Islamic Revivalism and Anti-Colonial Resistance in 19th-Century Africa

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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

This study examines the intersection of Islamic revivalism and anti-colonial resistance in 19th-century Africa through a comparative analysis of the Mahdist and Senussi movements. Drawing on extensive historical documentation and scholarly works, the research investigates how these movements balance religious reformation with political resistance against European colonial powers. The study reveals that while both movements emerged from similar desires for Islamic purification and social justice, they developed distinct approaches to achieving their goals. The Senussi movement established a decentralized network of educational and social welfare institutions (zawiya), emphasizing gradual reform and sustained resistance through community development. In contrast, the Mahdist movement pursued direct military confrontation and established a centralized Islamic state, achieving initial success but ultimately succumbing to internal divisions and British colonial forces. The research demonstrates that these movements' different organizational structures and strategies significantly influenced their longevity and legacy: the Senussi movement's institutional approach contributed to Libya's eventual independence, while the Mahdist state's more militant stance, despite its shorter duration, left an enduring impact on Sudanese nationalist consciousness. This analysis contributes to our understanding of how Islamic revivalist movements adapted to local conditions while pursuing both spiritual renewal and political autonomy in the face of colonial expansion.

Introduction

Revivalism, in Islamic history, aims to revitalize and purify Islamic practice and belief (Holt, 1970:15). Revivalist movements often arise in reaction to deviations from the "true" path of Islam as expressed in the Quran and the Sunnah (the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) (As-Sallaabee, 2005:360). Revivalists support a return to fundamental beliefs of Islam, opposing cultural additions and bid'ah (innovations) and restore the "pure" traditions of early Muslim society (Rodinson, 1971:82). They criticize the blending of Islamic belief and customs with those of other religions or cultural traditions (Guillaume, 1955:254).

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They often criticize existing political and religious leaders for their corruption and deviation from Islamic core beliefs (Warburg, 2003: 45). They stress the need for individual devotion and moral ethics (Holt & Daly, 2014:63)

Revivalism is not a constant phenomenon (Holt, 2012:156). It may take many different shapes, from moderate reform movements to violent revolutions (Warburg, 2003:98). However, the certain goals, methods, and beliefs of revivalist movements can be different (Al-Turabi, 1996:98). It depends on the historical context, social circumstances, and leadership (Holt & Daly, 2014:71).

Islamic revivalism in the 19th century can be categorized into two interconnected dimensions: internal and external. Internal revivalism is the restoration to basic Islamic ideas of purifying religious practices inside Muslim communities (Lapidus, 1988:485). External revivalism, which is frequently more political, confronts external obstacles such as colonialism and oppression, to mobilize communities for resistance and self-determination (Eaton, 2001:15). While these elements are separate, they often intersect within groups such as the Mahdists in Sudan and the Senussi in North Africa, which connected religious reform with anti-colonial campaigns (Holt, 1970:184; Evans-Pritchard, 1949:15). Knowing this interaction is essential to understanding the complex goals and tactics of Islamic revivalism in the 19th century (Voll, 1994:23).

In the 19th century, the Islamic world went through a tough time. European colonialism came in and affected the traditional Islamic government systems, which caused a lot of social and economic change (Holt, 1970:15). The aim of this study is to explore two significant Islamic revivalist movements of the 19th century: the Mahdist movement in Sudan and the Senussi movement in North Africa (Holt, 1970:184). It will examine how the Mahdists established a movement that stood up against colonial power (Holt & Daly, 2014:65) and struggled for social and religious changes (Trimingham, 1950:128). Mahdi had intellectual and spiritual basis for his position as a religious and political leader because of his scholastic background, which combined traditional Islamic study with a strong Sufi influence and a personal dedication to asceticism.

While not directly related to the Mahdi movement, the Senussi movement in North Africa is an example of similar struggles for Islamic revivalism in its regions (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:15). In addition, it will help us learn more about the various facts of Islamic revivalism in the 1800s by showing the different ways and the complicated reasons behind those who supported it (Trimingham, 1950:220; Voll, 1994:56).

