-improvement. It is a system of different moral and psychological methods. That system is the only, and the shortest way to the goal, i.e. the knowledge of God⁵. To reach this goal, Sufi goes through certain phases - Makams. There were basically seven Makams, each representing a specific psychological state in a particular stage of the mystical path⁶. However, Sufi could not pass this path alone, without certain knowledge. So, the system of Murid-Murshid (student-teacher) is being formed from the very beginning of Sufism. Sufi had to follow this path of self-improvement with the help of a caring leader, a sheikh or a pir (a great man) whom he chose to obey unconditionally⁷.

In the mystical path of Sufi, there are also short states of great inspiration (*hal*, *ahlal*). Hal is different from Makam. This is an ecstatic state, it cannot be achieved due to the efforts of Sufi, and it is a gift blessed by God, which is very short⁸.

The Tarika ends with the transition to the last stage - Hakika. This term is interpreted as a real, true being. Reaching the Hakika Sufi intuitively discovers the divine essence, thus dissolving in Him⁹. Sufis often call themselves Ahl al-Hakika (people of true reality), contrasting themselves with Ahl al-Hak, Sunni orthodox people who are not given the capacity for intuitive perception¹⁰.

The most important element in Sufi practice is Zikr (reference), so called prayer. Zikr in different Tarikas is performed in two ways: Sama - loud zikr u Khafi - silent zikr. Sama is a voice that changes the inner state of the listener. An integral part of the Sama ritual is the music and dance, through which the Sufi reached an ecstatic state. The text is very important in Sama, it could be

⁵ Ibid., 36.

⁶ Петрушевский 1966, 313.

⁷ Бертельс 1965, 40.

⁸ See Кныш 2000, 352-358, Goldziher 1981, 122.

⁹ See Кныш 2000, 349-350.

¹⁰ Одилов 1974, 18.

from the Qur'an or a lyrical poem, but it was perceived exclusively in an allegorical sense¹¹.

In general, poetry is the most important way to formulate and spread the philosophy of Sufism, through which Sufis described their mystical experience and conveyed their worldview. This poetry was characterized by a symbolic style. Each poetic image became a symbol with an unchanging meaning¹².

The process elaborating the Sufi philosophy launched in the 9th century. From the 11th century Sufism was divided into different Orders (Tarikas), and each of them was an organization with its own internal hierarchy. The Sufi Tarikas were usually named after their founder or Murshid. Murshid or sheikh chose one of his murids as his successor during his activity. After the sheikh's death, he was replaced by a successor, who got Murshid Khirka (cloak) - the symbol of power.

The chain of spiritual inheritance - Silsila played an important role in the development of Tarikas. It was the proof of the deep spiritual connection between the founder of Tarika and later sheikhs¹³.

According to the tradition, twelve main "mother" orders (Tarikas) were formed in Sufism until the 14th century. They are: Rifaiyah, Yasaviyah, Shaziliyah, Suhravardiyah, Chishtiyah, Qubraviyah, Qadiriyyah, Badaviyah, Maulaviyah, Bektashiyah, Halvatiyah and Nakshbandiyah.

The basic schools of mystical philosophy and practice were formed within these Tarikas. Sufism spread to different parts of the world through its many branches. Khorasan, Maghreb, Mesopotamia, with its center Baghdad, later Syria and Egypt became the main centers for the further development of the Sufi philosophy and practice. In Anatolia, Sufism spread from Central Asia, and in India from Mesopotamia and Khorasan.

Maghrib was a unique region for the development of Sufism. The Sufi orders arose here relatively later, during the Almoravid period (in Arabic - al-Murabitu, 1086-1147), and the local Sufis did not offer any new theories of philosophy or methodologies¹⁴.

¹¹ Бертельс 1964, 32.

¹² Фильштинский 1989, 226.

¹³ Trimingham 1971, 261.

¹⁴ Trimingham 1971, 44.

The role of Sufi orders in Algerian struggle against foreign invaders

The struggle of Algerians against foreign invaders always was led by Sufi marabouts¹⁵ and orders. The "Zawiyahs"¹⁶ founded by the Sufi orders were very important for the establishment and strengthening of the Sufis' reputation. The Sufis taught the students here Arabic, Islam, cared for the sick and the poor and prepared them for a possible armed struggle. This is especially typical for Sufis in North Africa. It should be noted that these "zawiyahs" were always ruled by the locals and never by strangers.

