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CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds
Studies

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Panel 44

Anticolonial Resistance and Political Projects in North Africa after the end of WWI (from Morocco to Egypt, 1919 - early 1920s)

At the end of WWI, North Africa was suffering. Like in several regions in the world the guns were not put down in November 1918. The most famous uprising in the Mediterranean area was the War of Independence led by Mustafa Kemal (1919-1922). In fact, its victory allowed to request for a revision of the Treaty of Sevres replaced by the congress of Lausanne. Less known fights in North Africa remained, especially in Morocco and in Cyrenaica. Far to be pacified North Morocco was a place of rebellion during and after WWI. We will shed light on the anti-colonial resistance led by Abdelmalek from 1915 and on the advent of the Rif War, led by Muhammad Ben 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi and their interactions. Fights were also directed on the level of the ideas to win hearts and souls. First, to fight against European peace treaties seen as unjust and to promote new political projects. Thus, the outbreak of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928 was a reaction against the ostracisation of the Arabs and the Muslims during the Peace conference in 1919. In addition, the early '20s saw the creation of the first Tunisian trade union, CGTT, thanks to Muhammad 'Alî al-Hâmmî and his experience in the Ottoman Empire and Germany during WWI.

Person in charge and discussant : Moreau Odile (University Montpellier 3 – SIRICE, University Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne)

Program

Biji Youssef (University Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne, SIRICE)

The effervescence in the Rif in the early twenties

Our presentation will be dealing with the emergence of the anticolonial struggle, taking Northern Morocco as a case study. We will analyze the effervescence in the Rif at the end of World War I and in the early twenties and show the origins of the Rif War led by Muhammad Ben Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi better known as Abdelkrim (the transcription of his father's name). This war broke out in 1921 and lasted five years, until 1926. Indeed this experience of war of resistance later became a source of inspiration for other resistance movements and was labeled as a «people's war ». We will explicate its interactions with both local and regional/international participants based on various sources of archives and memories.

Hajji Iman (University Lyon II, Triangle)

Muhammad 'Alî al-Hâmmî and the foundation of the first trade union in Tunisia

During the First World War, several Tunisian nationalists, both out of attachment to the Ottoman Empire and driven by a sense of pan-Islamic solidarity, moved to Istanbul, the capital of the Empire. This was
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the case of Muhammad 'Alî al-Hâmmî, known as the founding father of the first Tunisian trade union, the CGTT. After the end of the war and the defeat of the Ottomans, who had allied themselves with the central powers, he escaped to Berlin with the Minister of War, Enver Pasha, where he decided to settle and begin studying economics. This presentation will retrace the career of Muhammad 'Alî al-Hâmmî and show how he was able to put into practice, in his country of origin, Tunisia, the knowledge he had acquired in Berlin. Thus, in 1924, a cooperation society and the CGTT were founded under his leadership.

Kaya Halil (Internationale University of Rabat)

The Journey of Emir Abd el-Malik after the Great War

During World War I, several resistance movements were active in Morocco. Emir Abd el-Malik, son of the Algerian Emir Abd el-Qadir, led one of the most dangerous. After starting his military career in the Ottoman Empire, he came to Morocco in the early 1900s and served as "Commander of the Police Tabors" in Tangiers.

However, at the beginning of 1915, he revolted against the French forces in the region of Taza, where he was supported by Ottoman and German agents. Nonetheless, his history is little known and is almost non-existent in Moroccan historiography. Our contribution will present the activities of Emir Abd el-Malik during the war and after the armistice, the role he played in the emergence of the Rif resistance, and his relations with the family of Abd el-Krim, based particularly on Ottoman archives.

Thompson Elizabeth (American University, Washington DC)

The origins of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Paris Peace Conference

Based on Arabic language memoirs and British archival material from Egypt, this presentation argues that Hasan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 in response to the policies of the Paris Peace Conference, which excluded Egyptians and most Arabs from its deliberations and which sanctioned European colonization of the eastern Arab world against popular demand. The Muslim Brotherhood must be understood alongside other anti-systemic movements that have turned against the injustice of European peace. This paper will focus on Hasan al-Banna's teacher, Sheikh Rashid Rida, who had previously embraced European liberalism. Rida supported constitutional movements in the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Syria as expressions of Islamic values. But in 1919, he witnessed Britain's suppression of a popular Egyptian uprising based on those same principles. And in 1920, the peace conference authorized the French army to destroy the constitutional Arab government at Damascus. Rida was forced to flee his post as president of the Syrian Congress. Rida retained hope for the universal application of liberal principles, including Arabs, Muslims, and Egyptians until 1922. That year, the League of Nations approved the extension of British and French rule over the Arab peoples in the form of mandates. In response, Rida redefined Islamic reformism as hostile to the West, a vision that inspired Hasan al-Banna to found the Muslim Brotherhood.