This study will help us learn more about Islamic revivalism in the 1800s by examining these movements. (Lapidus, 1988:485) The study aims to explore how it affected religious thinking and political power. (Voll, 1994:23) It will give insight into these Islamic movements, revealing how these moments shape the political and religious norms in society (Warburg, 2003:10). This will help us better understand how Islamic revivalism had an impact on their societies (Hourani, 1991:345)

The North African Senussi Movement (1787–1859)

Origins and Early Development

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Early in the 19th century, Muhammad ibn Ali as-Senussi (1787-1859) launched the Senussi movement. Muhammad ibn Ali as-Senussi was a well-known Islamic scholar and Sufi mystic, revered for his ascetic habits and spiritual insights (Evans-Pritchard, 1949: 15). As-Senussi was a visionary who sought to revitalize Islamic practice and transform Muslim society. He founded a network of lodges to promote religious instruction, social welfare, and political organizing (Ghazi, 2001:45). Despite his dedication to Islamic teachings, As-Senussi was a practical who valued adaptability and economic self-sufficiency. He was also a social reformer who founded schools, hospitals, and other social organizations to give education, healthcare, and other necessary services to the community (Anderson, 2013:98). His legacy continues to inspire current groups striving to revive Islamic practice and promote social justice in the face of modern problems.

His revivalist movement became a powerful religious and social force in North Africa, especially in Libya and the Sahara Desert (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:15). The Senussi movement in North Africa developed from a complex interaction of internal and external elements to the Islamic world, which accelerated its expansion. The well-known academic and Sufi mystic As-Senussi worked to restore religious observance among the Bedouin people who were nomads and to purify Islam of any deviations (Ghazi, 2001:45). The decline of traditional religious and political institutions created a gap that the Senussi movement filled. The Bedouin tribes, dissatisfied and disregarded by the current governmental and religious institutions, found a connection in As-Senussi's teachings (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:182) These groups were attracted to his focus on personal piety, obedience to Islamic law, and rejection of modernity because they wanted to maintain their cultural identity and resist against the intruding impact of Western concepts (Ghazi, 2001:156). Over the area, he built a network of lodges (zawiya) that functioned as hubs for social assistance, spiritual guidance, and religious education (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:82)

The Senussi movement growth was greatly accelerated by the expanding effects of European colonization. Foreign powers' efforts to force Western cultural norms and take advantage of local economies caused a lot of anger and a desire for independence (Pliez, 2009:87). The Senussi movement offered a structure for directing this unhappiness into organized opposition with its platform for political mobilization and spiritual comfort (Ahmida, 2009:68). People trying to maintain their traditional way of life and fight cultural integration found connection in the movement's focus on independence (Pliez, 2009:87) and rejection of Western influence.

The reason of Senussi movement rapid growth was due to the dynamic produced by the interaction of internal and external factors (Ahmida, 2009:68). The external factors of colonialism and cultural imperialism intensified the internal triggers (Pliez, 2009:105), incorporating the desire for spiritual renewal and the decline of religious institutions. The Senussi movement attracted a wide following and strengthened its hold over North Africa for both religious reform and anti-colonial resistance (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:82).

Expansion and Union

Senussi movement lodges were established all across Libya, Chad, Sudan, and Egypt under the direction of As-Senussi and his successors (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:15). These centers. were for social services,

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education, and commerce, these lodges gave the nomadic people essential infrastructure (Pliez, 2009:87). Along with creating an effective military, the Senussi guarded their villages from outside threats and attacks by other tribes (Anderson, 2013:98).

The movement succeeded for a number of reasons. As-Senussi attracted followers with his personality and spiritual authority (Ghazi, 200:45). All throughout North Africa, the Senussi movement established a network of zawiya lodges (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:82). The underprivileged Bedouin groups connected with the movement's dedication to social welfare and education (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:82). These lodges functioned as multipurpose hubs offering the community a range of services. Teaching in Quranic recitation, Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), jurisprudence, and Sufism, the zawiya were essentially centers of Islamic study (Ghazi, 2001:156).

In times of colonial rule and cultural assimilation, they were essential for preserving Islamic knowledge and customs. The lodges also offered the locals social services like food, housing, and medical attention, particularly to the Bedouin tribes who were nomadic and often had to endure difficult desert living circumstances (Anderson, 2013:98). It also served as the centers of trade and commerce. It helped to promote the economic growth of the communities and to facilitate the flow of products across different regions (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:112). Apart from their religious and social purposes, the lodges functioned as hubs of political organization and mobilization, giving the Senussi leaders a forum to interact with their supporters and plan resistance activities against colonial authorities (Pliez, 2009:105).

