

The Tunisian stance on the Italian occupation of Libya in 1911

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Abstract:

Libya faced Italian control starting in 1911, sparking a wave of nationalist resistance among the peoples of North Africa, particularly among Tunisians. Tunisians offered significant support to their Libyan brethren, with the Tunisian Youth Movement at the forefront.

This movement initiated the publication of the newspaper "Al-Ittihad Al-Islami" (Islamic Union), followed by "Al-Ittihad Al-Tunisi" (Tunisian Union), aiming to raise awareness among Tunisians about participating in the struggle against the Italians, highlighting their crimes, and defending Libyan rights. Led by Ali Bach Hamba, the Tunisian Youth Movement recruited Tunisians and even Algerians to support the Libyan struggle, in addition to collecting financial donations and military supplies. The movement organized demonstrations and led boycott campaigns against Italian economic interests in Tunisia. Therefore, this study aims to explore the support and stances adopted by Tunisians towards the Libyan situation before the arrival of Italian rule.

Keywords: Libya; Itali's occupation; Tunisian Youth Movement ; Islamic Union; Bach Hamba.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Italian occupation of Libya, specifically the Province of Libya(Tripoli of the West), in 1911 represents the final stage in the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire's possessions in the Maghreb by European powers that preyed upon the territories of the so-called "sick man of Europe." This occupation occurred during a period marked by the spread of reformist and revivalist thought and the early formation of Maghrebi nationalist movements on the eve of the First World War. In response, a wave of solidarity emerged from the Ottoman state and from Arab Muslim volunteers, particularly from the Maghreb, who volunteered to rescue the province from the grip of colonial crusader forces.

Among those who supported the Libyan cause, the Tunisian brothers played a particularly prominent and influential role in this war. The Tunisian intellectual and political elite mobilized to support the Tripolitanian cause, while the movement of Tunisian youth actively provided assistance and support to Libya in its struggle against the Italian forces. At the same time, the intellectual elite defended the cause through periodicals and newspapers, as was the case with the Hadhira group and the Tunisian media elite. Other segments of Tunisian society also adopted various means and methods to defend the Tripolitanian cause on the eve of the Italian occupation of the country.

This coincided with the rise of European colonialism in Africa and Asia.

In this study, we have adopted the descriptive historical method and the statistical method, which relies on accurate French archival documents that monitored the elements of the Tunisian national movement before the First World War, and in particular the archive of the Tunisian national movement (T.N.A),and Archives of the Higher Institute for the History of the Tunisian National Movement (A.H.I.H.T.N.M) as well as the Arab sources that rely on Tunisian periodicals and newspapers that sympathized with the mujahideen in Tripoli against the Italian invaders

2.The Libyan issue in the interests of the Tunisian Youth Movement, propaganda and incitement:

On the eve of the Italian occupation of Libya in 1911, the Turkish magazine *Iqtiham* wrote about the Young Tunisians Movement, stating that the issue constituted a conspiracy against Islamic peoples in India, Tunisia, and elsewhere. The Italian occupation of Libya, in particular, aroused hostility

and resentment toward Italy among Ali Bach Hamba and Muslims in general.(Stamboul; 1912; 2)

It is well known that activists of the Young Tunisians Movement founded the Islamic Union Association and established a newspaper that served as its official mouthpiece, known as Al-Ittihad al-Islami (The Islamic Union). The newspaper aimed to defend Islamic causes within the framework of what was known as Pan-Islamism. It achieved considerable resonance among Tunisians in response to the ideas promoted by Muhammad Ali Bach Hamba and his companions from the Young Tunisians Movement.

A group of Tunisian citizens from various regions of the country sent a letter to the president of the Islamic Union, Ali Bach Hamba, expressing their cooperation with the Young Tunisians Movement. The letter stated, among other things *“To the distinguished patriot, Mr. Muhammad Ali Bach Hamba, may God protect and preserve him. The Italian government has revealed its disgraceful attitude toward the Islamic world and toward the Sublime Porte through its occupation of Tripoli of the West. Your religious sentiment has prompted us to establish a civil association composed of individuals united by Arab hearts. All Tunisian inhabitants stand in the service of your Islamic endeavor”*.

Indeed, the Young Tunisians Movement supported the Libyan resistance against the Italian invaders in 1911. This is evidenced by a letter dated 30 October 1911, sent by Mr. Farid, Qa'immaqam of Nalut, to Mr. Muhammad Bach Hamba, in which he emphasized the necessity of maintaining communication between the two parties via telegraph. He also expressed his deep gratitude and appreciation to the Turkish mujahideen and Maghrebi volunteers who participated in the Italo-Libyan war. In the same letter, he requested a list of medicines needed by the fighters in Libyan territory and informed him of the continuous victories achieved by Ottoman soldiers alongside Arab volunteers on the battlefields, stating: *“The Ottoman fighters and volunteers attack the enemy day and night, achieving numerous victories,”* and that victory was near. He further called for the dispatch of some newspapers to Libya.(A.N.T; 1911, 64)

At the same time, Italian intelligence reported information provided by Mr. Raspoli, the official in charge of Italian affairs in Paris, indicating that *“Muhammad Bach Hamba was leading a group of mujahideen in*

Libyan territory on the eve of the Italian occupation”.
(A.N.T;1915;161)

