

Islam and Anticolonial Rebellions in North and West Africa, 1914-1918

Jonathan Krause

University of Wolverhampton

Abstract: European empires experienced widespread anticolonial rebellions during the First World War. These rebellions occurred for many different reasons, reflecting the diversity of context and history across colonial societies in Africa and Asia. Religion naturally played a strong role in most of the anticolonial rebellions during the First World War, most prominently Islam. This article looks at the role Islam played in two key anticolonial rebellions in North and West Africa: the rebellions in Batna, Algeria and the Kaocen War in Niger, respectively. The article examines how Islam was instrumentalized by rebels, imperial collaborators, and French officers and administrators to further their own ends. Rebels called upon Islam to help inspire anticolonial movements, to bind together diverse populations, and to contextualise their actions in wider socio-political conflicts. Imperial collaborators likewise called on religious authority to assist with European imperial recruitment efforts. French officers and administrators used Islam both as a justification and a target for collective punishment and repression after the rebellions were put down from 1917. This repression is still under-studied in a period usually portrayed as evidencing broad imperial harmony, rather than violent extraction and oppression.

‘There is no god but god – Mohammed is the prophet of god. The hearts of [our] enemies are separated [from god] due to their misdeeds. They make no distinction between the true and the false. If god gives you victory, no one will conquer you. How many small bands of men have overtaken large groups with the aid of God? God is with the patient.’¹ This was the (rather lengthy) message written on the great black standard of Kaocen ben Mohammed, a Tuareg leader who besieged Agadez, Niger for some 80 days from December 1916 to March 1917. While the siege was eventually broken by a French-led relief force arriving from Dakar, by way of Lagos and Kano, fighting continued in the Aïr for another four years, blooming into what is now called the Kaocen War. This would be the most significant and prolonged anticolonial war in Nigerien history, with some arguing that it laid the ground for later Nigerien nationalism.² The Kaocen War, and the larger Senussi War that it was a component part of, was just one of the many anticolonial struggles that wracked the French empire during the First World War.

Nearly every major French colony in Africa and Asia experienced some notable anticolonial rebellion during the course of the First World War. This wildfire of rebellion hit its peak in 1916 with major anticolonial fighting occurring in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Benin.³ The size, scope, nature, and consequences of these rebellions as a global phenomenon have not yet been seriously addressed in the historiography of the First World War, despite their number, diversity and local importance.⁴ These rebellions erupted for many complex reasons reflecting the widely varying histories, societies and contexts from which they sprung, even if they were all ultimately tied to the realities brought forth by the First World War. This diversity of context and expression includes a wide range of both personal and institutional religious responses. These responses, and the religious traditions which informed them, were as varied as the people who fought against French colonialism.

Of the many religious traditions that existed in European overseas empires in the early 20th century none caused more concern for the French (and Europeans more broadly) than Islam.⁵ For French colonial officials Islam represented a foreign ‘non-African’ religion whose spread among black Africans was to be closely tracked, and at times feared.⁶ In reality, of course, the history of Islam in Africa is ancient. North Africa was progressively conquered by Islamic forces from the mid-7th century, shortly after the death of Mohammed. Contact between Muslim North Africans and non-Muslim Sub-Saharan Africans began almost immediately, with North Africans seeking West African gold from as early as 734.⁷ This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, because it was principally through the peaceful means of trade and cultural interaction that Islam spread to the Sahel and beyond.⁸ This deep Islamic past was not reflected in French conceptions of Islam in Africa, which, in turn, influenced how French authorities engaged with African Muslims.

The long history of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa is also important because it reminds us of the ancient economic, political, religious, and socio-cultural ties linking North and Sub-Saharan Africa. These ties are too often obscured in the scholarly literature, much of which still treats these deeply interconnected regions as utterly distinct and separate.⁹ This is despite what scholars like Baz Lecocq consider the socio-political similarities between North and, at the very least, Sahelian Africa. In particular, Lecocq points to both regions being dominated by a large number of relatively small, semi-autonomous political entities with constantly shifting allegiances, and the interconnectivity that comes from a shared religion.¹⁰

This article engages with the need to discuss North and West Africa in more integrated, comparative terms by analysing the role Islam played in two anticolonial rebellions in the French empire during the First World War: the rebellion in Batna, Algeria and the Kaocen War in Niger. These rebellions make for a good comparative study for a number of reasons. They are two of the most significant rebellions of Muslim people in the French empire during the First World War. The Kaocen War represents the largest and longest armed anticolonial rebellion in Nigerien history, and the rebellion in Batna, Algeria was put down by the largest French-led force assembled against Muslim rebels during the war. These two rebellions also represent two distinct types of colonial geographic spaces: relatively well-integrated regions that were submitted to conscription (Batna) and newly-conquered *territoires militaires* (northern Niger) which still operated with a large degree of independence. These rebellions remain under-studied in both the First World War and regional historiographical literature; neither are usually considered places where First World War fighting took place. As such, this article expands the study of the First World War beyond its traditional geographic boundaries and ultimately

provides an important example of how North and West African histories can fruitfully be discussed in a comparative manner.

This article will examine the role Islam played in these rebellions in three main senses. Firstly it looks at Islam's power to inspire and justify rebellion; the dreaded Pan-Islamic Jihad. For better or worse, jihad has been a major focus of European scholarship on Islam since the late 1800s.¹¹ The largely ineffectual Ottoman declaration of jihad in 1914 has similarly been a centrepiece of First World War history.¹² Focusing on the failure of the Ottoman jihad to rally a vast Pan-Islamic response, however, has obscured the way Islam was more effectively instrumentalised in parts of the non-Ottoman Muslim world, which this article addresses.

Secondly, this article looks at Islam's role in binding diverse groups together. Whether Islam was mobilised to rally people to rebel or to collaborate it acted as an important medium of contact and exchange across North and West Africa.¹³ The different ways that Islam was called upon by rebel and collaborationist groups gives us insight into how religion can make the global local, and the local global. This section builds upon, and extends the timeframe, of the work done by Julia Clancy-Smith on the pragmatism and flexibility of religious leaders and groups in the face of European colonialism.¹⁴

Lastly this article looks at how perceptions of Islam influenced the French response to and repression of the rebellions in Niger and Algeria. European conceptions of an eternal struggle between 'Christendom' and 'Islam' were, of course, nothing new in the early 20th century.¹⁵ European fears of Islam were heightened in the early 20th century by a perceived volatility in the Muslim world following the revolution in Persia in 1906, the deposition of the Ottoman and Moroccan sultans in 1908, and the various conflicts the French and Italians had with the Senussi in the early 1900s.¹⁶ The entry of the Ottomans to the First World War further

ratcheted up these fears. A potent mix of fear and vengeance translated into a sustained and brutal repression meted out by French imperial forces in the wake of the rebellions in Batna and Niger. In these repressions Islam was at times a target, and at other times used as justification for collective discipline. This repression remains seriously under-studied and is absent from broader First World War historiography. Focusing on colonial violence and repression during the war makes for a contrast with the collaborationist framework that shapes most writing on colonial societies during the First World War.¹⁷

It is important to note that this article is in no way intended to offer any theological engagement with Islam, as such. Islam represents an intensely diverse religious and cultural tradition.¹⁸ Islam was experienced, practiced, understood, and instrumentalised in many different ways, across many different aspects of life, by the African and European historical actors this article covers. ‘Muslim’ in this period furthermore had a racialized connotation, drawn from European assumptions about, and misinterpretations of, ‘the Muslim world’.¹⁹ The racialisation of Islam was common among French colonial officials, and even had echoes in how some North and West African people saw themselves and their communities.²⁰ Given the complexity and fluidity that ‘Islam’ or ‘Muslim’ connote, now and in the early 20th century, this article, as much as possible, allows for its historical actors to use and define Islam as they saw fit. The principal focus here is not on ‘Islam’ itself, but rather on its many different historical expressions and usages. Before going any further it is also important to take a moment to discuss sources. The vast majority of the sources extant for these rebellions are documents produced by the French colonial administration. This, necessarily, creates difficulties in assessing the mentality and motivations of various rebel groups. The situation is especially dire for Batna, Algeria where the original voices of the rebels are mostly lost. Even court testimony gathered

during the repression, as imperfect a source as it is, scarcely houses any direct quotes from Algerian rebels.²¹ Where we do have direct quotes from Algerians they are filtered through French channels, and therefore need to be treated with a degree of caution.