The educational facilities inside the zawiya were informal learning settings where pupils got instruction from religious scholars and elders other than official schools. Aside than focusing on Islamic knowledge and principles, the curriculum also included useful skills like farming, animal care, and trade—all of which were necessary for the nomadic groups to survive (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:127). The Senussi movement's emphasis on education and social welfare was a key factor in its success. The movement was able to develop a devoted following and become a major influence in North Africa, by attending to community needs and offering necessary services.

The durability and resilience of the Senussi were also influenced by their capacity to negotiate the complex political geography of North Africa (Pliez, 2009:105), form alliances with regional rulers, and secure some degree of independence from colonial powers (Ahmida, 2009:68).

Resistance to colonialism

North African resistance to European domination was greatly supported by the Senussi movement (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:156). The Senussi in Libya led an extensive, decades-long guerilla battle in violent opposition to Italian occupation (Pliez, 2009:87). Considering its military strength and capacity to inspire public support, the movement presented a serious threat to the Italian troops (Ahmida, 2009:68). The Senussi struggled politically as well as religiously and culturally against colonization (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:182). In the face of European cultural imperialism, the movement aimed to protect Islamic customs and principles (Ghazi, 2001:156). As concentrations of Islamic study and

practice, the Senussi lodges offered a substitute for the Western educational system and the enforced cultural standards on the area (Anderson, 2013:98). The Western educational system stressed secular subjects such physics, mathematics, history, and European languages, in contrast to the Senussi lodges, which concentrated on Islamic knowledge and practices (Vandewalle, 2012:45).

The goal of the curriculum was to produce a Western-educated elite who would support Western values and the colonial government. Usually, the language of teaching in Western schools was the language of the colonial power, like French or Italian. This made the locals even more cut off from their customs and cultural legacy (Ahmida, 2009:156). Muslim populations in the area often resisted the Western educational system, viewing it as a threat to their Islamic identity, which led to tensions and disputes.Local instructors were reduced to lesser ranks while European teachers occupied the highest positions in the Western educational system, which was often strictly hierarchical (Pliez, 2009:87). This kept up socioeconomic injustices and strengthened the colonial power relations. the Western educational system was gradually imposed, starting with the founding of missionary schools and then growing to include government-run schools. (Anderson, 2013:98). The colonial rulers used education as a means of strengthening their hold over the area and integrating the native inhabitants into Western culture. (Vandewalle, 2012:45).

Legacy and Effects

The Senussi movement made a long-lasting impact on North Africa even though it suffered defeats and was finally unable to form an independent Islamic state (Ahmida,

2009:156). It gave Libyans a feeling of pride and national identity and prepared the way for their ultimate independence in 1951 (Vandewalle, 2012:45). Human capital and infrastructure in the area were developed in part by the movement's focus on social welfare and education (Anderson, 2013:98).

Furthermore, the Senussi movement was important in forming North Africa's political and religious environment. Its focus on Sufism and Islamic orthodoxy still shapes religious life in the area (Ghazi, 2001:156). The anti-colonial resistance heritage of the movement is still an inspiration to modern movements aiming at political independence and social justice (Pliez, 2009:105)

Historical Context Sudan in the 19th Century

The history of Sudan in late 19th and early 20th centuries is marked by a complex relationship between the Ottoman rule and British presence. During the Ottoman rule, there were numerous rises and falls (Holt, 1970:17). First the Mahdists revolt, and ultimately the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (Warburg, 2003:45). It is crucial for understanding the socio-political environment during this era, to have insight into the dynamics between these two powers (Holt & Daly, 2014:63).

Ottoman Rule: Oppression and the Seeds of Revolt

Sudan was conquered in 1821 by the governor of Egypt, Mohammad Ali Pasha. His primary goal was to strengthen his territories. The other goal is to control the region's resources, particularly gold and slaves (Holt, 1970:17). The Ottoman rule defeated the divided Sudanese Kingdoms and rule over the country. Their administration introduced modern infrastructure and tried to ban the slave

trade. However, they were also known for corruption, high taxation, and brutal suppression of local resistance (Warburg, 2003:45). Although the slave trade was officially banned, its continuation intensified social tensions and despair (Holt & Daly, 20:52). These elements added to the unhappiness among Sudanese people.