In the 19th century only five (Rahmaniyah, Qadiriya, Tayyibiyah, Tijaniyah - Darqawah) Sufi orders in Algeria played a major role in the country's political and social life¹⁷.

Rahmaniyah, which was founded in Algeria in 1793 by Muhammad bin Abd al-Rahman¹⁸, was the biggest and had a huge influence in the region of Kabylie¹⁹ in Eastern Algeria. It also had numerous supporters in Central and Eastern Algeria²⁰.

Qadiriya, one of the oldest Sufi orders, was founded in the 12th century by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in Baghdad. In the 19th century Qadiriya spread its influence in the western part of the country, particularly in the province of Oran²¹.

In 1678 Mullah Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Sharif founded the Tayyibiyah order in Morocco. In the 18th-19th centuries Tayyibiyah had close ties with the royal family and even with the king of Morocco Moulay Idris (Idris I) who was the member of the order. Tayyibiyah became the most authoritative and influential Congregation in Morocco due to these ties. Tayyibiyah was highly respected in Algeria, especially in the western regions bordering Morocco²².

¹⁵ Marabouts (in Arabic - *murabit*) originated from the word *ribat*, a fortress-type dwelling. In the Maghreb countries, pious Muslim hermits and saints were called *marabut*. It is noteworthy that in the colonial period it was more perceived as a political term, as the Marabouts were associated with the anti-colonial struggle.

¹⁶ The residence of the marabut or sufi sheikh near the mosque, where he preached and taught the Murids.

¹⁷ Danziger 1977, 13.

¹⁸ Laremon 1995, 39.

¹⁹ This region is mainly inhabited by Berbers.

²⁰ Danziger 1977, 14.

²¹ Trimingham 1971, 41.

²² Laremon 1995, 40.

The Tijaniyah order was founded in Ain Madhi region by Ahmad bin al-Mukhtar al-Tijani in 1781²³. It was an active and widespread order and had followers in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, and Sudan²⁴. After al-Tijani's death, his sons Muhammad al-Kabir u Muhammad al-Saghir, leading the order, launched an uncompromising struggle both against the Ottomans and the French, as well as their rival orders²⁵.

Darqawah was the smallest of the above-mentioned orders, but was the most radical one. Darqawah preached and spread the ideas of political and social equality²⁶. The order, which was the branch of Chadeliyah order (founded by Abu Hassan al-Chadel in 1258 in Morocco) was founded in 1823 by Mulai al-Arbi al-Derkawi in the Bou Berich district of Morocco. Darqawah's ideology of social equality was particularly tempting for the poor of Morocco and Algeria. Darqawah's ideology of social equality was particularly tempting for the poor people in Morocco and Algeria²⁷.

Thus, the Sufi orders in Algeria have spread their influence throughout the country and among almost all segments of the population. It is no wonder that the orders became unifying and guiding centers for the people who were dissatisfied with the central government. During the Ottoman Empire Algeria actually had a colonial status. The authorities of the country - the system of government, the armed forces, the taxation belonged entirely to the Turkish element, the locals were deprived of the right holding any responsible position. As a result, the Algerians were in a desperate and hopeless situation due to the colonial policy of Istanbul.

The heavy tax burden had devastating consequences for many of tribes. They were forced to leave their ancestors' settlements, flee to deserts, mountains, and even leave their homeland, settling in neighboring countries, in order to avoid the Turkish tax system. For example, the Bonn Valley was completely deserted when the tribes migrated to Tunisia²⁸. As for the cities of Alge-

²³ Danziger 1977, 13.

²⁴ Ricardo 1995, 41.

²⁵ Kiser 2008, 11.

²⁶ Danziger 1977, 14.

²⁷ Laremon 1995, 41.

²⁸ Danziger 1977, 25.

ria, the situation was almost the same. In 1790-1825 the population of the Algerian cities and the economy declined²⁹.

This situation in the country could not remain for a long time. The anti-Turkish uprising was a matter of time. The religious elite, the Marabuts, who enjoyed the trust of the Algerians at the same time and had relatively good relations with the Turkish authorities, were the only possible candidates who could play the role of mediators and present the seriousness of the situation and the possible devastating consequences.

