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OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND MOROCCAN RESISTANCE TO THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR: ACTIVITIES OF TEŞKILAT-I MAHSUSA IN MOROCCO

*Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı Devleti ve Fas'ın Fransız Himayesine Karşı
Direnişi: Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'nın Fas'taki Faaliyetleri*

Halil KAYA 

Université Internationale de Rabat

halil.kaya@uir.ac.ma

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OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND MOROCCAN RESISTANCE TO THE FRENCH PROTECTORATE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR: ACTIVITIES OF TEŞKILAT-I MAHSUSA IN MOROCCO

Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Osmanlı Devleti ve Fas'ın Fransız Himayesine Karşı Direnişi: Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa'nın Fas'taki Faaliyetleri

Halil KAYA

Öz

Birinci Dünya Harbi boyunca Fas'ta Fransız Himaye rejimine karşı birçok silahlı direniş hareketi mücadele veriyordu. Osmanlı Devleti'nin "cihad" ilan ederek savaşa girmesiyle bu hareketler Fransızlar için ciddi tehdit unsuru haline geldi. Bu hareketleri mali ve askerî açıdan destekleyen Almanya, Osmanlı Devleti'nden bölgede genel bir ayaklanma başlatmak amacıyla subay talebinde bulunmuştu. Bu doğrultuda Fas'ı ayaklandırmak göreviyle Cihan Harbi'nde tarafsız bir devlet olan İspanya'ya gönderilen Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa subayları, 1916'ya kadar yoğun faaliyet yürüttülse de daha sonra Alman yetkililerle yaşanan anlaşmazlık sonucu görevlerine son verildi. Birinci Dünya Savaşı esnasında Fas'taki silahlı direniş hareketlerini içeren çeşitli çalışmalar mevcuttur. Fakat bu direniş hareketlerine Osmanlı Devleti'nin katkısı genellikle çalışmalara konu olmamıştır. Bu durum muhtemelen Osmanlı arşiv belgelerinin konu üzerine çalışan araştırmacılarla dil engeli yahut sair sebeplerle kullanılmamış olmasından ileri gelmektedir. Bu makalede Birinci Dünya Savaşı esnasında Fas'taki direniş hareketlerini asiste etmek ve bölgede Fransız karşıtı genel bir ayaklanma çıkarmak amacıyla İspanya'ya gönderilen Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa subaylarının faaliyetleri incelenecektir. Osmanlı arşiv belgelerine ek olarak İngiliz ve Fransız arşiv belgeleri de kullanılarak literatüre katkı sağlamak amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: I. Dünya Savaşı, Fas Direnişi, Osmanlı Devleti, Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, Mevlay Abdülhafid, Emir Abdülmalik

Abstract

During the First World War, many armed resistance movements were fighting against the French Protectorate regime in Morocco. These movements became a serious threat to the French presence when the Ottoman Empire declared "jihad" and entered the war. Germany, which supported these movements financially and militarily, requested officers from the Ottoman Empire to start a general uprising in the region. In this direction, Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa officers were sent to Spain with the task of supporting resistance movements in Morocco. Although that they conducted intense activities until 1916, as a result of the disagreement with the German authorities, they were dismissed from their duties. There are several studies on armed resistance movements in Morocco during the First World War. However, the contribution of the Ottoman Empire to these resistance movements has not been the subject of studies. This is probably due to the fact that Ottoman archival documents were not used by researchers for reasons such as language barriers. In this article, the activities of Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa officers supporting the resistance movements in Morocco to cause a general anti-French uprising in the region during the war will be examined. In addition to Ottoman archival documents, it is aimed to contribute to the literature by using English and French archives.

Keywords: World War I, Moroccan Resistance, Ottoman Empire, Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, Mawlay Abd al-Hafid, Emir Abd al-Malik

Introduction

On March 30, 1912, Morocco accepted the French protectorate with the Treaty of Fez. Afterwards, an agreement was signed with Spain, and as a result, the northern part of the country and the Sahara region came under Spanish control, while the rest came under French administration. Both colonial powers encountered a number of armed resistance movements. These resistance movements became a threat to the French presence, especially with the outbreak of World War I. Because the French Resident-General, General Lyautey, who ruled the country in practice, received an order to withdraw from areas except important coastal cities in order to send the forces under his command to the European fronts. Considering how this would endanger the French presence in Morocco, Lyautey did not leave the existing domains. Although he gradually sent about 45,000 soldiers to the fronts in Europe throughout the war, number of French troops in Morocco never fell below 80,000.¹ Nevertheless, these movements played a vital role when the Ottoman Empire, an ally of Germany, declared Jihad in November 1914. By declaring Jihad, the Ottoman Empire added a religious dimension to the war. It aimed to expand the war to the periphery by targeting the support of Muslim communities in European colonies. To this end, agents of Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, a special organization of Ottoman Empire, were sent to Morocco.

Among the European colonial powers, France had gathered 400,000 soldiers from Muslim countries. The vast majority of these soldiers were from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Although the Ottoman Sultan had not been recognized as the caliph in Morocco before, the declaration of Jihad was welcomed with an enthusiasm by the majority of Moroccan Muslims. This situation created huge concern on French authorities. Besides, letters of Sultan Mehmed Resat and Kaiser Wilhelm II with full of expressions encouraging the resistant groups by mentioning the virtues of jihad against the French, were occasionally seized by the French.²

Following the declaration of Jihad, a new one was added to the resistance movements that emerged after the Protectorate Agreement in 1912. Emir Abd al-Malik, a former Ottoman officer who held a very prestigious position in Morocco at the time, left his duty in Tangier immediately after the declaration of Jihad to launch an armed resistance in the Taza region. This resistance movement, which continued until the end of the war, is directly related to the Ottoman Empire and the Jihad call.