The Rise of the Mahdi: A Symbol of Optimism in the Midst of Chao

Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abd Allah was born in 1844 on Aba Island in northern Sudan (Holt, 1970:184). He was destined to play a major role in Islamic history in the 1800s (Warburg, 2003:27). Muhammad Ahmad was raised in a holy family of boat-makers (Holt & Daly, 2014:63) and got a standard Islamic education (Warburg, 2003:27). His early education was in the Quranic recitation and memorizing much like other Muslims of that time. This gave him a basic foundation of Islamic literature and introduced him to its spiritual and moral concept. His interest in Islamic studies deepened as he became older, and he studied Islamic theology, Fiqh (Islamic law), and Hadith (the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad). This wider understanding of Islamic studies gave him the means to understand and use Islamic concepts in many spheres of life. (Holt, 1970:184). He was strongly influenced by Sufism, a mystical tradition within Islam. He joined with the Sammaniyya Sufi order, a well-known Sudanese Sufi brotherhood distinguished by its focus on social reform, spiritual cleansing, and severity (Trimingham, 1950:126). His membership in the Sammaniyya order expanded his spiritual horizons and gave him access to a group of people who shared his concerns about the situation of Islamic society. Muhammad Ahmad was an enthusiastic reader and independent thinker in addition to a student. He devoted many hours to reading

and analyzing traditional Islamic literature, as well as to finding motivation in the lives of pious predecessor (Warburg, 2003:24). Muhammad Ahmad was becoming more and more dissatisfied with the current religious system as he learned more about Islam. He thought a lot of religious authorities had strayed from the actual principles of Islam and were dishonest, materialistic, and compromised. His need for change was stoked by this disappointment, he wanted to bring Islam back to its purity and create a fair society (Warburg, 2003:27).

In his early years, he was religious, lived a very simple life (Trimingham, 1950:126), and became more and more disappointed with the state of the Islamic world, which he saw as corrupted, unfair (Warburg, 2003:23), and far from the true path of Islam (Holt, 1970:185). In the 1870s, Muhammad Ahmad went on a spiritual trip, traveling throughout Sudan to preach reform and renewal (Holt & Daly, 2014:65). Muslims attracted to him because of his charm, his message of faith purity (Trimingham, 1950:128), and his calls for social justice (Warburg, 2003:24).

Then he proclaimed himself the Mahdi, the divinely guided redeemer of Islam, then the Mahdist movement initiated in 1881. The Mahdi, Muhammad Ahmad quickly rose to renown for a number of reasons. When it came to religion, his lessons spoke to the deep desire for spiritual revival and moral change in Sudanese culture. His stress on strict obedience to Islamic law, criticize on adoption of worldly changes as it is, and criticism of corrupt practices spoke to the religious feelings of many Muslims who were unhappy with the way religion was administered at the time (Holt, 1970:185) His faith, and fluency as a

speaker also captured his crowds and gave them hope and a sense of purpose.

The Mahdist movement started at a time when many people were unhappy with the foreign rulers that ran Sudan. People saw the government as unfair, uneven and cruel because it taxed people heavily, ignored basic services, and limited local authority (Warburg, 2003:23). People in Sudan, who are becoming more conservative, agreed with the Mahdi's calls for struggle against foreign rule and the creation of an independent state. The Mahdist movement also gave local leaders, religious teachers, and soldiers who were unhappy with their jobs a way to question the power structures that were in place and make their political goals known.

Sudanese people found great significance in Mahdi's message it was complex and serve both spiritual and material needs. For some, following Islamic principles to the point and avoiding worldly pleasures was the way to be saved and find spiritual happiness (Holt, 1970:186). On the other hand, it offered a fair and just society where the poor and abused would be free from exploitation, oppression and colonial rule.(Warburg, 2003:35). Furthermore, the Mahdist movement provided a platform to Sufi organizations, tribesmen, merchants, religious leaders, and the oppressed individuals, all showed their consent to support his cause to return to the basic principles of Islam and the establishment of an Islamic state (Holt, 2000:156). The Mahdist movement also played on the strong desire for unity and cooperation among Sudan's many ethnic and clan groups (Warburg, 2003:27). The Mahdist revivalist movement successfully fostered a common Islamic identity, promising social justice, and opposing colonialism. This revitalizing movement effectively brought Sudan's many ethnic and tribal groupings together (Warburg, 2003:27). This shared identity, based on religious convictions and aspirations for a better future, was essential in overturning the current political system and creating a theocratic government in Sudan (Sikainga, 2014:152). They did this by creating a shared identity based on religious beliefs (Trimingham, 1950:128) and hopes for a better future (Sikainga, 2014:152).

