

**PART I**

**The Colonial Embrace**



## CHAPTER ONE

# The Invasion of Morocco

THE LAST STAGE in the colonization of Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, otherwise known as the Scramble for Africa, transformed not just the new subjects of colonial rule but the colonizers themselves. Colonial expansion was not a one-sided affair. While Africans individually and collectively attempted to resist the invaders, many others collaborated in the invasion. Some sought to share power with the colonizers; others hoped to achieve the modernization of their countries by co-operating with the new powers. In that collaboration, accommodations were made and complicities created that transformed the identity of both. It was not just a political, cultural, and economic experience. It was also a sexual encounter. Rape and sexual exploitation were common forms of racist domination by the invaders, but there were frequent sexual liaisons between the colonizer and the colonized that could generate affection across racial barriers and modify behaviour and identity on both sides.<sup>1</sup> Indigenous resistance against European penetration also inflicted frequent disasters on the colonial powers, sometimes so severe that governments and systems of government were overthrown. So while Africa was transformed by colonial invasion, European history was rewritten by contact with Africa.<sup>2</sup>

One of the characteristics of this reshaping of Europe was the emergence of European elites based in the colonies that challenged or adopted a critical stance towards their governing circles. The Spanish case is the most extreme example of a growing colonial identity at odds with the metropolis. The thread linking all the chapters of this book is the formation of an interventionist Spanish military elite through the experience of colonial war in Morocco. This first chapter will briefly examine the European invasion of North Africa in the first decade of the twentieth century, consider the effect this had on Moroccans, and look more closely at the dominant role played by the Spanish military in that invasion.

For Spain, the colonial adventure in twentieth-century Africa began in 1908. Ten years after the 1898 Disaster, the year of Spain's defeat in the

<sup>1</sup> Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> David Levering Lewis, *The Race to Fashoda: European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* (London, Bloomsbury, 1988), 11.

Spanish–American War, when it lost the last remnants of its old empire, Spanish troops began to invade Morocco from Spain’s two historical enclaves on the north Moroccan coast. Their first operation was to occupy a rudimentary port 19 kilometres south of the enclave of Melilla in north-east Morocco. The action began at six in the morning of 14 February. Two companies and a brigade of soldiers on disciplinary charges set sail from Melilla in a gunboat and a mailship. At dawn, in heavy rain and cold winds, four landing boats plunged through rough sea towards land and Spanish soldiers leapt into the water up to their chests to reach the shore.

The military engagement that followed was an orchestrated charade. The dominant sharif (chief) in the area, El Rogui, put up a token resistance to persuade his fellow countrymen that he was opposed to the Spanish incursion into their land. His horsemen galloped about firing wild shots, while the Spanish let off a few bursts of machine-gun fire and cannon-shot from the gunboat. Without loss on either side, the troops moved into the port and hoisted the Spanish flag on the small warehouse.<sup>3</sup>

The operation marked the beginning of the invasion of Morocco by the Spanish army, which would eventually occupy its entire northern region and stay there until 1956. It was not directed against the sultan, though neither he nor his government was consulted. Nor was it directed against his opponent, the pretender to the throne, El Rogui. Nor was it, at least at that stage, the action of an expansionist power. Rather, it was the consequence of an international obligation undertaken by Spain.

The new venture in Morocco was a direct result of the insecurity felt by the Spanish political elites after the Spanish–American War. Spain had lost the scattered possessions of its once extensive empire after colonial wars in Cuba and the Philippines had turned into a disastrous military confrontation with the United States. Remaining aloof from the system of international relations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Spain had relied fatally on dynastic and religious connections to protect its colonies from foreign predators.<sup>4</sup> After the Disaster, Spain had sought to reinsert itself securely into the changing network of international alignments in order to protect its metropolis and islands and enclaves from the increasing competition between the Great Powers.<sup>5</sup>

From a policy of international withdrawal, Spain moved to an active search for allies and treaties. This quest was helped by Spain’s very weakness in the aftermath of the war, which had given rise to fears among European powers

<sup>3</sup> Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, *Historia de las campañas de Marruecos* (Madrid, Servicio Histórico Militar, 1947–81), ii. 20; Gabriel de Morales, *Datos para la historia de Melilla* (Melilla, n.p., 1909), 369–71.

<sup>4</sup> Sebastian Balfour, *The End of the Spanish Empire 1898–1923* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997) = *El fin del Imperio español (1898–1923)* (Barcelona, Crítica, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> For a fuller treatment of Spanish foreign policy in the post-Disaster period, see Sebastian Balfour, ‘Spain and the Great Powers in the Aftermath of the 1898 Disaster’, in id. and Paul Preston (eds.), *Spain and the Great Powers in the Twentieth Century* (London, Routledge, 1999).

that a competitor amongst them might gain some advantage. France was particularly worried about its security if Spain reached agreement with another power which would compromise the status quo over the Spanish port of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast opposite Gibraltar, and that of Mahon in Menorca astride French maritime routes between Algiers, Oran, Corsica, and Toulon.<sup>6</sup> Spanish–British relations were still tense because the British government had informally sided with the United States during the Spanish–American War, hindering the passage of a third Spanish fleet through the Suez Canal on its way to the theatre of war in the Far East. During the engagement Spain had fortified its defences in Algeciras opposite Gibraltar, giving rise to further tensions that persisted after the war.<sup>7</sup>

The main focus of colonial competition between the European powers was the partition of the Dark Continent. The scramble for African colonies since the 1870s had led to intensive negotiations between them. Germany, a new and aggressive international actor, was muscling in on spheres traditionally regarded as belonging to the Old Powers. Britain and France had begun to settle their differences after the latter withdrew from east Africa and the Nile in 1898. In subsequent negotiations, the French agreed to confine their colonial ventures in Africa mainly to Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.<sup>8</sup> For all their growing rapprochement, Britain was anxious to keep the French from encroaching as far as the northern coast of Morocco, from where they might challenge Britain's control of the Straits of Gibraltar and the route to the British Empire in India and the Far East.

Having signed a treaty with Spain in 1900 recognizing the latter's possessions of Guinea and the western Sahara opposite the Canary Islands, France sought, in secret negotiations two years later, to woo it into a new alliance that might strengthen its own position vis-à-vis Britain. In these talks, France offered to share spheres of influence in Morocco in the knowledge that French colonial expansion in the area would be little hindered by a weakened Spain.<sup>9</sup> The Spanish government withdrew from the negotiations out of fear of British displeasure. Unknown to Spanish policy-makers, however, Britain had been holding secret talks with France in which she had secured the assignation of a sphere of influence for Spain in northern Morocco as a buffer against French expansion towards the coast opposite Gibraltar.

It was German ambitions in North Africa above all that brought about a Franco-British rapprochement. In negotiations leading to the Entente

<sup>6</sup> *Documents Diplomatiques Français* (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères), vol. XX, Doc. 2, 2<sup>ème</sup> série, p. 196 (25 Sept. 1902).

<sup>7</sup> Rosario de la Torre, *Inglaterra y España en 1898* (Madrid, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the World War, 1898–1914*, vol. 1, *The End of British Isolation* (London: HMSO, 1927), Docs. 157–235, pp. 132–93.

<sup>9</sup> *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, Doc. 333, pp. 197–9. The 1902 draft treaty between France and Spain was first published in 1912 in the *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso de los Diputados* (henceforth DSCD) for 26 Nov. 1912 (Apéndice).

Cordiale of 1904, in which the Spanish government was not invited to take part, it was agreed that Spain should be given a sphere in northern Morocco. Having settled the matter with Britain, France reduced the area it had proposed to concede to Spain in 1902 by almost 50 per cent. In a subsequent Franco-Spanish treaty, Spain accepted a sphere of influence covering barely a fifth of Moroccan territory, some 22,000 square kilometres.

The land awarded to Spain as a sphere of influence was dominated by the Rif Mountains, a great limestone mass rising from the Mediterranean coast and stretching some 300 kilometres along the width of the narrow horizontal strip. Reaching heights of 2,500 metres, the mountainous range forms a natural barrier between Europe and Africa and, with the Sahara, separates most of Morocco from Algeria and the rest of the Magreb. To the south of the sphere the mountains give way to valleys and crests before reaching the French zone, while in the west they rise to dramatic heights, punctuated by deep valleys scored by torrential rivers, and then fall away into the plains on the Atlantic coast. The terrain varies dramatically, from the many forested slopes of the mountains in the south and west to the bushes and olive trees of the Mediterranean fringe and the barren peaks and sparse valleys of the eastern Rif.

The climate is also subject to extremes. In most of the western and southern strip the rainfall in winter is heavy and increases the rush of the streams and rivers swollen by snow that run down to the sea or into the French zone, while in the east it is often unreliable, threatening the harvests. During the summer the heat and lack of rain in the east dry up the riverbeds and crack the parched earth. Temperatures can plunge to well below freezing during all seasons except the summer, even in the valleys, and can rise to unbearable heights in the summer.