The Young Tunisians Movement also played an effective role in recruiting Arab fighters on Tunisian soil to join the Libyan resistance. In this context, a letter was discovered from one of the spahis from the Bousaada region in Algeria, named Hajj Idris ibn Hajj Tayyib Bousaadi, who held the rank of Brigadier of the Spahis in Tunisia. In his letter, he requested Ali Bach Hamba’s assistance in sending him to perform jihad against the Italian invaders. This letter highlights the prominent role of Muhammad Bach Hamba in recruiting Maghrebi fighters in Libya alongside the Turks and Libyans against the Italian invaders. The letter stated “:Our response unfolds from the policy of the supporter of truth, the noble leader among his peers, the generous and honorable scion of generosity and refinement, congratulating the bearer of the positions of the Muslims -my master Ali Bach Hamba”, so and he says:“ Today, I seek the countenance of God to advance to Tripoli, to the place where one strives in the path of God... Today, my master, what is sought—after God’s grace—is that you send me to those mujahideen. Upon you be God’s support and a near victory”.(ANT;1911; 87)

2. Financial Support Provided by the Young Tunisians Movement for the Libyan War:

The efforts of the Young Tunisians Movement to recruit Tunisian volunteers for the Libyan war were accompanied by the collection of financial donations. According to Shaykh Abdelaziz Thaalibi, the activist Ali Bach Hamba collected a sum amounting to 47,000 French francs, of which 7,000 francs were personally counted by Thaalibi. French security reports accused Ali Bach Hamba of appropriating the entire amount for himself instead of transferring it to the Libyan resistance. However, it is not possible to either confirm or deny this serious accusation.^(ANT;1914; 147)

The management of Hadhira newspaper, to which many members of the Young Tunisians movement belonged, contributed financially and materially to the Libyan resistance. Sawab newspaper published an article on October 31, 1911, calling on Tunisians to engage in charitable work, reminding them of the support and assistance Egyptians were providing to the Libyan resistance against the Italian occupation.

The article stated: *“Newspapers from Egypt and Istanbul have informed us that several committees composed of prominent Ottoman and Egyptian figures have been formed in Cairo to collect war aid for the mujahideen of Tripoli of the West. This is a national project in which every Muslim must support and participate. We have also learned that a group of distinguished Tunisian youths and notables have begun to follow this commendable example”*. The author of the article went further by calling for a broad social mobilization among Tunisians, under the supervision of the official authorities, to support the Libyan brothers in their war against the Italian invaders.(Anonymous, 1911, 2)

Within the framework of material assistance to Libyans, the Young Tunisians Movement, led by Ali Bach Hamba, compiled and published a list of Tunisian donors who provided financial aid to the wounded of the Tripolitanian war. This list was published in Wazir newspaper in its February 1912 issues under the title *“Who is it that will lend to God a goodly loan, which He will multiply for him – Tunisian Subscription.”* The article stated: *“We have opened this subscription to assist our brothers wounded in the Tripolitanian war in the name of the Ottoman Red Crescent, after obtaining authorization from the government. We place great hope in the high resolve of the Tunisian people to support us in this beneficial service demanded by Islam, through sending donations and encouraging others to do so”...*

the process of collecting donations was not easy for the Tunisians, as the French authorities dealt with the Ottoman Red Crescent with great caution, to the extent that they did not allow its members to disembark at the port of Tunis on the eve of its arrival on Sunday morning. Instead, the French authorities contented themselves with paying a courtesy visit to the delegation on behalf of the government aboard the ship. This visit was carried out by Mr. Peaux, secretary of the embassy, Dr. Amin Bey, head of the mission, and Destrée, who presented them with the proceeds of the subscriptions opened by the newspaper *Le Courier de Tunisie*.

The Red Crescent delegation also met with the press and with the Young Tunisians movement, headed by Ali Bach Hamba, expressing to them the goodwill shown by the Tunisian government. After that, the ship departed from the port of Tunis to anchor at the port of Sfax, where the members disembarked and continued overland toward Libyan territory. Meanwhile, crowds of Tunisians gathered not far from the ship, chanting slogans such as *“Long live France”* and *“Long live Turkey.”* The peaceful

demonstration expanded from Jules Ferry Street to the Residence Générale in Tunis, amid heavy security surveillance of the Tunisian demonstrators, in support of and solidarity with the Libyan cause.(Anonymous, 1912, 2)

Regarding Maghrebi solidarity with the Libyan cause, Mr. Ben Ali Fakkar originally from the district of Tlemcen in Algeria and employed as a professor at the Agricultural Chamber Institute in the French city of Lyon wrote an article in the French-language newspaper *Le Tunisien*, citing one of the French journalists' correspondents in Tripoli. The article described the wave of solidarity shown by Tunisians toward their Libyan brothers, as well as by Algerians who rushed to collect donations, with particular mention of the mobilization of the inhabitants of Tlemcen in support of the Ottomans in their war against the Italians. He wrote: *'Let us consider, for example, the magnificent outpouring of Islamic solidarity from Tlemcen, where the population rushed eagerly to assist the wounded Ottomans, and even women whose names appear in the countless subscription lists took part'*. (Anonymous, 1912, 2)