The rise of Muhammad Ahmad Mahdi marked a turning point in Sudanese history (Warburg, 2003:45). He started a rebel organization that would question the existing political order (Holt & Daly, 2014:65), change social relationships (Warburg, 2003:56), and leave a lasting mark on the area and enabled the struggle against colonialism (Holt, 2000:172).

The Mahdist State: A Revolutionary Challenge

The Mahdist movement went from being a revival of spirituality to a political force rapidly. The Ottoman rule was initially supported in suppressing the revolt by the British, who had interests in growing economy in the region. However, the Mahdists proved to be a powerful force. After years of fierce fighting against the Ottoman rule, the Mahdists took over Khartoum, Sudan's capital, murdered British General Charles Gordon, and terminated the Ottoman rule in Sudan (Holt, 2000:172). When Khartoum fell and British General Charles Gordon died, the Mahdist state was created (Holt and Daly 2014:71). This marked the birth of the Mahdist state, a unique experiment in Islamic governance (Holt & Daly 2014:71). They made it their own country in 1885. This was an important turning point in Sudanese history; it started a

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time of huge changes in politics, the economy, and society (Warburg, 2003:45). As both religious and political leader, the Mahdi was in charge. He was surrounded by a group of experts (Holt, 1970:191).

The new city, sought to construct an equitable society in line with Islamic principles (Holt, 1970:191). But the social reality both before and after the Mahdist state was founded was significantly more complicated (Warburg, 2003:48). Sudanese society was highly stratified prior to the Mahdist movement; merchants, religious elites, and tribal leaders ruled, while enslaved people and marginalized groups suffered prejudice (Holt, 1970:15). There were many traditional beliefs and rituals (Trimingham, 1950:128). Few people owned most of the wealth, and the Egyptian government was generally seen as repressive (Holt, 1970:17).

The Mahdist state made a lot of changes. It challenged the established social order, giving voice to underprivileged people (Warburg, 2003:48). Abolition of slavery and welfare program creation were two more social changes that the state started (Warburg, 2003:56). Strict morality based on Islamic law was upheld, which changed social behavior and cultural customs (Warburg, 2003:56). Economically speaking, increased inequality and disturbances resulted from the nationalization of resources and the transfer of wealth (Holt, 1970:193). Despite the aspiration for a just society, the reality of the Mahdist state was complex and marked by both progress and challenges (Warburg, 2003:105).

On social front, the Mahdist state tried to get rid of things it thought were against Islam, like drinking alcohol, and smoking. It was also meant to promote

social equality by ending slavery and giving the poor and needing basic government services (Warburg, 2003:56). Though the abolition of slavery by the Mahdist state is consistent with larger international anti-slavery movements of the 19th century, particularly British policy, it is crucial to take into account the different reasons and circumstances that underlie these acts.

The British anti-slavery movement was primarily driven by humanitarian concerns and financial concerns, as industrial capitalism moved away from economies dependent on slaves. (Miers & Klein, 1999:25) Early in their engagement in the area, the British did contribute to the suppression of the slave trade in Sudan, but their main goals were to establish colonial rule and protect their economic interests (Holt, 2000:48).

By contrast, the Mahdist eliminating of slavery was firmly based in Islamic doctrine and the Mahdi's idea of a fair and just society. Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran prohibit slavery and support treating people fairly, irrespective of their socioeconomic standing (Denny, 1987:89). Many Sudanese who had endured the repressive practices of the government, which included the extensive exploitation of slave labor, found great resonance in the Mahdi's message of social justice and equality (Warburg, 2003:27).

In terms of the economy, the Mahdist state took over land and resources, shared out wealth, and set up a tax system based on Islamic principles (Holt, 1970:192). The Mahdist state carried out its economic policies, by a mix of institutions and customs. Bayt al-Mal was the main financial organization of the Mahdist state, in charge of gathering and dispersing revenue, was the Bayt al-Mal. Income came

from taxes, military loot, zakat (alms), and seized property, among other sources. The state utilized the Bayt al-Mal to finance administrative costs, social welfare programs, and military operations (Holt, 1970:192). The Zakat Collectors were there for every province. The zakat collectors were assigned by the Mahdist administration to collect the obligatory charity tax that Muslims pay on their riches. This guaranteed the state would always have money coming in and supported its many projects. In addition, the Mahdist state set trade routes, regulated pricing, and placed duties on imports and exports (Holt, 2000:178). With this, self-sufficiency was to be encouraged and an equitable distribution of products within the state guaranteed. These efforts of the Mahdist state to establish a more just and self-sufficient economic structure mark a noteworthy development in the history of Islamic revivalism and its attempts to convert pure principles into practical government.

