

Ideology and Propaganda: How the French Reacted to the German Ottoman Recruitment of Moroccans in the Great War

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Introduction

Most of the time, the issue of the French conscription of Moroccans in the Great War is excluded from the history of French recruitment of African colonial subjects. Some *historians* claim that the French did not opt for conscription in Morocco in the First World War. In *Empires at War: 1911-1923*, Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela affirm that “[t]here were differences among colonies—so, for instance, enlistment was exclusively voluntary in Morocco, and only by conscription in Tunisia, with a mix in methods in Algeria, West Africa, Indochina and Madagascar.”¹ Matthew Stibbe agrees, showing in *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe During the First World War* that “[i]n 1912 the French parliament had passed several acts enabling conscription in West Africa, Algeria and Tunisia (but not in Morocco), if the numbers of volunteers were considered to be too low.”² Such claims need to be studied carefully in a context that contrasts with the principles of voluntary enlistment.

In “The “Grande Guerre Sainte”: Moroccan Colonial Troops and Workers in the First World War,” Driss Maghraoui disagrees with Gerwarth’s, Manela’s and Stibbe’s positions by exploring the interference of local *qajids*, tribal chieftains and spiritual leaders in rising the numbers of Moroccan recruits. Maghraoui argues that “[d]uring the course of the war, the colonial administration used the persuasive and authoritative powers of the *qajids* as a way of recruiting both soldiers and colonial workers.”³ In this paper, I would like to argue that the Turkish involvement in the Great War complicated the French views of the Moroccan reservoir of manpower. Voluntary enlistment, thus, was supposed to be replaced by conscription.

1. Robert Gerwarth, Erez Manela, *Empires at War: 1911-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 120.

2. Mathew Stibbe, *Captivity, Forced Labour and Forced Migration in Europe During the First World War* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 115.

3. Driss Maghraoui, “The “Grande Guerre Sainte”: Moroccan Colonial Troops and Workers in the First World War,” *The Journal of North African Studies* 9 (1) (2004): 8-9 (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

In collaboration with Euro-Asian Muslims, the Germans did their best to develop a peculiar approach against the so-called enemies of Islam, England, Russia and France. The latter, however, did not remain silent vis-à-vis a German ideology that aimed to employ the notion of Islam as a pull-factor so as to ideologically convert Muslims fighting under the French flag to soldiers fighting under the German one without making them lose their faith. As it seemed disgraceful for the French and the Germans to surrender quickly, propaganda marked an interesting chapter in the Great War between the two rivals. Max von Oppenheim's move to consider Islam as "the secret weapon" was an improvising attitude. He did not know that the French had their own version of the war, a project, which unified king and subjects, not a plan which simply targeted illiterate men by showering them with pamphlets.

This article is divided into three parts. The first part is devoted to trace Muslims' participations in wars led by their Christian empires. It shows how the Germans initiated a smart stratagem by claiming that they were supporters to Islam so as to persuade Muslims to quit the Triple Entente's trenches and to join German ranks. In the second part, we shall observe how the Ottoman-German propaganda reached its peak when its ideological discourse was put into practice: A Prisoner-of-War camp was built for Muslim mutineers and detainees to establish a good friendship with them. The last part argues that while the Germans in collaboration with the Turks made all efforts to attract Moroccan recruits in the name of religion, the French took advantage of the Moroccans' indifference towards the Turkish proposal.

1. Recruitment between Allure and Persecution

I was told by some Muslims who were captured by the Romans that the Roman king asked the Muslims' captors: "What was the reason behind the intention of the King of Bashgard [Hungary] to come and ruin my country? It was unusual for him to do that." He was told: "The king has Muslim soldiers who willingly fulfil their religious duties; therefore, they came for your state and destroyed your country." The Roman king replied: "And I rule over Muslims who do not fight with me." The king was informed: You force them to believe in Christianity." He said: "I will never compel a Muslim to accept my religion as true, and I will build mosques for them so as to fight with me."⁴

This story was written by Abu Ḥāmid Al-Gharnāfī, an Andalusian traveller who made his journey into so many lands in Europe and Asia, in the tenth century. The narrative represents a possible option where Muslims

4. Abu Ḥāmid Al-Gharnāfī, *Tuḥfat Al-Albāb*, edited and introduced by Qassim Wahb (Abū Dhabī: Irtyād al-Afāq, Dār Assuwaidi, 2003), 141.

could ally with Christians in order to face any imminent threat. The Roman king's generosity to build mosques and to allow Muslims to freely fulfil their religious duties emanates from an astute strategic plan to assimilate and profit from the energy of his Muslim subjects. A slight change at the level of the Christian ways of building, a trivial relinquishment on the characteristics of the Roman architecture, and a humble recognition of Islam in favour of the appearance of some Islamic places of worship will not spoil the taste of the general view of the Roman city, according to the Roman ruler. Actually, the people who frequent the new buildings will support the Romans in their wars against anyone who wants to destroy the Roman Empire.