Together with its largely primitive trails and tracks, this was not the most propitious terrain for the military operations of even the most accomplished colonial power. France, on the other hand, had awarded itself not only the vast majority of Moroccan territory but also the most fertile and peaceful part. Thousands of square kilometres of its rich agricultural land were watered by rivers that ran down from slopes of the Rif and Atlas mountain systems. Apart from the mountain tribesmen of the Atlas and the southern Rif, the inhabitants of the French area of influence were largely obedient to the sultan and his government.

The Spanish area was inhabited mainly by Berber tribes, who distinguished themselves from neighbouring Arab tribes by their language rather than their ethnicity, but who shared Islam as a common religion with the Arabs. With the rest of the indigenous inhabitants of Spain's sphere of influence, they numbered some three-quarters of a million people in 1904. For all their reputation as uncontrollables, the Berber tribes of the mountains maintained contacts with the sultan's government and paid their taxes or tribute through their tribal

leaders. The sultan's forces had little control over law and order in the heartlands of the Rif, but revolts occurred only sporadically when the balance of power within the area or between Rif tribes and the central authority was disrupted. Far from being the lawless and impenetrable wilderness painted in some hyped-up Spanish accounts, most of the Rif was connected to the rest of Morocco through trade routes and regional markets.<sup>10</sup>

In a secret clause of the Franco-Spanish Treaty of 1904, France and Spain awarded themselves the freedom to intervene in their spheres of influence if the Moroccan state failed to maintain order or showed 'persistent impotence', or if the maintenance of the status quo became impossible. France had already begun to invade Morocco from its base in Algeria to stop the frequent raids into its colony by Moroccan border tribes. Under its new commander, Lyautey, the French colonial army in northern Africa was transformed into an efficient fighting force manned mainly by so-called native troops from different parts of the French Empire. Unconnected with the local population either by kinship or religion, these contingents had the added advantage of being more able than European troops to cope with the harsh environment of much of Morocco. The policy of peaceful penetration advocated by the Quai d'Orsay had given way by 1904 to a predominantly military strategy of conquest, after Lyautey, backed by the French colonial party, had persuaded the French government that it was the only solution to the increasing anarchy in Morocco caused by colonial penetration.<sup>11</sup>

German pressure against French expansion in North Africa led to the international Conference of Algeciras in 1906, in which Germany found itself further isolated by the Franco-British alignment. The resulting treaty stipulated that Morocco should remain open to international trade and that the sovereignty of the sultan should be guaranteed. France and Spain were entrusted by the thirteen participating powers with the task of ensuring that the Moroccan state, the *Mahkzen*, held sway in their respective spheres. What this task entailed would be interpreted differently by the French and Spanish governments. A year later, in the Cartagena Pact of 1907, Spain was tied into the Entente by the signing of a mutual guarantee between Britain, France, and Spain against German expansion in North Africa. In Morocco itself, the main effect of the Algeciras Treaty was the disintegration of the authority of Sultan Abdel Aziz, who had put his signature to the treaty under pressure from the Great Powers. The rapid invasion into Morocco of European diplomacy and business stirred up a new holy war against the Christian.

Thus, it was above all Spain's sense of strategic insecurity following the Disaster of 1898 and the increasing competition between the European Powers that led it to take on a role in Morocco on their behalf. Some of the Spanish

<sup>10</sup> David Seddon, *Moroccan Peasants: A Century of Change in the Eastern Rif 1870-1970* (Folkestone, Dawson, 1981), 45.

<sup>11</sup> Douglas Porch, *The Conquest of Morocco* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1982).

policy-makers were aware of the potential costs and the risks involved. Shortly after his government fell in 1902, the premier responsible for withdrawing from the secret talks with France, Francisco Silvela, declared, 'we should banish from our thoughts the idea that the situation in Morocco . . . represents profit and wealth for us, when, on the contrary, it is the source of poverty, sterility, and stagnation for Spain, and we accept it and we have to maintain it merely to avoid worse ills of a political and international nature'.<sup>12</sup>

The oft-premier and leader of the Conservatives after Silvela, Antonio Maura, made an even more pessimistic analysis of the potential risks involved in Spain's new international commitment. In a letter to his minister of foreign affairs written in his usual rolling prose, he described Morocco as a 'variegated and contradictory multitude of dispersed, unattached energies without organic solidarity and without even a regular and stable bond . . . political life in Morocco . . . is all asymmetry and uncertainty'.<sup>13</sup> Yet publicly he insisted that Spain had a mission of peace in Morocco and, referring to the new sphere of influence assigned by the Great Powers, 'was disposed to defend, whatever the cost and if it became necessary, the integrity of her territory in Morocco . . .'.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to the Conservatives, rooted still in a policy of international abstentionism, the Liberals were receptive to the European currents of colonial expansion. However, an influential body of opinion they could not ignore was arguing that in the aftermath of the Disaster Spain's resources should be devoted to internal regeneration. As a result of the human cost of the colonial and Spanish-American wars, it was also widely acknowledged that any new venture entailing a military call-up would be deeply unpopular. At a time when social protest was beginning to escalate, the stability of the Spanish state might be in jeopardy.

Another lobby closer to ruling circles was calling for the peaceful commercial penetration of Africa as a means of regenerating Spain. Just as the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 had generated an enthusiastic movement in France for colonial acquisition, so the loss of its American empire boosted the influence in Spain of proponents of neo-colonial expansion who had been increasingly active in the last quarter of the century.

Some of the leading Liberals were also businessmen keen to exploit the opportunities for investment in Morocco. Behind them were business lobbies seeking new markets to make up for the loss of the protected colonial markets.<sup>15</sup> A questionnaire distributed by the Ministry for Commerce in 1906 revealed some enthusiasm amongst Chambers of Commerce, public-sector

<sup>12</sup> *Artículos, discursos, conferencias y cartas* (Madrid, Mateu Artes Gráficas, 1922–3), iii, 115.

<sup>13</sup> José Manuel Allendesalazar, *La diplomacia española y Marruecos, 1907–1909* (Madrid, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1990), 80.

<sup>14</sup> In a speech in the senate quoted in the *Diario de Barcelona*, 27 Nov. 1907.

<sup>15</sup> *Diario Mercantil*, 25 Dec. 1898 and 8 Jan. 1899, *El Trabajo Nacional* (mouthpiece of the Catalan *Foment*), 5 Aug. 1898 and 30 Jan. 1902, *La Vanguardia*, 27 Oct. 1904. See also Archivo Romanones (AR), Leg. 53 no. 55 (2).



bodies, banks, professional associations, mining, shipping, and fruit companies and so on, for commercial expansion into Morocco, backed by state aid.<sup>16</sup> The intellectual and political proponents of closer relations with Morocco of the nineteenth century had been overtaken by commercial and industrial interests of the early twentieth. The organic intellectuals of the Spanish–Moroccan business lobby were adamant that neo-colonial expansion into Africa was a ‘work of civilization’ entailing no loss of sovereignty on the part of the Sultanate.<sup>17</sup> What was less openly articulated was the likely cost to the Spanish Exchequer of the subsidies required by businesses venturing into Morocco and the infrastructural work—roads, railways, and ports—necessary for their success. It was taken for granted that most sensible Moroccans would appreciate the benefits of Spanish commercial penetration into their country.<sup>18</sup>

Another lobby pushing for a different kind of action in Morocco was military opinion. In the immediate aftermath of the loss of its empire, the Spanish colonial military had been deeply embroiled in the problems of repatriation, recompense, and adjustment to life in the metropolis. The defeat had left them with a bitter grievance. They had fought to defend the last remnants of the empire and believed that they had been sacrificed by the regime and betrayed by fickle public opinion. Much of their time was taken up with defending the army and navy against accusations of incompetence and cowardice. Their alienation from civil society was intensified by the rapid growth of left wing, anti-military movements in the first decade of the new century. In the absence of a modern police force, the military were used to quell the growing social unrest. The bond that had linked the army and the urban populace in the first half of the previous century was now dissolving.

The rise of regional nationalism in the first years of the new century was also seen by many officers as a challenge to the integrity of the nation. In their own self-image, it was the military that had created the modern state in Spain, and it was their duty to defend it against the forces of national dissolution.<sup>19</sup> Officers stationed in Barcelona ransacked the offices of two Catalanist newspapers in 1905 and the government responded by giving military courts extensive powers over civilian affairs. The new law marked the return of the army as a political force.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the army had withdrawn to its barracks after decades of political intervention. But in its new role in the first decade of the century as defender of law and order and centralism, it began to shed the progressive and republican tendencies of the nineteenth century to embrace an increasingly anti-democratic ideology. The combined

<sup>16</sup> Ministerio de Fomento, *Expansión comercial de España en Marruecos* (Madrid, 1906).

<sup>17</sup> Real Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid, *Exposición al Excm Sr. Presidente del Congreso de Ministros*, 30 Apr. 1904, in Archivo de la Fundación Antonio Maura Montaner (AFAMM), Fondo Documental, Mortera, Caja 4; Gonzalo de Reparaz, *Política de España en África* (Madrid, Calpe, 1907).

<sup>18</sup> See Ch. 7 for further treatment.