For the Kaocen War things are much better. A good quantity of original Senussi correspondence has survived and much of it is currently stored in the *Archives Nationales de Sénégal*. Most of the correspondence exists only in translation (in French, English, or Italian, depending on the archive), but some of the original Arabic letters remain. The Kaocen War also benefits from a good quantity of oral tradition, some of which was gathered by Boubou Hama in the 1960s and published in a series of source books called *Documents Nigeriens*. These are held at the *Université Abdou-Moumouni* in Niamey. In addition to this are traces of oral history gathered by historians like André Salifou, Kimba Idrissa and others from the early 1960s into the 1980s that survive in their published books and articles. These sources provide a rich, if not always congruous, body of material to help balance against French colonial interpretations that survive in abundance in the archives in Dakar and Niamey.

I

When writing or thinking about rebellion one cannot escape the first, and usually the dominant, question that springs to mind: why did the rebellion happen, or perhaps more precisely, why did it happen at that particular moment? As historians, despite the countless books and articles written on rebellion in one form or another, we do not yet have any firm framework for assessing this very fundamental question. This question, ‘Why, and why then?’, has been approached in different ways by historians of Algeria. Algerian scholars have been more likely to refer to the rebels of Batna as *mujahedeen* or nationalist revolutionaries, seeing their rebellion as part of a

130-year-long struggle for independence.²² European works, especially more general ones, are more likely to take the same line as French colonial administrators; namely that the rebellion was overwhelmingly due to conscription and that any broader political motivation was either secondary or non-existent.²³ The most notable example of this is Gilbert Meynier's tome *L'Algérie révélée: La guerre de 1914-1918 et le premier quart du XXe siècle* which notes curtly that conscription 'precipitated the insurrection in South Constantine'.²⁴ Some recent work, like that of James McDougall, takes a more nuanced view and sees the rebellions as evidence of the enduring strength of local Algerian social systems and their semi-independence from French authority.²⁵ Religion is barely mentioned in modern European works on the subject, which misses an important facet of the movements in both Algeria and Niger.

Contemporary French reports, enthralled in a *belle époque* obsession with the Classical world, liked to claim that the region around Batna had never really submitted to anyone: not the French, nor the Ottomans, nor even the Romans!²⁶ This caricature of the perpetually rebellious denizens of north-eastern Algeria is found time and again in French documents. Several reports cite a conversation between Bouzidi Mohammed Ben Taleb, a local marabout, and an unnamed French officer at the Pasteur outpost in which Bouzidi says of Aurèsians, 'These people have rebellion in their blood. They rebel, have rebelled, and will rebel.'²⁷ Whether the conversation happened or not it bears witness to the frequent ability of people living in desert or mountain peripheries to maintain a state of at least semi-independence from centralized authorities.²⁸

French reports surrounding the Batna rebellion were also rife with fears of Pan-Islamism, especially in the wake of the Ottoman Empire declaring a jihad against the Entente powers in 1914.²⁹ The Ottoman entry into the war made even more real the threat of possible German intervention, which French colonial administrators always feared lay behind anticolonial

resistance during the war.³⁰ Entente strategists did not quite understand the context of the Ottoman Sultan calling forth his nominal religious power as Caliph; the Ottoman jihad was called as much for reasons of internal stability vis-à-vis ethnic Arabs as anything else.³¹ French colonial administrators tracked Pan-Islamic anticolonial pamphlets published in Cairo and Constantinople, and enacted strict censorship of personal correspondence and imported politico-religious documents in West Africa.³² These efforts ultimately could not stop the importation of Pan-Islamic texts through Tunisia and Libya into Algeria as part of a broader ideological and intellectual current flowing through the western Muslim world, from Morocco to the Arabian Peninsula.³³

On a more local level there were Rahmaniyya *muqaddams*, Sufi adepts, who held influence in the rebellion in Batna, but their power significantly blurred the lines between political, personal and religious influence.³⁴ Religion obviously played a role in their influence, but was only ever one part of a larger base of power. Popular references to Islam mostly came in the form of songs which drew on religious and historical themes, including the Crusades.,³⁵ In his report on the Batna rebellion Octave Depont wrote about pro-German songs sung by Algerian ‘troubadours’, which were often infused with religious subtext.³⁶ In the most common form of these popular songs Kaiser Wilhelm is often referred to as ‘Hajj Guillaume’, a reference to the Kaiser’s supposed conversion to Islam and performance of the Hajj.³⁷ This positioning of the Kaiser as not only a temporal protector of Islam, but in fact a devoted Muslim convert, was common across North and West Africa during the First World War. Missives discovered in mosques in Nigeria and Cameroon, for example, claimed that if the Kaiser died ‘he dies a Muslim’.³⁸

The popular songs sung in Algeria during the First World War provide unique insight into the strong overlap between religious and secular geopolitical discourse. Islam provides a shared language for communicating political goals (Algerian independence), and a framework tying distant geopolitical developments to more local issues. In this sense these songs, and to some extent Islam in general, collapse global events to have local significance, and situate local conflicts in a broader, global context. For songs claiming that Germany was on the cusp of invading Algeria and taking it from the French, an invasion inspired by Kaiser Wilhelm's supposed Islamic faith, the political and the religious contexts are all but inextricable.

What is more, the First World War was not the first time that Algerians looked abroad, in particular towards the Ottoman Empire, for an external saviour who might liberate them from France.³⁹ Religion is used to explain why an unlikely military or geopolitical event may come to pass, and also to justify Algerian allegiance to yet another external colonial power. The supposed conversion of Kaiser Wilhelm explains why he might try to liberate Algeria, but undergirding this argument was the foundational belief in German military strength and prowess. We see this in the small number of direct quotations we have from Algerian deserters during the war. In their interrogation they frequently cited the power of Germany, and their belief that Germany would eventually prevail, as laying behind their decision to desert.⁴⁰

This matches similar claims made across the French empire by deserters and rebels who felt that France was notably weakened by the war, and that it was an opportune moment to risk rebellion, or at least disobedience.⁴¹ Particularly interesting here is how individual religiosity or calls upon religious language and ties were mobilised by the rebels at Batna, in the absence of support from formal Islamic leaders or institutions.⁴² This bottom-up foundation for the

movement helps explain the political moves the rebels make after their dramatic attacks in November 1916.

The Batna uprising climaxed with the capture and burning of the bordj at Mac-Mahon by Algerian rebels on 12 November 1916. In French reports on the capture of Mac-Mahon the deaths of the administrator and *sous-préfet* loom large.⁴³ Looking deeper into the targets of the rebels, however, is telling. Firstly, before the bordj was attacked the rebels sacked a number of farms that belonged to Europeans. These farms were not only the most explicit symbol of French people coming in and expropriating land for their own economic ends, but they were also a source of food, tools, and other valuable materials, all of which was sorely lacking and bitterly expensive by late 1916.⁴⁴ In the attack on the bordj itself the rebels took especial time to burn the administrative archives, which, among other things, contained the records related to conscription and recruitment in and around Batna.⁴⁵ The priority given to the destruction of these documents shows how important French bureaucracy, and especially recruitment, was as a motivator for the rebels.