This kind of resorting to Muslims in wars led by European imperial forces was not a characteristic of tenth-century wars; it was also invigorated by many European powers during the twentieth century. In the case of the French recruitment of colonial soldiers, Maghraoui goes on to argue:

“The large majority of colonial soldiers were in fact dispossessed peasants who were forced to sell their labour power abroad. But in the case of Morocco in 1914, the economic impact of colonialism was far less profound than in Algeria. The French conquest was only in its first stages, and most of Morocco was not under effective French control. I would like to suggest here that while economic factors may have certainly played an important role for Moroccan recruits, “ideological coercion” was equally effective in attracting people to the front and to metropolitan employers. As we will see there was a complicity between the colonial authorities and the local elite in that process.”⁵

In Morocco, the French were facing an unbearable crisis at the level of manpower, especially after the French military withdrawal to defend the tricolour against the Germans in France. However, this trauma gradually disappeared when “[c]olonial officers believed that there was a kind of irresistible attraction on the part of colonial troops towards the French nation and its ideals.”⁶

A central point in recruiting religiously different combatants in Christian forces was underlined by a basic distinction between Central Powers and Entente in terms of religious openness. Muslims in Christian forces faced unexpected tragic turning points. Their cause met an open challenge to their European persecutors as being responsible for fighting their co-religionists in Eastern Europe, hence, a call for action against England, France and Russia.

5. Maghraoui, “The “Grande Guerre Sainte,”” 2-3.

6. *Ibid.*, 3.

In “Between Collaboration and Resistance: Muslim Soldiers’ Identities and Loyalties in the two World Wars,” Humayun Ansari explains:

“When in November 1915 the majority of the Indian Army was withdrawn from France to fight in Mesopotamia against Germany’s Turkish ally, the Ottoman *Khalifa*, the symbolic leader of Islam, this presented fundamental dilemmas as Muslim troops arriving in Basra had to face Turkish Muslims in combat. This they were not prepared to do. Laying the *Qur’an* on their heads, the whole regiment, the 15th Lancers, took an oath “not to fight against Muslims.”⁷

In this connection between religious persecution and army desertion that Muslims experienced in the Eastern European front, the result was an unexpected turning-point. While Muslims met unbearable circumstances under the sway of some European Empires, the German camp required no more Muslim fights against Muslim camps. As Maghraoui put it,

“The scene of a German soldier brandishing the *Qur’an* may be intriguing to anybody reading about life in the trenches of the First World War. Yet in order to persuade Moroccan colonial troops to desert, this was exactly what the Turkish command advised the Germans to do during the decisive battles of the war. Apparently the Germans were also involved in their own brand of propaganda. But the scene itself was not imaginary. It reveals a moment that was real for Moroccans who were on the other side of the trenches.”⁸

It is awe-inspiring to observe the Germans capturing a moment of history with intent to allot the Entente the role of the altruist. Meanwhile, there was indeed a German propaganda accusing the Triple Entente as an enemy of their own colonised peoples, especially among the Muslim communities in Africa and Asia. The theoretical framework the Germans adopted to demonize their French enemy, for instance, took an ideological perspective in enthusing North Africans to rank the Great War a holy one.

2. *Jihād* from a German Perspective

With different ideological and political commitments, Muslims from many origins made the European scene more complex during the First World War. While fear was raised amongst the Germans that the Entente would be victorious, officers of the German propaganda endorsed the German decision

7. Humayun Ansari, “Between Collaboration and Resistance: Muslim Soldiers’ Identities and Loyalties in the Two World Wars,” *Arches Quarterly* 4 (8) (2011): 24 (London: The Cordoba Foundation, Spring/Summer 2011).