<sup>19</sup> See Balfour, *The End*, ch. 6.

effect of the loss of empire and the growth of new social forces as a result of the accelerating process of modernization shifted the bulk of military opinion away from the progressive tendencies of the previous century towards a range of traditional and new rightist ideologies.

The transformation of military thinking in Spain was part of a Europe-wide reaction against the certainties of nineteenth-century liberal positivism. One of its features was the adoption of new vitalist currents influenced by Nietzsche. The French model of the citizen army, so important in nineteenth-century Spain, was giving way in some military circles to the Prussian model of an elitist professional army whose strength lay in moral and spiritual values allied to military science.<sup>20</sup> In the post-Disaster period, however, the army was in no condition to wage war in any theatre. It was made up of 529 generals and 23,767 officers (though many were on the reserve list) for 110,926 troops. There was thus, for those on active service, a general for every 340 soldiers and an officer for every seven.<sup>21</sup> During the first decade of the new century half of the military budget was consumed by pay, in contrast to the French, who devoted only a sixth of their budget to salaries. The result was that the Spanish army was seriously underequipped.

On the eve of the first serious colonial battle of the twentieth century in 1909, the military boasted sixty divisional generals for an army of 111,435 soldiers. In comparison, the British army had thirty-four divisional generals commanding a total of 374,000 troops. Even more significant was the fact that, as the colonial war grew more serious, the metropolitan army continued to consume the lion's share of an already inadequate budget. Military expenditure rose from 218 million pesetas in 1909 to 627 million for a similar period in 1920–1, when the colonial army had begun its most serious military campaign to date. Of these 627 million pesetas, the army in Spain absorbed 480 million, that is to say, 76.55 per cent of the total. Yet the condition of the metropolitan army was such that, when the military disaster of July 1921 occurred in Morocco, there was not one division in Spain that was available immediately for action.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the potential of a new area of colonial activity after the loss of the overseas colonies awakened the military appetite. Morocco had a mythical resonance for the army and conservative sections of Spanish society. The medieval Reconquest against the Moorish infidel had spread across the Straits of Gibraltar into northern Africa by the end of the fifteenth century. The Papal Bull of 1457 had given the Church's blessing for the conquest of Islamic territories by Spain, while Isabel the Catholic's will enjoined her successors to carry

<sup>20</sup> Robert Geoffrey Jensen, 'Intellectual Foundations of Dictatorship: Spanish Military Writers and Their Quest for Cultural Regeneration, 1898–1923', Ph.D. Diss., Yale University, 1995. For further discussion, see Ch. 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Anuario Militar, 1900* (Ministerio de la Guerra, Madrid, 1900).

<sup>22</sup> Juan Pando, *Historia Secreta de Annual*, 2nd edn. (Madrid, Temas de Hoy, 1999), 77–80.

on the struggle against the infidel. But Spain's early conquests in Morocco had been gradually whittled down over the next few centuries to a few enclaves. Morocco had been the scene of two military victories in the nineteenth century. After harassment by tribesmen of two of these enclaves on the coast, Ceuta and Melilla, the Spanish army had marched out in 1859 to seize Tetuan and bomb Tangier, forcing the sultan to accept humiliating terms for peace in the following year.

The unwitting desecration of a holy tomb by labourers in Melilla in 1893 provoked a new uprising by tribesmen. A detachment of Spanish troops was surrounded and many of its soldiers killed, including their general. A military offensive against the local tribes led to a new treaty in 1894, in which the Moroccan state committed itself to maintain order in the area surrounding Melilla while Spain agreed to respect the integrity of Morocco. The two military engagements became mythologized in Spanish nationalist discourse as a new model of the qualities of the Spanish race and its inherent military attributes. After the loss of the old empire in the Americas, expansion in Morocco came to epitomize 'an advantageous compensation for past disasters' in keeping with Spain's 'historic and geographical destinies'.<sup>23</sup>

Thus national security, investment potential, and the reaffirmation of military pride became the contradictory impulses of Spanish colonialism. This was in contrast to Italy's expansion into Libya at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Italian search for a new colony was rationalized above all by internal demographic pressure that led its leaders to see the new colony as a promised land for its agricultural labourers, a space in which Italy's emigrants would remain Italian rather than become American or Argentinian.<sup>24</sup>

The Spanish military's new opportunity for action in northern Africa, however, was heavily circumscribed by Spain's international obligations. The military daily newspapers were impatient at the constraints imposed by the Treaty of Algeciras on the army's freedom of action. 'The Spanish army,' an editorial of a military newspaper complained, 'in its role as police or security, will enter Morocco . . . with a Mauser in one hand and an olive branch in the other; not as representatives of the Motherland, but as agents of the Sultan; not as conquerors, but as guarantors of the sovereign independence of the [Moroccan] empire.'<sup>25</sup> According to military opinion, the treaty exposed Spain's weakness in the struggle of nations. 'Because we are weak, we have to content ourselves with the crumbs of a feast which should be for us alone.' What had been Spain's 'birthright', expansion into Morocco, had been sold 'for a mess of

<sup>23</sup> 'La cuestión marroquí. España dormida', *Correo Militar*, 21 May 1900; 'Francia y Alemania en Marruecos', *El Ejército Español*, 3 Feb. 1910.

<sup>24</sup> Claudio G. Segrè, *L'Italia in Libia. Dall'età Giolittiana a Gheddafi* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1978), originally published in English as *The Fourth Shore: The Italian Colonization of Libya* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1974), 28–43.

<sup>25</sup> 'La chilaba triste', *La Correspondencia Militar*, 2 Apr. 1906.

pottage'.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the limitations of Spain's role, the army had to prepare for its task of policing northern Morocco, according to another paper. If it was not ready, a new military disaster might occur.<sup>27</sup>

The military and commercial lobbies wielded considerable influence but they did not dictate the government's strategy. The two main parties of the Restoration state, a system resting on patronage and a fictitious electoral contest, had to satisfy a variety of constituencies. They were thus relatively impermeable to the influence of individual lobbies. Indeed, diplomatic correspondence reveals the driving-force of Spanish foreign policy in Morocco to be Spain's search to fulfil her international commitments.<sup>28</sup> But both the government and the military commanders in Morocco entrusted with carrying out its policy were faced with an excruciating dilemma. The sultan's authority had never held sway in most of the area Spain was meant to oversee from within the Spanish enclaves. What little remained was crumbling under the impact of the penetration of European capital and French territorial encroachments. The military could not act as surrogate policemen for the sultan. To restore his authority meant Spain intervening directly in her sphere of influence, apparently in contravention of international treaties.

On the other hand, a pragmatic acceptance of *de facto* power also meant failure to fulfil the obligations of these treaties. Moreover, it entailed establishing amicable relations with chieftains responsible for levels of abuse and corruption against their own people that were unacceptable to European sensibilities. The unarticulated gut reaction of the military was to respect neither diplomacy nor local power but march in and restore order. These dilemmas were at the heart of Spain's problems in Morocco.

Spanish colonial officers had a model of military intervention close at hand. In the huge French sphere of influence in Morocco, the growing resentment against foreign invasion was beginning to take its toll of European residents. Until 1904 the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Théophile Delcassé had championed a policy of peaceful encroachment. But the terms of the Algeciras Treaty could be interpreted as a licence for military penetration. Attacks on French citizens in Morocco following the signing of the treaty led the colonial party in France to push for armed intervention.

They had a new instrument for military action in Morocco. The ambitious and talented French officer Hubert Lyautey had arrived in 1903 to take charge of the headquarters of the French Army in South Oranais near the undefined frontier between French Algeria and Morocco. In the space of four years he had transformed a bureaucratic military force into an efficient fighting unit of

<sup>26</sup> 'Mirando al exterior', *ibid.*, 16 Mar. 1906.

<sup>27</sup> 'La Conferencia de Algeciras. Después de la conferencia', *El Ejército Español*, 26 Apr. 1906.

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. President Maura's letter to the governor-general of Melilla, General Marina, on 23 Dec. 1908 in *Documentos presentados a las Cortes en la legislatura de 1911 por el Ministro de Estado (D. Manuel García Prieto)* (henceforth *Libro Rojo*) (Madrid, 1911), no. 435, anejos, pp. 166–8.

professional soldiers from different parts of the French Empire. No longer bound by the antiquated rules of nineteenth-century military engagement, the new army specialized in the tactics of counter-guerrilla insurgency adapted to the conditions of campaigns in Morocco.<sup>29</sup> Determined to stop raids by Moroccan tribes into Algeria, Lyautey had sent troops into southern Morocco in June 1904 and persuaded the French government to establish a permanent base there.

