Ahmed, this delegate reaching the Mahdi’s camp in 1883 soon after the sack of El Obeid.

"The moral and industrial training of the Senussi" [delegate], writes Sir Reginald Wingate, "revolted from the slaughter and rapine he saw around him. The sincere conviction of the regeneration of the world by a mahdi whose earnest piety should influence others to lead wholesome and temperate lives, the dignity of honest labour and self-restraint, these were the sentiments which filled the mind of the emissary from Wadai.”

The sheik Senussi, there is reason to believe, shared the lofty views which Wingate attributes to his agent. He decided to have nothing to do with the Sudanese Mahdi, though Mahommed Ahmed wrote twice asking him to become one of his four great khalifs. In his second letter, the text of which has been preserved, the Mahdi urged Senussi either to attack Egypt or to join him in the Sudan. To neither letter did Senussi reply, and he warned the people of Wadai, Bornu and neighbouring states against the new creed. In 1890 the Mahdists advancing from Darfur were stopped on the frontier of Wadai, the sultan Yusef being firm in his adherence to the Senussi teaching. As evidence of the influence of the sheik may be instanced the appeal made to him in 1888 by the sultan of Borku (or Borgo), a state to the north of Wadai, when invited by the chiefs of Darfur to rise against the khalifa Abdullah. Senussi advised Borku to abstain from Sudan affairs and only to fight against the Mahdists should they attack his kingdom. The Darfurian revolt of 1888-1889 against the khalifa was nevertheless carried out in the name of the Senussi.

The growing fame of the sheik Senussi el Mahdi drew upon him the unwelcome attention of the Turks. In many parts of Tripoli and in Benghazi the power of the sheik was greater than that of the Ottoman governors, and though Abdul Hamid II. looked favourably on an organization which might become actively anti-Christian, he did not desire that a new mahdi should arise to dispute his authority. In 1889 the sheik Senussi was visited at Jarabub by the pasha of Benghazi at the head of some troops. This event showed the sheik the possibility of danger and led him (in 1894) to leave Jarabub and fix his headquarters at Jof in the oases of Kufra, a place sufficiently remote to secure him from any chance of sudden attack. By this time a new danger to Senussia had arisen; the French were advancing from the Congo towards the western and southern borders of Wadai. In 1898 Senussi, in his character of peace­maker, wishing also to range together all the states menaced by the French advance, sought to reconcile Rabah Zobeir (*q.v.*) and the sultan of Bagirmi; neither of those chieftains belonged to the Senussi order and the sheik's appeal was unavailing. At the end of the previous year, at the request of Sultan Yusef, the sheik had sent an envoy to Wadai to be his permanent representative in that country. Yusef’s successor Ibrahim, who ascended the throne of Wadai in 1898, showed signs of resenting the advice of the sheik, stirred perhaps by the over­throw of the khalifa Abdullah at Omdurman. Senussi retaliated, says Captain Julien in his history of Wadai, by prohibiting the people of Wadai from smoking tobacco or drinking merissa, the native beer,“ which is to the Wadaiin what the skin is to the body.” Sultan Ibrahim rejoined that his people would fight and die for merissa; rather than give it up they would renounce Senussüsm. The sheik had the wisdom to give way, declaring that in response to his prayers Allah had deigned to make an exception in favour of the faithful Wadaiins. Ibrahim died in 1900 and his successors fell again under the influence of the sheik, who again changed his headquarters, leaving Kufra for Geru, in Dar Gorane, a western province of Wadai, where he was welcomed with veneration. He built and strongly fortified a *sauna* on the top of a rocky hill, difficult of access. His object in taking up this position was, presumably, to prevent the advance of the French. But, as Julien points out, Senussi was too late; Rabah had been slain by the French (April 1900), and Bagirmi was occupied by them. Nevertheless the sheik made an effort to prevent the French obtaining possession of Kanem, a country north-east of Lake Chad and on its northern and eastern frontiers bordering