8. Maghraoui, “The “Grande Guerre Sainte,”” 3.

to transform Muslim soldiers fighting under the British, French and Russian flags into faithful jihadis. The latter, thus, were stunned by the news, which came from Turkey, urging all Muslims in the world to fight against the British and French Entente. In “Salih Ash-Sharif al-Tunusi, a North African Nationalist in Berlin during the First World War,” Peter Heine claims that the call for *jihād*

“struck a chord in the feelings and imagination of the Muslim soldiers, to which little attention had been paid by the French in their engagement of such troops. Many North Africans deserted their lines to join the Germans, declaring that they had not been informed of the *jihād* and that they would no longer fight for the enemies of the *Khalif*.”⁹

In her book, *La Turquie dans la Grande Guerre: De l’Empire Ottoman à la République de Turquie*, Odile Moreau brings up an important issue about the Ottoman-German call for a “just war” during the Great War against Russia, England, France, Serbia, and Montenegro.¹⁰ For Moreau, the *fatwa* which legitimises this decision “provokes controversy on its lawfulness.”¹¹ Perhaps interestingly enough, the legitimacy of such a strange coalition was assiduously built upon the reputation the Germans enjoyed for being indifferent to colonising Islamic lands. The *fatwa*, Moreau goes on to argue,

“is a sacred duty for every Muslim. The fatwa is based on the Qur’anic verse 41 of Surah IX, *at-Tawbah*: “Go forth, light and heavy, and strive with your property and your persons in the cause of Allah. That is better for you, if only you knew. This call is addressed to all men regardless of their age or physical condition and makes it a call to fight for the cause of God.”¹²

Ideologically born in Germany, and strangely adopted by the Turks to manufacture a hybrid *jihād* between Muslim and Christian against *some*, and *only some*, Christians, the Turkish *fatwa*, for Moreau, had its own shortcomings as it is evident in this passage:

“The question of its lawfulness is also caused by the collusion of the Ottoman Empire with Central Empires, non-Muslim states, making it difficult to write. To present both Christians and God’s enemies, while

9. Peter Heine, “Salih Ash-Sharif al-Tunusi, a North African Nationalist in Berlin during the First World War,” *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 33 (1982): 90.

10. Odile Moreau, *La Turquie dans la Grande Guerre: De l’Empire Ottoman à la République de Turquie* (Paris: Soteca/ Belin, 2015), 73.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

excluding Germans and Austrians, is a difficult and highly dangerous exercise. Thus, the *fatwa* is not directed against all Christian countries, but only against those who fight the Muslim caliphate.”¹³

Jihād refers to Islamic holy war against unbelievers. The point here, however, is that the idea looks quite unusual why the attempt was made in Germany. The Arabs of the East, it seems to me, were pushed by the English to achieve independence from the Ottoman Empire, and so were the German Orientalist scholars so motivated to make the English ardent ways unsuccessful. Thus,

“The war provokes the engagement of German scientists and intellectuals. We are witnessing a mobilisation of academic research, to give advice, participate in various activities, such as intelligence. German Orientalists, in particular, put themselves at the service of their state during the First World War.”¹⁴

The assiduous coordinator of the German propaganda was Max von Oppenheim, a German aristocrat, Orientalist and archaeologist whose ambitious plans can be conveyed in Moreau’s quote:

“The Ottomans will have to perceive the role of the Germans as that of advisers and to present themselves, as for them, as the main actors. The memorandum advocates plans for the implementation of the revolution in Egypt, India, Iran, Morocco, Afghanistan and Russian Muslim areas. The German support is put in concrete form by the sending of war material, competent personnel and financial support. Max von Oppenheim estimates the cost of this project at a minimum of 100 million marks, while estimating that it will easily rise to more than 300 million marks. In conclusion, he proposes to intern Muslim prisoners in Germany in prison camps that will be exclusively reserved for them. Religious obligations will be respected. Mosques will be the first to be built in Germany. This particular care is intended to convince them to do *jihād* by joining the Ottoman army.”¹⁵

Von Oppenheim’s contribution to put the Turkish *fatwa* in concrete form is clearly manifest in his serious efforts to finance and maintain *jihād* by taking care of the Turks’ brothers in religion. To quote Martin Gussone:

