

**FROM THE AYAN TO AMIR: THE 'ABD AL-KARIM OF THE MOROCCAN RIF,
1900 TO 1921**

by

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B.A., University of Western Ontario, 1985

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From the Ayan to Amir: The Abd al-Karim in the
Moroccan Rif, 1900 to 1921.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the rise, from 1900 to 1921, of one of the most powerful and famous families in early twentieth-century Moroccan history. In 1921, the eldest son, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi (1882-1963) sprang into the limelight of international affairs by becoming the leader of Moroccan resistance to Spain's military occupation. It is as heroes of this resistance that the 'Abd al-Karim are remembered today. The complicated and intriguing process leading to 1921, however, tells a different story, one of social and political ambition that drew on the benefits accruing from collaboration with the Spanish, coupled with frustrated hopes for the modernization of the Rif.

Using original documents from the Servicio Histórico Militar in Madrid, some of which have not been examined before, the thesis stresses the process of social and political ascendancy leading to Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's eventual leadership during the Rif War (1921-1926). The works published to date have not attempted to place the 'Abd al-Karim family within the context of the rise of a landowning and politically influential a'yan that regarded Europeanization and collaboration as a source of support. As a result of the collapse of their role as prime middlemen, the 'Abd al-Karim decided to carry out the modernization of the Rif on their own. It is these virtually unanalyzed aspects of their history with which the thesis deals.

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DEDICATION

A Sol e y Jesús.

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INTRODUCTION

On 6 February 1963, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim died in his Cairo exile at the age of eighty, 'half forgotten', as Roger Le Tourneau put it, by a world that had catapulted him to the headlines of most newspapers over forty years before. His obituary in the Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord, the liberal response to the out-moded colonialist L'Afrique Française, outlined the main events of his colourful career as the most widely known North African of the interwar period. His outlook and politics were relegated deprecatingly to the past. Ibn 'Abd al-Karim, stated Le Tourneau, 'cherished ideas from another age...except probably in his native country, his death was received in an atmosphere of general indifference.'¹ Even in Morocco, it was clear that he was more revered as a hero of early anti-colonial military resistance than as a practical and ambitious politician of colonial days.²

How different this was from ibn 'Abd al-Karim's own image of himself. Following his surrender to French forces in 1926, he had confidently explained that his defeat was due to the forces of tradition in the Rif; in his eyes he had come before his

¹Roger Le Tourneau, 'Chronique Politique,' in Annuaire de l'Afrique du Nord (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et le Centre de Recherche sur l'Afrique Méditerranéene, 1963), 234-35.

²See Abdallah Laroui's comments, 'Abd el-Krim et le nationalisme marocain jusqu'en 1947,' in Abd el-Krim et la République du Rif: Actes du Colloque International de'Etudes Historiques et Sociologiques, 18-20 Janvier 1973 (Paris: François Maspéro, 1976), 482.

time.³

The scholarly debate that ensued from the rout of the Spanish army at Annual in 1921 relied until 1982 almost exclusively on secondary sources or piecemeal reconstructions based on folkloric recollections of the famous 'Abd al-Karim family. Thematically, the polemic revolved around what appeared to be the most important question: was ibn 'Abd al-Karim's leadership of the Rifians traditional, modern or pre-nationalist? If traditional, his power and ambitions were directed to keeping the Rifian tribes autonomous from any sort of centralized control, along the lines of the so-called 'traditional Berber' resistance. For those who propounded the view that his was an essentially modern movement, the crux of the issue was ibn 'Abd al-Karim's role as a 'nationalist resistance fighter.'⁴ Finally, according to the apparently synthetic approach taken by some who valued his contribution to 'liberation' from European imperialism, but hesitated to qualify it as fully modern, ibn 'Abd al-Karim represented a nascent pre- or proto-nationalism. The last interpretation, leaving the notable somewhere in a nebulous unexamined limbo between the 'old Morocco' of Walter Harris and Abdallah Laroui's 'nationalist discourse', was the safest path and the one most used.

³Ibid., 484.

⁴Mao Tse-Tung is credited with circulating this interpretation, Abd el-Krim et la République, 401.

What failed to be postulated for many years was an analysis of social, economic and political developments as a whole that would explain events in their context from the end of the nineteenth century to the final 'digestion' of Morocco, to use a favorite expression of Lyautey, in the 1930s. Historians thought of 1912 with a fixation that impeded them from grasping the continuity of a local situation neither belonging to the Morocco of the early nineteenth century, nor to that of the heyday of the Protectorate. In Muslim terms, this period in the Rif to which the 'Abd al-Karim belonged could be referred to as the first forty years of the fourteenth century.

The traditionalist approach is best exemplified by two North African specialists who represented the pro-Makhzan attitude in two very different situations, E. Michaux-Bellaire and Robert Rézette. In his lectures to the future officiers des Affaires Indigènes during the early years of the Rif War, E. Michaux-Bellaire made it clear that ibn 'Abd al-Karim was leading another of the timeless battles against the Christians and the central Makhzan.⁵ Thirty years later, Robert Rézette continued to expound the same theory:

It is incorrect to represent 'Abd al-Karim's revolt as the first manifestation of Moroccan "nationalism". It was in reality a new episode in the eternal dissidence of the badly-Islamised Berbers against central Arab power, an always latent dissidence that needed no more than a warchief to manifest itself violently.⁶

⁵See his 'Le Rif' and 'A propos du Rif,' AM 18 (1927): 175-240.