A rebellion in southern Morocco and the murder of a French doctor in Marrakesh in March 1907 gave the French government the excuse for further military intervention long demanded by the colonial party, though government spokesmen were careful to declare that it would be only provisional. Four months after the French military occupation of the rebellious region, a fresh incident led to a new military encroachment by the French. The killing by Moroccans of nine workers working for the French in Casablanca on 30 July was answered by the devastating shelling of the Arab quarter by a French warship. The action led to widespread looting and atrocities by Moroccans against men, women, and children in the nearby Jewish quarter. France asked Spain to contribute to a joint expeditionary force but the new president, Antonio Maura, turned down the request on the grounds that such action would arouse further hostility and disrupt the commercial life of the whole region.<sup>30</sup> French troops landed in the port of Casablanca and proceeded to carry out a massacre of Moroccans. Delcassé's policies now lay in ruins and the French felt they had little option but to consolidate direct rule over their part of Morocco.<sup>31</sup>

Although there is no evidence of the influence of French military actions, there can be little doubt that they strengthened the spirit of armed interventionism among Spanish colonial officers. Thus equipped with a model of military efficacy drawn from the hegemonic power in the area, they felt justified in moving beyond the cramped confines of their enclaves. The action of 14 February 1908 that began this narrative signified the first triumph in the Spanish sphere of the military over the diplomatic thesis, though like its French counterpart the government represented the occupation as a temporary measure. Despite Spain's misgivings, it was accepted by the international community. Neither Sultan Abdel Aziz nor his successor exercised control over their north-eastern territory. The pretender to the throne, El Rogui, falsely claiming to be the lost son of a former sultan, had mobilized tribes in the area and defeated the Moroccan government forces in December 1902. Since he controlled a vast swathe of territory, the Spanish authorities had had little option but to do business with him while at the same time they were under an obligation to ensure the Sultan's ascendancy. For the time being the Spanish government had taken on board the contradiction between constitutional and *de facto* powers.

<sup>29</sup> Porch, *The Conquest*, 129–30.

<sup>30</sup> *British Documents*, part 1, vol. 28, doc. 214, p. 335.

<sup>31</sup> Charles-André Julien, *Le Maroc face aux impérialismes 1415–1956* (Paris, Editions JA, 1978), 72.

*In situ*, this contradictory policy was much more difficult to carry out. The commander of Spain's troops in Morocco, General José Marina, a leading figure among the enlightened Spanish military Arabists of the new century, saw Spain's mission as a civilizing one, to be achieved through peaceful penetration. He devoted much effort to making friends with the neighbouring tribes while continuing to deal with their enemy, El Rogui. He also went to some lengths to recognize the different cultures in the area. During Ramadan, Marina gave orders for cannon-fire to signal the beginning and the end of the fast and banned the traditional anti-Jewish demonstrations of the Christian celebration of Holy Saturday.<sup>32</sup> This search for neutrality frequently meant interceding with the pretender when he overstepped the mark in his attacks on other tribes loyal to the sultan. But Marina's ability to maintain order from across the border was coming under increasing strain.

Before the occupation of the port, the Spanish army had made a brief incursion onto Moroccan soil on 29 January 1908 to protect the retreat of the sultan's bedraggled and abandoned troops (and their harem) besieged by El Rogui's forces. The occupation shortly afterwards was intended also to ensure order in the area by preventing the renewal of a lucrative operation controlled by French-Belgian interests which had been smuggling arms to El Rogui through the port. The fact that the Spanish authorities failed to consult the Moroccan government beforehand was a token of the extent to which they had begun to see themselves as a substitute for the Moroccan state, though they diplomatically assured the Sultanate that it was only a temporary occupation.<sup>33</sup> A third incursion took place on 12 March to occupy nearby Moroccan territory to secure peace in the area surrounding Melilla. Marina had felt this necessary because his policy of gaining sympathy among as many tribes as possible had won the local tribes away from El Rogui's sphere of influence. Without the protection of government troops, they were exposed to his reprisals against pro-sultan tribes.<sup>34</sup>

Marina's strategy thus undermined El Rogui's power and encouraged local opinion unsympathetic to European penetration. One of the pretender's supporters and chieftain of a tribe near Melilla had begged Marina not to go ahead with the occupation. He could not persuade his own people to accept it because they would think their land had been sold to Spain. He said he felt like a grain of wheat caught between two stones and waiting to be ground.<sup>35</sup>

It was above all the invasion of European capital into the Spanish zone of influence in Morocco that destabilized the area. Besides fulfilling its inter-

<sup>32</sup> Morales, *Datos*, 383.

<sup>33</sup> *Libro Rojo*, doc. 6, p. 5 and doc. 33, pp. 18–19.

<sup>34</sup> The Cabo de Agua occupation was also designed to make life easier for the small Spanish garrison on the Chafarinas Islands nearby whose soldiers had to cross to the mainland to buy provisions from the Quebdanis: Allendesalazar, *La diplomacia*, 149; Morales, *Datos*, 372–3.

<sup>35</sup> Manuel Galbán Jiménez, *España en África. La Pacificación de Marruecos* (Madrid, Imprenta del Servicio Geográfico de Marruecos, 1965), 29.

national commitment to maintain order in north-east Morocco, the Spanish government hoped thereby to create the conditions for the attraction of Spanish investment to the area. In the neo-colonialist discourse of the time, trade would benefit everyone, from businessmen to the Moroccans themselves. In the aim of enticing investment to the north-east, Marina could count on the pretender's search for money. El Rogui was not averse to European penetration, because it held the promise of profitable business deals. French and Spanish business agents had noted the potential for the mining of iron ore, copper, lead, and other minerals in the area under his control. Samples of iron ore from the mountains not far from Melilla had been analysed and found to be rich in content and easily mineable.

A race took place between rival European interests to gain the right to exploit these deposits. Various expeditions had been sent to acquire contracts to do so. A French company registered in Spain struck a deal with the chieftain to exploit both the lead and iron-ore deposits in the area for 400,000 pesetas. A further expedition by Spanish rival interests was organized to obtain a new contract from El Rogui. Arranged by the Jewish businessman David Charbit, already established as the chieftain's agent in Melilla, it set out on 20 November 1907 on behalf of a newly established company whose capital came from important business interests in Spain.<sup>36</sup>

An unpublished report on the expedition paints a vivid European picture of the meeting of two different cultures.<sup>37</sup> Having obtained military authorization to move into El Rogui's territory, Charbit's expedition was escorted to his headquarters by the Pretender's own troops. Arriving there before another rival expedition showed up, the six-member team and their servants set up camp but were forced to plead for a different site because they had been located by a ditch into which El Rogui's people deposited faeces and animal corpses. In their first meeting with the leader, they were clearly impressed but also puzzled by his attire. Besides his jellaba, he was wearing white leather gloves, boots made of red morocco leather lined with silver, a red silk handkerchief, and a silver-plated pistol. In his hands he held a rosary and a large pencil.

Among the gifts the Spaniards had brought were a gramophone and records. They had also brought thousands of 5-peseta pieces as a downpayment to El Rogui if the deal went ahead. As part of the ceremony preceding the bargaining, the Spaniards wound up the gramophone and played the Spanish Royal March, to which El Rogui appeared to listen with pleasure. They also presented him with a photograph of the king and played records of

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–14; María Rosa de Madariaga, *España y el Rif. Crónica de una historia casi olvidada* (Melilla, La Biblioteca de Melilla, 2000), 125–9; Victor Ruiz Albéniz, *La campaña del Rif. La verdad de la guerra* (Madrid, n.p., 1909), 11–12.

<sup>37</sup> Jacobo Butler, 'Yo negocié con el Rogui las minas del Rif', cyclostyled document in García Figueras archives, Biblioteca Nacional, n.d.

Spanish and Arab songs. If the Spaniards found Moroccan culture somewhat strange, it must have been equally bizarre for Moroccans to listen to a European military march.

Before they could begin discussing the deal, El Rogui left with his men to fight tribes loyal to the Sultan. The expedition witnessed their return and their inhuman treatment of prisoners. In a further audience, the writer was struck by El Rogui's 'intellectual and speculative sharpness'. The appearance of the rival expedition delayed further negotiation and Charbit's team was forced to pay for several intermediaries among El Rogui's chiefs. They finally obtained his signature, apparently in pencil and virtually illegible, for the right to exploit local iron-ore mines in exchange for 20 per cent of the mining profits, with advance payments every three months of 125,000 pesetas. The deal thus annulled the contract with the French company, which was left with the nearby lead mines. On their return to Melilla, the Spanish drew up a contract and made another trip to get a final signature. Work on both iron-ore and lead mines and the building of a railway to bring personnel to the mines and carry the minerals back to Melilla began in the spring of 1908. Presumably without Marina's consent, the Spanish company agreed that El Rogui could use the rail and trains to transport his own troops in his fight with other tribes in the area.<sup>38</sup>

The dealings of European businessmen with such a flamboyant imposter no doubt put Marina under some strain, though he was a decided advocate of opening the interior of Morocco to commerce. More seriously, the invasion of European capital into the Rif dislocated relations amongst the tribes that lived in the areas surrounding the mines. The problem was not just that El Rogui was opening the doors for the penetration of foreigners of a different religion, but that he was keeping the profits for himself. He was also looking for new areas of mining wealth to sell to the foreigner and made violent incursions into the territory of surrounding tribes. Also, private deals were being made elsewhere in the region between European speculators and tribal chieftains for the rights to exploit mines at prices that varied enormously. In the scramble for mining concessions, the Liberal statesman Count Romanones and his brother had struck a number of cheap deals, often behind the back of the Spanish authorities. In contrast to the high sums of money exchanged for mining concessions from El Rogui, they had bought plots of land judged to be rich in minerals for paltry sums of money.<sup>39</sup>

In an immensely poor region like the Rif, the sudden and unequal inflow of money and work opportunities exacerbated the divisions between the tribes. The subsequent appearance of machines, railways, and large numbers of foreigners constituted an invasion of their land and culture. It was also seen as a

<sup>38</sup> Galbán Jiménez, *España en África*, 15.