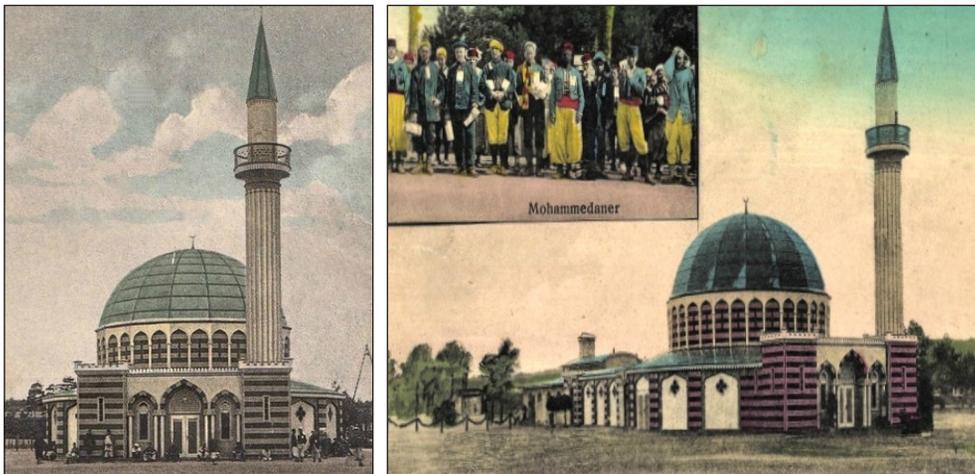
13. Ibid., 73-74.

14. Ibid., 74-75.

15. Ibid., 75-76.

“[V]arious means of propaganda were used: “a. religious influence; b. Guidance and education through meetings and lectures, lessons, groups trips to the capital, etc.; c. good treatment, supply and clothing.” (...) Thus the living conditions in the camps ought to be subordinated to the objectives of the propaganda. The Muslim prisoners of war were enabled to pray and were supplied with food according to their religious rules. Furthermore, the special treatment also affected the labour of the prisoners that was to be done without compromising the propaganda.”¹⁶

The Germans, thus, aimed to oppose their European enemies by using religiously different detainees against the French and the British colonial empires. In her article, “Germany’s Grand First World War *Jihad* Experiment” Florence Waters comments:



Mosque of Wünsdorf as an Instrument of Propaganda

“The unlikely prophet of the *jihād* was German aristocrat, adventurer and diplomat Max von Oppenheim. The 54-year-old had returned to the *Heimat* after 20 years of travel and study in the Orient and, before Britain had even declared war on Germany, had convinced the Kaiser that Islam was Germany’s secret weapon. Oppenheim believed that a well-orchestrated propaganda campaign would stir up a mass Muslim uprising against Britain and France from within colonial territories such as India, Indo-China and north and West Africa (...).”¹⁷

16. Martin Gussone, “Architectural Jihad: The “Halbmondlager” Mosque of Wünsdorf as an Instrument of Propaganda,” in *Jihad and Islam in World War I*, ed. Erik-Jan Zürcher (The Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 2016), 205-6.

17. Florence Waters, “Germany’s Grand First World War *Jihad* Experiment,” *The Telegraph*, (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/museums/11022199/Germanys-Grand-WW1-Jihad-Experiment.html>) Accessed 25 August 2017.

The choice of India, Indo-China, and North and West Africa is very important for the Germans to launch their own version of war plans. Perhaps the notion of Pan-Arabism was not a motivating cause to fight against the Germans for people of the Punjab, Bengalis, the Chams,¹⁸ Africans in the Savannah region, and Berbers in North Africa. I would like to draw attention to the fact that these areas revealed and are still revealing countless numbers of non-Arab Muslims, a significant characteristic that the Muslim Turks fully enjoy in Turkey. 14 November 1914 was a crucial day when Sheikh-ul-Islam in Istanbul avowed “*jihād* on behalf of the Ottoman government, urging Muslims all over the world –including in the Allied countries– to take up arms against Britain, Russia and France.”¹⁹ The idea might seem awkward to some extent, causing many questions among which: if Britain, Russia and France are the enemies of Islam, where can Muslims categorise other countries like Portugal and Greece, Norway and Spain?



