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James A. Chandler

When most European nations were building vast empires, Spain was losing the last remaining shreds of her once extensive Latin American colonies. In 1898 Cuba was lost following a war of independence which culminated in a one sided conflict with the United States. The disaster of the Spanish American War forced many Spaniards to acknowledge their secondary status among European powers and led to a widespread lack of enthusiasm for further colonial adventures. Nevertheless, six years after the loss of Cuba, Spain found it necessary to gain an interest in Northern Morocco. Subsequent efforts to control this territory involved her in over twenty-seven years of continual conflict and frequent humiliation. Probably no other European power fought so long and so intensively over such a small area. Throughout these struggles Spain insisted on retaining her hold over the area even though she had acquired it with little enthusiasm and her original motives for intervention came to have little relevance in the face of enervating conflict. This paper will attempt to identify the motives which led to Spanish intervention in Morocco and the effect such motives had on the policy followed by Spain in the Zone.

Geographical position had always ensured that the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula would have a close interest in Morocco. By the nineteenth century Spain was still holding the towns of Ceuta and Melilla and a few small islands off the Moroccan coast. Interest in the region gained considerable stimulus in 1860 following a war against the Sultan which generated more enthusiasm than concrete gains.¹ For the remainder of the century, Spain emphasized that she had an interest in the fate of Morocco and saw the increasing interference of Britain and France in the region as a threat.²

The most frequent and coherently expressed reason for intervention were fears for the strategic security of Spain. Such fears were expressed succinctly by the Liberal leader Montero Ríos who asked

Does the Government of His Majesty bear in mind that if the North West of Morocco comes under the domination . . . of a military or civil Protectorate of France, Spain would be reduced to seeing herself besieged perpetually in the North and South by the same power?³

This fear of encirclement had previously been expressed by such distinguished figures as Cánovas and Costa and came to be used in the early twentieth century by all those favouring Spanish interests in Morocco.⁴

An equally important, although on account of its nature less clearly stated argument, was the belief that 'Morocco was for Spain her last chance to keep her position in the concert of Europe'.⁵ Morocco was the one area in which Spain could claim sufficient interest to generate some diplomatic strength with respect to the European powers. To renounce her one important sphere of interest would be to renounce a major part of her already small role in European diplomacy and be placed at an even greater disadvantage in respect to diplomatic bargaining with the Great Powers.

For some Spaniards, Morocco was a land of vast mineral wealth.⁶ This largely unfounded notion was promoted by finds of iron ore near Melilla and probably by the mood of optimism for colonial investments which prevailed at the turn of the century. The economic motive for intervention was, however, never as strong as other factors, since it became clear that an open door financial policy would be operated in the area.

Although these motives were the most clearly stated reasons for intervention they do not in themselves present a very convincing argument. There were obvious absurdities in the strategic argument. Spain could never control the Straits of Gibraltar in the event of a war with a more powerful State and her borders with French Morocco were harder to defend than her coasts.⁷ It may therefore be suggested that underlying the more clearly stated reasons for intervention was a less easily identified feeling that a nation's prestige grows with the possession of colonies. This was expressed by the Liberal Prime Minister Canalejas, who commented on the need to gain an interest in Morocco that 'Spain is not a dead nation which is devoid of ideals, which ought not to share in the great tribunal of cultured nations . . .'.⁸ Such a feeling greatly increased the readiness of Spanish politicians to accept

the strategic argument and the notion that Morocco was vital to Spain's international position.

In spite of any belief that colonial possessions enhanced the standing of a nation, most parliamentary politicians were reluctant, particularly after the 1898 disaster, to cast Spain into a colonial role. Maura Gamazo observed in 1905 that those whose optimism had contributed to the loss of Cuba were those who today

propagate an insane dejection, a lack of confidence in our own abilities and the necessity for renouncing all external affairs. . . Opinion thus discouraged, the present opportunity would not be favourable for either military or economic engagements in Morocco.⁹

Such pessimism led to a conviction that however desirable colonies might be, Spain was not sufficiently powerful to hold extensive overseas possessions. Parliamentary politicians were, therefore, reluctant to involve themselves in an extensive imperial policy and, after 1898, little effort was directed towards developing Spanish interests in the Sahara or Equatorial Guinea. The long standing interest of Spain in Morocco, its geographical position and international importance made this area of far greater importance to Spain than her other spheres of overseas interest. These factors linked to a belief in the value of colonies for any nation were able to produce an almost unanimous if not fervent support among the Spanish elites for intervention.

Spanish interest in Morocco was recognised more on account of Anglo-French rivalries and, in particular, Britain's objection to a powerful nation holding an area opposite Gibraltar, than from any deference to Spain. In 1902 an agreement had been reached between France and Spain on their interests within Morocco, but the Conservative government of Silvela refused to sign the treaty for fear of offending Britain.¹⁰ Anglo-French disputes were settled in the 1904 Entente which gave France the principal interest in the territory provided that she conceded Spanish demands for the north of the region which ensured that a relatively weak power held the strategically important coastline. In October 1904 France and Spain succeeded in reaching an accord over their respective spheres of interest with Spain acquiring an area far less extensive than that offered in 1902.

Although the agreement of 1904 and the later Algeciras conference recognised some of Spain's demands with respect to Morocco there was little guarantee that in the eventual partition Spain would receive all or even any of the promised territories.¹¹ Suspicion and fear of French

intentions became the determining factor for Spanish policy towards Morocco from 1904 to 1913.

Long before 1904 the nations with an interest in Morocco had been developing their influence there. The Spanish were less effective in this respect than France or Britain. Although they had sent their representatives to the Sultan's Court and had channelled much of the trade in their region through Ceuta and Melilla Spaniards probably knew less about the regions outside these towns than their more powerful rivals.¹² The French were particularly feared on account of their considerable interest and influence in the area and because the nature of the strategic argument made them the least preferable of all the powers which could gain control of the region.

