

English translation from the French translation of the Arabic of the 1905 letter of Hassana, son of Ma-El-Ainin, to Shaikh Sidiyya Baba

From Paul Marty, *Etudes sur l'Islam maure: Cheikh Sidia, les Fadelia, les Ida ou Ali* (Paris, 1916), annex 3, pp. 109-10.

Praise to God the Unique. May peace be upon the one who is alone among his emissaries, Muhammad.

To the generous man, Shaikh Sidiyya, may God preserve him.

Salutations that the heaven cannot cover and that the earth cannot contain.

This letter has as its goal to make you aware that Muslims such as Ould Aida (Emir of the Adrar), the Ahel Su`aid Ahmad (imams of the Idawaich), the Ahel Sidi Mahmoud and the Ahel M'haimed (chiefs of the Mashduf), have addressed to Shaikh Ma-El-Ainin their complaints against the Christians [Europeans] and asked him to intervene with the Sultan of Morocco.

Advised by the marabout [Ma-El-Ainin], the Sultan said to the Christians that the Moorish country belonged to him and that they must not take it over. The Christians responded that in fact the area was abandoned and should become the property of whoever occupied it first. But the Emperor [Sultan] replied that the territories in question belonged to him since Ali Shandora (Emir of the Trarza and ancestor of the Ould Ahmed ben Daman) [in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century], and that he [Ali Shandora] had the seal which the Sultan [of Morocco at the time] had given him. Then the whites demanded proofs which must be furnished within a year, and if this was done the Christians would withdraw and restore the territory and everything they had taken from it.

These events motivated the Sultan now to send a mission headed by his cousin and accompanied by his *qaïd* and his secretary.

This mission will receive the submission of Muslims and provide arms and troops to those who desire it.

Once submission has been made to the representative of the Sharifian court [of Morocco], it will serve as proof of the Sultan's argument.

If then the Christians leave the country, everything will return to normal. Otherwise it will be *jihad*. Those who defend the cause of religion will be supported and those who ally with the French will be considered enemies.

I wanted to alert you in time and to ask your aid for the defense of religion. You must hasten to act quickly.

Peace!

Written on the order of Shaikh Ma-El-Ainin, 15 Rajab 1323 (15 September 1905).

Signed: Hassana, son of Shaikh Ma-El-Ainin.