Even more telling than the attention given to the destruction of administrative records at Mac-Mahon was the rebels' decision to found a nominal Algerian republic on 12 November 1916.⁴⁶ After capturing Mac-Mahon in the early hours of 12 November the rebels could have done any number of things that did not entail setting up an independent republic. The fact that they did so implies a long-term, agreed-upon plan to do so, which is striking. What's more, the rebels at Mac-Mahon were not alone; the Maghreb experienced a wave of republican sentiment during, and immediately after, the First World War. Tunisians declared their own independent republic in 1918, Moroccans did the same in Rif in 1920, as did Egyptians in Zifta in 1919.⁴⁷ The secular force behind these movements is notable, especially in Egypt where nationalists

expressly pointed to the religious diversity of Egypt, rather than couching their effort in Islamic terms. More broadly there were new nation-states and republics born out of anticolonial rebellion in the Arabian Peninsula (1916), Vietnam (1917), Ireland (1916) and elsewhere.⁴⁸ Set within the context of the wave of republics borne during and immediately after the First World War, the rebels at Batna must be described as republicans rather than people motivated primarily by religion. These distinctions are more blurry when dealing with the Senussi War, of which the Kaocen War was a part, due to the war being centred on a religious sect.

The best, and most recent, English-language account of the Kaocen War was written by Kimba Idrissa in 2003. Idrissa draws two Islamic connections that must be addressed. The first is the relationship between Kaocen and Abderrahmane Tegama ag Bagari, the Sultan of Agadez, with whom Kaocen had covertly planned the siege of Agadez. Tegama, born in 1880, had undertaken Koranic studies in Agadez, Borno, and Kano before being converted to Senussism, giving him some foundation on which to base claims of spiritual authority.⁴⁹ Tegama was appointed the Sultan of Agadez by French authorities in 1908, thus finding himself in a position of temporal power as a local client for the French empire. It was this influence that allowed him to declare a religious war against the French, a decision that no doubt helped win the support of people in the Aïr who had for a long time been otherwise atomised.⁵⁰ Oral history given by Elhadj Bougounou of Agadez, among others, confirms the central importance of Islam in Tegama's ability to bring together competing factions in the Aïr to fight against the 'kaffirs', the French.⁵¹

The importance of religion to Kaocen personally, on the other hand, is difficult to pin down. The oral tradition consistently highlights Kaocen's martial prowess, but rarely puts this in a religious context.⁵² In the chronicle laid down by Mohamed Chouwa, 'the Chadian', Kaocen is

said to have won the favour of Sid Sidi Mohammed El-Abed, an important Senussi patron, through his military exploits, rather than any religious devotion.⁵³ Other oral accounts highlight the religious underpinning of these martial exploits, noting that Kaocen won the respect and trust of El-Abed by ‘clearing the land of the infidels, and because they had fought with faith for the cause of Islam’.⁵⁴ This affinity led El-Abed, after the successes against the Italians in Libya and the French at Djanet, Algeria, to supply Kaocen with a large quantity of men and arms to push the French out of Niger. The relationships and geographic space that formed the partnership between El-Abed and Kaocen remind us of the fluidity of ‘Saharan’, North, and West African histories.⁵⁵

Oral history communicated by Ammane ben Ahmed Bougounou in the 1960s when he was the Marabout of Agadez, focuses primarily on Kaocen’s ‘manly’ attributes, rather than his religious devotion. Young Kaocen is described as wandering the mountains and valleys of Aïr alone, single-handedly raiding Arab caravans as a young boy and ‘never returning to camp without booty’ whilst on raid.⁵⁶ Kaocen is depicted as being sparked into action against the French primarily by in-fighting amongst the Tuareg, rather than by any sort of religious awakening (the fact that Kaocen finds himself fighting against the Italians in 1911-2 and the French multiple times from 1909 to 1919 may support claims that he fought primarily to preserve Tuareg independence). Given that these chronicles were kept by marabouts, who would undoubtedly seek to highlight the faith and devotion of Muslim heroes, the fact that Kaocen’s religious ardour is rarely mentioned suggests either that religion was not his principal driving motivation, or that the marabouts do not want to be too closely associated with a historical figure that, while often cast in heroic light, also precipitated probably the worst period of colonial repression in Nigerien history.

Kaocen and Tegama's religiosity is even more difficult to pin down in their surviving papers. In their wide-ranging correspondence with Tuareg, Toubou, and Senussi leaders across the eastern Sahara Kaocen and Tegama do reference theology, the Prophet and jihad; but it is unclear if these were rhetorical devices or heartfelt calls for religious unity. The importance of Islam and religious language in formal correspondence in the region was certainly substantial. French correspondence with Senussi leaders before hostilities erupted between them is overflowing with deeply religious language.⁵⁷ Kaocen does reference Islam and fighting against the infidel in his decrees and letters, at least in part as a means to guilt other groups into supporting his war effort.⁵⁸ Tegama's role as a spiritual leader was much more prominent, but Finn Fuglestad has argued that it was nevertheless nominal and symbolic; it did not necessarily denote a strong religious devotion and Fuglestad argued that it garnered little respect or power among the Tuareg.⁵⁹

While religious fervour may not have been the preeminent motivator for the Kaocen War it is worth taking a step back and looking at the role that Islam played in the broader context in which the war began. The Kaocen war, on one level, was a component part of the broader Senussi War, which raged from late 1914 until the early 1920s.⁶⁰ The Senussi War itself is not a monolith, but rather a loose series of relationships between Senussi groups, or groups led by Senussi leaders, who fought against the Italians in Libya, the British in Egypt and Sudan, and the French in Tunisia, Chad, Algeria and Niger. Religion was naturally mobilised by the Senussi to hold their diverse coalition together (a coalition which included Ottoman agents), but this had its limits and did not afford the Senussi a position from which to dictate to populations in Libya, let alone in Chad, Sudan, Algeria, and Niger.⁶¹ In this sense the Senussi jihad shares similarities to its better-known Ottoman counterpart.⁶² At the same time we should recognise the importance

of religion to the wider Senussi movement, which in some ways resembles the great state-building jihads of the 19th century.⁶³ These movements forcefully remind us that religiosity and state-building are in no way mutually exclusive. While the very loose organisation was based heavily on a shared religious ideology there are strong arguments that religion played a variable role in the individual participants in the Senussi War. This is especially true of the branch of the Senussi headed by Sid Sidi Mohammed El-Abed in Fezzan, the Senussi who supplied Kaocen with the bulk of his initial arms and men.

El-Abed, according to the excellent recent work by Simona Berhe, was interested overwhelmingly in his own independent political power, and not in the Pan-Islamic ideals and goals of his older brother, the Grand Senussi.⁶⁴ This differing take on the importance of Islam led the Grand Senussi to ally more closely with the Ottomans, which led the Senussi in Cyrenaica to launch an utterly doomed invasion of Egypt in 1916.⁶⁵ All this while El-Abed and his associates in Fezzan (including Kaocen's brother Mokhtar) shook their heads at the folly of it all. If Kaocen was a real jihadist interested in promoting the cause of Pan-Islamic revolt and a unification of African Muslims under the black banner of the Senussi he had his opportunity, and instead allied himself with the far more pragmatic and calculating El-Abed.

II

If Islam was not the primary motivation for Kaocen or his closest associates this is not to say that it was not important, or that it did not serve any useful function. Islam is unavoidable in the correspondence circulated around the broader Senussi leaders and is a testament to how important it was culturally. Here is just one example, of many, of an excerpt from a typical letter

between Senussi leaders (in this instance between El-Abed and Moussa Ag Amastane, from May 1917).