Politically, it put all the power in the hands of the Mahdist government. It set up a structured system of government that depended on religious experts and loyal tribe leaders to keep things running smoothly and follow the law.

Economic Challenges and the Legacy of Slavery

The Mahdist state faced economic challenges from the beginning. The state had to deal with big problems like internal instability, economic crises, and the constant threat of attack from outside (Holt & Daly, 2014:77). The elimination of slavery caused a huge drop in agricultural productivity, since it had been strongly dependent on the use of enslaved labor (Holt, 2000:178). Its sudden abolition also upset long set economic trends, resulting in labor shortage,

also a decline in certain industries which depend on slave labor. (Warburg, 2003:124). Revivalists acknowledge the Mahdist state's efforts to establish other economic systems, such as promoting trading from neighboring regions and self-sufficiency of agriculture. (Al-Turabi, 1996:112) Because farming and trade were so important to the Mahdist economy, floods, famines, and the fact that trade lines were often blocked by war made things very hard (Holt, 1970:193). Along with ongoing conflict with British and Egyptian troops were the hurdles for the success of these initiatives. (Holt, 2012:184) Revisionists argue that a more visionary leadership, ready to engage in long-term development initiatives, would have increased the Mahdist state's economic resilience. The redistribution of wealth, while initially favorable, resulted in economic instability and rivalry among those who lost their property (Warburg, 2003:81). The Mahdist state's policy of isolation and prioritization on military expenditures worsened economic issues. The disruption of trade channels led to a shortage of necessary products and increased inflation (2000:181). The lack of investment in infrastructure and education caused a long-term hinderance in economic development (Warburg, 2003:84). The Mahdist prioritized the military infrastructure, to protect their state from external threats, particularly from British. (Holt, 2012:178) revivalist argue that investing in infrastructure was essential for the growth of revivalism that can raise the standards of Sudanese people. They highlight building dams, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure projects to support trade, agriculture and economy (Al-Turabi,1996:98). They emphasized religious education throughout their territory (Warburg, 2003:127).

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Challenges and Internal Conflicts Within the Mahdist State

The Mahdist state had many problems from both inside and outside, even though it had some early victories. Strict social and religious policies separated some groups, leading to frustration and resistance (Holt, 1970:195). Droughts, famines, disruption of trade routes, and the abolition of slavery led to economic instability and hardship (Warburg, 2003:124). Khalifa's growing oppression, repression of criticism, and concentration of power led to anger and divides within the country (Holt, 2000:196).

The Mahdist military, which was known for being fierce and religiously devoted, beat the British and Egyptian troops in the beginning. The Battle of El Obeid in 1883 and the fall of Khartoum in 1885 were major turning points in the Mahdist fight. They showed how strong the movement was militarily and how well it could get people back it (Holt, 1970:190). But in the end, the Mahdists had to deal with a strong enemy: the British, who in the late 1890s started a coordinated effort to take back Sudan. (Warburg, 2003:105).

After the death of Muhammad Ahmad (the self-proclaimed Mahdi) in 1885, a power struggle arose among his successors. Some sources suggest that the Mahdi, on his deathbed, nominated 'Abdallahi as his successor. This claim is supported by the fact that 'Abdallahi was already a prominent figure in the revivalist movement, while there was initial disagreement, several revivalist key figures, including religious leaders eventually supported 'Abdallahi. He became Khalifa (Holt, 1970:136). However, Abdallahi's leadership proved less unifying than the Mahdi. The Mahdi's followers were not from a similar group. They belonged to various nationalities, different tribes, and had dissimilar religious perspectives.