There have been few studies written on Ottoman activities in Morocco during the World War I while Ottoman policies regarding Muslim subjects in European colonies are examined in some important studies.³ One reason behind this is that mentioned Ottoman policies and even the presence of the Ottoman agents operating in Morocco quite new information for many. This situation arises from the "secondary" role assigned to the Ottoman Empire in the Moroccan studies

¹ Mohammed Bekraoui, *Les Marocains dans la Grande Guerre 1914-1919*, Publication de la Commission Marocaine d'Histoire Militaire, Rabat 2009, p.127-128

² Louis Barthou, "*La Bataille du Maroc*", Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, Paris, 1919, p.50-51

³ For further studies that talk about the relations of the Ottoman Empire with the resistance movements in Morocco during the World War, see also: Ahmet Tetik, "*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa (Umûr-ı Şarkıyye Dairesi) Tarihi*", İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul, 3 vols. ; Edmund Burke III, "Moroccan Resistance, Pan-Islam and German War Strategy 1914-1918, *Francia*, 1975, Band 3, p.434-464; Odile Moreau, "Arif Taher Bey : An Ottoman Military Instructor Bridging the Maghreb and the Ottoman Mediterranean" in Odile Moreau, Stuart Schaar. *Subversives and Mavericks in the Muslim Mediterranean: A Subaltern History*, University of Texas Press, 2016, p.57-78; Mohamed Bekraoui, "*Les Marocains dans la Grande Guerre*", Publication de la Commission Marocaine d'Histoire Militaire, Rabat, 2009, 398 p.

focusing the World War I. It is also due to the fact that no studies have been done which combines both the Western archives and the Ottoman archives.

In this article, we will examine the propaganda activities of the Ottoman Empire in Morocco during the World War I. We will also evaluate the operations carried out by the Ottoman officers in the field in the light of the archival documents of various countries.

1. Moroccan-Ottoman Relations Prior to the First World War

The Ottoman Empire-Morocco relations date back to the 16th century. Bilateral relations that started in the Saadi period continued in the Alawite period. Main topic of these relations was disagreements between Morocco and the Ottoman Regency in Algeria. Since both, Ottomans and Morocco, claimed the caliphate, this issue caused ups and downs in relations. Nevertheless, relations have progressed better in which there have been interactions such as supporting each other as well. In the 18th and 19th centuries, when the threat of colonialism began to show its effect, more cooperation and cooperation efforts were reflected in the correspondence between the two states.⁴

The main interactions of these two Muslim states took place in the 19th century, during the reign of two remarkable sultan of their time: Abdulhamit II and Hasan I. During the aforementioned period, ambassador exchanges⁵ took place on various occasions. Also, despite the fact that they were conclusive, two states attempted to establish diplomatic relations through the Germans. After the Hasan I, Moroccan ulama of the Sultan Abd al-Aziz era made demands for the removal of European military experts to replace them with the Muslim Ottoman officers as experts in the army. However, Sultan Abd al-Aziz made more concessions to France and Spain even though this drew reaction of the ulama as well as the public.

The Bou Hamara rebellion, which started in 1902, affected the country with already disappearing stability. As a result, Abd al-Hafid won the power struggle that he entered with his brother Sultan Abd al-Aziz. Abd al-Hafid became new sultan in 1908 by having support of the ulema of important cities. Subsequently, Sultan Abd al-Hafid launched a campaign, “Chaouia resistance”, to leave imperial powers out of the country. Therefore, he gained a reputation as the Sultan of Jihad. On the other hand, he accepted the Algeiras provisions to make his sovereignty recognized by European powers. Admittedly, the most important steps in the Maghrib-Mashrik rapprochement were taken during his reign. In 1909, the Moroccan delegation headed by Mohammed El-Mokri went to Europe to hold loan negotiations. Within the scope of this trip, it was planned to go to Berlin and Istanbul, respectively. However, French intervention succeeded to keep Istanbul out of trip.⁶ However, Mohammed al-Mokri conveyed a request to the Egyptian

⁴ Abdurrahmane el Moudden, *Sharifs and Padisahs: Moroccan-Ottoman Relations From The 16th Through The 18th Centuries*, Contribution to the Study of a Diplomatic Culture, Princeton, 1992 p.12-13; see also: Nazire Karaçay Türkal, *18. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Osmanlı-Fas İlişkileri: Seyyid İsmail ve Ahmed Azmi Efendilerin Fas Elçilikleri (1785-1788)*, (Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi), Trabzon, 2004.

⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, *“The Politization of Islam”*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 265-268; II. Abdülhamit and Hasan I exchanged letters and expressed their wishes for establishing good relations. However, official diplomatic relations could never be established between Morocco and the Ottoman Empire. A person of Moroccan origin named Ibrahim es-Senusi and a resident of Egypt served as an envoy.

⁶ MAE (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères), *Affaire du Maroc 1908-1910*, M. de Saint-Aulaire to M. Stéphan Pichon, Tanger, 9 November 1909; It is stated in this French diplomatic document that al-Mukri went to Istanbul and made a request for the officers. But this Istanbul trip never took place. On the other hand, the unofficial identity of the Ottoman

Khedive Abbas Hilmi Pasha for Muslim military officers to serve in the Moroccan army. In the meantime, this task was offered to a number of Ottoman military school students who were in exile in Egypt. Thus, in November 1909, the first Ottoman military mission came to Morocco and began its mission. This situation, which was strongly condemned by France, also caused a diplomatic crisis. As a result of French pressure, ottoman military officers were dismissed and left the country a few months later.⁷

The Ottoman-Moroccan relations, which can be seen in the example of the Ottoman soldiers taking part in the Moroccan army, were mostly going through Egypt. Although Egypt came under British control in 1882, it was a part of the Ottoman Empire de jure. The number of Moroccans who were engaged in commercial activities here, who stayed a while to go Hijaz for pilgrimage, and received education in al-Azhar in Cairo was quite high. Thus, in Morocco's anti-imperial struggle, Egypt represented Morocco's connection with the Islamic world, notably with Istanbul. Moreover, Hijaz was another important interaction point. Moroccans, who came to the Hijaz every year for pilgrimage, were contacting with realm of the Ottoman Empire. Significantly, the ulema of both states were exchanging views and ideas as well as developments in their respective countries. Therefore, arguably, Moroccan scholars⁸ and merchants interacted with the rest of the Islamic world predominantly in these two places, Egypt and Hijaz.⁹