The Turks faced with a dilemma: to lighten the taxation which would significantly reduce the treasury's revenues leading to Sublime Porte dissatisfaction or to conduct more radical measures. The Turkish government, confident of its strength, preferred to maintain an established tax system. At the same time, they began to persecute the Marabuts to prevent possible uprising and put pressure on the Sufi orders, considering them as the main centers of generating discontent among the population. However, actions taken by the authorities did not give the expected result.

In the early 19th century, separate tribes, led by independent Marabut and Sufis, rebelled. The first Sufi order which revolted against the Ottoman government was the Darqawah. In 1803-1806 the revolt led by Sheikh Bu Dali defeated Turkish troops in the province of Constantinople, the Bey of Constantine was killed. In 1805 another marabut of the Darqawah order, Sheikh Sharif, won major victories in Oran, establishing control over almost the entire region, forcing the Turks to revolt in the cities of Oran and Tlemcen. The uprisings soon spread throughout the Shelby Valley to the Moroccan border³⁰. It should be noted that Tijaniyah order also joined Darqawah when it became clear that the Sultan of Morocco supported Darqawah. Eventually, the Turks managed to weaken the revolt step by step and in 1817 the rebellion was over³¹.

It should also be noted that at the same time the anti-Turkish uprising took place in the Oran region in 1804. Derkavia managed to provoke a revolt

²⁹ Danziger 1977, 25.

³⁰ Жульен 1961, 353.

³¹ Danziger 1977, 26.

of a number of tribes in Kabalia against the rule of the Dey³², which was joined by the Rahmania Order. This revolt lasted until 1809³³. Derkavia's actions in Kabalia may be seen as an attempt to stage a popular uprising.

The anti-Turkish uprisings provoked and led by Darqawah order had a negative impact on the authority and prestige of the Ottoman Empire in Algeria, especially on the ascendancy and reputation of the Dey in the country. Despite the fact that the Turks finally managed to suppress these uprisings and re-establish their control over the region, this movement demonstrated the strength and capabilities of Algerian Sufi orders.

In 1820 the Tijaniyah order revolted and refused to pay Ottoman taxes. Ain-Madhi city³⁴, which was the center of the order, was attacked by the Turks. Successfully resisting the Turkish siege, Tijaniyah attacked the city of Maskara in 1827. However, this attack was unsuccessful. The Turks defeated the latter and assassinated Tijaniyah's leader Muhammad al-Qabir³⁵, putting an end to the uprising.

In fact, the defeat of Tijaniyah, at least during this period, put an end to the uprisings led by the Sufi orders.

The anti-Turkish uprisings continued, but this time they were led by independent Marabuts. It should be noted that they were mostly local in nature and could not threaten the central government. Studying the anti-Turkish uprisings which took place in Algeria during the Ottoman period, we came to a conclusion that Turkey could not control the Algerians. However, one must take into consideration that the rebellions led by the Darqawah and the Tijaniyah failed, because they did not have full support in Algeria which was mainly due to the conflicts among the orders and ongoing rivalry. Their prestige and influence has traditionally extended to the region of their central residences. The lack of unity in which also played a role the intrigues by the Turkish authorities, made it possible to defeat them one by one.

³² In 1671 Algeria was ruled by Deys, who were elected by the commanders of the Janisary troops by Divan of Aghas and Captains stationed in Algeria. Ланда 1999, 8. The name Dey came from the Turkish word for uncle.

³³ Laremon 1995, 44.

³⁴ An oasis city in the north of the Sahara. Abou-Khamseen, Manssour 1983, 226.

³⁵ Danziger 1977, 26, Laremon 1995, 44-45.

The relative peace has been established in Algeria after 1827. The Dar-qawah and the Tijaniyah, weakened by the Turkish persecution, having neither the opportunity nor the desire, stopped their attempts to revolt against the authorities. None of the Sufi orders in Algeria could fight the Turks without the help of others. They did not manage to form a united anti-Turkish alliance.

Thus, taking into the consideration the above-mentioned circumstances, as well as the strong position of the Turkish authorities which was as important as the presence of an army³⁶, it would be difficult for the Sufi orders to overthrow the established system, at least in the foreseeable future. The French invasion of Algeria in 1830³⁷ put an end to the Turkish authority changing the course of Algeria's historical development, it also had an influence on activities and orientation of Sufi orders whose goal was to liberate Algeria from the foreign domination.