The first interventions by Spain in Morocco were largely pre-emptions of possible French initiatives. They were also excursions into what was for them largely unknown territory. In 1906 a trading station at Restinga, near Melilla, had been set up by a French adventurer in order to supply El Rogui, a local pretender to the Sultan's throne. In 1907 the region was occupied by the Sultan's troops largely at Spanish insistence but this force was defeated by El Rogui at the end of the year. Spain then moved into the area in February 1908 in order to prevent any possible re-establishment of the French station.¹³ A second coastal area, Cabo Agua, was occupied in the following month when its inhabitants who had supported the Sultan's troops appealed to Spain to protect them from El Rogui's vengeance.¹⁴ The deputation asking for protection stated that they had come to Spain in the first place.¹⁵ As the region bordered the French sphere it was clear that France could only be in second place.

Morocco became a major issue for Spanish domestic politics following the defeat of El Rogui by the Rif Kabils in October 1908. The Pretender had leased mines at Uixan to a French and to a Spanish company whose operations were brought to a halt when victorious tribesmen attacked the Christian enterprises. Ineffective efforts were made by the Spanish authorities to secure the re-opening of work through negotiations with the Sultan and local leaders.¹⁶ The French company took great exception to the closure of the mines and began to demand sufficient protection to allow work to start, stating that this would be procured from France if it was not provided by Spain.¹⁷ By May 1909 it seemed possible that these threats would be carried out; reports were received that expeditions containing disguised French army officers had crossed into the Spanish Zone.¹⁸ According to the Commander of Melilla, General Marina, the possibility of French

intervention was the principal factor which forced the Conservative Government of Antonio Maura to allow the mines to reopen.¹⁹ It is probable that Maura believed some force would be necessary to guarantee the safety of the miners but did not foresee the degree of violence which followed his decision.

Work began on 7 June, but was brought to a halt a month later by an attack on workers constructing a railway. General Marina immediately repulsed his attackers and occupied an area around Melilla. On 18 July the occupying forces were heavily attacked by the Moroccans and Spain found herself immersed in a large-scale conflict.²⁰ The struggle lasted in its most intense phase until November, with further major action continuing until January 1910. As a result of the conflict, Spain acquired some small gains in territory and ensured the reopening of the mines. These gains were only achieved with the aid of 42,000 men and at the cost of 2,235 casualties.²¹ The size of the campaign indicates that it was a serious military affair which, in view of its small achievement, could hardly be termed a victory. Indeed the Spanish army suffered several serious reverses and it became clear that the Rif Kabils were very able fighters, possessing equipment often as advanced as that of the Spanish army. After 1909 only the most bigoted army officers could believe it would be easy to defeat the Rif.

Apart from initiating a large military commitment to Morocco, the 1909 conflict had important repercussions within Spain. Immediately hostilities began, reservists were called up from Madrid and Barcelona. The move created resentment among the politicized urban workers which erupted on 26 July as the 'Semana Tragica', a week of violent rioting in Barcelona accompanied by lesser though significant disturbances in Madrid.²² The cause of these riots must be found mainly in the general condition of the urban worker rather than in hatred for the government's policy on Morocco. Conscription for service in a colonial war was nevertheless a grievance sufficient to act as a catalyst to violence. The Spanish worker retained memories of the privations suffered during service in Cuba and felt that the Spanish bourgeoisie and the Church were once again sending them to fight for the interests of the capitalists, whereas the sons of the wealthy could buy themselves out of conscription. Since the Spanish working class had to bear the brunt of the fighting in the Moroccan war, it is not surprising that the colonial policy became extremely unpopular in all left wing circles. The riots of 1909 had an important effect on the more organized left wing opposition which subsequently made the reduction of commitment in Morocco a major part of their platform. The riots

also forced parliamentarians to moderate their policies towards the area in order to avoid generating further disturbances.

Following the 1909 campaign Spain had continually to maintain a large military presence in Morocco, and up till 1927 there was never peace in the Zone. Even during the quietest periods, there were occasional raids on Spanish positions and a continual threat of large scale hostilities. In the east, such a period of relative calm lasted until August 1911 when over-reaction by the army to a minor incident sparked off a further series of hostilities.²³ Spain again made little headway in the conflict and only succeeded in gaining territory up to the river Kert by May 1912 when the death of the Berber leader El Mizzian in a skirmish allowed the fighting to die down.

Spanish encroachment into the western half of Morocco was motivated, as in the east, by fear of French intentions. By 1911 the Moroccan Empire was in sufficient chaos to give France an excuse to march on Fez and begin to force a Protectorate agreement. Spain was immediately alarmed at the proposed expedition and demanded the right either to participate or to be given a free hand in her Zone under the terms of the 1904 agreement.²⁴ These demands were backed up by an operation to occupy the Anjera Kabil near Ceuta which was justified in terms of Spain's 1861 treaty with Morocco.²⁵ The move had little effect on the French who unilaterally went ahead with the march on Fez in April. In May Spanish fears for the integrity of her sphere of interest were further heightened when units of the Fez expedition began operating in the Spanish Zone in the region of Alcazarquivir.²⁶

At this stage, as on other occasions, a struggle developed within the ruling elite between politicians who advocated a cautious approach and a more bellicose circle which included army officers and the King. Alfonso exerted strong pressure on his government in favour of intervention and both the Liberal leader Moret and General Weyler stated privately that 'the King leads our action in Africa'.²⁷ Since the government of Canalejas, which was in power at this time was far from stable and thus needed the King's support it is probable that royal interest was a major factor in determining the resultant action.

On 8 June Spanish forces were landed at Larache and moved inland to occupy Alcazarquivir in a peaceful operation. France immediately protested and might have taken further action had not the arrival of the 'Panther' in Agadir forced her to direct diplomatic attention to the more serious threat of German pretensions. The Spanish and French forces in the Larache region co-existed for two months on very uneasy

terms until the situation was clarified by an agreement by both countries to respect each others spheres of interest.²⁸ As a result of the march on Fez and settlement with Germany, France was able to sign a Protectorate agreement with Morocco in March 1912 and, after much wrangling, a treaty between Spain and France was completed on 27 November 1912 to establish a Spanish Protectorate.