<sup>39</sup> From between 3,000 and 7,000 pesetas: Archivo del Banco de España, Sociedad de Minas del Rif, legajo 1. At the beginning of 1908 the two groups merged to form the Compañía Española del Rif.



threat to their religion. The jihad against the Spanish some fourteen years previously had been provoked merely by work to extend Melilla's fortifications that had disturbed a holy shrine. The potential for such desecrations now seemed far greater.

The descent into war between Spain and the tribes surrounding Melilla was thus the result of disruptive commercial and political penetration. The arms trade in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the invasion of mining interests in the first decade of the new century had upset the balance between tribes. The French and the Spanish policy of divide and rule in Morocco further undermined the system of coalition or *leff* amongst tribes, which had served to maintain some degree of order in the Moroccan hinterland. The local tool of conflict resolution, a fine imposed on an individual or group of individuals by village or tribal authorities such as the *Jema'a*, was weakened by Spanish intervention. The result was an increase in feuds and vendettas and the emergence of new petty tyrants.<sup>40</sup> This was a common effect of colonial intrusion in other parts of Africa. Traditional patterns of interaction among different ethnic or tribal groups were upset when colonial powers sought to alter the balance of power by fostering intermediaries.<sup>41</sup>

On the other hand, where a chieftain was unrecognized by the Sultanate, Spain sought to replace him. The Spanish policy of encouraging tribes loyal to the sultan helped to undermine El Rogui's power. A Spanish doctor in one of the mines, Ruiz Albéniz, a notable Arabist and a proponent, along with the mining companies, of a neo-colonialist strategy of not interfering with the existing balance of power in the Rif, complained that the governor general's policy had destabilized the whole area. 'There was no power in the Rif other than that of El Rogui, and we set out to destroy it and support something that was fictitious, anarchic, without responsibility: that of the kabyles [or tribal groups].'<sup>42</sup>

The first attack against the mines took place in October 1908, forcing the fifty or so Spanish workers there to flee to El Rogui's headquarters, where the chieftain provided them with an escort to Melilla. The mines were sacked, moving the pretender to seek out and punish the perpetrators from the nearby tribes. El Rogui had frequently resorted to violence to assert his authority. He also liked to remind the Spanish that he exercised effective control in his area of domination by sending them macabre tokens of his hegemony. After seizing

<sup>40</sup> Madariaga, *España*, 273–5; J. David Seddon, 'Local Political and State Intervention: Northeast Morocco from 1870 to 1970', in Ernest Gellner and Charles Micaud (eds.), *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa* (London, Duckworth, 1972), 109–33.

<sup>41</sup> Thus, for example, French colonialism on the Ivory Coast: Timothy C. Weiskel, *French Colonial Rule and the Baule People: Resistance and Collaboration 1889–1911* (Oxford, OUP, 1980), 210–14.

<sup>42</sup> Victor Ruiz Albéniz, *Ecce homo: las responsabilidades del desastre* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 1922), 24; also, Ruiz Albéniz, *La guerra*, 29–30. The author explains also that the Spanish authorities refused him permission to treat any of the pretender's followers and blocked the passage of a consignment of food for the chieftain through the port of Restinga. For a similar analysis, see Galbán, *España en Africa*, 25–8.

some of those apparently guilty of the action against the mining companies, he sent thirty-two decapitated heads to Melilla to persuade the Spanish authorities that work on the mines could begin again. Instead, they insisted that all the tribes had to give their consent first.<sup>43</sup>

In a further blow to the pretender, his troops were refused permission by Marina to proceed directly into the territory of a neighbouring tribe to impose financial contributions on the chieftain. An attempt by the Spanish mining company to provide El Rogui with ammunition so that he could continue to protect the mining and railway works was blocked by the Spanish High Command.<sup>44</sup> Retreating before the gathering uprising against him, El Rogui was forced by the end of 1908 to abandon the area and withdraw southwards with his declining number of followers to his headquarters in the French sphere of influence. Before he left, he sent a letter to the Spanish authorities declaring: 'My departure will cost Spain many thousands of millions of pesetas and streams of blood and tears. Poor Spain!'<sup>45</sup>

In his absence, the prevailing anarchy in the area convinced Marina that there was no other option but decisive military intervention to restore order and allow the mines to start work again. Maura was sympathetic and asked Marina to make a formal request for more troops and war matériel. But he urged him to await the policy of the new sultan, who had ousted his brother as part of a rebellion in central Morocco, analogous to that of the Rif, against his collaboration with Europe.<sup>46</sup> Faced by an increasingly impatient military lobby, and by pressure from France after a French expedition had attempted to reach the mines without permission, Maura's government finally agreed at the end of May 1909 to a limited military protection of the works.<sup>47</sup>

In successive telegrams to the minister of foreign affairs, Marina warned of increasing agitation amongst the Moroccan tribes for action against the mines. Only the absence of many of the local men, who were working on the harvest in Algeria, was holding up an attack. Three days before the first assault Marina warned the government that the threat was now serious.<sup>48</sup> What followed was by no means a 'predictable tragedy', as many critics of the government were to argue. Both government and military knew that military conflict was likely and they prepared for it. However, they failed to take into account the nature of the enemy and the special conditions in which that war would be fought.

In the vacuum of power after El Rogui's flight, a new chieftain, El Sharif Mohammad Amzian, had emerged in the Rif calling for violent resistance against the Spanish. His was not an exclusively religious movement. Under the banner of a jihad he managed to assemble the different protests against the

<sup>43</sup> Ruiz Albéniz, *Ecce Homo*, 22–24.

<sup>44</sup> Galbán, *España en Africa*, 26–7.

<sup>45</sup> Ruiz Albéniz, *Ecce Homo*, 12.

<sup>46</sup> *Libro Rojo*, no. 435, anejos pp. 166–8.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 251; Germain Ayache, *Les Origines de la guerre du Rif* (Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1981), 140–1.

<sup>48</sup> *Libro Rojo*, no. 619, p. 260, no. 628, p. 266, and no. 640, p. 270.

effects of Spanish penetration. Spanish sources later calculated that he had gathered together some 5,000 warriors.<sup>49</sup> Before June 1909 the Spanish garrison in Melilla numbered 5,700 officers and soldiers. Marina started to deploy a detachment of these troops to protect work on the railway between the mines and Melilla. On 9 July Spanish workers constructing a railway bridge along the line were attacked; six were killed and another injured, while the remainder escaped on the train that had brought them to the site. While his detachment moved quickly to the area, Marina mobilized the Melilla garrison, which had been training for military action for some time, and marched out with most of the troops to drive away the attackers with few losses to either side. Marina also ordered a naval bombardment of coastal villages on 13 July in the area supposedly dominated by the Moroccan resistance movement. The Spanish government, conscious of its negative international impact, called a halt to any further shelling.

As the soldiers were deployed in the area around the mines from 9 July they were subject to repeated guerrilla harassment. Fresh troops from the metropolis were immediately mobilized for action in Morocco, and the first contingent set sail from Spain. The war was deeply unpopular in Spain. Reservists, drawn from the poorer classes who could not pay the sum of money required for exemption from military service, and who had never expected to have to do it at all, were forced to abandon their families and jobs. The Disaster of 1898, the injustices of the ensuing demobilization, and the conviction amongst many that soldiers were being sent merely to defend the mining companies, led to vociferous protests at the ports and stations of embarkation. Such was the strength of feeling against the conflict in Barcelona, the most politicized city in Spain, that an anti-war strike was declared on 26 July by militant metalworkers. Their action triggered a week of rioting, later called the Tragic Week (*Semana Trágica*), that brought into play a range of different grievances against the establishment, in particular the Church.<sup>50</sup>

Not unexpectedly, many of the troops that arrived in Morocco were hardly prepared for the extraordinary conditions of warfare in the Rif. Some were sent into action almost immediately, after spending two days travelling by train through Spain and twelve hours on a rough crossing to the port of Melilla. Insufficient training and lack of incentive among the soldiers hardly made for an efficient army. In addition, the officers had an inadequate knowledge of the terrain and tended to use inappropriate textbook strategy. There were many

<sup>49</sup> The following details of the war, though not the analysis, are drawn mainly from: Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, *Historia*, vol. 2; Carlos Hernández Herrera and Tomás García Figueras, *Acción de España en Marruecos* (Madrid, n.p., 1929–30), vols. 1 and 2; Capitán Eduardo Gallego Ramos, *La campaña del Rif (1909): orígenes, desarrollo y consecuencias* (Madrid, n.p., 1909); Enrique López Alarcón, *Crónica de un testigo: Melilla 1909. Diario de la guerra escrita durante las operaciones militares en el Rif* (Madrid, Hijos de R. Álvarez, 1911).