The Algerians who had been fighting against the Turkish domination for a long time welcomed the Day's defeat but when the French policy became a threat for the independence of Algeria, the Arab tribes revolted. Initially, these movements did not have general leadership, disagreements between the most influential sheikhs did not allow the latter to lead the anti-French uprising.

The situation changed in 1832³⁸. When Abd al-Qadir, the elected leader of the Qadiriya order, led the anti-French movement, collecting around him the majority of the tribes of the Oran region³⁹. In a short time, the revolt spread to central and western Algeria, involving not only the pro-unity tribes, but also many other tribes, which were united around the common idea. It should be noted that Abd al-Qadir was trying to form an anti-French alliance with other Sufi orders, particularly with the Tijaniyah. However, the leader of the Tijaniyah order Muhammad al-Tijani refused to join Qadiriya, which led to armed clashes between the two orders in 1839⁴⁰.

Abd al-Qadir managed not only to wage an effective liberation war against the French, but also created an Algerian Arab state based on Islamic

³⁶ The number of regular Turkish army counts 20.000 (Bellemare 2003, 6), but the total mobilized troops reached 40.000 (Куропаткин 1877, 16).

³⁷ Bouyerdene 2012, 5.

³⁸ Marçot 2011, 284.

³⁹ Գաապարյան 2019, 198:

⁴⁰ Abou-Khamseen, Manssour 1983, 227-228.

principles. The struggle lasted 15 years (1832-1847) and was defeated, not being able to fight alone with one of the most powerful states in Europe. The fall of the strongest uprising in Algeria in the 19th century did not mean the end of the liberation movement. The anti-French movement in Algeria was reborn due to the revolt of Sheikh Bu Maza⁴¹ (Muhammad bin Auda), the member of the Darqawah order. The revolt lasted for about two years, spreading from Dahra to Uрсenis, from Titer to Kabylie, reaching to the Sahara Desert⁴².

Charles Richard, a contemporary French spy, claimed that Bu Maza was acting under the direction of al-Hajj al-Arbi, the leader of the Algerian Tayyibiyah religious order. The Tayyibiyah's support Bu Maza was due to the political goal of establishing power centers in Algeria, independent of the Abd al-Qader liberation movement⁴³.

After the revolts of Abd al-Qadir and Bu Maza, in 1871 the last revolt involving the Sufis took place in Kabilia, due to the implementation of a number of decrees by the French authorities. These were the seizure of Algerian lands, the restriction of their rights, as well as the change of the judicial system, according to which the Muslim judges, the Qadis, would be replaced by secular judges⁴⁴.

Such restrictions and disregard for the rights of Algerians provoked Muslim resentment and anger, sparking one of the largest uprisings.

The uprising was led by Sheikh Muhammad bin Ahmed al-Hajj al-Mukrani, who was joined by al-Haddad⁴⁵, who was the Sheikh of the Rahmaniya Order. It began on March 16⁴⁶, lasting about seven months, and was eventually suppressed by French forces.

Conclusion

Thus, the study shows that during the period of Algeria's historical development, the role of Sufi orders in Algeria during this period was an indisputable reality in the internal life of the country and played a special role. It is

⁴¹ Bu Maza, a man with a goat, or a goat father.

⁴² Marston, Petzon 2013, 46.

⁴³ Laremon 1995, 55-56.

⁴⁴ Ageron 1991, 51-52.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁶ Liorel 1982, 247-250.

noteworthy that the Sufi orders in Algeria took the leading role in the liberation movements of the anti-Turkish firstly and then the anti-French struggle. This reality can be explained by the fact that the national liberation ideology was not formed in Algeria in the 19th century and this gap was filled by Sufi orders which began to conceptualize liberation ideas, the centers of the orders became the cradles of the struggle.

Studying and comparing the activities of the Sufi Orders during both the Turkish and French rule, we must record the similarities between the methods and goals of the struggle. That was the motivation for presenting these two historical stages in one article. In addition, such an approach allows for a more complete and substantiated representation of the role of Orders in Algerian socio-political life.

However, they did not succeed in uniting around a common goal due to the disagreement, distrust and hostility, even Abd al-Qadir, could not overcome these problems. It should be noted that the concepts formed during this period, the uprisings that took place, had a huge impact not only on the Algerian anti-French struggle but also on the further historical development of the country.