The signing of the agreement with France created a fundamental change in the role of Spain towards her Moroccan Zone. Previously, fear of France had been the dominant factor determining the degree of intervention and concern over the region, but the removal of this threat and the acquisition of complete responsibility for the administration of the area created a situation in which new justifications for intervention were required and new ideas needed on the policies to be followed in the Zone.

The principal motives behind the acquisition of the Protectorate necessitated only that there should be a significant Spanish presence in the Zone. This aim did not lend itself to many constructive ideas with respect to future policy and little thought was therefore given to the form of the administration which was to be set up in a region. Before the formation of the Protectorate the administration of occupied areas had, in the absence of alternative ideas, devolved into the hands of the military commanders who controlled Ceuta, Melilla and later Larache. This system was formalized, with necessary additions, under the decrees establishing the Protectorate.²⁹ A post of High Commissioner was created as the effective head of the civil administration. The first incumbent of this office was General Alfau, previously Commander of Ceuta, thus further entrenching the hold of the military on the administration of the region.³⁰ Responsibility for military affairs in the Zone was at various times vested in the High Commissioner and in the Regional Commanders, although at all times the Commander of the more isolated Melilla sector enjoyed considerable independence.³¹ At ministerial level responsibility for the Protectorate was in theory held by the Foreign Ministry, which exercised some control in towns through its Consuls and had formal authority over the High Commissioner. The military preponderance in the region, however, ensured that the Ministry of War had considerable leverage in policy-making and administration, and the two Ministries were frequently at cross purposes on Moroccan affairs. The effect of this largely army-based administration, particularly in the first vital years of the Protectorate, was to make it impossible for Spain to persuade the

Moroccans to submit to their authority. The army looked upon the Protectorate as a region to be occupied and subjugated and hence the whole administrative structure became biased towards the requirements of surveillance and repression rather than to the welfare of the Moroccans themselves.

The motives for intervention in Morocco could be satisfied with only a nominal Spanish presence in the region. It would nevertheless be an embarrassing reflection on the military prowess of Spain and a further flaw in her prestige if she did not occupy her Protectorate. Such a failure would be particularly obvious in an area so close to Europe and in which some large mining concerns had an interest.³² It was thus thought necessary to make some attempt to occupy the region although the unpopularity, cost and humiliations of the 1909 campaign made parliamentarians unwilling to sanction an all-out campaign of conquest. Most politicians, therefore, supported a policy of 'passive penetration', a gradual military advance into areas which had previously been prepared through political means to accept Spanish authority without open hostility.

The Liberal government of Romanones in 1913 attempted to move in the direction of such a policy and yielded to a demand from General Alfau to occupy Tetuan, the designated capital of the Protectorate, on condition that the operation be conducted 'without firing a shot'.³³ Although Alfau grudgingly obeyed this instruction, not all army officers were so inclined to obey the government's policy. In the Larache command, a feud developed between the bellicose and ambitious Spanish commander Fernández Silvestre, and the most powerful Caid in the West, El Raisuli.³⁴ Although the feud was provoked by Silvestre, who followed a militaristic policy considerably out of line with the demands of the government, a clash between Spain and Raisuli would in any case have been inevitable.³⁵ The Caid had no wish to submit to Spain and had only supported the landings in Larache on the basis that, unlike the French 'The Spaniards are strong enough to help us but not so strong that they will oppress us'.³⁶

By 1913 relations between Silvestre and Raisuli had reached such an acrimonious state that the Caid placed himself at the head of an open insurrection against the occupying forces. Following the Tetuan operation, in spite of its pacific nature, the military administration had done nothing to endear itself to the Moroccans. Soldiers had caused ugly incidents in Tetuan and the inhabitants had found that the army was to remain permanently in the city.³⁷ By June 1913, hostilities against Spain were sufficiently grave to prompt offensive operations in

order to relieve pressure on Tetuan, and in the following month bitter fighting broke out in the Larache sector. The Moroccans were ready, not only to resist an advance, but to attack regions already occupied.

The fighting of 1913, although a severe setback to any hope of a passive occupation of the Zone, could not lead to an abandonment of such a policy. The situation was not sufficiently serious to promote a more extreme policy such as withdrawal but nevertheless gave no support to the proponents of the opposite policy of rapid military conquest. The result of the fighting was to produce an even greater emphasis on the need for a politically prepared advance. General Marina replaced Alfau and was told by Romanones that there was no immediate necessity to achieve Spanish aims in Morocco, which were 'to maintain personal security in our Zone and to open it to commerce and civilization'.³⁸

In spite of instructions to strengthen Spanish authority primarily by political action, Romanones considered that the hostile situation in the West was abnormal and should be brought to an end as rapidly as possible, using force if Marina thought it necessary. The government was thus not enthusiastic about the conquest of new territories but was determined not to lose ground already occupied.

Marina carried out some relatively small military operations in 1914 but achieved considerable success in reducing the level of hostilities by agreeing to open negotiations with Raisuli. The outbreak of the European War was a further factor which helped to bring about a more peaceful situation since German agents were soon at work persuading the Caid to direct their raids against the French rather than the Spanish Zone.³⁹ The emphasis on political action and the European War made the years 1914-18 the quietest period in Spanish Morocco until 1927.

After an emissary of the Caid had been murdered by Spanish officers in Silvestre's Command, Marina was unable to complete the negotiations with Raisuli.⁴⁰ Both Marina and Silvestre were obliged to return to Madrid and the able commander of Melilla, General Gomez Jordana, was promoted to High Commissioner. Jordana secured a pact with Raisuli in September 1915, giving the Caid a limited control over any Kabil which would submit to his authority.⁴¹ In the climate of a passive policy, Raisuli subsequently set about undermining Spanish authority in the Western sector in an attempt to enlarge his sphere of authority. The military-based administrative system was unable to counter Raisuli or to make any significant progress in the East by political means. Jordana thus witnessed a gradual erosion of his powers

in the West and began to make frequent demands for permission to take military action against the Caid. Successive governments refused these requests, either on the pretext of the need for neutrality during the European War or because they did not want the problem of Morocco to be added to the grave internal difficulties facing the parliamentary regime during 1917 and 1918.⁴² Jordana died at his desk drafting a further plea for action against Raisuli only a few weeks before the government decided on a radical change of policy.