The response was thus widespread among various social groups and from different regions of Tunisia, as reported in *Le Tunisien* in an article entitled "Aid to the Red Crescent in Tunisia." It stated the following: *'Tunisians have shown an unparalleled enthusiasm and joy in assisting the Red Crescent. Subscription lists have begun to reach us from all parts of the province, overflowing with contributions to aid their brothers wounded in the Tripolitanian war'*:so that The newspaper published the lists of donors across four pages in its weekly issues. (Anonymous,18/02/1912,.3)

Among the contributors were: the administration of *Le Tunisien* newspaper (500 francs), Abdelrahman Ka'ak (40 francs), Chadli Chneiq (5 francs), El-Hadi Khalsi, Sheikh Thaalibi (5 francs), Tayeb Radhwan (100 francs), commando gallati (i.e., Omar Qallati) (200 francs), Hajj Qaddour Ben Liman (100 francs), Mohamed Riyahi (15 francs), Mohamed Bach Hamba (20 francs), Mohamed Bourguiba (6 francs), Qaddour Ben Ammar Warqali (6 francs), Mohamed Ben Hussein Jaziri (1 franc), Sadiq Tlaltli (20 francs), Mohamed Riyahi (15 francs), and many others numbering in the hundreds, including women, sheikhs, and Zaytuna students, as well as students from other schools, originating from Tunis, Kairouan, Bizerte, and Gafsa. These donors included Tunisians, Algerians, and Moroccans. According to these statistics, the total amount collected reached 46,118.70 francs, distributed among the following provinces:

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Side	Tunisa	Gafsa	Bizerte	Kairouan
Amount/f	3850.45	328.05	46	395.20

Financial donations to the Libyan resistance in 1912:(Anonymous,1912, 2-6)

The Tunisian newspaper continued to cooperate with the Red Crescent in Tunisia by publishing lists of Tunisian donors to assist the victims of the Italo-Libyan War. An amount totaling 9,500.15 francs was recorded as having been donated from various regions of Tunisia, as reported in the same newspaper dated 4 March 1912, distributed as follows:

Side	The present	Souleyman	Tribal homeland	Akod	Tala	Ksar Hellal	Writhing	The Kaff	Tabarsuk	Mater
Amount	248.6	596.5	1334.9	365.35	1516.7	1100	220.9	2311.5	768.7	999

Tunisian donations to the Libyan resistance throughout the country on

March 4, 1912: (Anonymous, 1912, 2-6)

The total amount of donations reported by *Le Tunisian* newspaper in its issue dated 11 March 1912 reached 10,550.30 French francs, collected from the following sources:

Side	The present	Nabeul	Sousse	Photographer Country	Sfax	Meagher	Mater	Abaqsour	Qafor	Thursday Market
Amount	859.85	1440.40	2578.3	1317	1169	140.50	795.75	424	425.55	145

Tunisian donations to the Libyan on March 11, 1912: (Anonymous, 1912, 2-6)

The Tunisian wave of solidarity was not purely political; rather, it encompassed various Tunisian social groups, each contributing according to their means. Among the Tunisian intellectual and religious elite, we find donations bearing the designation “Zaytouni,” referring to students and shaykhs affiliated with the Zaytouna Mosque. Even senior religious scholars took part in the donation effort, among them Shaykh Muhammad Zerrouk, who authored a small booklet (rissāla) on the rituals of pilgrimage, priced at 50 centimes, and dedicated its financial proceeds to aiding the wounded of the Tripolitanian War. (Anonymous, 1912,3)

The conclusion that can be drawn from these figures is that Tunisians stood by their Libyan brothers, who were engaged in jihad against the

Italian invaders. They supported them financially, intellectually, politically, and even with their blood, which was shed on Libyan soil. Concerning the Tunisian mobilization for fundraising under the auspices of the Red Crescent, Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Swaysī Qayrawānī composed poetry to stir Tunisian resolve, from which we cite the following verses:

A noble soul striving in the way of God, seeking His pleasure,
He has braved the battlefield with valor, steadfast and firm.
With resolute courage, ever advancing,
He guards the world and his homeland with his blade.

...
From the enemy's bullets four struck him,
Hitting limbs and body alike.
Yet from his veins flowed pure blood,
Surpassing in honor the brightest hues of glory.

...
Come, carry me toward the crescent, for I seek
No retreat from battle, no solace in rest.
I do not mind if I am wounded,
For I have the forgiveness of the Most Merciful.
And I ask not for my family or children,
If I find kindness among those of faith.

...
Do not withhold in subscribing to the crescent's cause,
For the stingy among men shall be scorched by fire.
The orphans and wounded of war alike

Pray for us, openly and in secret. (Anonymous, 1912, 28,3)

The intellectual, political, and media elites in Tunisia played a significant role in garnering both material and moral support for the Libyan cause, both locally and regionally. *Moushir* newspaper reported a meeting in October 1911 that brought together prominent Libyan and Tunisian figures whose voices carried weight in North Africa. The gathering included a large number of citizens from both countries and notable personalities such as Sheikh Ismail Sfaihi, Sheikh Salim ben Yaqoub Fitouri, and Sheikh Mansour Zayda Fitouri.