<sup>50</sup> Joan Connelly Ullman, *The Tragic Week: A Study of Anticlericalism in Spain, 1875–1912* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1968); Balfour, *The End*, ch. 4.

veterans of the 1895–8 colonial campaigns amongst them, but in the new theatre of operations the experience of counter-guerrilla warfare in Cuba and the Philippines had to undergo major adjustments.

The most important differences as far as military tactics was concerned were the terrain and the weather. The Rif, as the etymology of the name exemplifies, is a rugged land of high mountains and deep valleys, ‘a constant dislocation of terrain,’ as the doctor in the mines, Ruiz Albéniz, wrote, ‘made up here of a mountain peak, there a whole mountain range, beyond that a hill, and everywhere a broken terrain, a mad geological configuration’.<sup>51</sup> The climate was one of harsh extremes. In the mountains, the temperature could rise to 50 degrees during the day and plummet to below zero at night. Water, vegetation, and wood were sparse, forcing campaign troops to carry all their supplies with them.

Another problem for the occupying army, not unlike the conditions of the Cuban campaign, was that it could never be sure who the enemy was until it was too late. A General Staff report stated: ‘The absence of a regular and defined enemy, for the struggle is against the tribes of the territory in which combat is taking place and even against others who have joined up, makes it difficult to determine which inhabitants are hostile and which are peaceful, and diminishes the result of victorious combats . . .’<sup>52</sup> The ruthless strategy in the Cuban campaign of forcing the civilian population into concentration camps to clear the countryside of support for the freedom-fighters was not an option available to the Spanish commanders in Morocco, both for logistic reasons and because of Spain’s international commitments.

In certain circumstances, the Rif tribesmen were among the most accomplished guerrilla fighters in the world, equivalent in some respects to the Gurkha warriors of Nepal. Skilled horsemen and mountaineers, they could survive for days carrying only figs, bread, and ammunition in the hood of their jellaba. Their religion assured them that if they died fighting the infidel they would go to paradise. They evaded frontal attacks and fought in small groups. Neither artillery nor cavalry nor fixed bayonet charges were very effective against them. Spanish troop movements and convoys of supplies were almost always vulnerable to their ambushes. They could track the enemy unseen all day, hiding amongst rocks and behind undergrowth waiting for an opportunity to shoot. As an observer of the 1909 war wrote: ‘As they have no positions to defend, no town to guard, no forts to garrison, convoys to escort, provisions to bring, works to carry out, and as in addition they know the land like the back of their hand and are operating in their own territory, they can move about with extraordinary ease knowing only too well that their spies won’t betray them and that their own people in the rearguard run no risk.’<sup>53</sup> They did have

<sup>51</sup> Ruiz Albéniz, *La campaña del Rif. La verdad de la guerra* (Madrid, n.p., 1909), 71.

<sup>52</sup> Estado Mayor Central del Ejército, *Enseñanzas de la campaña del Rif en 1909* (Madrid, n.p., 1911), 11.

<sup>53</sup> Augusto Riera, *España en Marruecos. Crónica de la campaña de 1909* (Barcelona, Maucci, 1909).

settlements and fields to defend, and these would present the Spanish army with targets, but their overall mobility was not thereby significantly impaired. Ruiz Albéniz calculated that each Rif guerrilla was worth a hundred Spanish soldiers.<sup>54</sup>

There were other circumstances in which the traditional military culture of the tribesmen worked to their disadvantage. Concerted resistance to armed penetration across tribes was extremely difficult to achieve because of the fragmentation of social structure. Moreover, tribal alliances were fragile and the leaders of a jihad were forced to make messianic appeals to muster a collective response always conditioned by pragmatic considerations.<sup>55</sup> War was traditionally a means for one tribal leader to assert hegemony over another and for the individual to acquire loot, and often both these mechanisms had to coincide. Combining to halt the invasion of a foreign army, on the other hand, posed almost insuperable problems of supplies, weaponry, ammunition, and above all discipline. The Rifian guerrillas were highly skilled at harassing an army as it advanced. Following up a victory over a conventional force, though, required the sort of co-ordination they sorely lacked. The rifles that tribesmen possessed were more effective for sniping than for pitched battles. The best-armed amongst them owned a Maüser 93 rifle that they had acquired through trade or war loot. Others possessed older rifles that needed repeated, time-consuming reloading.

In the Spanish military discourse of the time, the Rifians' tactics could be seen as treacherous. Far from absorbing the lessons of the colonial wars of 1895–8, in which modern guerrilla and anti-guerrilla warfare was put into practice, Spanish military writers continued to appeal to nineteenth-century values of honour, chivalry, and outmoded rules of engagement. A populist, myth-making account of the 1909 military campaign described the Rifian warriors thus: 'When they want to they accept battle, or seek it out; but when they don't want to, they run away and flee in disorder without fear that their honour might suffer, because they do not know what honour is. They only know about fighting with advantage, and treachery is their only advisor.'<sup>56</sup> Even the more enlightened officers and observers of the military campaign, who favoured commercial over military penetration, evidently failed to understand that European civilization was not generally welcome among the population.<sup>57</sup> Ignorance of what drove the Rifians to fight was exacerbated by the prevailing racism among most Europeans. Contemporary Spanish pictures of

<sup>54</sup> Ruiz Albéniz, *La campaña*, 72.

<sup>55</sup> Amal Vinogradov and John Waterbury, 'Situations of Contested Legitimacy in Morocco: An Alternative Framework', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13: 1 (1971), 32–59.

<sup>56</sup> Riera, *España*, 66.

<sup>57</sup> e.g. the infantry officer Federico Pita in his *La acción militar y política de España en África a través de los tiempos* (Madrid, Revista Técnica de Infantería y Caballería, 1915), and Ruiz Albéniz, *La campaña*.

the Moroccan Other, similar to the racist imagery of other colonial powers, were tinged with nineteenth-century romantic projections.<sup>58</sup>

Quite apart from ignorance of the enemy and problems of logistics, Spain's government and her military had not caught up with changing technology and the consequent transformation of the tactics of warfare. Some military regulations still dated from the pre-1898 period and were only slowly being overhauled. New Infantry Regulations had been approved less than nine months before the 1909 campaign began, and were unlikely to have been fully in place by then. Military tactics had not been fully revised to take into account the new weapons the army was acquiring on the international market.<sup>59</sup> The training of reservists was inadequate and many of them had long forgotten its basic principles. The law of recruitment mobilized individuals from different parts of Spain with no apparent rationale. The disciplinary brigade of soldiers on charges that took part in the first actions on Moroccan soil in 1908 and in the offensive of 1909, suffered frequent desertions, showed little discipline in its use of ammunition, and was notorious for its behaviour in the rearguard. In general, the Spanish army betrayed little preparation for counter-guerrilla warfare.<sup>60</sup>

In the events leading to the so-called 'Disaster of the Wolf Ravine', or Barranco del Lobo, on 27 July, two incidents that took place four days earlier illustrate the shortcomings of Spanish military preparations. A column had set out at night to reach before dawn the heights of a mountain from where Moroccan guerrillas had been directing lethal fire every day at Spanish convoys carrying provisions to troops in advanced positions. With only a rough and inaccurate drawing of the area to guide him, the colonel and his men got lost and found themselves at another position already secured by Spanish troops. When light came, the Moroccans were able to fire on a mass of Spanish soldiers gathered together in a small space. According to one account, the colonel exclaimed, 'Follow me if you're a man!' and charged into the open with a number of officers and men, . . . only to be cut down after a few paces by Moroccan bullets.

Later that day, another column made up of troops who had just arrived from Catalonia halted by a ruined Moroccan dwelling to eat their cold rations. The commander, believing they had left the combat zone, wanted his exhausted troops to eat and rest after their long journey and a full day's campaign. Without adequate cover, and leaving many of their rifles in a pile, they sat down on the ground. As they ate, guerrillas stole up on them and started shooting them down. Many of the soldiers ran off without their arms and others were killed, including their commander and several officers.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> For further discussion of the Moroccan Other see Ch. 7.

<sup>59</sup> General de Torcy, *Los españoles en Marruecos en 1909* (Madrid, Adrian Romo, 1911), 210–11.

<sup>60</sup> Estado Mayor, *Enseñanzas de la campaña del Rif en 1909*.

<sup>61</sup> Hernández Herrera and García Figueras, *Acción de España*, ii. 68–70.

It was above all lack of knowledge of the complex topography of the Rif that led to the Disaster of the Barranco del Lobo. No study had been made of the area and no proper map existed. The result was a simple error of direction that led to the deaths of many Spanish soldiers. During the previous night, some 300 metres of the railway line leading to the mines had been ripped up and damaged by tribesmen. Marina sent out two columns, one to protect the repair of the line and another, led by General Pintos, to prevent the enemy from leaving the valleys nearby where they were supposed to be gathered. Pintos himself, along with one of the brigades of his column, had arrived in Morocco only two days before. His expedition set off for the foothills of the Gurugú mountain range. In the midday light the terrain leading to them seemed a large sloping plain, whereas it was in fact rugged land scored with deep gullies leading to ravines. Although their advance had been preceded by artillery bombardment by both campaign pieces and the long-range guns in nearby Melilla, they found themselves under deadly fire as they laboriously crossed the rough terrain. Grouped in too dense a formation, they began to suffer substantial losses.