In December 1918 a government led by Romanones initiated a new policy towards the Protectorate. This aimed at the occupation of the entire Zone through a gradual but continual military advance. The end of the European War had enabled a victorious France to demand that Spain should put her unruly Protectorate in order and bring an end to raids across the border. This mood was probably made clear to Romanones when he visited the Versailles Conference at Christmas 1918.⁴³ Romanones also realised that the end of the war would remove the German incentives for promoting raids on the French and bring a large number of cheap surplus weapons within reach of the Moroccans.⁴⁴ These considerations must have reinforced Jordana's observations on the state of the Protectorate. The 'political' policy and the pact with Raisuli had resulted in an almost complete loss of prestige and authority in the western part of the Zone. It is also probable that the period of quiescence from 1914 to 1918 had allowed many politicians and the army to become less cautious and pessimistic about the success of military action within the Protectorate.

The new High Commissioner, General Damaso Berenguer, was an officer with considerable Moroccan experience who had previously held the position of Minister of War. A few weeks after his appointment, Silvestre returned to Morocco and was soon afterwards transferred to the Melilla Command where he could enjoy considerable independence. Both Generals were responsible for a relatively successful advance in the East and West of Morocco until 1921.⁴⁵ They were aided by improvements which had taken place since 1909 in specialised sections of the army. Much of the front line fighting was conducted by a force of North African mercenaries under Spanish army officers, a change inaugurated in 1911. In 1920, a European based mercenary force, modelled on the French Foreign Legion, was created and rapidly became the most efficient fighting unit in the army. The young officers who volunteered to lead these indispensable units tended to be ambitious and modern minded careerists who developed an enthusiasm

for Moroccan affairs and a dislike for the politicians and traditionally minded officers whom they saw as undermining in various way their ability to conquer the territory.⁴⁶ As this group of officers, the *africanistas*, rose in seniority, they began to exert considerable pressure for a bellicose policy in the Protectorate.

The policy inaugurated in 1918 achieved its greatest success with the capture of the town of Xauen in October 1920, and by July 1921 Berenguer's forces were poised to capture Raisuli's headquarters at Tazarut. In Melilla, Silvestre began to revive military operations in the region, even though Berenguer had originally decided to occupy the West before turning his attention to the East. After persistent requests, Silvestre gained permission to launch an offensive against the previously intractable Beni Said Kabil. The operation was so successful that Berenguer reversed his original plan and allowed Silvestre to advance further into the Rif mountains. By January 1920 Silvestre had reached the village of Anual where he established his front line headquarters. At Berenguer's request, Silvestre planned his next major move which involved the occupation of the Bay of Alhucemas.⁴⁷ This area was the meeting point of several Kabils and had long been regarded as the centre of dissidence against Spain in the Eastern region. The uncertain political mood of the sector and lack of preparation made it impossible to carry out the operation. In April, Berenguer again demanded the postponement of the operation after a costly failure to occupy a post in advance of Anual.

On 21 July 1921, the position of Spain in Morocco was dramatically reversed. A post flanking Anual which had been besieged for three days fell to the Berbers, who then proceeded under the leadership of a new and able Commander, Abd-el-Krim, to attack Anual itself. Silvestre found himself in an indefensible position with demoralized troops and, after some vacillation, ordered a retreat. The retreat turned into a rout as conscripts panicked and Moroccan soldiers mutinied. Worse still, the previously occupied regions turned against the Spaniards and the scattered defensive positions were either overwhelmed or abandoned without a fight. By 24 June Abd-el-Krim's forces were at the walls of Melilla, Silvestre was dead and his second in command, General Navarro, was being harried to Monte Arruit, where he was besieged along with some 1,000 men who were willing to accept his command. On hearing the serious reports from the east, Berenguer immediately abandoned his operation against Tazarut and sent his most able troops to save Melilla. In the following days reinforcements were poured into the city but according to Berenguer he received armed men but not an

army. These units were too ill-organised to be used in offensive operations and Berenguer was unable to save Monte Arruit which fell on 9 August. Estimates of the numbers killed in the collapse of the eastern command range upward from 8,668, masses of equipment including 117 cannon were abandoned and all gains made in the east since 1909 were lost.⁴⁸

The shock of the disaster led to the formation of a broadly-based government under Antonio Maura intended to give stability in a time of crisis and to salvage some honour from the disaster. A campaign was immediately mounted to reconquer the lost territories, and reinforcements were sent to the west in order to stave off possible repercussions. The campaign brought the number of soldiers in Melilla to 36,000 and was at first conducted with little regard for cost, initiating a new phase of heightened military commitment to the Protectorate.⁴⁹ There were few objections to the policy of reconquest, even from the Socialists who for some months preferred to concentrate their attacks on those they held responsible for the disaster. This question of responsibility was to dominate internal Spanish politics for the next two years.⁵⁰ From August 1921 to January 1922 the massive Spanish advance moved towards the Rif mountains aided by Krim's reluctance to defend the low lying regions of the east. As the advance progressed it became easier to argue that the honour of the nation and the army were now satisfied and it was now therefore necessary to plan the future policy of Spain in the Protectorate.