The pan-Islamist policy, a policy of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century, was a triggering factor in the increasing of Ottoman-Moroccan interactions. Influential Muslim sheikhs and opinion leaders such as Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi, Muhammad Zafir al-Madani, Jamaladdin al-Afghani, within the framework of the policy, conducted pan-Islamist propaganda based in Istanbul. It is possible to observe the impact of this effort in the activities against European colonials, especially in the North Africa. Pan-Islamist policies also showed their effect in Morocco, although not as much as in the regions controlled by the Ottoman Empire for a period such as Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. For example, Moroccan Sultan Mawlay Hassan contributed to the Hijaz for the benefit of the pilgrims. His son, Abdulaziz, who came to the throne after him, donated 184,601 francs through Debbah Efendi, a prominent figure in Mecca, to the construction of the Hejaz Railway¹⁰. The above-mentioned military mission is another project as a result of Pan-Islamist framework. In this regard, Edmund Burke III mentions Ittihad-i Maghribi Cemiyeti, Society of Moorish Union (SMU), with reference to the British archives¹¹. This society, a pan-Islamic organization based in Cairo, played an active role in the fight against the French in Morocco¹². The Society is included in a number of notable events, from the Ottoman military mission in Morocco to the al-Haqq newspaper, which was published in Tangier with an anti-French publishing policy. Furthermore, Hasan Şerei Pasha, a Moroccan resident in Egypt, played

mission to Morocco is evidence for this situation.; Mustafa L. Bilge, "II. Abdülhamit'in İslam Birliği Çağrısı ve Fas", *Actes of Colloquium, II. Abdülhamit ve Dönemi*, Istanbul, 1992 p.54

⁷ For this ottoman military mission see: Odile Moreau, "Une Mission Militaire au Maroc", *The Maghreb Review*, vol.30 no.2, 2005, s.209-224

⁸ Mustafa L. Bilge, *op.cit.*, p.51: For example, Abu Chouaib Doukkali is one of the Moroccan scholars who grew up in Al-Azhar and played a key role in the spread of Salafism in Morocco.

⁹ Edmund Burke III, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance to French Imperialism, 1900-1912", *Journal of African History*, XIII (1972), p. 97-102

¹⁰ BOA (Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi), *Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO)*, 1993-149432: As an example can be seen in the document, the Ottomans referred to the Moroccan Sultans as "Emir of Morocco" or "Ruler of Morocco". This usage indicates that the Ottomans did not see them as their equals.

¹¹ Edmund Burke III, "Moroccan Resistance, Pan-Islam and German War Strategy 1914-1918", *Francia*, 1975, Band 3, p.437

¹² Edmun Burke III, "*Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco*", The University of Chicago Press, 1970, p.161.

a key role in the society regarding Moroccan affairs. Şerei Pasha¹³, who was among inner circle of personalities such as Khedive Abbas Hilmi and Sheikh Ali Yusuf¹⁴, and who was the Minister of Foundations during the period of Khedive Ismail Pasha, covered the expenses of the Ottoman officers who moved from Egypt to serve in the Moroccan army. He also gave a letter of reference addressed to Mohammed al-Muqri to facilitate the travel of the aforementioned officers.

Another key aspect regarding the Moorish Union is Tahir Bey, who was the head of the Ottoman officers going to Morocco in 1909 and was sent to Madrid by Teskilat-i Mahsusa in 1915 to deal with Moroccan affairs during the World War. Tahir Bey was a former military officer who was expelled from the Military Academy in Egypt in 1909.¹⁵ Besides, there are couple of factors revealing that SMU was not an ordinary organization. One is that Tahir Bey and the other officers took part in the 1909 mission such as namely Nuri (Yozgat), Remzi (Damascus) and İsmet (Darende) were involved in Libyan resistance in Tripoli during 1911-12. Secondly, same figures were sent to Madrid by Teskilat-i Mahsusa with a mandate regarding Moroccan affairs in 1915.¹⁶

2. Ottomans and Moroccan Resistance in the First World War

Although the Ottoman Empire tried to remain neutral at the beginning of the war, an alliance agreement with Germany signed on 2nd August, 1914, eventually consequence with involvement of Ottomans in the war. Germany needed the power of the Ottoman State and therefore the caliphate for its plan to revolt the Muslim colonies of the Entente States in accordance with the memorandum, which was largely prepared by Baron Max von Oppenheim. According to Oppenheim, an effective uprising in Morocco was not foreseeable. Because the French were quite strong in Morocco, which came under French protection with the Fez agreement in 1912. Despite strong French presence, the armed resistance that started before the war and very strong Sufi movements in Morocco have taken attention¹⁷. After the Ottoman Empire entered the war, Enver Pasha prepared a plan with the Second Chief of the Ottoman General Staff, German von Bronsart Pasha. In compliance with the Article 2 of the plan, the Sultan would declare jihad against the Entente Powers upon official declaration to enter the war¹⁸.

¹³ N. Scotidis, "L'Égypte Contemporaine et Arabi Pasha", Paris-Flammaron, 1888, p.118: In Scotidis' work, Şerei Pasha is mentioned as "Hassan Cherei Pasha".

¹⁴ For further information on Al-Mueyyed Journal and Sheikh Ali Yusuf see also: Adil Baktıaya, "El Müeyyed'in İttihat ve Terakki'ye Cevabı: Mısırlı Bir Gazetecinin Kanun-i Esasi, İdare-i Örfiye ve Hilafet ile İlgili Görüşleri", İstanbul Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi, No:38, (Mart 2008), s.69-87

¹⁵ BOA., *DH. MKT.*, 2885-31: Tahir Bey (Yanyalı) II. During the reign of Abdülhamid, he was removed from the military and sent into exile together with a number of officer/officer candidates who caused the exile of his friends by being a detective at the Military Academy; Ahmet Bedevi Kuran, "İnkılap Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler", İstanbul, 1945, p.285: Ahmet Bedevi Kuran is one of the students of the Military Academy in exile in Egypt. He could not join the convoy that went to Morocco under the leadership of Tahir Bey due to his illness and was able to go to Morocco only two months after them.