The meeting resulted in sending a telegram to the Ottoman Sultan Muhammad V, expressing the loyalty and allegiance of the people of Tripoli to the Ottoman Empire and their urgent need for support against the Italian invaders. The text of the aforementioned message reads: "*One million five hundred thousand Tripolitaniens, your majesty's subjects,*

categorically reject this report which undermines the honor of the people of Tripoli. They present to your exalted threshold their sincere devotion and friendship to the Ottoman throne. At this moment, we wish to express, with one voice, our deep attachment to the Islamic Caliphate, awaiting its royal orders on behalf of all the people of Tripoli." (Anonymous, 1911, 2)

Tunisians challenged European colonialism by advocating the taking up of arms and jihad against the occupying invaders. It should be noted that the idea of jihad deeply concerned the French authorities in their North African colonies; consequently, the French administration proceeded to confiscate newspapers that called for unity and jihad against occupation. Among those who wrote on this matter was Sheikh Tayeb Ben Issa, who published an article in the newspaper *Hadhira* inciting support for the Libyan jihad, opening with the Quranic verse: *"So whoever transgresses against you, transgress against him in the same manner as he transgressed against you, and fear God, and know that God is with the righteous."*

Through this, he expressed the sentiments of Tunisians in particular and Muslims in general regarding the Libyan question, calling for Islamic solidarity a bond that European powers, including France, sought to obscure and deny by rejecting the existence of a religious link among Muslims, according to Sheikh Tayeb Ben Issa, in order to sow division and fragmentation.

However, it appears that Tayeb Ben Issa was mistaken in this regard, as French security authorities themselves referred to the Islamic bond that connected the reformist and nationalist elite with the Ottoman state, as noted earlier in this study. And he further expressed the feelings and pain of Tunisians over the occupation

of Libyan lands, stating: *"This is the first time I have articulated the general sentiment of the Tunisian people, whose sense of grievance is no less intense than the profound anger that spread among the rest of the peoples of the Islamic nation across the world."* (Anonymous, 1911, 2)

Coinciding with the Italian occupation of Libya in 1911, and in sympathy with the Libyan people and the Ottoman state, the activists of the Young Tunisians movement donated financial aid to support the Libyan resistance, which was handed over to the Red Crescent authorities.

During this period, Tunisia witnessed the Tramway events, which led to demonstrations in 1912 after an eight-year-old Muslim boy was run over on November 9, 1912, causing significant civil unrest. In response, members of the Young Tunisians called for a boycott of the tram, which was operated

by the Belgian company in Tunisia, and escalated demands for wage equality between Tunisians and Europeans. Security investigations revealed the involvement of the Young Tunisians, led by Ali Bach Hamba, in these disturbances, prompting the formation of a committee of Tunisians to demand the rights of Tunisian workers during this difficult security situation in the country.(A.NT, 1937, 11-36)

To be fair, Tunisian support was not limited to the Young Tunisians movement; it extended across various social groups. At the same time, the Young Tunisians played a key role in public advocacy against the Italian occupation of Tripoli. The Hadhira group contributed to raising awareness of the issue through numerous articles published in the Hadhira newspaper during 1911, led by Mr. Ali Bouchoucha.

The newspaper Hadira reported that when war broke out between the Italians and the Libyans, Tunisians took to the streets in popular demonstrations. Simultaneously, numerous telegrams from Tunisian associations, clubs, merchants, and other social groups were sent to the Tunisian government condemning the war and demanding the liberation of the Libyans. Support was also provided by Arab and Islamic nations, including the Ottoman Empire, Yemen, and Egypt. As Ali Bach Hamba testified in the newspaper Tunisi: *"I don't think there is anyone who is unaware that Italy's aggression against Turkey provoked the anger of the entire Islamic world, and that the Arabs of Algeria and Tunisia share this sentiment with their brothers..."*(Bach Hamba, 1912,1)

From Yemen, a telegram arrived from Imam Yahya Hamid Din to the Sublime Porte informing them that he was preparing to attack with one hundred thousand Yemeni volunteers to fight the Libyan enemies. as stated in the text of the translated message as follows: *"In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, I have been informed that some foreigners are encroaching on Tripoli, the West and Hodeidah, so I am ready to march.. With one hundred thousand swordsmen until God grant the word of God to be exalted"*.

In Egypt, a correspondent for Muqattam newspaper in Alexandria reported that approximately 500 Egyptians from the Awlad Ali tribe had volunteered to fight in Libya, according to the mayor, Abdoun ben Abkar, and the tribal sheikh, Bakr ben Abi Mohamed. They were preparing to join the Libyan war and would depart on Tuesday via the Mariout road, mounted on their horses and fully armed. The correspondent also reported that around 4,000 other Egyptian citizens were ready to volunteer for the Libyan resistance.

(Unsigned,1912 , 2)

3. Tunisian boycotts and strikes in support of the Libyan cause:

Regarding the tramway events that coincided with the Italian occupation of Libya, Tunisians proceeded to boycott riding the tram. In fact, the Italian occupation cannot be considered the sole reason for the boycott, though it may have been one of the causes, given that Italian workers constituted a large proportion of the company's workforce. They often harassed Tunisian workers and passengers and showed them little respect. Moreover, the tram used to run at high speed through Muslim neighborhoods, which sometimes resulted in Muslims being run over. However, the incident in which an Italian driver ran over a Tunisian child triggered an uprising among Tunisian Muslims against the Belgian tram company, leading them to declare a boycott.(Unsigned, 1912, 3)

The participation of Abdelaziz Thaalbi, Ahmed Tawfiq Madani, and Hassan gallati was evident. In the context of the Zallaj events, Ahmed Tawfiq Madani referred to his role in inflaming the general situation in the city of Tunis in defense of the land, saying: "I was among those who roamed the markets and cafés, calling out at the top of my voice: *'We die, but we will not surrender our Zallaj.'*" People were influenced by my words more than they were by the words of those older than me, and my sphere of activity was between the markets of Tunis and the Halfaouine square."