In the name of God the clement and merciful. From the part of the slave to his Master, Mohammed Labeled ben sid Mohammed Sherif Essenoussi, Elkhettabi, Elhassani, Elidrissi, to the most grand, powerful, precious, [and] glorious, to our friend, to the one who delights our eyes, the Tobel Moussa, Amenokal [military leader] of the Hoggar. God protect you. May salvation be upon you, as well as the mercy of God the highest and his blessings.... We praise God for granting you health and peace.⁶⁶

Almost the entire bulk of the letter proper is full of religious haranguing, with the practical components of the letter only coming at the very end (namely, El-Abed disavowing Kaocen and claiming, farcically, that Kaocen had acted entirely without his help or knowledge). There is no doubt that Islam provided some sense of a shared cultural and spiritual identity for the various Senussi factions. It was a binding agent, related to, and spread by, commerce, that maintained relationships spread out over vast distances, and often amongst groups and individuals with divergent, and at times diametrically opposed, political objectives.⁶⁷ The fact that the Senussi War fractured irreparably as soon as the Grand Senussi's invasion of Egypt failed shows both the power, and the fragility, of relying on religion.⁶⁸

Oral history sees Kaocen frequently turning to religion to bolster his coalition or admonish his enemies. In the account of Malam Douhary Tanode from Agadez, Kaocen is remarked as having written to the French ordering them to give up Christianity or perish: 'Dear Captain, I am writing to you to say, in your own interest, abandon Christianity and idolatry. If not, grave things will pass between us.'⁶⁹ Given the fact that Kaocen's army achieved near-total surprise when it suddenly appeared at the gates of Agadez, and the fact that the French have no records of direct correspondence with Kaocen, this exchange is almost certainly apocryphal. More convincingly some oral history points to Islam as a key force in unifying Kaocen and

Tegama with both men agreeing to a 'war on the *kaffirs*', even if Idrissa suggests this was perhaps a somewhat cynical mobilisation of religion to win supporters by Kaocen and Tegama.⁷⁰

Tanode's account goes on to stress the largely secular nature of the planning and relations between Kaocen and Tegama, amongst Tegama and his advisors, and between both men and other Tuareg groups, including the Hoggar.⁷¹ The role of religion in mediating the relations between different Tuareg groups is especially interesting. In one letter from Ahmoud, the Sultan of Ghat to Kaocen from March 1918 Ahmoud, after warmly greeting Kaocen ('Praise be to the one god. It is to him that we implore for relief. To our friend and brother, the venerated Kaocen ben Mohammed, may god protect you'), goes on to denounce the 'vile usurpers of Islam', the Hoggar, a Tuareg group from Algeria who had ultimately sided with the French in the broader Senussi War.⁷² The division of Muslims into true believers and heretics of course has a long and important history in the high politics of the Sahel and Sahara; in particular these divisions, usually invented, served as *casus belli* for the state-building jihads of Usman Dan Fodio a century earlier.⁷³ That said, these divisions still undermine claims that the Tuareg and Senussi were united in Pan-Islamic struggle. Can a movement truly be Pan-Islamic if Muslims fight against it? At the same time, some oral tradition places Islam at the centre of the motivation for most participants in the fighting, showing the power Islam might have as a binding agent for followers even if it is deployed somewhat cynically by faction leaders.⁷⁴

If Islam provided a cultural basis for mutual understanding among Tuareg leaders in Libya, Algeria and Niger it seemed to play no such role in Batna. Whereas French administrators were fearful of instrumentalised Islam in West Africa from 1914 French reports surrounding local religious leaders around Batna are effusive in describing the loyalty of religious figures in the conscription effort.⁷⁵ This is a common theme in war-time French

documents, with surveillance reports very rarely mentioning any religious personages as being even suspect of disloyalty.⁷⁶ While it is true that French reports often lament that some marabouts did not go out of their way to warn the French of the impending attacks at MacMahon and elsewhere this does not necessarily mean that the marabouts acted out of any disloyalty to France or along religious lines.⁷⁷ Collaborationist leaders need to be able to tack a middle ground and appease both French colonialists and the local indigenous population; this is rarely an easy task.

While the vast majority of religious figures sided, overtly or tacitly, with the French there were some rebels who drew power and influence from religion. Of these the most prominent was the sheikh of Seggana. As a sheikh he operated with the tacit approval of the French, not entirely unlike Tegama in Agadez, but relied primarily on pre-existing power structures, some of which were religious.⁷⁸ He was noted not only for his wealth, but also for his religiosity, and his having taken multiple pilgrimages to Mecca.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, whatever specific exhortations he made to his followers have since been lost, but at least some of the rebels at Batna did see themselves as taking part in wider events that had some rooting in religion. Octave Depont quoted, accurately or not, Algerians saying things like '[our sons will not go and] die in conditions contrary to the Muslim religion'.⁸⁰ Both French and Algerian actors noted that the rebels' 'co-religionists' were rebelling across Northern Africa, although the movements largely remained separate from one another and tended to follow nationalist, rather than pan-Islamic lines.⁸¹

While religious language and exhortations would have been a part of the glue that held the Algerian rebel movement together the core structures and goals of the Batna rebellion were overwhelmingly practical and political.⁸² The rebellion was a calculated political move that had

been meditated for months, at least.⁸³ The French suspicion that the rebellion had been pre-planned of course undercuts their assertions that the rebellion was exclusively about conscription, a common rhetoric used to deflect critiques of the French imperial project and its consequences. For many French military and colonial authorities it was much easier to frame the rebellions in Algeria and Niger as being fuelled by extremely proximate (and therefore short-lived) stresses like recruitment, and exacerbated by what they often saw as religious fanaticism.

III

To understand the full role of Islam in the rebellions in Algeria and Niger in the First World War one must look at the effect that an imagined Islam had on French administrators and officers operating in Africa. Islam held an odd, and at times contradictory, place in the imagination of French colonial officers and administrators who often found themselves treading a careful ideological and political line on the subject.⁸⁴ On the one hand, a surprising number of French officers and administrators had positive things to say about the religion⁸⁵, even if only within the context of their more virulent disdain and condescension for black Africans and polytheistic religious beliefs ('fetishism' in contemporary French parlance).⁸⁶ Parallels to these fraught imaginations of Islam in European thought are of course nothing new, and persist in different forms today.

Whether their individual opinions of Islam tended to the more or less favourable ends of the spectrum, most French administrators maintained a deep-seated fear of the illusory Pan-Islamic uprising that would unite the diverse populations of North and West Africa against them (populations the French had actively sought to fragment and supplant through their *politique des*

races).⁸⁷ The middling path often taken by French authorities was perhaps best summed up in a report from May 1914:

To persecute Islam would be still more dangerous: it would be to unavoidably provoke not a direct revolt; Muslims are too intelligent for that. [Rather, it would exacerbate] the natural state of mind of the population of all races worried about their faith, the thirst of persecution, the exasperation of faith, and [incite] a more acute proselytism.⁸⁸

In short, persecuting Islam would not make the French safer, but would only further advance the prerequisite conditions that would make the all-dreaded pan-Islamic uprising all the more likely. Despite trying to not quite encourage the spread of Islam (despite building *médersas* and sponsoring loyal Muslims' pilgrimages to Mecca) nor discourage it (despite periodically persecuting Muslim leaders and maintaining a tight control on incoming Islamic literature in Dakar) the French presence ultimately hastened the spread of Islam as greater regional connectivity, spurred by the French desire to easily maintain liaison between far-flung outposts and facilitate European economic activity in West Africa.⁸⁹

One end of the broad spectrum of beliefs held by the French on the question of Islam can be represented by individuals like Octave Depont. In 1916 Octave Depont, then Inspector-General of the *Communes Mixtes* of Algeria, was tasked with writing a report which sought to explain why and how a serious rebellion had erupted in Batna earlier that year (this after Depont had already published a lengthy, if unreliable and condescending, report on Islam in Africa).⁹⁰ To his credit, Depont often saw rebellion as coming from a very broad range of stressors, primarily economic (the arrival of locusts, for example) and political, even if his analysis overtly failed to assign any blame whatsoever to the faults of French administration or governance.⁹¹ Principal among these causes, for Depont, was anger over French attempts to recruit Algerians to serve in the French army and to fight in the bloody killing fields of Europe and the Middle East.

In addition to this practical concern, however, Depont recognised another, more insidious threat: Pan-Islamic jihad.