¹⁶ Edmun Burke III, "*Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco*", The University of Chicago Press, 1970, p.205; It is known that Tahir Bey came to Morocco several times between 1909 and 1915 and carried out anti-French activities. For example, Tahir Bey came to Morocco to join the forces of Ahmed al-Hibe, who started the first great resistance by declaring his own sultanate after the Treaty of Protectorate in 1912, but he was arrested and deported by the French before he could reach the destination.

¹⁷ Kadir Kon, "Almanya'nın İslam Stratejisi Mimarlarından Max von Oppenheim ve Bu Konu Hakkındaki Üç Memorandumu", *Tarih Dergisi*, vol.53, İstanbul, 2012, s.236

¹⁸ Ahmet Kavas, "Fransa'nın Kuzey ve Batı Afrika'da Uyguladığı İslam Siyaseti: Sultan Reşad'ın Yayınladığı Cihad Çağrısının Reddi Meselesi", *Dini Araştırmalar*, Ocak-Nisan 2000, c.2, s.6, s.23-24

At the beginning of the war, Germany carried out propaganda activities in line with Oppenheim's memorandum by establishing the "Eastern Affairs Office" called Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient/NfO. In fact, we know that figures such as Salih Şerif et-Tunusi, Halim Sabit (Şibay) and Emir Ali Pasha were active in this office. For example, Salih Şerif et-Tunusi prepared many anti-French propaganda texts used to influence the Muslim soldiers fighting in the French army in various fronts. Emir Ali Pasha, on the other hand, went to Berlin in 1915 and addressed the soldiers in the Muslim prison camp in Zossen to win them in favour of the Ottomans¹⁹. In addition to these works, propaganda activities were carried out in Morocco. Particularly, Arabic fatwas and brochures were in circulation throughout the country. Newspapers regarding the war and Germany's advance into France were sent to the region²⁰. However, Muslim Ottoman officers were inevitably needed to operate in the region to manage potential uprising in Morocco and to assist the armed resistance movements. In this regard, upon Germany's request, the Ottoman Empire sent several officers of Teskilat-i Mahsusa to Madrid, Spain.

2.1. Selection of Ottoman Officers, their transition to Spain and their activities in Morocco

The selection of Ottoman officers sent to Morocco is quite remarkable. As we mentioned above, Tahir Bey and three officers were members of the unofficial Ottoman military delegation that went to Morocco via Egypt in 1909-1910 with the mandate of modernizing the Moroccan army. The same figures appear in the Ottoman-Italian war that took place in Tripoli in 1911-1912. After Tahir Bey's removal from Morocco, he went to Paris and Egypt, respectively. He came to Morocco several times between 1910-1912 and tried to support the anti-French resistance movements there. In May 1911, he was arrested by the French in Tangier, where he came to establish a newspaper to publish an anti-French content. He was expelled from Morocco later on²¹. Tahir Bey, who was in Paris at the beginning of the Tripoli War, worked in the Garyan region, where he came voluntarily with Ali Fethi Bey, the Ottoman Military Attaché.²² Due to his activities in Tripoli, Tahir Bey regained his military duty and the rank of captain.²³

It is likely that during the Tripoli War, a relationship developed between Tahir Bey and Enver Pasha. On this occasion, Enver Pasha must have been aware of Tahir Bey and his friends' Moroccan journey. After the declaration of Jihad, towards the end of 1914, Major Tahir Bey and three officers, Nuri, İsmet and Remzi, were sent to Spain to deal with Moroccan affairs. The officers used various routes such as Rome and Genoa and fake passports to arrive in Spain²⁴. The Entente Powers knew that the Ottoman Empire would send officers to Spain for Moroccan affairs. However, it seems that as a result of an intelligence tactics, they were provided with false

¹⁹ Edmund Burke III, "Moroccan Resistance, Pan-Islam and German War Strategy, 1914-1918", *Francia*, Band ^, 1975, s.455-456.

²⁰ SHD (Service Historique de Défense), *GR, 7N, 2122*, Capitaine Huot, Note sur l'Action Allemande au Maroc, February-Avril 1915

²¹ Odile Moreau, "Arif Taher Bey: An Ottoman Military Instructor Bridging the Maghreb and the Ottoman Mediterranean" in Odile Moreau, Stuart Schaar. *Subversives and Mavericks in the Muslim Mediterranean: A Subaltern History*, University of Texas Press, 2016, s.63-64

²² Georges Rémond, *Trablusgarp Savaşı ve Enver Paşa*, transl. İdil Cihangir, Doğu Kütüphanesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2019, p.79, 93 ; Hamdi Ertuna, *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi: Osmanlı Devri, Osmanlı-İtalyan Harbi (1911-1912)*, ATASE Yayınları, Ankara, 1981, p.183 Ahmet Bedevi Kuran, "*İnkılâp Tarihimiz ve Jön Türkler*", İstanbul, 1945, s.191: Ahmet Bedevi mentions that he could not participate in this trip due to his illness and that Tahir and Ali Fethi Beys joined the resistance by crossing to Tripoli via Tunisia.

²³ BOA, *BEO*, 4135-310078, 18 Ocak 1913; BOA, *İ.HB*, 128-21, 16 January 1913

²⁴ BOA, *DH.KMS.*, 29-28, Edirne Valiliğine,30 November 1914

information. According to the British archive document, "*Bedri Pasha from Shkodra, Albania will meet in Algeciras, Spain with a delegation waiting for him, and he will be sent to Morocco to start a rebellion in Morocco and deliver the fatwas there.*"²⁵ However, Bedri Pasha was never appointed to this task since died in 1912 in Istanbul, where he came for treatment while he was Governor of Shkodra.²⁶

At that time, the most authorized official in the Ottoman Embassy in Madrid was Chargé d'Affaires Vâsık el-Muayyad. Vâsık al-Muayyad was informed that Tahir Bey's task was to contact with the Muslims of Africa under European occupation, and he was ordered to provide all kinds of convenience. While carrying out this operation, it was also ordered to refrain from any activity that would trigger any uprising in the Spanish-controlled areas.²⁷ Because Spain was one of the neutral states in the World War. Moreover, the headquarters for the Moroccan operation of the German and Ottoman officers were the embassies in Madrid. The former Moroccan sultan had passed from Tangier, where the French forced him to reside at the beginning of the war, to Spain without their consent.