Types from the Prison Camp in Zossen: (Starting from the left) Arab, Senegalese, Indian, Turk, Moroccan (2), Zouave. (<http://sirkukri.blogspot.com/2015/09/prisoners-from-far-off-land-indian.html>)

The planned movements to ripen an Ottoman-German stratagem saw light in a place on the outskirts of the capital of Germany. To implement von Oppenheim’s ideology of *jihād*, the Germans built a unique Prisoner-of-War camp called *Halbmondlager*, “half-moon camp,” in Zossen, a place near Berlin where “a combination of political education and religious instruction was carried out in the camps.”²⁰

So, the religiously forbidden practices of another different religious culture in a Christian land helped to open up unlimited hiatuses within the Germans’ Eurocentric stance as a European power. The Germans wanted to become friends of their Christian foes’ colonial subjects no matter the religion. In this respect, Waters speaks of Zossen’s half-moon camp as a fabulous site which

18. Muslims of Champa in Southeast Asia.

19. Ansari, “Between Collaboration and Resistance: Muslim Soldiers,” 23.

20. Qtd. in Gussone, “Architectural Jihad: The “Halbmondlager” Mosque, 206.

“was like no other PoW camp in history. Reserved primarily for Muslim prisoners, detainees lived in relative luxury and were given everything they needed to practise their faith. Spiritual texts were provided, Ramadan observed, a mosque erected –the first on German soil– and there were sermons by visiting spiritual leaders and academics.”²¹

Indeed, agreeable uniforms, and German training and weapons were not the solely attractive things the Germans dealt with in their well-refined agenda. Building a mosque, however, might be a reasonable project for the Germans and on German soil to maintain a good friendship with Muslims. Ahmed Bin Hussein, a Moroccan eye-witness who was present at *Halbmondlager* provides an important story about his life as a prisoner of war:

“They even made a favour of us, and gave us a kitchen. Pork was not to be given to us. They gave us good meat, pilaf, chickpeas etc. They gave three blankets, underwear, and a new pair of shoes, etc. to each of us. They took us to the baths once in every three days and cut our hair.”²²

After so many years of travel and study in the Orient, the result was establishing a small Prisoner-of-War camp. Small in size, but with a building where Muslims fulfilled their religious duties, received lectures from Muslim preachers, and enjoyed eating food devoid from even the smell of pork and wine, the PoW camp divulged adventurer von Oppenheim’s intention to turn what he had studied in the lands of the Muslims into a secret weapon against the Christians.



A German soldier watching a Muslim detainee while the latter reaching the final step in performing his ritual ablution. (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/470696598535661614/>)

21. Waters, “Germany’s Grand First World War *Jihad* Experiment.”

22. Ibid.

The French conscription of Moroccan soldiers in the French army might fade away against the strong words of the Turkish caliphate, leaving ample opportunities to the Germans to problematise the French military projects in Morocco. The French were aware of the interesting rivalry undertaken by the Germans at the level of summoning Muslims in North Africa and Europe through a religious voice to react against their European colonisers; accordingly, the French, too, bade scholars of the religious elite in Morocco to put an end to the German scheme. “You reap what you sow,” the Germans were told.

3. A “Common Cause”: When Ideology Serves Humanity

Clearly, then, Zossen’s PoW camp stressed so many German benevolent attitudes towards Muslim detainees. However, would this magnificent generosity motivate a man like Bin Hussein, who escaped from unbearable war atrocities against the Germans, to quit better conditions and join new battlefields?

While Muslim detainees from different nationalities received invaluable lectures delivered by highly qualified Muslim and nationalist lecturers, like Sâlih Ash-Sharif,

“letters written by German soldiers at the front are full of lists of the books they had been reading. Among titles were the New Testament, Goethe, Schiller, Keller, Fichte, Kleist and Nietzsche (...). Novels published during the war had circulations in the hundreds of thousands (...).”²³

War of words was the common objective which made “[t]he intellectuals and artists of various countries cooperated with their governments for the benefit of their nations and created their works accordingly.”²⁴ In Turkey, some reactionary poets like Ziya Gökalp appropriated German symbols and, in poetic fashion, let “the German Kaiser speak as if he were a Muslim: “The Kaiser has declared to the soldiery and population:/Let your heart reunite in chain!/Trampling the enemy is like praying,/Faith will be guide of my army!/ The All-Compassionate will protect us!” (...).”²⁵ Propaganda was persistent. In his book, *The War that Will End War*, the British novelist H. G. Wells sees the Great War as an odyssey of beliefs rather than a mere clash between bombs

23. Erol Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity: Literature in Turkey during World War I* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 4.

24. *Ibid.*, 1.