Under Abdallahi's leadership, this diversity which had been a strength—became a liability as he battled to preserve the same degree of unity and agreement as the previous leader.Different groups brought various skills , perspectives and recourses that enrich the Mahdist state. Like the Baggara Arabs share their cattle and nomadic experience, while the Ansaar, Mahdi's main supporters strengthen them with their military power (Holt, 2012:156). However, as the Mahdist state solidified, the same development that was the source of rise became a source of tension. Competing factors for authority and control arose. Internal divisions like tribal rivalries weakened the revivalist movement. (Warburg, 2003:167) This weakened caused by Abdallahi's incompetence to maintain unity and handle these many interests.

Khalifa Abdullahi's Leadership and the Decline of the Mahdist State

The Mahdist state was further weakened due to Khalifa Abdullahi's dictatorial leadership style. He solidified his control by removing competitors and centralizing power, but his governance progressively grew more oppressive and inconsistent (Holt, 2000:196). He imposed severe punishments for minor violations, removed tribal chiefs, and suppressed opposition within the organization (Warburg, 2003:101). Khalifa's policies led to disappointment among the public. The followers of Mahdi's followers felt betrayed due to dictatorship rule and the financial crises they were suffering (Holt, 2000:197). Furthermore, the Mahdist state's successors strict religious and social rules turned off some groups of people, which caused anger and rebelliousness.

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The British Intervention and the Fall of the Mahdist State

The British started a military operation against the Mahdist state to get back at Khartoum for their loss and protect their colonial interests in the area (Holt & Daly, 2014:79). Using these flaws to their advantage, the British beat the Mahdists at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, ending the Mahdist state (Holt & Daly, 2014:80). After the Mahdist forces were decisively defeated at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, they were no longer in charge of Sudan as a British colony. The above factors contributed to the movement's decline and eventual defeat by the British in 1899. (Warburg, 2003:105)

The Legacy of the Mahdist Movement

The Mahdist state had a big effect on the history of Sudan and the Islamic world as a whole (Daly, 1991:15). This showed that faith revivalism has the power to bring about social and political change (Trimingham, 1950:220). It also showed how hard it can be to make a state that works for everyone in an area with a lot of different racial, religious, and tribal groups (Anderson, 2013:115).It was a sign of the fight against colonialism and gave hope to future Sudanese nationalism (Sikainga, 2014:152).

Key Figures in the Mahdist Movement

Abu al-Jummayza was an inspirational speaker and a well-known preacher. He quickly became famous within the movement. He developed as a personal advisor to the Mahdi and was instrumental in distributing the Mahdist message, mobilizing followers, and arranging the armed forces of the cause (Holt & Daly, 2014:75). Many were moved to join the cause by Abu al-Jummayza's eloquence and religious fervor, which greatly helped in the Mahdist movement's rapid enlargement and success (Holt & Daly, 2014:75).

Abu al-Jummayza had an effect that went beyond being a teacher and guide. He played a big part in shaping the movement's ideas by combining Islamic revivalism with Sudanese customs and goals (Sikainga, 1996:32). He said that people should reject foreign rule that had deviated from the authentic teaching of Islam and stress the value of following basic Islamic law very strictly (Sikainga, 1996:32).

It was also clear that Abu al-Jummayza was a good leader of troops. He formed the Mahdist army and led them in many fights against the Turkish Egyptian army. He played a part in their wins and in the creation of the Mahdist state in 1885 (Holt & Daly, 2014:75). Abu al-Jummayza continued to be very important in the Mahdist state. At first, he was a close advisor to Khalifa Abdallahi ibn Muhammad, who succeeded the Mahdi. But soon there were disagreements between the two leaders, which caused a split and eventually led Abu al-Jummayza to turn against them (Holt & Daly, 2014:75). The movement became even weaker when Abu al-Jummayza spoke out against the Khalifa Abdallahi ibn Muhammad. (Holt & Daly, 2014:75). He started his own rival group, which caused fighting within the Mahdist state and used up all of its resources.

Abu al-Jummayza left behind a more complicated legacy (Holt & Daly, 2014:75). He was important to the growth of the Mahdist movement, but his later resistance and disagreement and his role in its eventual decline (Holt, 1958:236).

Comparative Study of the Senussi and Mahdist Movements

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Senussi and Mahdist movements had very different origins, goals, tactics, and legacies even though they both formed as significant Islamic revivalist organizations in the 19th century

Similarities

The goal of these organizations, who sought a return to the fundamental ideas of the Quran and Sunnah, was to purify Islamic beliefs and practices (Holt, 1970:15)They criticized the alleged corruption and negligence within the existing religious and political groups (Holt, 1970:185) and called for a new commitment to Islamic principles and values (Trimingham, 1950:128).The powerful and committed leaders of both organizations motivated their followers (Warburg, 2003:27).