(Madani, 1976, 43)

As for Abdelaziz Thaalbi, he was one of the active figures in the 1912 tramway events. Together with his associates, he carried out an awareness-raising campaign by contacting the people in their homes, cafés, and popular streets, including Bab Souika. He also reached out to the working class in the ports with the aim of boycotting the tram.(Aqqad, 1993, 160)

In fact, the Tunisian movement succeeded in achieving its initial goal, and a widespread boycott of the company was declared the day after the incident. Tunisian workers seized the opportunity to demand a wage increase equivalent to that of their foreign counterparts. The boycott lasted for nearly a month, ultimately forcing the company to request the intervention of the French authorities to end the general strike.

As for the group of young Tunisians, they formed a committee headed by the French lawyer Destry, along with other Tunisian members: Ali Bach Hamba, Hassan galati, Ahmed Safi, Chadhli Darghouth, and Mohamed

Laroui. The committee presented a set of conditions to the ruling administration in exchange for ending the boycott.(Khaled, 1985,43)

The events of Zallaj in 1911 and the tramway boycott of 1912 resulted in the paralysis of the Young Tunisians movement and the exile of its leaders from Tunisia, such as Ali Bach Hamba, Abdelaziz Thaalbi, and Mohamed Nouman, as well as the imprisonment of Mokhtar Kahia.

The Maghreb cooperation was clearly demonstrated during the Zallaj events through the participation of Algerians, Libyans, and Moroccans in these developments. Several Algerians and Libyans were arrested during the latest demonstrations. Among the Libyans who were tried following the Zallaj events in Tunisia were:

- ✓ -Rahouma Ben Mabrouk Tripolsi, 41 years old, from the Western Zawiya region.
- ✓ -Hassan Ben Belkacem Ben Ali, 30 years old, from Ghadames.
- ✓ -Mustafa Ben Mohammed Ben Tayeb, 23 years old, from Ghadames.
- ✓ -Muhammad ben Ali Shadhli Tarabulsi, who was initially sentenced to death, a sentence that was later reduced to hard labor. (Abu al-Qasim, 1992,16)

Brotherly relations continued between Tunisian and Libyan nationalists.

with ongoing intellectual and political communication with the Arab and Islamic world and Maghrebi leaders. Among them was Sheikh (Sulayman Baruni), who established strong relations with Tunisian political and intellectual figures. It is worth noting that Sheikh Sulayman Barouni was at the forefront of the resistance against the Italian occupation in 1911 and rejected the truce concluded in 1912, continuing his resistance against the Italians in the Nafusa Mountains of Libya. He later moved to Tunisia in 1913. (Abu al-Qasim, 1992,16)

French security reports from the early twentieth century indicate various meetings and gatherings that brought together Sheikh Sulayman Barouni with the Jerbians (the inhabitants of Djerba) and Tunisian Mzabit. These included his meeting with the artist Mohamed Zaki, president of the Association of Letters in Tunis, on 13 April 1914 at Souk Halfa, No. 63, located on Church Street, as well as with the journalist Jaayibi.(A.N.T.,1914, p.162)

The Young Tunisians movement strengthened its good relations with the Maghrebi national elite, which had already begun to take shape before and during World War I.

French security reports documented the connections with Sheikh Sulayman Barouni, the leader of the Libyan resistance against the Italian invaders. These reports, dated 12 April 1912, noted Barouni visit to the Tunisian capital, where he stayed at the Hotel Britannia to offer his sincere condolences to members of the Young Tunisians movement, including Ali Kiayat ben Mokhtar, Commander Omar Qallati of Algerian origin, Chadli Dargouth, and Mohamed Zaki.

It is worth noting that that morning many Tunisians from various social classes came to meet Sheikh Sulayman Barouni, who had promised them a meeting. Meanwhile, his private secretary visited Mr. Ahmed Jamal, while his official spokesperson stayed at the Casino Café before returning to their accommodation at the Hotel Britannia in the capital, Tunis. (A.NT; 1914, 91)

In fact, Sheikh Sulayman Barouni strengthened his relations with the Maghrebi intellectual elite in Algeria and Tunisia, establishing connections with Sheikh Abdelaziz Thaalbi, even if only through exchanged letters concerning the activities of the Libyan national movement.