25. Erol Köroğlu, “Propaganda or Culture War: Jihad, Islam, and Nationalism in Turkish Literature during World War I,” in *Jihad and Islam in World War I*, ed. Erik-Jan Zürcher (The Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 2016), 138-9.

and rifles. "Our business," the British propagandist argues, "is to kill ideas. The ultimate purpose of this war is propaganda, the destruction of certain beliefs, and the creation of others. It is to this propaganda that reasonable men must address themselves."²⁶ Undoubtedly, Wells seems totally convinced that it was harder to shoot an idea to death since it is intangible, a call to engage in "a war which is about the power of words."²⁷

Thus, words, the letters people compose to create a particular meaning, became ready to replace the iron instruments used to penetrate and kill human bodies. Equally significant, the power of words used in the Great War ranked the Germans and the French intimate enemies:

The Germans, who were portrayed as the descendants of the Huns, were guilty of spilling blood, instilling fear and committing massacres, rape and destruction everywhere they set foot. The French, on the other hand, were described as the most civilized people on earth, people who were courageously defending their country.²⁸

Instigating binary oppositions between German and French, Entente propagandists, needless to say, deftly used racial terms to describe the Germans as guilty people, criminals, rapists and trouble makers simply because the descendants of the Huns were the initiators of the war. Surprisingly enough, the same stereotypical labelling was used to portray the Moroccan Goumiers who fought for the French against the Germans and their partisan Italians in Italy in the Second World War. However, the French who cut their teeth in humiliating African populations were declared not guilty.

In his book, *Muslime in der Mark: als Kriegsgefangene und Internierte in Wünsdorf und Zossen, 1914-1924*, Gerhard Höpp explains that the failure of the German propagandist strategy was not

"certainly due to the lack of commitment of the propagandists or to the inadequate benefits for the prisoners, but rather to the illusory idea, from the very beginning, of the initiators of these people, who had just escaped the fire of the war, with the abstract idea of a holy war to lead the battlefields."²⁹

Höpp's view of the German propaganda is noticeably haunted by a candid mistrust of both German propagandists' efforts and Muslim recruits' hidden intentions. Meanwhile, the elites of a new nation in Turkey would

26. H. G. Wells, *The War that Will End War* (London: Palmer, 1914), 91.

27. Wolfgang G. Natter, *Literature at War, 1914-1940* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, 53.)

28. Köroğlu, *Ottoman Propaganda and Turkish Identity*, 3.

29. Gerhard Höpp, *Muslime in der Mark: als Kriegsgefangene und Internierte in Wünsdorf und Zossen, 1914-1924* (Berlin: Druckerei Weinert, 1997), 89.

abandon the *jihād* propaganda that proved ephemeral, allowing the rise of a new secular state to come to the fore.³⁰

Additionally, the French had their own strategy, which looked similar to the one carried out by von Oppenheim, and they would not remain silent on what was going on between the Germans and the Ottomans.

To dwell on the propagandist approach the French used in order to face the German plot, it would be useful to quote Maghraoui:

“[T]he French employed a propagandist language from within an Islamic field of reference with which most Moroccans could associate. In so doing, they sought to appeal to the religious convictions of individual Moroccans to make the *Grande Guerre* a “*guerre sainte à la française*.” This form of conscription-through-ideology was not uncommon in the French tradition of foreign recruitment. The reference to the ideals of *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* was a typical French strategy for attracting Europeans from different ethnic backgrounds to their wars. Reference to Islam in this context was especially interesting because it meant that the French had to imagine new ways of propaganda in which the Great War had to look “holy” and the Muslim Turks to appear as ‘infidels.’”³¹

Inspired by reciprocal propagandist views in making the Great War a holy one, the Franco-German war was entangled in an utterly chaotic ideological dimension. Through the Turks, the Germans had sought a Moroccan assistance against the Triple Entente in Europe and Morocco which was neither occupied by the Germans nor ruled by the Turks. Yet, through religious brotherhoods and Sufi scholars, “[i]t was up to the French now to look like the real defenders of Islam.”³² Should Moroccan conscripts put loyalty to the French above loyalty to the Germans and the Turks?



Lyautey and von Oppenheim were adopting the lifestyles of the natives who are presumed to give them help. (<https://www.amazon.fr/Lyautey-Arnaud-TEYSSIER/dp/2262030766>)

30. Köroğlu, “Propaganda or Culture War: Jihad, Islam, and Nationalism,” 149.

31. Maghraoui, “The “Grande Guerre Sainte,”” 12.

32. Ibid.

Lyautey's fervent ways to lessen the bad repercussion of the French colonisation of Morocco and its consequences on Moroccans was tirelessly tracked. Lyautey's attempt to make approaches to the Moroccan Sultan, Mawlāy Yūsūf, made the French officer follow a deft handling of a striking unification between Islamic ideals and French principles. A new ideology was born. He said that "the religious reason, for which he [the sultan] is the unquestionable leader, can only support those who are fighting for the achievements of rights, justice and liberty."³³ Lyautey's view of the Franco-Moroccan relationship vis-à-vis the French situation in the First World War brought within its folds ambivalent outlooks. Maghraoui goes on to argue:

"French colonialists often praised the colonial project in a language that was articulated in a predominantly "secular" and "rationalist" discourse which sharply opposed religion and Islam in particular. In a remarkable reversal the language of Islam was here appropriated to serve the notion of liberty and equality, which are the two fundamental ideals of the French Revolution."³⁴

Lyautey's statement in many guises reiterates an old saying initiated by Heraclites: "The war is the mother of everything."³⁵ The war is also, to support such a statement, the mother that gave birth to an extraordinary close joining of two different outlooks which opposed each other: the French colonial secularism the French colonists inherited from the principles of the French Revolution and the spiritual principles of Islam. How could the Moroccan soldiers fight for ideals, which were not theirs, then? Yet, before asking this question, one can also utter a list of questions among which: How did the French convince illiterate people to join the French army and to battle for big concepts like equality *à la française*?

The topic of a shared cause thus seemed to loom, alerting France's enemies to the rise of multi-cultural army. Three months after the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Mawlāy Yūsūf announced:

"After sending Our Sharifian Letter urging you to help the French and Allied troops and make common cause with them to fight the enemies of humanity, freedom and civilisation, and add to your reputation, We received, through the Resident General, a letter from the French Minister of War about you, (...). You, on the contrary, fight in the name of the

33. Quoted in Maghraoui, "The "Grande Guerre Sainte,"" 13.

34. Ibid., 13.

35. Quoted in Ghanim Hanna, "Mafhoum al-Harb bayna Nietzsche wa Heideger," *Alamu al-Fikr* 33 (2) (2007): 37.

purest right, for the liberty of the nations, for the salvation of the people, the maintenance of peace and order.³⁶

The shared-cause element is clearly demonstrated in the royal statement, proclaiming that the sultan and his subjects are faithful to their promises. For Mawlāy Yūsūf, the Allies believe in liberty and their victory over the Germans and their collaborators would equal Islam's sovereignty in the Sharifian Kingdom.

No matter how paradoxical Lyautey's approach of collaboration between French ideals and religious cause might look like, the French general seemed to adopt a pragmatic vision of an army whose human resources contradict each other: The French as colonisers and the Moroccans as colonial soldiers. In fact, Lyautey's strategy, Maghraoui explains, "was however very successful, not because the sultan might have believed him, but because it set the parameters of a propagandist religious discourse for the whole period of the war."³⁷ On November 20, 1914, a telegram was written in a session of *Al-Majlis Al-Baladi* of Fez confirming that "[i]ts members have declared that Turkey does not defend any Islamic cause."³⁸ The leitmotif of a "common cause" as it is clearly shown in this profound complicity between French pragmatism and Moroccan faithfulness was the national hymn chanted to enthuse both Moroccan subjects and Allies to react against the Germans.

Conclusion

Definitely, European imperial forces' recruitment of Muslims in both tenth and twentieth centuries interlocked. The fifty four-year-old German aristocrat's efforts to turn Muslim soldiers fighting for Britain, Russia and France into combatants against the enemies of Germany find a striking correlation in certain tenth-century-war events between Europe's kings and in their strategies in recruiting Muslims against other European imperial forces. By referring to the manner in which the French and the Germans deflated each other's war plans, through the power of words, I would like to deflect the negative repercussions induced by conscription on Moroccan recruits into a feeling of dismay and malcontent experienced by the conscripts' employers. Perhaps normally enough, it is up to the Moroccan recruits who should show

36. "Proclamation du Sultan Moulay Youssef," *Revue du Monde Musulman* XXIX, (Dec. 1914): 7-8. Mentionned in "Les Musulmans Français et la Guerre," (Arabic texts and French translations), *Revue du Monde Musulman* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, Editeur for La Mission Scientifique du Maroc), vol. XXIX (1914).

37. Maghraoui, "The "Grande Guerre Sainte,"" 13.

38. "Les Musulmans Français et la Guerre," "Télégramme Rédigé en Séance du Medjles el-Baladi de Fés, le 20 novembre 1914," *Revue du Monde Musulman* XXIX, (dec. 1914): 9.

displeasure. Yet, it seems that the French and the Germans fell prey to their mutual misrepresentations, a strange twist in events which made the two propagandists bear the pains of receiving much stereotypical labelling and preconceived vignettes.