Muhammad ibn Ali as-Senussi, the founder of the Senussi order, and Muhammad Ahmad, the Mahdi, have been regarded as being inspired and representing Islamic virtue and devotion (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:15).

Both sides wanted to address social injustices and improve the situation of their followers (Holt & Daly, 2014:63). The Mahdists abolished slavery and instituted social welfare programs (Warburg, 2003:56); the Senussi constructed hospitals, schools, and other social institutions to serve their communities (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:82).

Although to varying degrees of success, both communities fought European colonialism (Trimingham, 1950:220). The Mahdists fought the British and Egyptians for many years (Holt, 1970:190) while the Senussi fought a guerrilla war against Italian colonization in Libya (Pliez, 2009:87).

The Mahdists constructed a centralized state with an advanced administrative structure (Holt, 1970:191), the Senussi maintained a more scattered network of lodges emphasizing local authority (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:112). This diversity in political form reflected the many socioeconomic and geographical contexts in which the movements operated (Trimingham, 1950:220).

The Mahdists conducted extensive military operations (Warburg, 2003:105), whereas the Senussi mainly relied on guerrilla warfare (Pliez, 2009:87). Sudan and Libya have very diverse geography and resources, which explains the difference in military strategies (Anderson, 2013:115).

Differences

Although suffering setbacks, the Senussi movement played a crucial role in Libya's eventual independence (Vandewalle, 2012:45), whereas the Mahdist state ultimately came under British colonial rule (Daly, 1991:15).

In the region, the Senussi movement is seen more favorably than the Mahdist movement, which has a more complex and divided history including both positive and negative aspects (Trimingham, 1950:235).

Even though they both have as their common origins Islamic revivalism and anti-colonial struggle, the leadership, philosophy, structure, and impact of the Mahdist and Senussi organizations are different. Comparing these movements will help us to understand the complex interplay between political objectives, social realities, and religious beliefs (Holt & Daly, 2014:71), as well as the various forms that Islamic revivalism may take in the 19th century (Voll, 1994:56)

Conclusion

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In the Islamic world, the 19th century saw immense instability. It brought change by European colonization, economic exploitation, and political breakdown (Holt, 1970:15). Islamic revivalist groups arose with the intention of reviving and purifying the religion (Hourani, 1991:345). These movements included the Mahdist movement in Sudan (Warburg, 2003:27) and the Senussi movement in North Africa (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:15). They both followed distinct paths and achieved different degrees of success.

Muhammad ibn Ali Founded as-Senussi, the Senussi movement. It focused on social reform, Islamic guidance, and resistance to Italian colonization (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:15). This revivalist movement concentrated on creating a network of lodges that functioned as social, spiritual, and educational hubs for the Bedouin tribes of North Africa (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:82). Because of its strong entrusted organization, the movement was able to resist colonial powers and continue to have an impact for more than a century (Pliez, 2009:87). Although the Senussi participated in anti-colonial activities as well, their main emphasis on social and religious reform helped them to survive and eventually play a part in Libya's independence (Vandewalle, 2012:45). A system of lodges was established by the movement to serve as educational institutions, spiritual guides, and communal centers (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:82). The Senussi's influence still shapes North Africa's political and religious environment even though they were eventually unable to create an independent state (Evans-Pritchard, 1949:185).

The Mahdist movement led by Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abdallah Mahdi effectively took a different approach and defeated Ottoman rule and British colonial forces in Sudan. They founded a separate state (Warburg, 2003:45). But internal disputes, financial struggles, and finally British colonial control presented difficulties (Warburg, 2003:105). Still, its influence on Sudanese culture and history as a resistance symbol are still very much in place. (Holt, 1970:191),

By taking different approaches to the problems of modernity and colonialism, these groups show the variety of shapes that Islamic revivalism might take in the 19th century. Senussi movement's emphasis was on religious instruction, social welfare, and progressive resistance; Mahdist state emphasis was on political power and direct conflict with colonial troops (Trimingham, 1950:220). Though they used different strategies, both movements were successful in energizing sizable populations, challenging existing power structures, and making a lasting impression on the political and religious landscapes of their own areas.

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