His ties were further strengthened by his visit to Tunisia on 26 September 1923 to consult with Tunisians regarding raising the Libyan issue outside Libyan territory. The French security authorities imposed strict surveillance on him to prevent any communication with members of the Tunisian national movement and allowed him to stay in Tunisia for only four days. This visit was covered by the Tunisian newspaper *Al-Umma* (the nation), which published an article on 3 September 1923 expressing its indignation at the disgraceful stance of the French administration toward Sulayman Barouni. The article highlighted: *"On the morning of the 26th of the past month, the esteemed guest, the great scholar, and the distinguished fighter Sheikh Sulayman Pasha Barouni, hero of Tripoli West and former member of the Ottoman Council of Notables, arrived in our midst for a visit and leisure. No sooner had his feet settled on our soil which welcomes the great and especially the men of Islam than the administration's orders took him by surprise in a most shocking manner."* (A.NT; 191;91)

4. The Libyan Cause in the Interests of the Tunisian Press:

The Young Tunisians used the newspaper *Al-Ittihad Al-Islami* (Islamic Union) to spread shared ideas among Muslim peoples and to advocate for Maghreb causes in the early second decade of the twentieth century. The newspaper published an article titled "Incitement Against the Italians" on 3 November 1911, as noted in French security documents, highlighting the

strength of Muslims during the medieval period and their cooperation with one another.

Meanwhile, the newspaper *The Tunisian* (*The Tunisian*), the Arabic-language voice of the Young Tunisians movement, ceased publication after June 1911 due to summer holidays. This period coincided with the Italian campaign in Libya, but the newspaper later continued to address the Libyan issue. On 12 June 1911, the newspaper announced its temporary suspension in a prominent headline, "Hiatus", stating: "As it is customary for this newspaper to take a break during the summer season each year, it will suspend publication for the upcoming week and will not resume until next October. Therefore, we bid our readers farewell until we meet again,."

From the issues available to us, we observed that the newspaper referred to the tension among the French settlers following the Zallaj events of 1911. The newspaper's editor, Ali Bach Hamba, noted that the French press supported the Italian invasion of Libya, but he emphasized that this did not reflect the sentiment of the French public. As he stated: "If the Francophile newspapers sided with the invaders of Libya, they never truly represented the feelings of the French nation. I am fully convinced of this because I questioned many individuals from all social classes, even from rural areas in distant regions, and found widespread resentment and painful frustration among the French people.(Bach Hamba, 1912,1)

After *The Tunisian* resumed its journalistic activity in the autumn of 1911, the newspaper began reporting news of the war, publishing accounts of Ottoman-Libyan victories over the Italian armies, and highlighting Italian fears and defeats. It refuted the reports of the European press, including the Italian press, which misled the public with false claims of the resistance's surrender at the beginning of the Libyan war. The newspaper, in both its Arabic and French editions affiliated with the Young Tunisians movement and led by Ali Bach Hamba, Sheikh Abdelaziz Thaalbi, and others who wrote for the paper worked to awaken the spirit of the Tunisian people to stand in solidarity with their Libyan brothers in this crisis that had struck the Islamic nation.

The newspaper *Hadhira* welcomed the launch of *Ittihad Islami*, founded by the Young Tunisians movement under the leadership of Bach Hamba, highlighting its Islamic orientation that called for unity and discouraged division among members of the same nation. As stated in the newspaper on 13 October 1911: "*The Arabic press has been strengthened with the publication of an Arabic newspaper issued every Monday and Thursday by the esteemed Mr. Ali Bach Hamba. It is an Islamic-oriented newspaper,*

whose mission is pursued by the pens of Tunisian writers to clarify the true meaning of union, to explain the spirit of Islamic civilization and its merits for all humanity, to encourage unity , and to warn against the consequences of discord and division.(Anonymous, 1911, 4)

The Tunisian intellectual and political elite became aware of the colonial schemes being plotted against the Islamic world by European colonial powers, which had seized control of many Ottoman provinces. Among those who recognized the early stages of the Italian occupation of Libya was Sheikh Tayeb Ben Issa, the owner of the newspaper Moushir in 1911. He was initially one of the prominent figures influenced by socialist ideas, but later joined the Free Constitutional Party of Tunisia. He eventually split from this party to establish the Independent Party with other elites, though it did not hold significant weight in the Tunisian political arena, and later joined the new Free Constitutional Party of Tunisia. (Boutaibi, 1912, 200-205)

During the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Italian government allowed many Italians to migrate to libya , granting them numerous privileges that became a pretext for Italian intervention in the province under the guise of protection. However, the Hamidian coup of 1909 and the rise of the Committee of Union and Progress thwarted Italian ambitions to achieve their colonial objectives in libya , according to Sheikh Tayeb Ben Issa.^(Ben Issa, 1911, 1)

Despite the Italian government's attempts to send peaceful missions and delegations to libya , the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) was aware of these maneuvers, which prompted the Italian authorities to change their political approach toward the Ottomans and launch a fierce propaganda campaign aimed at swaying public opinion in libya and tarnishing the reputation of the Ottomans among Libyans. The campaign claimed that the Ottoman state was neglecting the typhus epidemic in the province, which led many Libyans to flee military service and seek refuge in Tunisia.

The inevitable conclusion reached by Tayeb Ben Issa was that this Italian bias against the Ottoman state would become a serious problem in the future, yet Italy would not be able to achieve its colonial ambitions in libya . As he stated: *"As long as the Italians do not abandon their ambitions and the Ottoman government resists and counters their actions in Tripoli, it is not unlikely that the matter will one day become a major problem.*

However, Italy's victory is impossible because it cannot take the province by force."