⁶Robert Rézette, Les Partis politiques marocains (Paris: Cahiers de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1955), 60.

The Spanish had their equivalent interpreters, although these were usually both more biased against ibn 'Abd al-Karim personally and yet better informed. The man who was heralded in the summer of 1921 as 'le mystérieux' by the French was not an unknown entity for the Spanish. Cañido Lobera, who had been his superior as editor of the Melilla newspaper, El Telegrama del Rif, damned him for being 'an adventurer' who lacked the 'religious tradition and chivalrous prestige' of the other notorious opponent of Spain, al-Raisuni.⁷ Another Spaniard, expressing the view of the vast majority who knew the Rifian notable before the battle of Annual, spoke bitterly of a 'shrewd fellow' who had elevated himself to unprecedented heights by the use of 'European-style roguery.'⁸

This traditionalist approach resisted the changes in scholarly attitudes of the 1960s. Despite the merits of John Halstead's Rebirth of a Nation,⁹ the nature of his thesis depended on a clear-cut distinction between the pre-nationalist period and the post-1930s political party agitation; thus ibn 'Abd al-Karim had to be presented as 'at heart the "last great chief of the Holy War in Morocco" and his struggle began and ended as a tribal movement.'¹⁰ The jump from the 1927

⁷Cándido Lobera, 'La acción española en Marruecos durante el año 1925,' RTC (January 1926): 9.

⁸Francisco Gómez Hidalgo, Marruecos, la tragedia prevista (Madrid: Juan del Pueyo, 1921), 262.

⁹J. Halstead, Rebirth of a Nation (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University, 1967).

¹⁰Ibid., 33.

pacification of the Rif to the 1930 Berber dahir was qualitative as well as quantitative for Halstead.¹¹

For 'Alal al-Fasi, a fellow Moroccan politician, ibn 'Abd al-Karim was a true hero of the independence movement, although not in the style of al-Fasi's own young generation. According to al-Fasi, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim fought 'the sentimental words' and 'false promises' of the benefits of European civilization with bullets; 'This is indeed the spirit of al-Maghrib.'¹²

The surge of nationalist sentiment and the independence of Morocco in 1956 produced a change in the interpretation of that country's recent history. On the less academic side of the spectrum, Rupert Furneaux (1967)¹³ and David Woolman (1968)¹⁴ published romanticized accounts of the rise of the 'Abd al-Karim. In ^{Furneaux} Woolman's case, the study is hardly more than a hagiography of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim. On the other side, David M. Hart carried out a thorough anthropological study of the Banu Waryaghil, the 'Abd al-Karim's tribe, which was

¹¹Cf. though Charles-Robert Ageron, 'La politique berbère du Protectorat Marocain de 1913 à 1934,' Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine 28 (1971): 50-90.

¹²'Alal al-Fasi, The Independence Movements of Arab North Africa, trans. Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh, American Council of Learned Societies Near Eastern Translations Program, no. 8 (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1954), 91-107.

¹³Rupert Furneaux, Abdelkrim: Emir of the Rif (London: Secker & Warburg, 1967).

¹⁴David Woolman, Rebels in the Rif (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968).

published in 1976 under the title, The Aith Waryagħar of the Moroccan Rif.¹⁵

Hart based his account on interviews with surviving participants of the 1920s war and all the secondary sources available to him at the time. This remained the best study for six years. Hart broke with the traditionalist interpretation of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, but refused to consider him a full-blown modern politician. The Rifian leader was left in a political purgatory, neither fully traditional like the Middle Atlas Berber resistance leaders, nor entirely modern like the Istiglal.¹⁶ This approach was echoed by non other than Ernest Gellner in 1981, who characterised ibn 'Abd al-Karim as neither a 'saint' nor a 'puritan', standing somewhere half-way between traditional and modern resistance to the Europeans.¹⁷

The interest in studying resistance to western imperialism fostered a radical alteration in interpretation that is best exemplified by Pessah Shinar's comparative analysis (1965) of 'Abd al-Qadir and ibn 'Abd al-Karim.¹⁸ Shinar argued that, unlike the Algerian amir, the Rifian leader

¹⁵David M. Hart, The Aith Waryagħar of the Moroccan Rif: An Ethnography and History (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976).

¹⁶Ibid., 373.

¹⁷Ernest Gellner, Muslim Society (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 148.