As they approached the Barranco del Lobo ravine, Pintos divided the column into two. The right-hand column managed to reach a hill to the right of the ravine. Disregarding Marina's instructions, Pintos led the left column towards the ravine and was killed by a sniper as he sat to rest on a rock. The column that penetrated into the Barranco del Lobo began to be hit by fire from above, in front, and from both sides. Most of the officers were shot dead. The troops retreated in disorder, leaving behind the dead and wounded as well as the mules carrying ammunition. In the action the Spanish army suffered over a thousand casualties, of which around 180 were fatal (casualties on the Moroccan side are unknown). In order to make known his anger over Pintos's action, Marina refused to attend his funeral.<sup>62</sup>

The disaster had the paradoxical effect of mobilizing support in Spain for army action in Morocco. More effectively than a victory, the spectacular defeat strengthened solidarity towards the military among the middle and upper classes. Proper war, with a suitable number of heroic deaths, brought passion and drama to daily life in the peninsula. The facility to evade military service by making a payment to the state was suspended on 4 August. In a blaze of publicity, some young aristocrats volunteered to serve in Morocco with the troops. The disaster also gave a new sense of identity and self-righteousness to officers and many troops stationed in Morocco. Expanding operations gave officers the opportunity for rapid promotion and the award of medals for

<sup>62</sup> Ruiz Albéniz, *La campaña*, 73. There is some polemic over whether Pintos obeyed or disobeyed Marina's instructions. For the view that he was simply following orders, see Roberto Muñoz Bolaños, 'La campaña de 1909', in José Luis de Mesa *et al.*, *Las campañas de Marruecos 1909-1927* (Madrid, Almena, 2001), 31-8.

courage. What had started out as a police operation to protect the mines now turned into a war of revenge against 'barbarian' tribes.

Rather than risking their lives to prop up a corrupt and collapsing empire or to protect the interests of rich speculators, the military now felt at last that they were defending national pride.<sup>63</sup> The outrage over Spanish casualties in the Barranco del Lobo strengthened the latent racism against Arabs. Marina was obliged to issue an order for local inhabitants friendly to Spain to be accompanied by a two-man military escort when they made their way about Melilla. Ruiz Albéniz met a Moroccan acquaintance of his who had fought on the Spanish side in the campaign and who found on his return to Melilla from battle that a relative of his and several other Moroccans had been badly beaten up by Spanish soldiers.<sup>64</sup>

For Marina and probably most of his officers, further military expansion into Spain's sphere of influence beyond the outposts established in 1908 was long overdue. He was insistent that the positions the army was now occupying should be permanent. In a confidential letter to the Minister of War on 15 July, eleven days before the disaster, he had written: 'Even disregarding the protection of the mine works, the main positions we are occupying have immense importance for the expansion of Spain and her influence in this region . . . it is right that I should point out this importance, so that what is provisional should become permanent in the future, for this represents so much for Spain.'<sup>65</sup> For military colonial opinion, the battle in the Barranco del Lobo sanctioned the penetration of the army into areas from where the enemy operated. Especially since their losses on 27 July, the Moroccan fighters now evaded any direct confrontation with Spanish columns and instead confined their actions to assaults on outposts and convoys.

During a two-month halt to operations, and with a steady stream of reinforcements and supplies from Spain, Marina assembled a well-equipped expeditionary force. By mid-September it numbered around 40,000 men. While the troops were largely confined to Melilla, Spanish artillery and naval guns had kept up a daily barrage of the ravines that the troops would soon be crossing.<sup>66</sup> On the Moroccan side, the new leader Mohammad Amzian had emerged in the course of 1909 among the anti-Rogui allies to lead the jihad against Spain, and he profited from the lull in fighting to recruit more fighters.

Operations by Spanish columns to forestall a jihad were a source of preoccupation for the government, for the harsh methods considered necessary by the military augured badly for future relations with local people. The Maura government was keen to hide the brutality of Spanish occupation from civilian eyes at home. The minister of war requested Marina in future 'not to allude in

<sup>63</sup> 'Momentos de expectación' and 'Política africanista: la empresa de ahora', *El Ejército Español*, 5 and 7 Aug. 1909; 'Homenaje al ejército', *La Correspondencia Militar*, 22 Jan. 1910.

<sup>64</sup> Ruiz Albéniz, *La campaña*, 61 and 64.

<sup>65</sup> Estado Mayor, *Historia* (Apéndice), 335.

<sup>66</sup> Hernández Herrera and García Figueras, *Acción de España*, ii. 74.



reports to the destruction of houses and the devastation of fields, recommending to the commanders of columns that in the use of coercive methods against the tribes they adopt military exigency as a norm, avoiding any act of destruction that does not have this necessity as its cause, respecting as far as possible the cattle, seeds, and farming implements, which should be impounded and retained.' The gap between mission and reality was full of wishful thinking. The minister went on to state: 'The pacifying and civilizing mission carried out by our troops should not be marked by ruin, as far as possible, so that the path of reconciliation of minds is left open. We should not have to deal with irrecconcilable people, but on the contrary we must lay the basis for friendly relations in the future.'<sup>67</sup>

Yet after the July disaster such niceties were far from the military mind. This was reflected in an earlier telegram sent on the same day to Marina by the same minister to the effect that the very success of pacification might lead to a suspension of the offensive before it got under way, which would cause great disillusion both in the public and amongst the military, who were keen to subjugate the Rifians. In a further example of the contradictions in which Maura's government now found itself, he also warned that Marina should not publicly state that rebellious tribes had submitted to Spanish troops since this would give the impression that Spain had replaced the authority of the sultan, which, of course, she had been doing for at least a year.<sup>68</sup>

On 20 September Marina's offensive was launched on several fronts.<sup>69</sup> Accompanied by artillery and guided by a reconnaissance balloon, units of infantry and cavalry moved out of advanced positions into territory controlled by the Rif tribes under Amzian. The tribesmen put up a fierce resistance, but by 27 September units had reached the Barranco del Lobo, where they found the remains of the bodies of the troops killed two months earlier, which were sent to Melilla for burial. Mt. Gurugú above the ravine was also occupied, and in an almost theatrical ceremony the Spanish flag was planted at the summit.

These military successes were enthusiastically celebrated in Spain. Several battlefield events, such as the Gurugú flag-planting, became myths of Spanish courage. A further epic story was the action of Corporal Noval. Captured by the Moroccans, he was told to lead them at night to a Spanish position where they could surprise the sentries. But Noval apparently cried out to the sentries to fire and he was shot along with his captors. Such heroic events raised hopes that the war was coming to an end. The government's lifting of restrictions and announcement of the opening of parliament encouraged these hopes. A final push was made in November. Several chiefs who had supported Mohammad Amzian sued for peace and the offensive was finally declared at an end. The repatriation of troops was staged over the following six months. Out of a total

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, appendix, docs. XIX and XX, 15 Sept. 1909, pp. 347–8.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> The following account is drawn from a number of sources, including a semi-official account by Gallego Ramos, *La campaña* and Hernández Herrera and García Figueras, *Acción de España*, vol. 2.

of 42,000 soldiers who had been mobilized since July, 20,000 were left to occupy the conquered region. This area covered some 17,000 square kilometres outside the Melilla frontier.<sup>70</sup>

The 1909 campaign was the catalyst of the Army of Africa. It had been a tough apprenticeship for serving officers in gaining an understanding of the peculiar conditions of warfare in the Rif. There was a renewed awareness of the disadvantages of using Spanish troops doing military service for action in the harsh environment of the Moroccan countryside, in a war to which they felt little commitment. Once again the crucial distinction observed in the Spanish–Cuban war between counter-guerrilla professionals and columns of peasant boys doing military service had become all too apparent. The royal order of August 1909, which had opened the ranks to volunteers, had injected militancy into the campaign army. More importantly, as in the colonies of other European powers, the use of irregular native troops had been highly effective. Spanish military officers, like the politicians themselves, were always looking over their shoulder at the French model just a few miles away in Algeria and Morocco.

The French colonial army under Lyautey had become an efficient and ruthless military machine, relying to a great extent on its mercenary colonial troops. Unlike the Spanish native troops, however, France could draw its mercenaries from other parts of the French Empire such as Senegal, while Spain had to rely on local troops to fight against local enemy. Spain's military command in Morocco had begun to recruit mercenaries from neighbouring tribes to fight against Moroccan resistance. They were good fighters like their enemy and knew the land. These would soon form the core of new regular native troops called the *Regulares*. Before the 1909 campaign, a small force of native police had been created and soon two nuclei were set up on a more permanent basis in the area along with a Native Office. In December they were enlarged to form a full company of native police, capable of operating in other areas under Spanish control.<sup>71</sup>

Many lessons were also learnt regarding military strategy and tactics. A report by the General Staff published in 1911 made a number of unsurprising recommendations based on the experience of the campaign.<sup>72</sup> Shelling by artillery and ships was seen to have been highly effective in cowing the enemy, though not in inflicting heavy casualties because of their mobility. The thorough training of the troops in appropriate skills was essential. Their diet needed to be improved: rather than the heavy doses of rice which they had consumed during the 1909 campaign, they should have lighter and richer food. Oddly to our contemporary tastes, biscuits were recommended as the most useful source of nutrition during operations.