Thus, he became aware of the Libyan issue early on, although his assessment of Italy's capacity to occupy Libya was mistaken, due to his excessive confidence in the Unionists (CUP). He also referenced the privileges granted by the Ottoman state to Germany in Western Tripoli, hoping they might serve as a barrier against Italian colonialism, as well as his Arab zeal to prevent the colonization of Libya. (Ben Issa, 1911,1)

Tayeb Ben Issa alerted the Maghrebi public to the media campaign that was taking place in the Kingdom of Italy at the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, which the Italian press launched against Libya and the Ottoman state. This was highlighted in his newspaper *Moushir* on 13 August 1911, in an article entitled "Islamic Conditions – Tripoli West and Italy", in which he outlined Italy's ambitions in Tripoli West, stating: "Anyone who follows European correspondence, especially the Italian newspapers, finds much news about that Ottoman province and feels that a major political movement is unfolding around it. There is no doubt that Italy is behind this zeal..." (Ben Issa, 1911,1, 2)

tayeb Ben Issa explained the motivations behind Italy's interest in occupying Tripoli West as follows: " *Fear of Britain and France settling their dispute following the Fashoda incident in Sudan, which could lead to an understanding between them to divide Tripoli West and exclude Italy from the region.*"

Lack of reliance on its allies Germany and Austria-Hungary, with whom Italy had joined the Triple Alliance in 1881, after losing the opportunity to occupy Tunisia the same year. Italy considered the German empires incapable of preventing France from occupying Libya and creating a European balance of power in the Mediterranean.

Winning over France instead of siding with Germany during the resolution of the Moroccan question at the Algeiras Conference, by conceding its rights to France in Fez in exchange for France recognizing Italy's freedom of action in Tripoli West .

France's violation of the Algeiras agreements by establishing a colonial administration in Fez, which made Italy fear that France might build an empire stretching from Gibraltar in the west to Sudan in the east. Italy therefore felt the need to preemptively occupy Tripoli West to thwart this potential empire.

Seeking the support of major European powers to pressure the Ottoman Sultan to relinquish control over Tripoli West in favor of Italy, with

Austria-Hungary among the European countries opposing Italy.(Ben Issa, 1911,1, 2)

In summary, the goal of the Italian envoy was to gain international support to force the Ottoman state to cede Tripoli West to Italy, as stated by Sheikh Tayeb Ben Issa of Algerian origin: *“Italy paid full attention to obtaining the approval of the great powers to present its demands to the Ottoman government. Austria was reluctant to accept these demands, yet the Vienna Ministry (Austria’s capital) has not yet issued a response. Italy wishes to negotiate with the Ottoman government and desires to establish itself in Tripoli West as France did in Fez...”* (Ben Issa, 1911, 1, 2)

It should be noted that the French authorities allowed the Red Crescent in Tunisia to collect donations for the treatment of Libyan and Turkish wounded, as indicated in this study, while maintaining a cautious stance on the Italian issue. France considered that its intervention should be collective with other active European powers, rather than unilateral. When rumors spread that the French government intended to negotiate with the Ottoman state to cede Tripoli West to Italy, French Prime Minister Poincaré quickly responded: *“Any intervention must be joint among all powers; otherwise, it should not occur.”* That position was praised by Sheikh Abdelaziz Thaalbi, as it aligned with the aspirations of the Islamic nation, in an article he published in issue 27 of The Tunisian. The rumors, he noted, were spread by the German Empire to tarnish the reputation of the Allied powers in their colonies among Muslim populations.(Thaalibi, 1912, p. 1, 2)

Ben Issa also emphasized that Italy’s interest was primarily driven by European ambitions to acquire Ottoman territories. Italy focused its attention on Libya, coveting it to the extent that it considered it rightfully its own, feeling that no other power could challenge its claim.(Ben Issa, 1912, 1)

The newspaper Moushir closely followed the Libyan issue, particularly a letter dated 8 September 1911 from the Italian city of Genoa, concerning the study of the Libyan question by the Ottoman and Italian governments. The letter, published in **Neue Frabe**, included an article by Dolato, a member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, emphasizing the need to establish military balances in the Mediterranean through Italy’s control of Tripoli West . It noted that Italy’s relinquishment of its claim to Fez in Morocco was intended to secure a position for itself in Tripoli West without international competition.(Ben Issa, 1912,1)

The Tunisian political and intellectual elite utilized every means to support the Libyan cause and disseminate news about it, including the national press. For instance, the newspaper Hadhira, owned by Ali Bouchoucha, published on 10 October 1911 an article titled :“Europe and the Ottoman State in Western Tripoli”, highlighting the scramble of European powers for Ottoman territories. Italy did not remain a passive observer of Austria-Hungary’s occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Balkan Wars, Britain’s control over Egypt and Sudan, or France’s conquest of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. The article argued that these factors, among others, led Italy to occupy Tripoli West in 1911. As the author stated: *“The sword has preceded justice. Italy decided, soon after announcing that it had no intention of occupying Tripoli, to prepare its forces and dispatch its entire fleet to Ottoman waters after declaring war on the Sublime Ottoman State to seize the Tripolitanian province from its legitimate owner by force...”* (Bouchoucha Ali, 1911, 1)