For Depont the Ottoman declaration of holy war constituted a ‘very oriental duplicity’ in only targeting Muslims living in the empires of France, Britain and Russia, but that ‘the poison of holy war...did not, in general, have effects that were too serious.’⁹² This does not mean that Depont felt that Islam had little role to play in the rebellion; far from it. He repeatedly mentions the nefarious workings of marabouts, of indigenous chiefs who, feeling that the French were weak chose to place themselves ‘on the side of Allah’, and other similar statements.⁹³ For Depont, and others like him, Islam represented a persistent and mysterious threat to French dominance in North and West Africa. This sentiment may have informed French behaviour during the repression in Batna in 1917.

The repression meted out against Algerians living in and around Batna was felt wide and deep. French authorities targeted not only the rebels and deserters themselves, but their families and their communities more broadly. Hundreds were killed by roving French-led columns, largely made up of ‘Senegalese’ (West African) troops.⁹⁴ By 1917 the forces of repression would balloon to some 13,892 men and 217 officers.⁹⁵ 805 Algerians were arrested, tried and condemned in the wake of rebellion. To these are added roughly 400 more that were seemingly tried by local disciplinary commissions, and thus never had proper trials to begin with. Depont justifies this level of violence *ex post facto* in his report stating, among other things, that:

We have too often forgotten that in indigene lands, especially in times of war, an authority is not real, active, strong and obeyed, as it should be, but that it escapes the critiques of which the Muslims cannot not conceive neither the sense, nor the finesse, nor the reach and who always finish, in their spirit, by weakening power when they do not annihilate it completely⁹⁶

And later:

The methods of peace, with their formality, their hesitations and their scruples over legality, that we always end, before taking them up, by paying too much, have given up their place for the methods of war, the only ones applicable in many territories, as they combine at one the initiative, promptness of decision-making and speed of execution, all necessary qualities, indispensable even, to better administrate indigenes and avoid, in troubled times, the insurrectional movements which have long menaced us. It was these same methods of war that we followed in Batna, where the actions were graver than those related above, and where it was important not to allow things to degenerate into an insurrection.⁹⁷

Livestock, probably the most important vehicle for storing wealth for most people in the region, were heavily targeted. Ouanassa Tngour estimates that Aurès lost around 165 cows, 2,563 sheep and 1,238 goats plus about 58,428 francs (a mixture of both cash and stolen goods).⁹⁸ To this was added a series of collective fines and punishments which grew the overall cost to some 726,835 francs, a staggering sum for the already impoverished residents of Aurès.⁹⁹ Using rebellion to justify a wholesale theft of Algerian wealth was an established tactic of French colonial authorities by 1917. It had already been used after the rebellion in 1871, after which substantial sums of money and tracts of land were expropriated by French officials under the cover of collective punishment.¹⁰⁰

To justify wide-ranging collective discipline the Governor-General's office produced an extensive document building a legal justification for levying fines on people not implicated in the rebellion to cost the cost of damage done to French administrative buildings and also to French-owned farms.¹⁰¹ Part of the justification included 'the traditions of Islam', which the author claimed had a legal tradition of collective punishment. Thus, while Islam was not at the absolute forefront of French justifications for their broad-based repression of Aurès in 1917 it formed a notable part of the justification for both the military and civil force levied against innocent Aurèsians in the wake of the rebellion of 1916.

Similarly, in Niger the fear of Islam, and the French sense of being betrayed at a vulnerable time of war, led to absolutely brutal repression. Multiple accounts note that the French massacred Muslims upon lifting the siege at Agadez; with massacres occurring at several other junctures during the repression of 1917-1919.¹⁰² André Salifou's *Kaoussan ou la Révolte Sénoussiste* is especially detailed here, thanks to oral history that Salifou gathered in the 1960s with survivors of the French repression. Akililik Ag Tabia of the Igamayan Tuareg recalled how

I was accused of having participated in the revolt. A White by the name of Bourges condemned us to death at In Gall and grouped us up about twenty steps from the current Administrative Post. A Kel Fadey Tuareg, Bacha, asked Bourges for mercy for all the young people of my age [which was granted]. Then, in my presence, Bourges gave the order to the soldiers to start the execution by bayonet and by coupe-coupe [machete]. My uncles and cousins fell before me, bayonets thrust in their back, and their heads [chopped nearly off] were left dangling on their breast or their back, held in place [only] by a flap of skin.¹⁰³

Stories of French massacres are also found in the oral tradition. The chronicle of Ammane ben Ahmed Bougounou, Marabout of Agadez, in particular notes the massacre of Muslims, especially preachers or wise men, in the aftermath of the siege at Agadez.¹⁰⁴ Looking on from Nigeria and Egypt even the British were horrified at the French behaviour. Frederick Lugard, British Governor General of Nigeria, noted that French activities 'appeared to be little short of extermination'.¹⁰⁵ Lugard had feared ahead of time that the coming French repression would be unusually brutal, and was unenthusiastic about assisting the French in southern Niger.¹⁰⁶ British troops based in Nigeria had occupied posts in southern Niger to free up French garrisons to take part in the Kaocen war, placing them in a position to discover and transmit information regarding the French repression. Their limited deployment, however, and the fact that they began withdrawing as early as April 1917, limits the scope of their intelligence, especially since the war

dragged on for a further two years.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, Lugard's perception of French activities in the Senussi Wars was confirmed by post-war British reports, which benefitted from insights derived from British officials in Egypt. One report, admittedly focusing on Tripolitania and Fezzan rather than Niger, suggests that the population of these regions fell from 650,000 to 250,000 (61.5%) during the height of the Senussi Wars and subsequent repression, from 1916-1919.¹⁰⁸ It is not hard to imagine that the Air shared a similarly gruesome fate.

The scale of the horror inflicted by the French repression in Niger is hard to measure, but some historians have suggested that the population of Air fell by roughly half during the period of the French repression (primarily from 1917-1919).¹⁰⁹ Such an arithmetic is, however, extremely hard to verify, even in the best of circumstances. Population figures, even for the better-documented southern region of Niger, are suspect, and even if they were soundly accurate it would not be easy to distinguish between the population losses due to migration, famine-related death and disease, and people who were killed outright by French-led troops.¹¹⁰ Simply put, the exact death toll of the French repression is unknown, and probably unknowable. The massacres that took place at Agadez, In Gall, and elsewhere are nowhere to be found in the official correspondence between Mourin, commander of the Column of Agadez, and his superiors. This is, of course, unsurprising.

The ferocity of the French repression, while hardly out of line with other colonial repressions, must at least in part come back to French fears about an imagined Islam. The direct association of Kaocen with a specific Islamic sect (the Senussi) that was waging war against Europeans across a wide span of the eastern Sahara was undoubtedly enough to convince French officers that Islam was, at least in part, to blame. This also helps explain why the killing of imams is so heavily noted in oral histories and tradition.

IV

Religion, in its many forms, has always played a central role in the lives of people and their societies. For the rebels in Batna and Niger, Islam offered a larger vision of community and history. In a rhetorical sense it tied together their local struggles with the grand struggles of Muslim people all over the world during the First World War. This rhetoric did in some way translate into reality for rebels from Morocco to Niger who received small quantities of military supplies from the Germans and Ottomans at different times during their rebellions.¹¹¹ Islam could, even if only briefly, paper over long-standing divisions to bring people together for the pursuance of a singular, united goal: in this instance, the establishment of new, independent states free from European control. This should caution us against seeing 'all religion [a]s premodern and antirational while the state is both modern and rational'.¹¹²

Islam provided a shared language that communicated a sense of identity and community among disparate groups, be they the Tuareg factions scattered across the Sahara, or the rebels, patriots and intellectuals producing revolutionary or Pan-Islamic pamphlets that found their way into the hands of people living in north-eastern Algeria. Islam was used as a rhetorical device before and after the rebellions of 1916 to highlight the most immediately obvious difference between Algerians and Nigeriens and their French colonizers.¹¹³ It could, in a word, stand in for opposition to the French politico-economic programmes in North and West Africa that undermined pre-existing social structures and expropriated huge tracts of land for European development and exploitation.