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ملخص: الإيديولوجية والدعاية: ردود فعل الفرنسيين أمام التجنيد العثماني الألماني للمغاربة في الحرب العظمى

تركز هذه الدراسة على تناول موضوع ردود فعل المغرب تجاه التجنيد الفرنسي والعثماني-الألماني للجنود المغاربة خلال الحرب العالمية الأولى. ويستند البحث الرئيسي في هذه الدراسة إلى فرضية مفادها أن القوة الأوروبية التي استفادت بمهارة من الاستخدام الفعال للدعاية في تجنيد الجنود المستعمرين في الحرب العالمية الأولى قد تكسب مزيداً من المجندين من ذوي الديانات المختلفة. وخلصت هذه الدراسة إلى أنه بدءاً من نشوب حرب في القرن العاشر الميلادي بين ملوك أوروبيين إلى الحرب العالمية الأولى كان هناك ميل لدى بعض القادة الأوروبيين لتجنيد العناصر المسلمة في الاقتتال مع قوى إمبريالية أوروبية أخرى حيث عرفت هاتين الحقتين المختلفتين استخدام الخطاب الديني كخيار استراتيجي لاستقطاب عدد هائل من المجندين المعتنقين لديانات مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحرب العالمية الأولى، الدعاية، الإيديولوجية، الوفاق الألماني العثماني، المجندين المغاربة، فرنسا، المغرب.

Résumé: Idéologie et propagande: Comment les Français ont réagi au recrutement ottoman-allemand des Marocains pendant la Grande Guerre

La recherche porte sur la façon dont le Maroc a réagi au recrutement français et ottoman-allemand des soldats marocains pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Son objectif principal est basé sur la prémisse selon laquelle la force européenne, qui a habilement bénéficié d'un brillant emploi de la propagande dans le recrutement de soldats coloniaux dans la Grande Guerre, gagnerait plus de conscrits de confessions différentes. Allant d'une guerre du dixième siècle entre des rois européens à la Grande Guerre, certains dirigeants européens étaient enclins à recruter des musulmans pour lutter contre d'autres forces impériales européennes. Le discours utilisé pour atteindre un grand nombre de conscrits religieusement différents à ces deux époques différentes a utilisé le discours religieux comme une option pour gagner plus de recrues.

Mots clés: La Grande Guerre, propagande, idéologie, entente germano-ottomane, conscrits marocains, France, Maroc.

Abstract: Ideology and Propaganda: How the French Reacted to the Ottoman-German Recruitment of Moroccans in the Great War

The research is about how Morocco reacted to the French and the Ottoman-German recruitment of Moroccan soldiers in the First World War. Its main objective is based upon the premise that the European force, which skilfully enjoyed a brilliant employment of propaganda in recruiting colonial soldiers in the Great War, would win more religiously different conscripts. Ranging from a tenth-century-war event between European kings to the Great War, there was an inclination among some European leaders towards recruiting Muslims to fight against other European imperial forces. The discourse employed to achieve a huge number of religiously different conscripts in these two different eras made use of religious discourse as an option to gain more recruits.

Keywords: The Great War, Propaganda, Ideology, German-Ottoman Entente, Moroccan conscripts, France, Morocco.

Resumen: Ideología y propaganda: cómo reaccionaron los franceses ante el reclutamiento otomano-alemán de los marroquíes en la Gran Guerra

La investigación trata de cómo Marruecos reaccionó al reclutamiento francés y otomano-alemán de soldados marroquíes en la Primera Guerra Mundial. Su objetivo principal se basa en la premisa de que la fuerza europea, que hábilmente disfrutó de un brillante empleo de propaganda para reclutar soldados coloniales en la Gran Guerra, ganaría conscriptos más religiosos. Desde un evento de guerra del siglo X entre los reyes europeos hasta la Gran Guerra, hubo una inclinación entre algunos líderes europeos hacia el reclutamiento de musulmanes para luchar contra otras fuerzas imperiales europeas. El discurso empleado para lograr un gran número de reclutas religiosamente diferentes en estas dos épocas diferentes hizo uso del discurso religioso como una opción para obtener más reclutas.

Palabras clave: La Gran Guerra, propaganda, ideología, entente alemán-otomano, reclutas marroquíes, Francia, Marruecos.