<sup>70</sup> Hernández Herrera and García Figueras, *Acción de España*, ii, 88.

<sup>71</sup> Javier Ramos Winthuysen, *Tropas indígenas y Ejército Colonial* (Seville, n.p., 1921), 41 and 51–2.

<sup>72</sup> Estado Mayor, *Enseñanzas*, 15–320.

As for strategy, according to the report, the army needed to follow up victories rather than retreat to rest. Mobility was vital. The column under a permanent commander should be the main unit of operation and small mobile companies should protect main columns on all sides. Marches should be short. Columns should only go through passes when the heights above were secured. The tactic of enveloping the enemy through lateral movements was far preferable to frontal assault. Infrastructure such as road-building and sanitation needed improving. The adoption of new technology in telecommunications, military hardware, and hygiene was also urged. Many of these recommendations, however, were likely to cost the sort of sums the hard-pressed Spanish governments were hardly inclined to approve, given the continued unpopularity of the war and the fierce demands on the Exchequer from domestic sources, including the metropolitan army.

The 1909 campaign also forged a new colonial identity amongst veterans of the previous colonial wars, and among younger, ambitious officers who relied on military action for the advancement of their careers because they were insufficiently well connected in Spain. The harsh landscape of the Rif, the tough conditions of the campaigns, and the ruthless character of battles helped to shape a sense of identity far removed from the culture of the metropolitan garrison where routine and bureaucracy reigned. It was characterized by elitism, a scorn for the softness of civilian life, and, by extension, of garrison life, and an increasing disdain for civilian government.<sup>73</sup> This self-perception of a unique identity was encouraged by mainland publicity for the defeats and victories, and the wealth of promotions and medals that followed the campaign. The disaster of the Barranco del Lobo alone gave rise to sixty-one promotions.

Understandably, officers in Spain felt put out since they were not given similar opportunities for rapid promotion. One of the daily newspapers for officers launched a campaign at the end of the war arguing that promotion should be based not on the number of casualties but on merit.<sup>74</sup> Why else would the defeat of 27 July be rewarded by so many medals when the successful action of 9 July, when the Rif aggressors were driven away from the railway with few losses, earned none at all?<sup>75</sup> Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, a veteran officer of the Cuban campaign now based in Spain, wrote two open letters in the newspaper arguing for a closed military scale.<sup>76</sup> A rival military newspaper rose to the

<sup>73</sup> See Ch. 6.

<sup>74</sup> 'Sobre la propuesta del 27 de julio', *La Correspondencia Militar*, 23 Dec. 1909; the point was repeatedly argued in the paper throughout December and into January 1910. The question had already aroused much polemic in the military press in April and May 1906.

<sup>75</sup> Joaquín Llorens, 'Los ascensos por méritos de guerra', *ibid.*, 30 Dec. 1909.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 Dec. 1909 and 1 Jan. 1910. The paper also campaigned against the minister of war for allegedly promoting his relatives and friends. For an interesting analysis see a report from the British ambassador in Madrid to the minister of foreign affairs, Lord Grey, in *British Documents*, part 1, vol 28, doc. 47, 14 Jan. 1910.

defence of the promotions system and attacked the campaign.<sup>77</sup> Small demonstrations followed, and the debate became especially heated when the government fined Queipo de Llano and the editor of the newspaper, and arrested a military MP for supporting them. The growing cultural cleavage between colonial officers and military circles in Spain was now intensified by a professional dispute.

Yet even among colonial officers a fissure began to emerge regarding the nature of military occupation in Morocco. The government's precepts about respect for Moroccan society and for its structures of local power were backed by enlightened colonial military opinion. The General Staff report on the role of the military in Morocco insisted that the army was there to enable the Moroccans to rise from barbarism to civilization. Alongside civilian authorities, its function was to oversee the opening of commerce, the building of roads, hospitals, and first-aid centres, and so on throughout the Spanish sphere of influence. The 'natives' had to be treated with a 'nobility of sentiment'. Force should only be used if all other means of persuasion failed; that is, peaceful penetration should always be attempted first. Prisoners should be treated correctly. The army should also respect property and customs and pay the right sums for all goods purchased from local people.<sup>78</sup> Such an approach was backed by two generations of colonial officers.

Though this sort of discourse was obligatory in official settings, in private many colonial officers felt differently. After the 1909 disaster in particular, military instinct was to march into Morocco and break some heads. A new spirit of interventionism in politics was in any case evident after the events in Spain of 1905–6. Impatience with the government's supine policies in Morocco overflowed after July 1909. One of the main mouthpieces of these sentiments was the military paper *El Ejército Español*. Its editorials pushed for military action in Morocco before anything else and whatever the circumstances. In the typically florid language of the time, it declared: 'Weapons plough the virgin soil so that agriculture, industry, and mining might blossom there, so that paths are opened up that become the arteries of commerce.'<sup>79</sup> An army enthusiast himself, the young king encouraged this militarism. After the first action on 9 July he sent a telegram of congratulations to Marina that went far beyond the ritual language of compliment. 'The first act of war waged in my reign has filled me with pride. The great hopes I have placed in the Army and in the future of the Motherland have been fully borne out.'<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> 'Sobre recompensas', *El Ejército Español*, 24 Dec. 1909, and 'Movimiento de escalas', *ibid.*, 11 Feb. 1910.

<sup>78</sup> Estado Mayor, *Enseñanzas*, 15–320.

<sup>79</sup> 'Política africanista. La empresa de ahora', 7 Aug. 1909.

<sup>80</sup> M. García Álvarez and A. García Pérez, *Diario de las operaciones realizadas en Melilla a partir del día 9 de julio de 1909* (Toledo, n.p., 1909), 6.

Among many colonial officers, militarism was accompanied by racism towards Moroccans. Ignorant, primitive, fanatical, barbaric, and infantile, they needed the heavy hand of the army to convince them of the value of European civilization.<sup>81</sup> Racism, imperialism, and militarism were therefore important components of a new right-wing culture within the military. Taking the Prussian military as its model, it celebrated the priority of character and energy of leaders over rules and tactics. Unlike other strands of right-wing opinion, this culture did not sympathize with the conservative clerical establishment and rejected religion as a motive for Spain's colonial advance in Africa. In the words of the military newspaper, *Isabel la Católica's* testament meant merely 'fisticuffs for faith against the infidel', while the army's role was to bring civilization in all its forms.<sup>82</sup>

Both enlightened and militaristic opinion shared a common distrust of neo-colonialism. Officers serving in Morocco had had to risk their lives for the sake of the mining elites, who had been quite happy to do deals with local chieftains behind their back. In contrast to the mining barons, the more progressive business circles in Catalonia and Madrid were still calling for peaceful, commerce-led penetration into North Africa. The earnest neo-colonial discourse of liberal businessmen and intellectuals of the Africanist lobby was greeted with derision by the right-wing military press. Most of them were, according to a military newspaper: 'Exhibitionists, who come more out of a desire to show off than to contribute to the greater glory of the Motherland . . . Military victory is the cutting edge of the victory of commerce and of industry.'<sup>83</sup>

Thus armed with a sense of moral justification and the nucleus of a more professional colonial army, the Spanish military were poised for further expansion into the Moroccan empire. The new military operations would bring them into collision with Moroccan opponents more formidable than those they had previously encountered. Unlike the experience of the French in their Moroccan sphere or the British in Egypt and India, the Spanish had to deal with tribes, fractions of tribes, and chieftains without the benefit of an indigenous hierarchy of power and clientelism. With considerably fewer resources than other colonial powers, Spain began to face resistance that was far more complex and difficult to handle than that of her rivals. Accommodation with local chieftains increasingly broke down as it became clear that Spain was neither respecting their sphere of influence nor bringing the advantages some of them had expected. The British Raj, in contrast, had brought technology to

<sup>81</sup> e.g. Narciso Gibert, *España y Africa* (Madrid, n.p., 1912), 20; Un Africanista más, *La guerra y el problema de Africa. Unas cuantas verdades* (Burgos, n.p., 1914), 1–88; Fernando de Urquijo, *La campaña del Rif en 1909. Juicios de un testigo* (Madrid, n.p., 1910), 248. For further analysis, see Ch. 7.

<sup>82</sup> Modesto Navarro, 'De táctica', *El Ejército Español*, 20 Jan. 1908. See also Carlos Blanco Escolá, *La Academia General Militar en Zaragoza (1928–31)* (Barcelona, Labor, 1989).

<sup>83</sup> *El Ejército Español*, 'El Congreso Africanista', 15 Dec. 1909.

India and created a host of collaborators. When its power was challenged, it had responded by making the sort of political concessions Spain could not afford and most Spanish colonial officers did not want.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London, Abacus, 1997), 417–36.