For the French, Islam presented both a spectre to be feared and repressed, and also justification for their policy of brutal collective discipline.¹¹⁴ European relationships with Islam

across Africa in the late 1800s and early 1900s had been nuanced and fluid, moving between persecution, surveillance, and facilitation based on changing circumstances and changing colonial leadership.¹¹⁵ The strain of war and ramped-up fears regarding Islamic ‘fanaticism’ saw the French pursue brutal repression in Algeria and Niger from 1917. This repression was targeted at Muslims in Niger, and justified by thin appeals to French misperceptions of Islamic law in Algeria. This should cause us to reconsider how common violent repression was in European empires during the First World War. The colonial recruitment campaigns, especially that of the French empire, were often based explicitly on coercion; in West Africa they were even modelled on the old Trans-Atlantic slave trade.¹¹⁶ These recruitment practices helped spur anticolonial rebellions from Senegal to Saigon. The brutal repression that followed most of the rebellions has not yet been integrated into the broader historiography of European empire during the First World War, which has tended to engage with colonial populations only after they are successfully recruited into European militaries. At the very least the experiences of Batna, Algeria and the Aïr in Niger prompt us to reconsider the breadth to imperial-colonial experiences and repercussions stemming from the realities of the First World War.

Department of History and War Studies, University of Wolverhampton, Great Britain, J.Krause@wlv.ac.uk

* This work was generously supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under the Early Career Grant AH/N001850/1. The author would like to thank Abdouramane Oumarou of the *Laboratoire d'Études et de Recherches sur les Dynamiques Sociales et le Développement Local* for his hospitality and assistance in facilitating the research done in Niamey for this article. The author would also like to thank Richard Fogarty, John Horne, and Miles Larmer for reading drafts of this article before submission. Their comments were enormously helpful.

¹ *Rapport d'Operations – Causes qui ont nécessité la Colonne, Annexe III, Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer (ANOM), Aix-en-Provence, France, 14 MIOM 303, 1D216; « Il n'y a de Dieu que Dieu – Mohammed est la prophète de Dieu. Les cœurs des ennemis se sont séparés à cause de leurs méfaits. Ils ne font aucune distinction entre le vrai et le faux. Si Dieu vous donne la victoire, personne ne vous vaincra. Combien de petites troupes d'hommes l'ont emporté sur de grandes troupes avec l'aide de Dieu. Dieu est avec les patients. »*

² Kimba Idrissa, ‘The Kawousan War Reconsidered’, in Jon Abbink, Mirjam de Bruijn, and Klaas Van Walraven, eds., *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden and Boston, 2003), p. 191; Finn Fuglestad, *A History of Niger: 1850-1960* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 105; and André Salifou, *Kaoussan ou la Révöte Sénoussiste* (Niamey, 1973), pp. iii & 73

- ³ Jacques Frémáux, *Les Colonies dans la Grande Guerre : Combats et épreuves des peuples d'Outre-mer* (Soteca, 2006), pp. 251-256
- ⁴ At the time of writing the only work to directly compare these disparate experiences is Jacques Frémáux, *Les Colonies dans la Grande Guerre : Combats et épreuves des peuples d'Outre-mer* (Soteca, 2006). Some major English-language publications fail to discuss them at all; Hew Strachan, *The First World War in Africa* (Oxford, 2004) & Lawrence Sondhaus, *World War One: the Global Revolution* (Cambridge, 2011).
- ⁵ Marc Michel, *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre : l'appel à l'Afrique (1914-1918)* (Paris, 2014), p. 42 & Brian J. Peterson, *Islamization from Below: the Making of Muslim Communities in Rural French Sudan, 1880-1960* (New Haven and London, 2011), p. 2
- ⁶ For example, *Situation Générale de l'Islam en Afrique occidentale française, ANOM*, 14 MIOM 1084 19G1, bobbin 445. This perception of Islam as 'non-African' still persists in some scholarly writing today. Roman Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology* (Bloomington, Indiana, 2013), p. 11
- ⁷ Mervyn Hiskett, *The Course of Islam in Africa* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 92 & Nehemia Levtzion, *Islam in West Africa: Religion, Society and Politics to 1800* (Aldershot, 1994), p. 208
- ⁸ Charlotte A. Quinn and Frederick Quinn, *Pride, Faith, and Fear: Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Oxford, 2003), p. 3; Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa*, p. 12 & Levtzion, *Islam in West Africa: Religion, Society and Politics to 1800*, p. 209
- ⁹ Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 5
- ¹⁰ Baz Lecocq, 'Distant Shores: A Historiographic View on Trans-Saharan Space', *Journal of African History*, 56 (2015), pp. 24 & 29
- ¹¹ Benjamin Soares, 'The Historiography of Islam in West Africa: an Anthropologist's View', *Journal of African History*, 55 (2014), p. 29
- ¹² See the attention given to jihad in Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: the Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920* (London, 2015); Mustafa Aksakal, 'Holy War Made in Germany'? Ottoman Origins of the 1914 Jihad', *War in History*, 18 (2011), pp. 184-199; and others.
- ¹³ Paul E. Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa During the Age of Revolutions* (Athens, Ohio, 2016), p. 25
- ¹⁴ Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Popular Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford, England, 1994), p. 5
- ¹⁵ David Motadel, 'Islam and the European Empires', *The Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), p. 833
- ¹⁶ Christopher Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 29
- ¹⁷ Works that focus primarily on imperial recruitment and collaboration, willing or otherwise, like Richard Fogarty, *Race and War in France: colonial subjects in the French army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore, 2008), Kimloan Vu-Hill, *Coolies into Rebels: Impact of World War I on French Indochina* (Paris, 2011) & Tan Tai-Yong, 'An Imperial Home Front: Punjab and the First World War', *The Journal of Military History*, 64 (2000), pp. 371-410 remain the norm. Works that focus more directly on anticolonial movements like Patrick Royer and Mahir Saul, *West African Challenge to Empire: Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War* (Oxford, 2001) and Joe Lunn, *Memoires of the Maelstrom: a Senegalese Oral History of the First World War* (Oxford, 1999), while important, remain a minority in the historiography.
- ¹⁸ Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2017), p. 1
- ¹⁹ Arthur Asseraf, *Electric News in Colonial Algeria* (Oxford, 2019), p. 14
- ²⁰ Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World*, pp. 3-6
- ²¹ For example, see the documents held in ANOM, ALG CONST B3 209
- ²² Abla Gheziel, *L'éveil politique de la société algérienne : Révoltes, soumission, assimilation et nationalisme 1830-1936* (Paris, 2018), p. 204 ; Gheziel in particular refers to Abou-Kassam Saadallah, *Al-haraka al wataniya fil Djazaïr min 1900 ilâ 1930* (Beirut, 1969)
- ²³ For example, Fréméaux, *Les Colonies de la Grande Guerre*, pp. 251-252 and Keith Jeffery, *1916: A Global History* (London, 2015), pp. 61-62
- ²⁴ Gilbert Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée : La guerre de 1914-1918 et le premier quart du XXe siècle* (Éditions Bouchène, 2015, 1981), p. 559
- ²⁵ James McDougall, *A History of Algeria* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 253-254
- ²⁶ *Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 219, pp. 362 – 369, among other examples.