When Tahir Bey came to Madrid, he met with the former Moroccan Sultan, Mawlay Abd al-Hafid, who was residing in Barcelona at that time.²⁸ According to a "top secret" report Tahir Bey presented to Enver Pasha, the support of Mawlay Abd al-Hafid was inevitable in order to launch an effective movement in Morocco. Because Tahir Bey thought that only Abd al-Hafid might be the leader to bring tribes and groups, each in separate regions and irregularly fighting against France, together.²⁹ In fact, even though Mawlay Abd al-Hafid was known as the "jihad sultan" by following an anti-French policy when he defeated his brother Abd al-Aziz in 1908, later on, he lost his prestige since he abdicated in 1912 by signing the agreement that made the country a French colony.

It was essential to unite the Moroccan resistance under a single leader. Just after the Protectorate Agreement in 1912, Ahmed al-Hiba emerged in the south of Marrakech by declaring his sultanate. Although he was able to hold Marrakech for a brief time, he had to retreat after being defeated by the French forces. In the north, around Tangier, Sharif Ahmed al-Raissouni, another rebellion leader, declared his sultanate. Moreover, in the inner parts of Morocco, the Middle Atlas, Moha ou Hammou Zayani, the chief of the Berber Zayan tribe, rebelled and severely defeated the French on 13 November 1914. All these resistance movements were local-scale and independent movements until the Ottoman Empire declared jihad and sent its officers to the region. In this context, possibly due to his past relationships, Tahir Bey negotiated with

²⁵ TNA, FO, 371/2140, 82545/472, 14 December 1914, R. Rodd to Edward Grey.

²⁶ Mehmet Arslan, Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü, "*Kütahyalı Bedri Paşa*", 01. 12. 2020, <http://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/bedri-pasa-kutahyalı> erişim tarihi: 25.06.2022

²⁷ BOA, HR.SYS, D.2392, G.5, Said Halim Pasha to Moukhtar Pasha; The correspondence between the Madrid Embassy and Istanbul was mostly carried out through the Berlin Embassy. The Ottoman Charge d'affaires in Madrid forwards the telegrams he received from Tahir Bey to the Berlin Embassy; The Berlin Embassy was delivering these telegrams to its addressee in Istanbul. Generally, the addressee of the telegrams is Enver Pasha, the Minister of War and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief.

²⁸ During the Moroccan mission of Tahir Bey and his friends in 1909-1910, Mawlay Abd al-Hafid was the Sultan. So they knew each other from that period. In fact, according to an article published in Sirat-I Mustakim with the signature "A. T. from the Ottoman Army's Chief of Staff", which most likely belongs to Tahir Bey, Mawlay Abd al-Hafid was so disturbed by this situation that he cried out when he had notified Ottoman officers regarding their removal. *Sirâtülmüstakîm*, tome 4, vol. 101, p.399-400

²⁹ BOA, HR.SYS., D.2392, G.5, Moukhtar Pasha to Said Halim Pasha, Berlin, 22 January 1915.

Mawlay Hafid and was able to persuade him to lead the movement under certain conditions. These conditions were as such;

1. Mawlay Abd al-Hafid's domination in Morocco would be recognized by Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire,

2. The Ottoman State and Germany would cover all the expenses necessary to prepare and carry out the general revolt of the tribes in Morocco,

3. In case of failure of the operation, the Ottoman State would allocate a palace in Istanbul and a salary suitable for his position to Abd al-Hafid, whose entire estate and property had already been confiscated by the French.³⁰

The conditions of Mawlay Abd al-Hafid were conveyed to Enver Pasha. Although Enver Pasha comments that Mawlay Abd al-Hafid is a pompous person and inclines towards the French and therefore cannot be trusted, he thinks that it is best to evaluate the option available in the current situation. Thus, Enver Pasha instructed the acceptance of the terms to Tahir Bey³¹ by asking him to determine the amount of payment required for the operation and notify the Istanbul.³² Thus, the Moroccan strategy was built on the ex-Moroccan sultan Mawlay Abd al-Hafid, thanks to Tahir Bey.

As a result of his meetings with Mawlay Abd al-Hafid, Tahir Bey instrumentalized medals and badges for some influential figures of important tribal chiefs and officials in Morocco. The motivation lying behind Tahir Bey's action was to gain these unsatisfied figures, who had to submit to the French, to the German-Ottoman side. By means of cash and logistical support by the Ottoman-German bloc which increased their impact, there was no reason for this project not to be realized. In this direction, Tahir Bey prepared a list of figures including those who were resistance leaders with Ottoman-German support during the War³³. However, a remarkable part of them consisted of people who were once the vizier of Mawlay Abd al-Hafid, but who achieved important positions in full harmony with the French during the war.³⁴ It was probably not intended to gain the direct support of the people mentioned in this way, but to break their loyalty to France a little. In any case, this plan, like many other plans, was to be vetoed by Germans.

Two issues lie at the heart of the strategy that Tahir Bey and his team have determined for Morocco. While the first aimed to support the armed resistance movements and thus to wear down the French military units with "guerrilla" methods, on the other hand, it was tried to gain the support of the people of the region with the propaganda activities carried out. From the point of view of the Ottomans, the most important of these armed resistance movements, which fought independently in various regions far from each other, is undoubtedly the movement by Emir Abd al-Malik.³⁵ After the Ottoman Empire declared "jihad" and joined the war, Emir Abd al-Malik

³⁰ BOA, *HR.SYS., D.2109, G.10*, Moukhtar Pasha to Said Halim Pasha, Berlin, 2 February 1915.

³¹ BOA, *HR.SYS., D.2392, G.5*, Enver Pasha to Hariciye Nezareti, 11 February 1915

³² BOA, *HR.SYS., D.2109, G.10*, Said Halim Pasha to Moukhtar Pasha, Berlin, 13 February 1915

³³ BOA, *HR.SYS., D.2393, G.2; HR.SYS., D.2392, G.5*, Moukhtar Pasha to Said Halim Pasha, Berlin, 20 April 1915.