Although Spain was facing severe difficulties in Morocco there was reluctance among nearly all supporters of the parliamentary system to abandon the region. Of the motives which had originally led to intervention in the Zone, belief that the area would be financially profitable now had few adherents. Spanish presence in Morocco was frequently justified in terms of strategic factors but severe critics of this argument were formed, and not only among the left wing. General Primo de Rivera, who had favoured abandonment in 1917, stated after Anual that 'to have one soldier on the other side of the straits is strategically a weakness for Spain'.⁵¹

Primo de Rivera was unusual among the Spanish ruling class in advocating a complete abandonment of the Zone. Some left-of-centre Liberals and the bourgeois Catalan Nationalist, Cambó, although rejecting the strategic argument nevertheless supported at least a nominal Spanish presence in the Protectorate in order to maintain the integrity of Spain's international commitments.⁵² The need to retain some diplomatic standing coupled with the loss of prestige which would

be suffered by the parliamentary system both within and outside Spain, were the essential factors determining the retention of Morocco. The Protectorate could not be abandoned without further lowering Spanish international prestige through the recognition of her obvious military incompetence. The once militant radical Lerroix observed that 'If we abandon Morocco, would they not immediately have the right . . . considering that it is a confession of incapacity and incompetence . . . to abandon the Canaries and abandon the Balearics?'⁵³ Regenerationists had a further interest in retaining Morocco as a means of revivifying the nation. The Conservative Thomas Maestre held that 'To abandon Morocco would be for Spain to die, because all aspiration for aggrandisement would be lost'.⁵⁴

Parliamentarians also realised that the failure of Spain in Morocco was a reflection on the competence of the parliamentary system. A new political regime led by the Socialists or the army would be able to avoid much of the humiliation of abandonment by maintaining that they were not responsible for the development of an impossible situation. Supporters of the parliamentary regime could not easily pass off the responsibility of the system and hence could only save their prestige within Spain by securing some form of victory within the Protectorate. Even if the politicians were eager to abandon Morocco they would have had to face serious opposition from some sections of the army, particularly the *africanistas* who could not regard their honour as satisfied until they had conquered the whole Zone.

The Spanish parliamentary parties were therefore placed in a classic dilemma: unable to win a colonial war and unable to withdraw from the conflict. It was clear to most sides that Spain could gain no credit or value from the situation in Morocco, but extreme policies of ending the situation by abandonment or conquest were equally impossible.

By January 1922 there were considerable divisions within the cabinet over the future policy to be followed in the Protectorate. The Foreign Minister, González Hontoria, put forward a plan for the occupation of the low-lying coastal regions leaving the mountainous interior to be occupied by political means.⁵⁵ Cambó, the Minister of Finance, advocated only a token presence in coastal areas.⁵⁶ These suggestions were totally opposed by the Minister of War, La Cierva, who demanded a continuation of the military campaign until the Zone was completely occupied, maintaining that the Rifs would continue to attack any Spanish positions involved in a partial occupation of the Protectorate.⁵⁷ The divisions in the cabinet were resolved in favour of La Cierva who was able to use military pressures in order to support his

demands.⁵⁸ The government accordingly confirmed in January that plans would be made for the occupation of the Bay of Alhucemas and a new campaign was to be launched against Raisuli. One month later the government fell: it was an instrument far too artificial to survive the crisis which had brought it into being.

The new government was an orthodox Conservative administration led by Sánchez Guerra. None of its members had had any great interest in Morocco and did not bring with them any new or radical solutions to the problem. Sánchez Guerra's first reaction was to allow his cabinet time to develop new ideas by an ambiguous declaration of support for the initiatives begun by the Maura government and the policy suggested by González Hontoria.⁵⁹ Although Sánchez Guerra might have preferred to follow La Cierva's plans, the mood of public opinion and some parliamentary politicians made it impossible for a normal Spanish government to sustain such a bellicose policy. By 1922, left wing protest was perhaps less likely to erupt into spontaneous violence, as in 1909, but could be efficiently and effectively led into more persistently damaging forms of opposition. The cabinet must also have been concerned with the growth of opposition in more respected sectors of society: the Ateneo of Madrid, the intellectual centre of Spain, organised a series of meetings on responsibility which culminated at the end of 1922 in huge anti-war rallies.⁶⁰ Such protests were also of significance among regionalist parties. Moreover, the Conservative cabinet had to face strong opposition from many Liberal groups, who objected to the extent of the war, to say nothing of a memorandum from its Minister of Finance who indicated that the country could not meet the financial expenditure of the fighting in Morocco.⁶¹ A further and important deterrent to a policy of continued advance was the fear of a second Anual which could have grave consequences for the parliamentary regime and the Conservative party.⁶²

In April 1922 the cabinet decided to modify the proposals of the Maura government and embark on a more cautious policy. The modifications were, however, adopted with caution, since the government could not afford to alienate the army or the appreciable number of its members who supported La Cierva's demands. Sánchez Guerra nevertheless abandoned the proposed Alhucemas operation and asked Berenguer to repatriate 20,000 men by July following a rapid campaign to subdue Raisuli.⁶³ A further change of policy occurred in June after the resignation of Berenguer, who had been blamed in part for the Anual disaster following the Picasso enquiry into the defeat.⁶⁴ The new High Commissioner, General Burguete, had regularly written

on the Moroccan problem and was selected largely because his ideas seemed acceptable to the government.⁶⁵ In consultation with the government, it was decided that he should negotiate a new pact with Raisuli and continue a bellicose policy towards Abd-el-Krim.⁶⁶

Burguete rapidly came to an agreement with Raisuli though this action was extensively criticized as giving concessions to the Caid at a time when he seemed near to defeat.⁶⁷ Berenguer had captured Tazarut in May 1922 but the army had failed to pin down Raisuli, who in reality was being defeated more by the growing influence of Krim than the activities of Spain. In the east, Burguete and the government, although concurring on the necessity for some form of action, could not agree on the form that this should take. Burguete held that an operation to occupy Allucemas was the only method of solving the war in the east. The government refused to allow such demands commenting that 'even if the possession of the bay succeeds it will be more of a cause of preoccupation than of pleasure to the government.'⁶⁸