- ²⁷ *Troubles dans l'Arrondissement de Batna, 1916-1917, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218; « ces gens ont la révolte dans le sang, ils se sont révoltés, se révoltent et se révolteront. »*
- ²⁸ Lecocq, 'Distant Shores', p. 30
- ²⁹ *Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 219, p. 4*
- ³⁰ Charles-Robert Ageron, 'Les troubles insurrectionnels du Sud-Constantinois', pp. 100-101 in Charles-Robert Ageron, *Genèse de l'Algérie algérienne* (Paris, 2005)
- ³¹ Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans*, p. 48
- ³² *Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 219, p. 223* and *Le Gouverneur Général à Colonies Bordeaux; Dakar, Novembre 1914, ANOM, 14 MIOM 1084*
- ³³ Gheziel, *L'éveil politique de la société algérienne*, p. 215 and Francesco Correale, *La Grande Guerre des Trafiquants : Le front colonial de l'Occident maghrébin* (Paris, 2014), p. 108
- ³⁴ *Rapport de l'Administrateur de la commune Mixte d'Aïn-Touta sur le rôle joué par plusieurs douars de la commune dans le soulèvement de Novembre 1916 et sur la répression à appliquer, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218*
- ³⁵ Gheziel, *L'éveil politique de la société algérienne*, pp. 212-213
- ³⁶ *Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 219, p. 228*
- ³⁷ Asseraf, *Electric News in Colonial Algeria*, pp. 118-124 & Baz Lecocq, 'The Hajj From West Africa From a Global Historical Perspective (19th and 20th Centuries)', *African Diaspora*, 5 (2012), p. 188; It is important to note that the Hajj was much smaller in the early 20th century compared to today, and drew primarily from people already living in the Arabian Peninsula. For people to travel from Africa or Europe to perform the Hajj was seen as a major commitment and display of devotion.
- ³⁸ *Traduction d'une lettre arabe trouvée à la mosquée de YOLA le 25 Décembre 1914 (L'écrivain est reconnu être celui de Malem Abou Bokar à Garoua) »; « S'il meurt, il meurt en musulman, ANOM, 14 MIOM 1084, 19G1, bobbin 445*
- ³⁹ Asseraf, *Electric News in Colonial Algeria*, pp. 76-77
- ⁴⁰ *L'Administrateur de la Commune mixte de Takitout à Monsieur le Sous-Préfet de l'arrondissement de Sétif, 14 Février 1916, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 411*
- ⁴¹ For example, Royer and Saul, *West African Challenge to Empire*, p. 297
- ⁴² Ageron, 'Les troubles insurrectionnels du Sud-Constantinois', p. 108
- ⁴³ For example, *Rapport de l'Administrateur de la commune Mixte d'Aïn-Touta sur le rôle joué par plusieurs douars de la commune dans le soulèvement de Novembre 1916 et sur la répression à appliquer, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218*
- ⁴⁴ *Rapport d'ensemble sur les causes, les origines de développement et des conséquences du mouvement de résistance à la loi et de rébellion qui s'est produit dans la Commune Mixte de Barika et les moyens d'en éviter le retour, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218*
- ⁴⁵ *Troubles dans l'Arrondissement de Batna, 1916-1917, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218*
- ⁴⁶ Frémeaux, *Les Colonies dans la Grande Guerre*, p. 252
- ⁴⁷ Gheziel, *L'éveil politique de la société algérienne*, p. 209 and Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 142-3
- ⁴⁸ Peter Zinoman, 'Colonial Prisons and Anti-Colonial Resistance in French Indochina: the Thai Nguyen Rebellion, 1917', *Modern Asian Studies*, 34 (2000), p. 65 and *Annexe No 4 à la lettre No du Gouverneur Général de l'Indochine à Monsieur le Ministre des Colonies; Le 15 du 7^e mois de la 1^{ère} année de DAI-HUNG-DE-QUOC, ANOM, INDO FM, nf, carton 58, dossier 646*
- ⁴⁹ Idrissa, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, p. 200
- ⁵⁰ Finn Fuglestad, 'Révolte et Mort de Tegama, Sultan d'Agadès (1920)', *Notes Africains, Université de Dakar Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire*, October, 1976
- ⁵¹ Idrissa, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, p. 213
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 211
- ⁵³ Boubou Hama, *Documents Nigériens: Tome I, l'Air, (1967-1969)*, p. 158
- ⁵⁴ Hama, *Documents Nigériens: Tome I, l'Air*, p. 149
- ⁵⁵ Lecocq, 'Distant Shores', p. 23
- ⁵⁶ Hama, *Documents Nigériens: Tome I, l'Air*, p. 149
- ⁵⁷ For example, Untitled Letter from Cercle Commander at Bilma to Sid Sidi Mohammed Abed, March 1916 and Untitled Letter from Sid Sidi Mohammed Abed to the French representative at Oued Zouar, 28 December 1915, *Archives Nationales de Sénégal (ANS)*, 6F9, among countless others.

- ⁵⁸ There are several letters in which this is the case. The most notable example might be his open letter to the Toubou asking for their support not long after his arrival in Niger in December 1916. ‘God will reward and protect you’, *Lettre de Kaossen à tous les Toubous*, ANOM, 14 MIOM 862, 11G18
- ⁵⁹ Fuglestad, ‘Révolte et Mort de Tegama’, p. 96
- ⁶⁰ Simona Berhe, *Notabili libici e Funzionari italiani: l’amministrazione coloniale in Tripolitania (1912-1919)* (Soveria Mannelli, 2015), pp. 98-100
- ⁶¹ Berhe, *Notabili libici e Funzionari italiani*, p. 98 & *Lettre de Mohammed Senoussi Ben Sid Abderrezag au Cheikh Mokhtar Ben Mohammed*, ANOM, 14 MIOM 862, 11G18
- ⁶² Aksakal, ‘Holy War Made in Germany’, p. 186
- ⁶³ For more see Paul E. Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa During the Age of Revolutions* (Athens, Ohio, 2016) and also Jonathan Wrytzen, ‘Colonial War and the Production of Territorialized State Space in North Africa’, *Political Power and Social Theory (Rethinking the Colonial State)*, 33 (2017), pp. 151-173 for the creation of territorialized state space in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- ⁶⁴ Berhe, *Notabili libici e Funzionari italiani*, p. 209 & John Slight, ‘British Understandings of the Sanussiyya Sufi Order’s Jihad against Egypt, 1915-17’, *The Round Table*, 103 (2014), p. 237
- ⁶⁵ Rob Johnson, *The Great War and the Middle East* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 68-70
- ⁶⁶ *Lettre du chef Sénoussiste Mohamed Labeled à Moussa ag Amastane*, ANOM, 14 MIOM 862, 11G18 ; « *Au Nom de DIEU le Clément et Miséricordieux. De la part de l’esclave de son Maître, MOHAMMED LABED BEN SID MOHAMMED CHERIF ESSENOUSSI, ELKKETTABI, ELHASSANI, ELIDRISSI, Au très grand, au puissant, au précieux, au glorieux, à notre ami, à celui qui réjouit nos yeux, le Tobel MOUSSA, Aménokal des Hoggar. Que DIEU le protège....Que le salut soit sur vous ainsi que la miséricorde de DIEU le très haut et ses bénédictions....Nous louons DIEU de vous avoir accordé la santé et la paix.* »
- ⁶⁷ Quinn and Quinn, *Pride, Faith, and Fear*, p. 3; Loimeier, *Muslim Societies in Africa*, p. 12; and Levtzion, *Islam in West Africa*, p. 209
- ⁶⁸ Berhe, *Notabili libici e Funzionari italiani*, p. 207
- ⁶⁹ Hama, *Documents Nigériens: Tome I, l’Aïr*, p. 174
- ⁷⁰ Idrissa, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, pp. 213-214
- ⁷¹ Hama, *Documents Nigériens: Tome I, l’Aïr*, pp. 170-1
- ⁷² *Lettre du Sultan Amoud à Kaossen ben Mohammed, 15 mars 1918*, ANOM, 14 MIOM 862, 11G18. The Hoggar had ultimately sided with the French against the Kell Ajjer in a bid for control over key nodes, especially Djanet. Jeremy Keenan, *The Lesser Gods of the Sahara: Social Change and Contested Terrain amongst the Tuareg of Algeria* (London, 2004), pp. 28-29
- ⁷³ Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa During the Age of Revolutions*, pp. 20-21
- ⁷⁴ Idrissa, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, p. 213
- ⁷⁵ *Rapport d’ensemble sur les causes, les origines de développement et des conséquences du mouvement de résistance à la loi et de rébellion qui s’est produit dans la Commune Mixte de Barika et les moyens d’en éviter le retour*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218
- ⁷⁶ For example, Untitled report, *Douar Ksour, 22 août 1914*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 411 among many others.
- ⁷⁷ *L’Administrateur de la Commune Mixte de Khenchela à Monsieur l’Inspecteur Général des Communes Mixtes, Gouvernement Général de l’Algérie, Khenchela, 27 Mars 1917*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218
- ⁷⁸ The sheikh, his family and his retainers maintained close relationships with the French right up until the attack at Mac-Mahon. *Rapport d’ensemble sur les causes, les origines de développement et des conséquences du mouvement de résistance à la loi et de rébellion qui s’est produit dans la Commune Mixte de Barika et les moyens d’en éviter le retour*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218 and Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint*, p. 5
- ⁷⁹ *Les troubles de l’Aurès en 1916*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218
- ⁸⁰ Meynier, *L’Algérie révélée*, p. 559
- ⁸¹ *L’Administrateur de la Commune Mixte de Khenchela à Monsieur l’Inspecteur Général des Communes Mixtes, Gouvernement Général de l’Algérie, Khenchela, 27 Mars 1917*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218
- ⁸² Depont points toward rebel leaders using religion to influence followers, but his assertions also needed to be taken skeptically, given his attitude towards Islam. *Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l’Arrondissement de Batna en 1916*, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 219
- ⁸³ Gheziel, *L’éveil politique de la société algérienne*, p. 208
- ⁸⁴ Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960*, pp. 12-14 and William F. S. Miles, ed., *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed* (Boulder & London, 200), pp. 82-3, among many others.