³⁴ BOA, *HR.SYS., D.2393, G.2*; People like Glawi and Mtugi, whose names are on the list, are important leaders who have influence in Marrakech and the south of Morocco, called the Grands Caïds de l'Atlas. During the World War and even before, these barbary leaders were the number one supporters of the French, who tried to resist the operation initiated by Ahmet al-Hiba.

³⁵ Emir Abd al-Malik is one of the sons of the famous leader Emir Abdulkadir, who fought against the French for many years after the French occupation of Algeria. He was born in Damascus in 1868 and was in the pro-Ottoman wing of the family, which split into two as French or Ottoman supporters after his father Abdulkadir's death in 1883. Later, he

captured the city of Fes and marched on Casablanca, as appeared in news³⁶. In fact, at that time, Abd al-Malik was still at his post in Tangier. It would be appropriate to attribute similar propaganda news to Emir Ali Pasha, who was in Berlin at the time and tried to persuade Muslim war prisoners to change sides by giving sermons. Emir Abd al-Malik had to deny these news and soon escaped from Tangier in March 1915. Followingly, he came to the Taza region where he started the resistance movement. Tahir Bey describes this process in his report to Enver Pasha as follows:

*“Emir Abd al-Malik, who had left Tangier five months ago, was able to escape from the Beni Ouadras tribe, to which he was captured on the way, only after a thousand difficulties and took refuge in the Beni Mussaver tribe. But it was not possible to save himself from there, as the French distributed 125,000 Francs to this tribe for handing Abd al-Malik over... Emir Abd al-Malik was forced to flee from Beni Mussaver in disguise...”*³⁷

After this difficult process, Emir Abd al-Malik came to the Taza region and started the armed resistance movement. Throughout this movement, abovementioned officers, Nuri and Remzi, were with Abd al-Malik. Apart from Nuri and Remzi Bey, there was also Albert Bartels, a German who was engaged in trade in Morocco before the war. Bartels was captured by the French after the war started and escaped from the camp where he was held captive prior to his joining Abd al-Malik upon orders of the German state. Bartels, in his memoirs that he published later, states that Abd al-Malik's aim was to establish his own state. According to him, Abd al-Malik, like the Turkish officers with him, shows hostility to Germany.³⁸ What is noteworthy at this point is the following. Bartels does not mention any military career in his memoirs. He came to Morocco at an early age for business in which he got chance to know the country, its people, and its politics. Although German government understandably utilized his knowledge, it is quite interesting that Bartels, an amateur in armed resistance, involved in such movement which he harms the resistance. Because Bartels left Abd al-Malik, whom he constantly criticized for using wrong tactics and strategies, therefore, he chose establishing his own unit. Criticised figure, Abd al-Malik, was a former Ottoman military officer. Next to him were active Ottoman officers such as Nuri and Remzi Bey. In addition, when Abd al-Malik first came to Morocco in 1903, he entered the court of Bou Hamara, who claimed the reign at that time, and participated in important battles in the Taza region. Therefore, his acquaintance with the tribes in the region dates back to ancient times and he had a considerable influence over them as he was a "sheriff", being descendant of Prophet Muhammed. Bartels, as far as we know, did not know these parts of Morocco at all. As

was invited to Istanbul and accepted into the military with the rank of "cavalry captain". Subsequently, he was appointed as the aide of Sultan Abdulhamid II. During this period, he was disgraced but not punished because he went to Damascus without permission. Following the second time, an arrest warrant was issued for him, but he could not be caught. Abd al-Malik, who was understood to have escaped to Egypt in 1902, went to Morocco in 1903 and took part in various political events. Abd al-Malik, who was appointed as an inspector in the "port police" in the city of Tangier in Morocco where he seemed to accept the French Protectorate before the World War. When the World War started and "jihad" was declared, he fled from Tangier and started an armed resistance movement and continued the movement he carried out with Ottoman-German support until 1919. After the World War I, Abd al-Malik, who was not mentioned for a while, could not come to terms with Mohammed bin Abd al-Kerim al-Khattabi, who emerged in the following years and fought against the Spaniards, and started to fight with him, and as a result, he was shot dead during a conflict in August 1924.

³⁶ Eşref Edip, "Fas Emiri Abdülmalik Hazretlerinin Mektubu", *Sırâtmüstakîm*, XIII-324, p.92-93., 15 Kanun-i Sani 1330/28 January 1915

³⁷ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2392, G.5, Edhem Bey to Said Halim Pasha, Berlin, 26 July 1915

³⁸ Albert Bartels, *Fighting the French in Morocco*, Alston Rivers Ltd, London, 1932, s.166

far as he wrote in his own memoirs, he lived in the city of El Jadida on the Atlantic coast and was able to see some cities in the region for trade reasons.³⁹

Towards the autumn of 1915, Emir Abd al-Malik became an important force with the troops he gathered from the tribes in the northern regions of the French-controlled city of Taza. Abd al-Malik's main goal was to attack the city of Taza, which has a key role in both transportation and communication on the Algeria-Morocco route whilst he attempted to cause serious problems for the French by destroying strategic targets such as telegraph lines and railways. Despite some successes, the French forces deployed there before the war were in a superior position both numerically and technologically. Therefore, French repulsed Abd al-Malik every time. Although Abd al-Malik, who was forced to support the Germans for money and weapons, lost a lot of power as a result of his separation with Bartels, he continued his guerrilla warfare until the end of the war.