Permission was however reluctantly given for a major offensive along the Eastern front in order to secure a base at Tizi Azza, which Burguete required as a spring board from which to launch a further offensive. The operation, which began on 26 October, suffered so many casualties in its first days that the cabinet immediately called a halt to the move and left the army holding the position of Tizi Azza, which proved difficult to defend. The advance in the east remained at this point until 1925, being exposed to vigorous Rif attempts to provoke another major disaster. Burguete coupled his military initiatives with attempts to improve army morale and root out sloth and corruption. In line with the government's ideas, he considered establishing a more civilian administration in the Zone but such reforms, even if they could have been completed, were at this stage in the war unlikely to make an impression on the Moroccans.⁶⁹

In December 1922, the government of Sánchez Guerra was replaced by a Liberal administration led by García Prieto. The new government, unlike its predecessor, suffered more from an over-abundance of differing ideas about Morocco than from any lack of imagination. Divisions within the cabinet were apparent even in their first policy statement issued on 25 December 1922 which confessed that they had been unable to decide on the extent of military commitment to the Zone.⁷⁰ The leaders of the Liberal factions making up the government were, however, able to emphasise the need for an end to the military administration in the Zone, and as a consequence replaced Burguete

with a civilian High Commissioner. The eventual incumbent of the post was a Liberal minister, Luis Silvela, who was forced to accept, only after more distinguished and, with regard to Morocco, better informed nominees, had refused to accept such a vulnerable position.⁷¹ In spite of the Liberals' emphasis on civilianization, they made almost as little progress in this direction as the administration of Sánchez Guerra and certainly achieved nothing which would make any impression on the acceptability of the Protectorate to the Rif. Within Morocco, neither Silvela nor the army were eager to hasten civilian control, and the problems concerned with the future military advance tended to make the question one of secondary importance.

Divisions in the cabinet and military pressures made it impossible for the government to agree on any military initiatives in the Zone. The first clash within the cabinet ended in May 1923 with the resignation of the Minister of War, Alcalá Zamora, who was the only member to favour a military advance as the solution to the problem.⁷² The pretext for his resignation came as a result of a new round of negotiations with Raisuli in which the Caid demanded further advantages from Spain. Alcalá Zamora was probably also concerned with approaches which were being made between the government and Krim. Negotiations with the Rif leaders were at this stage little more than a sounding out of positions. Krim demanded full independence for the Rif whilst the Liberal government would at most concede him the limited form of authority given to Raisuli.⁷³

Following the resignation of Alcalá Zamora, pressures for an advance came from the authorities in Morocco, the principal target being the Bay of Alhucemas. These demands were supported not only by the African army but by Silvela, who, like Burguete, advocated a military solution in the East as soon as he arrived in the Zone.⁷⁴ The Liberal government was even less inclined than Sánchez Guerra to accept the demand. It nevertheless allowed the appointment of General Martínez Anido to the Melilla Zone, despite his reputation for ruthlessness following the suppression of terrorism in Barcelona, possibly in order to appease the African army or to satisfy a request from Silvela.⁷⁵ The General immediately devised a massive plan for the occupation of Alhucemas by both land and sea. The plan was unhesitatingly rejected by the government which then dispatched a Commission of the Central General Staff under General Weyler to make a report on the rectification of the Eastern Front.⁷⁶ The Commission advocated two defensive lines, the first being in advance of the positions then held. The proposal to make any form of advance precipitated a new conflict in

the cabinet, since the initiative was unsatisfactory to those members who thought in terms of a large scale reduction of military activity in the Zone. The conflict resulted in a victory for the supporters of the Weyler plan and three supporters of a more passive policy were obliged to resign.⁷⁷ The reshuffled cabinet was short lived since the parliamentary regime and the Weyler plan were swept away on 14 September in a military coup by General Primo de Rivera.

On gaining power Primo de Rivera promised a 'prompt, dignified and sensible' solution to the war.⁷⁸ He dismantled the civilian administrative system which, apart from the High Commissioner, existed almost entirely on paper, and set up a central office for Morocco in Madrid. He did not, however, produce an answer to the major problems which had faced the previous governments. In sweeping away the parliamentary system, Primo de Rivera removed the necessity for maintaining a majority in the Cortes and a cohesive cabinet, but was still faced with most of the pressures which had confronted his predecessors. The inability of the army to defeat Krim and the financial burden of the war were unchanged. Although he received widespread support immediately after the coup, the dictator could not long afford to ignore popular demands for a reduction of the war, nor could he unduly antagonise the politicians of the old regime. As a military leader he was no less susceptible to pressures from the army than a civilian government. Primo de Rivera had not forgotten his *abandonista* sentiments, but the arguments of the army and the politicians opposed to a withdrawal made him cautious in pursuing such a policy.

By 1924, whilst the eastern front remained static, the Spanish hold over the west disintegrated as Krim began to eclipse the power of Raisuli. By April Xauen was cut off from Tetuan and the Spanish position in the interior seemed on the verge of collapse. This serious situation led Primo de Rivera to announce in June a policy of semi-abandonment.⁷⁹ Troops would be withdrawn in the east and west to the coastal plains where they would secure themselves behind a strong defensive line leaving the interior to Abd-el-Krim. In July, Primo de Rivera made a tour of the Protectorate in order to plan the withdrawal in detail and presumably to convince the army of the necessity for such a move. The hostility of the African army was considerable, particularly from the *africanista* officers. On a visit to the legion, the most able fighting force in the army, Primo de Rivera was openly insulted and their colonel, Francisco Franco, made it plain that neither he nor his men would support a withdrawal.⁸⁰ As a result of

such opposition, Primo amended his plans and ordered a retreat only in the West. The abandonment of Xauen took place in October with Primo himself taking over the post of High Commissioner.⁸¹ The operation was costly in men and marked the nadir of Spanish fortunes in Morocco. In the west troops were sheltering behind a strong, though not impenetrable, defensive line whilst Krim took control of the region from the ailing Raisuli.