⁸⁵ This was not true of all officers, of course. Some (like Edouard Maguet, administrator of Dedougou) instituted severe programmes of repression against Muslim populations, including wanton imprisonment and torture. Royer and Saul, *West African Challenge to Empire*, pp. 92-100

⁸⁶ [Illisible] du Sénégal, du Haut-Sénégal-Niger, de la Guinée Française, de la Côte d'Ivoire et du Dahomey et à Commissaire du Gouvernement Général en Mauritanie, 11 Septembre 1909, ANOM 14 MIOM 1084 19G1, bobbin 445

⁸⁷ *Situation Générale de l'Islam en Afrique occidentale française*, ANOM, 14 MIOM 1084 19G1 and *Le Gouverneur Général de l'Afrique occidentale française à Monsieur le Ministre des Colonies (Service de l'Afrique occidentale et équatorial, Dakar, 21 Juin 1911, ANOM, 14 MIOM 1084 19G4; 'Lutte contre la propagande panislamique en Afrique occidentale française'*

⁸⁸ *Jugement d'Ensemble sur l'Islam, Mankono, 11 Mai 1914, ANOM, 14 MIOM 1084 19G1; « Persécuter l'Islam, serait encore plus dangereux: ce serait provoquer inmanquablement non la révolte directe; les musulmans sont trop intelligents pour cela, l'état d'esprit naturel aux populations de toutes races inquiétées dans leur foi, la soif de la persécution, l'exaspération de la foi, et un prosélytisme plus aigu. »*

⁸⁹ Miles, *Political Islam in West Africa*, p. 82

⁹⁰ Untitled Cabinet paper, Governor General of Algeria, 23 November 1916, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 208

⁹¹ *Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 219, pp. 7-8*

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 4; « *le poison de la guerre sainte... répondant à l'appel du Chef de la Colonie, le poison n'eut pas, en général, d'effets trop fâcheux.* »

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 11

⁹⁴ *Opérations du Général de Bonneval dans le Sud-Constantinois du 21 Novembre 1916 au 15 Février 1917, ANOM, ALG Gouverneur Général d'Algérie (GGA) 2H90-94*

⁹⁵ Ouanassa Siari Tngour, 'La Révolte de 1916 dans 'Aurès', in Abderrahmane Bouchène, et. al., *Histoire de 'Algérie à la période colonial* (Paris, 2012), p. 257

⁹⁶ *Les Troubles Insurrectionnels de l'Arrondissement de Batna en 1916, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 219, p. 7 ; « Nous avons trop oublié qu'en pays indigène, surtout en temps de guerre, une autorité n'est réelle, agissante, forte et obéie, comme il convient, que si elle échappe à des critiques dont les musulmans ne peuvent concevoir ni le sens, ni la finesse, ni la portée, et qui finissent toujours, dans leur esprit, par affaiblir le pouvoir, quand elles ne l'annihilent pas complètement. »*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9 ; « *Les méthodes de paix, avec leur formalisme, leurs hésitations et des scrupules de légalité, que nous finissons toujours, avant de les lever, par payer fort cher, avaient fait place aux méthodes de guerre, les seules applicables à de nombreux territoires, parce qu'elles comportent à la fois initiative, promptitude de décision et rapidité d'exécution, toutes qualités nécessaires, indispensables même, pour bien administrer les indigènes, et éviter, en temps troublés, les mouvements d'insurrection dont nous serons encore longtemps menacés. Ce sont ces mêmes méthodes de guerre qui vont être suivies dans l'arrondissement de Batna, où les fait sont autrement graves que ceux plus haut relatés, et où il importait de ne pas laisser dégénérer en une insurrection »*

⁹⁸ Tngour, 'La Révolte de 1916 dans 'Aurès', p. 258

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 258

¹⁰⁰ Asseraf, *Electric News in Colonial Algeria*, p. 77

¹⁰¹ *Note sur la responsabilité collective, ANOM, ALG CONST B3 218*

¹⁰² Idrissa, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, p. 214 & Fuglestad, *A History of Niger*, p. 99

¹⁰³ Salifou, *Kaoussan ou la Révöte Sénoussiste*, p. 97; « *j'ai été accusé d'avoir participé à la révolte. Un Blanc du nom de Bourges nous condamne à mort, à In Gall et nous groupa à une vingtaine de pas du Poste administratif actuel. Un Touareg Kel Fadey, Bacha, demanda à Bourges la grâce pour tous les jeunes de mon âge. Ensuite, en ma présence, Bourges donna l'ordre à ses soldats de commencer l'exécution à la baïonnette et au coupe-coupe. Mes oncles et cousins tombèrent devant moi, la baïonnette enfoncée dans le dos et la tête pendant ou sur la poitrine ou sur le dos, retenue par un lambeau de peau. »*

¹⁰⁴ Hama, *Documents Nigériens: Tome I, l'Air*, p.163

¹⁰⁵ Akinjide Osuntokun, *Nigeria in the First World War* (London, 1979), p. 160

¹⁰⁶ Margery Perham, *Lugard: the Years of Authority 1889-1945, vol. III* (London, 1960), p. 548

¹⁰⁷ *Télégramme Officiel de Territoire Niger à Gouverneur Général, Général commandant supérieur Dakar, 23 Avril 1917, ANS, 1D218*

¹⁰⁸ Slight, 'British Understandings of the Sanussiyya Sufi Order's Jihad against Egypt, 1915-17', p. 236

¹⁰⁹ Idrissa, *The Kawousan War Reconsidered*, p. 214

¹¹⁰ Finn Fuglestad has discussed the substantial decrease in Niger's population from 1912 to 1921, but also had a hard time disaggregating the various causes. Fuglestad, *A History of Niger*, pp. 88-92

¹¹¹ Correale, *La Grande Guerre des Trafiquants*, p. 147

¹¹² Bruce B. Lawrence, *Shattering the Myth: Islam Beyond Violence* (Princeton, 1998), p. 16

¹¹³ Fogarty, *Race and War in France*, p. 169

¹¹⁴ Peterson, *Islamization from Below*, p. 2

¹¹⁵ Slight, 'British Understandings of the Sanussiyya Sufi Order's Jihad against Egypt, 1915-17', p. 235 and Harrison, *France and Islam in West Africa, 1860-1960*, pp. 31-2

¹¹⁶ Lunn, *Memoires of the Maelstrom*, pp. 38-39