After Abd al-Malik declared jihad and started the resistance movement, many tribes of the Rif region joined him. Interestingly, it is observed that some tribes fighting each other for years put aside their enmity to fight under the banner of Abd al-Malik. So how did Abd al-Malik get the support of these different tribes? Is just being a "sheriff" enough for that? I do not think so. At this point, the support of the Ottoman Empire to him, namely the Turkish officers given to Abd al-Malik's entourage, and the jihad declarations that were frequently distributed in the region and that called on the tribes to join Abd al-Malik are important⁴⁰. During the World War, the majority of the tribes, especially in the Rif region, supported Abd al-Malik by sending soldiers. Beni Ouriaghel tribe is among them. After the World War I, in 1921, in the Battle of Annual, Muhammad b. Abd al-Kerim al-Hattabi is also a member of this tribe. According to a report by Tahir Bey, Muhammed b. Abd al-Kerim was arrested and imprisoned on the charges of working for the Ottoman Empire, that is, Abd al-Malik, and helping the shipment of weapons.⁴¹

2.2. The conflict with the Germans and the removal of Tahir Bey and his team

Ottoman officers sent to Madrid had to act together with the German embassy there. According to another report by Tahir Bey, the German government aimed at starting a general uprising in Morocco. Until that day, the Germans had tried in vain to win the Moroccan tribes and the ex-sultan Abd al-Hafid. After Tahir Bey arrived in, Turkish officers did well, therefore, Germans transferred the administration of Moroccan affairs to them.⁴² However, the Germans were disturbed by the fact that Tahir Bey was very close to Mawlay Abd al-Hafid. They felt excluded with the notion that Tahir Bey was trying to exclude them in order to conduct Moroccan affairs which was almost dependant on them in terms of material and finance.

The German embassy in Madrid was the headquarters of the Moroccan operation. Although Ambassador Prince von Ratibor was the most authoritative person, we know that the Moroccan operation was led by the German military attaché von Kalle.⁴³ It seems that from the beginning,

³⁹ Ibid, pp 10-15.

⁴⁰ CADN (Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes), Tanger, Légation et Consulat, 675PO/B1/1182, Agence de France, F. Couget to French Consul in Tetuan, Tanger, 3 August 1915. For example, in this document, it is informed that a jihad fatwa written on green paper and an Arabic brochure targeting the Moroccan Resident-Governor General Lyautey were sent to the members of the notables in some cities in Morocco.

⁴¹ BOA, HR.SYS., D.2393, G.1, Hakki Pasha to Halil Bey, Berlin, 5 January 1916.

⁴² BOA, HR.SYS., D.2392, G.5, Moukhtar Pasha to Said Halim Pasha, Berlin, 25 February 1915

⁴³ TNA (The Nationale Archives), ADM, 223/737, vol. VII This file, named Berlin-Madrid Decrypts in the British archives, consists of deciphering the correspondence of the German foreign and general staff with the Madrid embassy,

Tahir Bey and von Kalle did not get along very well. Because, according to Tahir Bey, the Germans thought that they could persuade Mawlay Abd al-Hafid to go to Morocco by keeping him under pressure. This situation must have greatly offended Mawlay Abd al-Hafid, as he decided to convey all his demands to both German and Ottoman administrators through Tahir Bey. The relationship between Tahir Bey and Mawlay Abd al-Hafid was indeed remarkably good. It is difficult to predict whether this situation came from the fact that Tahir Bey and the ex-Sultan were in Morocco in the same period in 1909-1910 and their acquaintance there. But there was a kind of "mutualist" relationship between these two personalities. As we mentioned above, Tahir Bey succeeded in convincing both Enver Pasha and the German delegation that a serious operation could not be carried out in Morocco without Mawlay Abd al-Hafid. As a result, the Central Powers recognized Mawlay Abd al-Hafid as the Sultan of Morocco. Germany, on the other hand, accepted the periodic financing of Mawlay Abd al-Hafid and 300,000 marks, which were stated by Tahir Bey as necessary for the operation.⁴⁴

According to Tahir Bey, the Germans still treated Mawlay Abd al-Hafid as a "overthrown sultan". This situation caused Mawlay Abd al-Hafid to distrust the Germans. The Germans, on the other hand, aimed to send him to Morocco as soon as possible and put him at the head of the resistance movements. In this regard, Mawlay Abd al-Hafid informed that he could only accept to pass to Morocco by plane or submarine. Because the Entente Powers carry out a very serious control in the Straits of Gibraltar and in the seas in general, and it was very dangerous to make such a journey from the sea. The plan to cross with airplanes and submarines couldn't be executed by being seen as dangerous in the first place. In this process, it was decided that Derkavi Sheikh Şerif ben Seddik, who escaped from Tangier and supported the resistance, would lead the operation in Morocco.⁴⁵

The closeness between Tahir Bey and Mawlay Abd al-Hafid was not the only reason for the conflict with the Germans. As mentioned above, there were frequent disagreements between the German agents on the field and the leaders of the resistance. The Germans wanted to manage this resistance, for which they provided money and weapons. But Moroccan tribes were not happy to see the Germans, another Christian ethnicity, by their side in their struggle to expel the French from their territory. Tahir Bey evaluated this situation as "*it is very difficult to explain the existence of the Germans to the tribes in this holy war, jihad*".⁴⁶ As the conflict between Tahir Bey and his team and the Germans grew, Germany demanded Enver Pasha to dismiss Tahir Bey and his team. Enver Pasha asked Tahir Bey for a general report on this situation. Tahir Bey, in his "top secret" report, explained in detail the problems arising from the Germans from the very beginning of the operation. For example, a German agent named Farr⁴⁷, who was sent to Morocco at the beginning of the operation, established good relations with the tribal leader named Hammido, who was widely known to be pro-French. Hammido's brother worked at the Bureau de Renseignement in Taza, under the orders of the French. Farr, who was sent to give military training to the Moroccans but could not even speak their language, had the illusion that he could buy the support of the tribes with the wide financial means he held. 23 Germans who were with him, most of whom had escaped from the French Foreign Legion, attempted to waving the

as the name suggests. In most of these correspondences, the name of Military attaché von Kalle stands out. The political decision maker of the Moroccan operation seems to be Foreign Minister Zimmermann.

⁴⁴ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2392, G.5, Moukhtar Pasha to Said Halim Pasha, Berlin, 3 March 1915

⁴⁵ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2392, G.5, Moukhtar Pasha to Said Halim Pasha, Berlin, 3 June 1915, 8 June 1915.

⁴⁶ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2393, G.1, Hakki Pasha to Halil Bey, Berlin, 29 October 1915

⁴⁷ Albert Bartels, mentioned above, is the German agent assigned to replace Farr upon his death.