After withdrawing in the west and finding that the army strongly opposed a further retreat, Primo de Rivera found himself in a position scarcely better than before. The defensive line in the west and the eastern front still required a massive commitment in men and money, and there seemed little possibility of a weakening in the powers of the Berbers. Primo may well have hoped for some negotiated settlement with Krim but such a move would have provoked the Spanish army.⁸² The problem of future action was unexpectedly solved when Krim launched an attack on the French Zone, following French occupation of economically valuable areas near the Rif mountains. Prior to the attack the French had shown little willingness to help Spain, although they had objected to the turbulent state of the neighbouring Protectorate. The ferocity of the Rif attack took them by surprise and in May 1925 there were some fears that Fez would be taken. Co-operation between France and Spain was now an obvious policy and arrangements for a joint offensive from both the north and south were made in June. At this point Primo de Rivera, despite his previous statements, firmly seized the opportunity of French support and put forward a policy for the occupation of the Zone. His objections to the Moroccan Protectorate centred on the difficulties involved in its occupation. If the area could be held with little cost, he had no objections to maintaining possession.

Whilst the French began attacking the Rif from the south, Primo de Rivera put into practice the long-awaited landing in the Bay of Alhucemas. The operation began on 8 September and Axdir, the capital of the Rif, was captured after heavy fighting. During the second half of 1925 the tide turned against Krim and by January 1926 both French and Spanish forces were penetrating deep into the Rif mountains. At this point Krim decided to negotiate and although the European powers may have been willing to concede a limited authority to the Rif, Krim would still not retreat from his demands for full independence.⁸³ The talks broke down and the advance continued. In May 1926, deserted by most of his followers, Krim surrendered to the French who eventually exiled him to the Reunion Islands. After the surrender it took a further

two years for Spanish troops to complete the occupation of the Protectorate. On 10 June 1927 the Rif war was declared at an end.

NOTES

1. García Figueras, *Marruecos* (Madrid 1941), 75. Spain also intervened militarily in a small campaign around Melilla in 1893.
2. See C. J. Bartlett, 'Great Britain and the Spanish Change of Policy towards Morocco in June 1878', *Bulletin of Historical Research*, November 1958.
3. Quoted in Maura Gamazo, *La Cuestión de Marruecos desde el punta de vista Español* (Madrid 1905), 33-34.
4. *Ibid.*, 31, and Fernandez Almagro, *Historia Política de la España Contemporanea* (Madrid 1968), I, 353-54.
5. Romanones, *Notas de Una Vida III; Obras Completas II* 292.
6. *España Nueva*, 6 July 1909, interview with Romanones.
7. This argument was put forward by the Socialists and later by some more Conservative politicians. See *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes, Congreso* (hereafter DCC) Cambó, 30 June 1922, 3221.
8. *Diario de las Cortes, Senado* (hereafter DCS) 17 November 1910, Canalejas, 1043.
9. Maura Gamazo, *op. cit.*, 300.
10. Romanones, *Las Responsabilidades Políticas del Antiguo Regimen* (Madrid 1924), 43.
11. Spain, as a result of the conference, also provided the officers for police contingents in Tetuan and Larache and shared command with France in Casablanca and Tangier.
12. Ruiz Albeniz, *España en el Rif* (Madrid 1921), 252.
13. *Documentos presentados a las Cortes 1911* (hereafter *Libro Rojo*) Allendesalazar to General Marina, 23 February 1908, no. 7.
14. Romanones states that these occupations also ensured that France realised that Spain would defend her rights in Morocco. Romanones, *Notas de Una Vida op. cit.*, 236.
15. *Libro Rojo*, Marina to Allendesalazar, 1 March 1908, no. 19.
16. *Libro Rojo*, Maura to Marina, 23 December 1908.
17. *De Anual a la República Comision de Responsabilidades* (hereafter C de R), Marina's evidence, 420.
18. *El Imparcial*, 11 May 1909 and 17 May 1909.
19. *C de R*, Marina's evidence, 420. Romanones had investments in the Spanish mine which led to the accusation that the government intervened to protect the politician's interests. It is however doubtful that the conservative Maura would have aided the liberal Romanones.
20. The most detailed account of the fighting is in General de Torcy, *Los españoles en Marruecos en 1909* (Madrid 1911), and Estado Mayor Central *Historia de las campañas de Marruecos* (Madrid 1947).

21. General de Torcy, op. cit., 34, Tuñón de Lara, *España del Siglo XIX* (Paris 1960), 380.

22. See Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week* (Harvard 1968).

23. Hernández de Herrera and García Figueras *Acción de España en Marruecos* (Madrid 1927), 131-68 and Estado Mayor Central op. cit; *C de R*, Riquelme's evidence. The Colonel of the Information Service held that the conflict was provoked by officers desiring a clash with the Moors.

24. *Affaires du Maroc*, VI, 184-85, Cruppi to Geoffray, 8 April 1911.

25. DCC, 8 April 1911, Canalejas, 703.

26. Hernández de Herrera and García Figueras, op. cit., I, 118.

27. Natalio Rivas Archives, Leg 11-8900-02, Diary of Natalio Rivas, 17 October 1911. Weyler is quoted as saying 'cada vez si ve mas claro que el Rey dirige nuestra acción en Africa'. On 29 April 1911 Moret makes a similar statement and adds that Alfonso had sent one of his military aides to Morocco in order to find ways of 'provoking our intervention'.

28. *The Times*, 29 July 1911.

29. See Franco-Spanish Treaty of 27 November 1912 and Real Decree 27 February 1913.

30. Several attempts were made up to 1922 to appoint a civilian High Commissioner. As Spanish difficulties in Morocco increased, the degree of military control in the Zone became a matter of considerable controversy.

31. *C de R*, Berenguer's evidence, 297.

32. The German Mannesman Brothers were particularly interested in the Rif area before 1914 and offered to secure peace with Raisuli in exchange for mining concessions. *Survey of International Affairs*, 1925, I, 108.