Saharan territory, which the Senussites considered their particular preserve. A *sawiα* was built at Bir Allali, in Kanem, that site being chosen as it was an entrepôt for the trade of Tripoli with all the Chad countries. Bir Allali was strongly garrisoned by the Senussites and war with the French followed.@@1 After a severe engagement Bir Allali was captured by a French column under Commandant Tétard in January 1902. The sheik Senussi, much affected by the loss of Kanem, died shortly afterwards (May 30, 1902). He was succeeded by his nephew Ahmed-el- Sherif. who in view of the presence of the French on the borders of Dar Gorane removed to Kufra.

The new head of the Senussites maintained the friendly relations of his predecessors with Wadai, and, following the example of his uncle, made advances to Ali Dinar, the sultan of Darfur, which were not reciprocated. To keep in touch with Darfur a *sawia* had been built on the caravan route from Kufra to that country. The adherents of the Senussi el Mahdi in the deserts bordering Egypt maintained for years that he was not dead, and in March 1906 a public declaration was made at Siwa that “ Sidi Mahommed-el-Mahdi had returned from his secret journey to Kufra.” Commenting on this announcement Sir R. Wingate wrote: “ It is well known that the body of the late sheik lies in a tent at Zawia-el-Taj in the identical shrine which was made for it at Geru when he died ” (Egypt No. 1 (1907), p. 120).

It will be seen that the Senussites occupy desert fastnesses which could only be attacked by Europeans after overcoming great difficulties. By Henri Duveyrier and other writers of the last half of the 19th century they were regarded as likely to pro­claim a *jihad* or holy war against the Christians of North Africa. This view was founded upon the supposed tenets of the order and upon geographical and political considerations. The record of the first and second Senussi sheiks shows them, however, to have acted chiefly on the defensive. A study of all available data up to 1906 led M L. G. Binger, one of the greatest authorities, to the conclusion that the politics of the sect were subordinated to the material interests of their chief, and that the Senussi sheik was as unable as were other noted Moslem leaders (such as Abd el Kader in Algeria; Samóry in the western Sudan and the Dongolese Mahdi in the Egyptian Sudan) to overcome the rivalries and divergence of interests of their own co-religionists. This view received confirmation in the events of 1906-1910 when the French came in conflict with the sultanate of Wadai. Although there was severe fighting the French found less difficulty than had been expected in seizing the capital of Wadai, nor was there any general movement of the Senussites against them. The French also sent flying columns into Borku and Enndi. The comparative ease with which these operations were carried out seemed to demonstrate the weakness of the Senussites (see Wadai). Nevertheless, like any other Moslem fraternity, and perhaps more readily, the Senussites might be speedily transformed into a powerful fighting organization. Through the seaports of Tripoli and Benghazi, with the connivance (or in defiance) of the Turks, the importation of arms and ammunition into the eastern Sahara is a matter of little or no difficulty, and the Bedouin of that region could furnish a numerous and well-armed fighting force. A Senussi sheik would also recruit many followers in the central Sudan. At the same time the Senussi organization is not so widespread in the Sudan and the western Sahara as would appear from the exaggerated reports once current. The Senussi sheiks, with the doubtful exception of Darfur, are without followers in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Bagirmi, Kanem and other states once dependent on Wadai did not embrace Senussüsm. In the Hausa States and in the greater part of the western Sudan as far as Timbuktu the Moslems acknowledge the spiritual headship of the emir of Sokoto,

@@@1 ln the accounts of the fighting in French equatorial Africa at this period it is necessary to distinguish between the sheik Senussi el Mahdi and the sultan Mahommed el Senussi (b. *c*. 1850) of N’Delé, a prince who had married the sister of Rabah Zobeir. Senussi of N’Delé became an ally of the French. The state of N’Delé lies S. of Wadai and is cut by 9° N., and 20° E. (See Karl Kumm in *Geog. Jour.,* Aug. 1910.)