German flag in their area. As a result, the Moroccan tribes looted and chained them all. However, with the intervention of Emir Abd al-Malik and Nuri Bey, the chains were removed, but the Germans continued to be held captive.⁴⁸

According to the long report Tahir Bey wrote, the activities of the German Farr progressed in contrast with the resistance of Emir Abd al-Malik. His collaboration with Hammido caused the anger of the anti-French tribes in the region. In this process, the problems between Farr and Abd al-Malik turned into a problem between the Ottoman mission and the German mission in Madrid. Some letters sent by Abd al-Malik were kept in the German embassy and not delivered to Tahir Bey. This already shows that the Germans have decided to keep the management of affairs in their own hands. As a result, Tahir Bey complained that the Germans behaved inappropriately to the sensitivity of the issue. Despite this detailed report, Tahir Bey and his friends were dismissed by Enver Pasha at the beginning of 1916, upon the pressure of the Germans. While Tahir Bey was ordered to return to Istanbul, the İsmet, Nuri and Remzi Beys stayed in the field. Therefore, the Moroccan operation was left entirely to the Germans⁴⁹. Tahir Bey, who had not yet received the news of his dismissal, sent another long report to Enver Pasha. In this report, he stated that his duty was to start an uprising in Morocco and that he did it as best he could and stated that the Germans did not show the necessary sensitivity to the issue and assumed the role of an alternative "colonizer" to the French. For this reason, he stated that it was impossible to get a result in Morocco in the aforementioned manner while concluding his report with the words: *"In this situation, when we use the Crescent to destroy the Cross, we cannot openly show ourselves together with another Cross."* After learning that he was dismissed and summoned to Istanbul, he stated that he could not fulfill this request "under the current circumstances" and begged Enver Pasha's pardon.⁵⁰ Afterwards, although Tahir Bey and other officers were ordered to go to the United States to deal with Indian affairs⁵¹, the mentioned officers claimed that they did not have enough budget for this trip. After the budget was allocated to them, they put forward another reason that the current situation in Spain did not allow them to leave the country. So, they did not obey this order as well.⁵²

The duty of the Ottoman officers, who were sent to Spain to start a total uprising in Morocco, officially ended after the operation was completely handed over to the German Embassy. However, the mentioned officers continued to operate for this purpose, maintaining their links with Morocco until the end of the war. After the mission of Tahir Bey and three officers, another Ottoman officer went to Morocco in November 1916. Mawlay Ahmed al-Hiba, who was carrying out an armed resistance movement in the southern parts of Morocco, requested officer and technical support for the success of the operation in his region with the letters he sent to Sultan Mehmed Reşat and Kaiser Wilhelm. In line with this request, one of the artillery captains, Ahmet Hayri Bey, was included in the German mission and set out with a submarine to deliver weapons to the shores of the Sous region of Morocco. However, this operation was not successful as Ahmet Hayri Bey and the German officers were arrested by the Spanish controlling the region. Detainees

⁴⁸ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2393, G.1, Hakki Pasha to Halil Bey, Berlin, 4 November 1915

⁴⁹ BOA, *HR. SYS.*, D.2393, G.1, Halil Bey to Hussein Hilmi Pasha, Vienne, 8 January 1916

⁵⁰ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2393, G.1, Hakki Pasha to Halil Bey, Berlin, 15 January 1916; 5 February 1916

⁵¹ ATASE, *BDH Kol. Kls.1840, D.675, 56-10-2*

⁵² BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2393, G.1, Halil Bey to Hakki Pasha, Berlin, 15 January 1916.

were forced to reside in Alcala near Madrid.⁵³ However, this duty of Ahmet Hayri Bey was not an Ottoman mission, but rather the inclusion of an Ottoman officer in the German mission.

Conclusion

The war acquired a religious dimension when the Ottoman Empire sided with Germany in the World War and declared jihad. The Allied Powers had a significant Muslim population due to the Muslim geographies they held. Again, France ruled over a large number of Muslims in Africa. The declaration of jihad by the Ottoman Empire was followed by a series of propaganda and unconventional war activities. In this direction, one of the target countries was determined as Morocco. The Ottoman caliphate was not recognized in Morocco, which accepted the French protectorate in 1912. Despite this, a series of armed resistance movements that took place right after the establishment of the French protectorate strategically appealed to the support of Germany and the Ottoman State. The Ottoman State sent officers to the region in order to support these resistance movements and to cause a total uprising in Morocco. Tahir Bey and his friends, who were in contact with Enver Pasha and were in charge of the Special Organization, started to carry out the operation by shuttles between Morocco and Spain. In order to unite the uprising under one roof, Tahir Bey built the operation plan on the former Moroccan sultan Mawlay Abd al-Hafid. The problems experienced with the Germans during and after this process affected the conduct of the operation and caused the Ottoman mission to be dismissed from duty.

During the World War, as in many different fronts, there were problems with the Germans in Morocco. The main reason for the problem in this front seems to be that the Germans tried to impose themselves as the sole patron of the operation. There is no doubt that Germany is the power on which the operation is based, both in terms of money and weapons. However, although the presence of Ottoman officers in the field was essential for the "jihad" call to have a legitimate basis, the German authorities in Madrid managed to have Tahir Bey dismissed by making several requests to Enver Pasha. As a result of the withdrawal of the Ottoman officers from the field, the existing problems between the local resistance fighters in the region and the German agents continued to increase.

Despite all these, it would be wrong to make a "failed" assessment for the Moroccan operation. Because from the very beginning of the operation, it was not set out with a surreal claim to expel the French from Morocco, it was aimed to keep the French busy in field by supporting the existing resistance movements in the region and creating new ones such as Abd al-malik's movement. It can be said that the Moroccan operation, which can be described as an unconventional war operation and guerrilla warfare, was a process in which the insurgents who would emerge later in the region gained experience.

⁵³ BOA, *HR.SYS.*, D.2393, G.2, Hakki Pasha to Halil Bey, Berlin, 17 November 1916; ATASE, *BDH Kol, Kls.1833*, D.207, 23-1

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