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Արամ Գասպարյան, Անուշ Թամրազյան

Ամփոփում

Սուֆիական միաբանությունների ներսում, XI դ. սկսած, ձևավորվեցին միատիկ փիլիսոփայության և փորձընթացի հիմնական դպրոցները, որոնց բազմաթիվ ճյուղավորումների և ուղղությունների միջոցով սուֆիզմը տարածում ստացավ աշխարհի տարբեր ծայրերում: Մաղրիբը նույնպես յուրահատուկ տարածաշրջան էր սուֆիզմի զարգացման համար. այստեղ շատ մեծ էր

սուֆիական միաբանությունների դերը տարածաշրջանի սոցիալ-քաղաքական կյանքում:

XIX դարում արդեն սուֆիական միաբանությունները դարձան համակարգող ուժ օտարերկրյա զավթիչների դեմ պայքարող մուսուլմանական հասարակության համար: Մասնավորապես, Ալժիրում անվիճելի էր սուֆիական միաբանությունների դերը երկրի ներքին կյանքում: Այստեղ դրանք ստանձնեցին ազատագրական շարժումների՝ հակաթուրքական, այնուհետև նաև հակաֆրանսիական պայքարի ղեկավարումը:

Սակայն որքան էլ մեծ լինեին միաբանությունների ազդեցությունն ու հեղինակությունը, նրանց այդպես էլ չհաջողվեց համախմբվել մեկ միասնական նպատակի շուրջ դրանց միջև առկա անհաղթահարելի տարածայնությունների, անվստահության, հաճախ նույնիսկ թշնամանքի պատճառով: Այնուամենայնիվ, այս ժամանակաշրջանում ձևավորված գաղափարները և տեղի ունեցած ապստամբությունները հսկայական ազդեցություն ունեցան ոչ միայն Ալժիրի հակաֆրանսիական պայքարի, այլ նաև երկրի հետագա պատմական զարգացման վրա:

Բանալի բառեր՝ Արդ ալ-Կադիր, Ալժիր, սուֆիական միաբանություններ, Ռահմանիյա, Կադիրիյա, Թալիբիյա, Դերքավիյա:

СУФИЙСКИЕ ОРДЕНЫ В АЛЖИРЕ: БОРЬБА ЗА ВЛАСТЬ

Арам Гаспарян, Ануш Тамразян

Резюме

На протяжении XI века основные школы мистической философии и практики были сформированы внутри суфийских орденов, и благодаря их многочисленным ветвям и направлениям суфизм распространился в разных частях мира. Магриб тоже был уникальным регионом для развития суфизма. Суфийские ордены, являясь местом единства для многих людей, могли в случае необходимости использовать эту силу в политической борьбе или в повстанческих движениях.

Уже в XIX веке они стали координирующей силой мусульманского общества в борьбе с иностранными захватчиками. В частности, в Алжире неоспоримой была роль суфийских орденов во внутренних делах страны. Они возглавили освободительные движения – антитурецкую, а затем и антифранцузскую борьбу. Однако, как бы ни было велико влияние и значение суфийских орденов, им не удалось объединиться вокруг общей цели

из-за непреодолимых разногласий, недоверия, а часто даже вражды между собой.

Однако сформировавшиеся в этот период идеи, вспыхнувшие восстания оказали огромное влияние не только на антифранцузскую борьбу Алжира, но и на дальнейшее историческое развитие страны.

Ключевые слова – Абд аль-Кадир, Алжир, суфийские ордены, Рахмания, Кадирия, Тайибия, Деркавиа.

THE SUFI ORDERS IN ALGERIA: STRUGGLE FOR POWER

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Abstract

The basic schools of mystical philosophy and practice were formed within Sufi orders (Tarikas) from the 11th century. Sufism spread to different parts of the world through its many branches. Maghrib also was a unique region for the development of Sufism. The Sufi orders had a great role in socio-political life of the region. The Tarikas were the place of great unity for many people and used that force in political struggle or insurgent movements.

In the 19th century, Sufi orders in Algeria became a coordinating force for Muslim society fighting against colonising empires. They took the leadership in liberation movements of the anti-Turkish firstly and then the anti-French struggle.

However, they did not succeed in uniting around a common goal due to the disagreement, distrust and even hostility. But it should be noted that the concepts formed during this period, the uprisings that took place, had a huge impact not only on the Algerian anti-French struggle but also on the further historical development of the country.

Key words – Abd al-Qader, Algeria, Sufi orders, Rahmaniyah, Qadiriyyah, Tayyibiyah, Darqawah.