33. DCC, Romanones, 12 May 1914, 630.

34. El Raisuli had succeeded in dominating the South Western half of the Spanish Zone by 1909 and had gained some previous international fame by kidnapping and holding to ransom an American millionaire and the *Times* correspondent, Walter Harris.

35. *C de R*, Marina's evidence, 414. Natalio Rivas Diary, Leg 11-8901, 11 June 1911. Records an occasion when the cabinet demanded that the Minister of War should ensure Silvestre did not advance and that this order was not correctly conveyed to the officer on account of a suspected intervention by the King.

36. Rosita Forbes, *The Sultan of the Mountains* (London), 113.

37. *C de R*, López Ferrer's evidence, 104.

38. From a letter, Romanones to Marina, 27 February 1914, DCC, 12 May 1914, Romanones, 632.

39. Walter Harris, *France, Spain and the Rif* (London 1927), 57.

40. *C de R*, Marina's evidence, 414-15.

41. García Figueras, *Marruecos* 164.

42. These excuses are quoted in a letter by Jordana to Romanones, Minister of State in November 1914. Hernández de Herrera and García Figueras, op. cit., 244-50.

43. Romanones, *Las Responsabilidades Políticas*, op. cit., 104.

44. *Ibid.*, 108. He was also concerned with the question of Tangier and was aware that the French could point to that state of the Spanish Protectorate as an argument against its passing to Spain.

45. Much was said on the relations between the two Generals after Anual,

particularly as to whether Berenguer could control Silvestre, who was once the High Commissioner's commanding officer.

46. Among the non-general officer staff demands to retain traditional prerogatives and conditions of service were strongly forwarded by the formation of the military juntas during 1916. These organisations led by colonels and more junior officers found no support and considerable hostility from the *africanistas*. Some generals and civilians even placed on the juntas the blame for Anual.

47. Operations to capture this area had been planned in 1911, 1913 and 1916 but none had come to fruition.

48. DCC, Indalecio Prieto, 27 October 1921, 3819. This estimate is conservative. It is impossible to give an exact figure as estimates of troops in the Command at the time vary from 25,790 (Vizconde de Eza 25 October 1921) to 17,170 and 20,980 given in the Picasso Report 313; DCC, 21 October 1921, Martínez Campos, 3696.

49. Berenguer, *Campañas*, I, 105-08. The number of soldiers at the start of the reconquest campaign.

50. Accusations for responsibility were unofficially levelled at the King who, given his earlier activities (see notes 27 and 35) may well have been urging Silvestre to advance. Officially the Liberals attempted to censure the Conservatives in power at that time and the Socialists, censured Conservatives and the Maura National government.

51. DCS, 25 November 1921, Primo de Rivera, 2039.

52. DCC, 30 June 1922, Cambó, 3221; DCS, 12 December 1921, Chapaprieta, 2207.

53. DCC, 29 November 1921, Lerroux, 4454.

54. DCS, 2 December 1921, Thomas Maestre, 2124.

55. DCC, 14 November, González Hontoria, 3970.

56. DCC, 30 June 1922, Cambó, 3221.

57. La Cierva, *Notas de mi Vida* (Madrid 1955), 253.

58. He convened a Conference at Pizarra near Malaga in February 1922 in which Maura, González Hontoria, the naval minister, and La Cierva, as well as six senior military personnel including Berenguer, reconsidered Moroccan policy.

59. DCC, 14 March 1922, Sánchez Guerra, 79.

60. See *La Voz*, 11 December 1912. Much of this protest centered on the refusal to pay the ransom required by Krim for the release of prisoners captured at the time of Anual. The government of García Prieto met Krim's demands on gaining office.

61. Hernández de Herrera and García Figueras, op. cit., 524.

62. Hernández Mir, *Del Rif a Yebala* (Madrid 1927), 41.

63. *C de R*, Burguete Memoria, 70-71.

64. Berenguer was found indictable by the Military Prosecutor, who studied the Picasso Report, on the grounds that he was responsible for military affairs in the Protectorate. Berenguer heard of the indictment from newspaper reports before being officially informed.

65. Burguete wrote regularly in *La Voz* under the pseudonym of *Un Soldado*.

66. García Figueras, op. cit., 186.

67. DCS, 8 June 1923, Maura Gamazo, 99.

68. Hernández Mir, op. cit., 41.

69. Regions which had long been occupied and appeared to accept Spanish rule were to be placed under the authority of a Caid who was to be supervised by

a civilian. In the Rif it was also decided to set up a Moroccan authority, an Amel, as the ostensible leader of the region.

70. *La Voz*, 25 December 1922.

71. *El Debate*, 16 January 1923. The original choice was a more senior Liberal Minister, who had considerable interest in Morocco, Miguel Villanueva.

72. Hernández Mir, *La Dictadura en Marruecos* (Madrid 1930), 45-48. Alcalá Zamora, later President of the second Republic, had also earlier refused the post of High Commissioner. His resignation, as in other departures from the cabinet, will have been influenced by the situation in the factional struggles in the party as much as by Moroccan disputes. See J. A. Chandler, 'The Self Destructive Nature of the Spanish Restoration'. *Iberian Studies*, Autumn 1973, on such divisions.

73. Hernández de Herrera and García Figueras, op. cit., 464.

74. Mir, *Del Rif a Yebala*, 182.

75. *La Voz*, 13 August 1923, interview with Silvela.

76. Hernández de Herrera and García Figueras, op. cit., 471. General Weyler had won notoriety and fame in the Cuban wars and was by 1923 the most senior general in the army.

77. They included Miguel Villanueva who had become Minister of Finance in the Cabinet.

78. García Figueras, op. cit., 198.

79. Hernández de Herrera and García Figueras, op. cit., 488.

80. Mir, *La Dictadura en Marruecos*, 161.

81. García Figueras, op. cit., 202.

82. Stanley Payne, *Politics and the Military in Modern Spain* (Stanford 1967), 216.

83. *Survey of International Affairs*, I, 140-44.