On 24 October 1911, the newspaper Hadhira wrote about the landing of Italian troops on the Libyan coasts. The Italians managed to achieve victories over the Ottoman forces in Libyan territory, which forced the latter to withdraw to the interior regions to reorganize their ranks. Subsequently, the Ottoman and Libyan forces won three battles against the Italian invaders in Gharyan, Bu Mleban, and the Jabal. Although resistance is not the main focus here, Hadhira reported the Italian occupation of Derna and Benghazi and the surrender of the city of Khums. At the same time, Sheikh Senoussi was preparing to resist the Italian armies, with his forces estimated at 20,000 fighters from the Benghazi desert and Fezzan, in cooperation with Ottoman troops mobilized by the Ottoman state under the leadership of Fathi Bey and Enver Pasha. This was especially after the British allowed the passage of 6,000 Turkish recruits through Egyptian territory to defend Tripoli West . (Bouchoucha Ali, 1911, 1)

The newspaper Hadhira also published news of the Italian–Turkish battles in Benghazi in its issue dated 31 October 1911, in an article entitled “The War between Turkey and Italy.” It highlighted the fierce resistance encountered by the Italians at the hands of Libyan and Turkish fighters. As stated in the article: *"During the past week, serious incidents occurred in the vicinity of Tripoli in the west and Benghazi, in which the people of the state from the desert suffered..."*

The Italians found themselves facing a significant regular Ottoman force, and on that day many Italians were killed. This prompted the Italian

command to send a telegram on 21 October requesting the mobilization of additional troops, particularly from Rome, to reinforce their fighting forces in Western Tripoli. (Bouchoucha Ali, 1911, 1)

According to a report published by Hadhira, citing the newspaper Sabah, the Turks were determined to attack Tripoli, and a new battle had taken place there. Among the officers who would join the defense of the province was Enver, the hero of freedom and constitutionalism and the military attaché at the Berlin embassy, who had arrived in the province and joined Fathi Bey to organize the defense against the Italian armies. (Bouchoucha, 1911, 1)

These Italian forces had been landed by the Italian fleets on the Libyan coasts in mid-October 1911, numbering about 25,000 soldiers under the command of General Caneva, with plans to increase the force to 50,000 fighters and 5,000 naval personnel. (Bouchoucha, 1911, 1)

The newspaper Hadhira contributed significantly to defending the Islamic world and supporting the causes of the Maghrebi peoples in Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Morocco. As a result of Hadhira's support for Western Tripoli, it was banned from publication for three weeks after publishing an article entitled "Europe and Islam," which had been sent from Tripoli on the occasion of the Ottoman–Greek War of 1897. The article highlighted the concerted aggression of the Christian West against the Islamic world and argued that the Islamic world, led by the Ottoman state, was inevitably bound to confront the West militarily rather than pursue a policy of leniency and appeasement. Ali Aribi notes in his book Ali Bouchoucha: His Life and Works that, because of its discussion of this war, the newspaper was also banned from entering Algeria for an entire year. (Aribi, 2008, 51)

If we seek to clarify Hadhira's stance on the Italian occupation of Tripoli West and the joint resistance mounted by the Ottomans and Libyans, it is necessary to return to the numerous headlines related to this issue, which can be confined to the month of October 1911 as follows:

<i>Article title</i>	<i>Historie</i>	<i>Numericity</i>
Europe and the upper state in Tripoli in the west	10/10/1911	1107
Results of the Italian occupation of Tripoli in the west	17/11/1911	1108
Italy, Tripoli, West	////	///

Tripoli West	////	///
News of the Ottoman Empire – War News Summary	24/11/1911	1109
The Italian Danger	////	///
The war between Türkiye and Italy	31/11/1911	1110

Articles in Al-Hadhira newspaper in solidarity with the Libyan people, 1911: (j. hadhira 1911, 1-6)

the newspaper Moushir did not hesitate to defend Tripoli West against the Italian military assault in 1911. The newspaper, owned by Sheikh Tayeb Ben Issa, published three articles on the Libyan question. The first was entitled “Tripoli West and Italy” under the heading “The Tripolitanian Question,” and the third was entitled “Italy and Germany.” (j. hadhira 1911, 1-6)

7.Conclusion:

Despite North African countries having been subjected to early colonial rule even before the occupation of Tripoli West in 1911, Egyptians and Moroccans demonstrated their support for the Libyan cause in defense of Libya during the Italian colonization.

The Tunisian Youth Movement did not delay in supporting the Libyan cause, through material and moral support, which was represented by jihad for the sake of God, which the freedom fighter Muhammad Bach offered his side and his Tunisian companions, or on the battlefields, or by supporting the noble cause by collecting money and money or propaganda for the cause through Al-Ittihad Al-Islami newspaper and Tunisian newspaper.

Among the organizations that provided great support to the Libyan people, we mention the Tunisian Red Crescent, which supervised the collection of financial donations from various segments of Tunisia and the Maghreb community residing in Tunisia during the period of the Italian occupation of Libya.

Tunisian support for the Libyan cause took various means to support the Libyan cause, including material, moral, media, gatherings and demonstrations to support theLibyan cause at the beginning of the occupation.

The Algerian community in Tunisia is delaying joining the Libyan resistance movement alongside their Tunisian brothers who fought for the Libyan cause on the eve of the Italian occupation.Although this support did

not prevent the Italians from occupying the country, the struggle position was honorable, which the Arab nation lacks in supporting each other in this time.

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