¹⁸Pessah Shinar, "'Abd al-Qadir and 'Abd al-Krim: Religious Influences on Their Thought and Action,' Asian and African Studies 1 (1965): 139-74.

constituted a *novum* in the religio-political annals of the Maghreb - the first manifestation of modern militant Arabo-Berber nationalism and Islamic modernism in a purely Berber environment.¹⁹

This was an advance on the idea that ibn 'Abd al-Karim was merely another Berber chieftain causing trouble in the mountains. Shinar, however, stressed the secular nature of the Rif War and ibn 'Abd al-Karim's leadership to the detriment of the continuity of a traditional tribal Islamic resistance to Christians. Ibn 'Abd al-Karim was not a militant of any Arabo-Berber nationalism; that he was a novum hits closer to the mark. It would take the thorough research of Germain Ayache to bring the nature of this novum to the fore.

Germain Ayache's Les origines de la guerre du Rif²⁰ (1982) was the first study of the 'Abd al-Karim using original sources as its base. Instead of focussing his analysis on the Rif war, the traditional interest of historians, Ayache broke new ground by analyzing the years leading up to the Rifian victory of Annual. Ayache's use of the archival material is at times difficult to cross-check due to the frequent changes in cataloguing systems, for example, at the Servicio Histórico Militar. It is evidently scholarly and fairly comprehensive.

The book, however, is marred by Ayache's strained interpretation of the material, a drawback caused mainly by his

¹⁹Ibid., 165.

²⁰G. Ayache, Les origines de la guerre du Rif (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1982).

tireless crusading for the nationalist thesis, which is by no means limited to the 'Abd al-Karim²¹; for Ayache, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim is a modern nationalist. However, as M'hammad Benaboud has pointed out in a recent review of the book, Ayache seems to disprove his own thesis, by presenting ibn 'Abd al-Karim as precisely 'the antithesis of the popular leader so forcefully.'²², The only explanation that Ayache gives for the lasting collaboration with Spain which his study uncovers is that the 'Abd al-Karim wanted 'to spare their brothers the sufferings of a hopeless war' against the foreign aggressor.²³ By strait-jacketing the material, Ayache accomplishes the impossible; a North African sympathetic to the nationalist hypothesis like Benaboud is left convinced of the opposite thesis. Ayache's final conclusion is that Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim founded 'the first peasant State to be born in history.'²⁴

The most recent work is C.R. Pennell's well-documented presentation of the Rif War itself.²⁵ Relying on Ayache's

²¹See for example his, 'Le sentiment national dans le Maroc du XIXe siècle,' Revue Historique 240 (October-December 1968): 393-410, and, more specifically, 'Société rifaine et pouvoir central marocain (1850-1920),' Revue Historique 259 (October-December 1975): 345-70.

²²M'hammad Benaboud, 'Reflections on the Origins of the War of the Rif,' Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine 27-28 (December 1982): 376.

²³G. Ayache, Les origines, 163.

²⁴Ibid., 15

²⁵C.R. Pennell, A Country with a Government and a Flag: The Rif War in Morocco, 1921-1926 (Gallipoli House, Cambridgeshire,

conclusions, Pennell divorces the 'Abd al-Karims' break with Spain, 1919 to 1921, from their previous history. Ignoring the reasons for the 'Abd al-Karim's collaboration with Spain, apart from the inevitability that Ayache stressed, the leadership of the 'Abd al-Karim is explained curiously enough along the lines of the middle-of-the-way interpretation, although the nation-building ideology of Muhammad is considered something new:

...from the beginning bin 'Abd al-Karim had the intention of creating a very different system, one based not on the traditions of Berber autonomism but on resistance to the Europeans. To this he added a mixture of salafi-inspired reform and technological progress.²⁶

He contradicts this by stating that the 'Abd al-Karim were practically forced by 'existing social and political pressures' to join the rising crest of 'the tradition of localised resistance to the Christians.'²⁷ Pennell's recipe reads too much like just that, a recipe.

The process leading to the 'Abd al-Karim's leadership in the Rif War was fundamentally linked to the social and political changes that were then occurring in the Rif. The 'Abd al-Karim's position as notables was ultimately strengthened by these changes and consequently the ideological and political stances they espoused reflected their growing status. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi was indeed a novum but he was also, along

²⁵(cont'd) England: Middle East and North African Studies Press and Menas Press, 1986).

²⁶Ibid., 237.

²⁷Ibid., 56.

with the other members of his family, a man of his times. This thesis intends to examine him as such and to analyze both the constraints and the opportunities.

Note on Transcriptions and Translations

The forms of geographical names common on the Protectorate maps have been preferred, unless a more usual English transliteration exists, such as Tangier. Wherever possible, tribal names appear in their Arabic form, e.g. Banu Waryaghah and not the parochial Shluh Aith Waryaghah. Personal names are likewise given in the Arabic original, Muhammad not the more common Rifian Mohand.

The transliteration system employed is the one used in the International Journal of Middle East Studies, although it has been simplified. Alif is not transcribed and diacritical marks have been dispensed with.

All translations have been done by the present author, who hopes that he has not fallen prey too often to the treacherous syndrome of the 'traduttore, traditore'.

Note on the Maps

Figure A: Northern Morocco has been drawn using the 1918 Elola y Méndez map of the Protectorate put out by the Alta Comisaría de España en Marruecos. Figure B: The Alhucemas Bay Area is a composite taken from the ordinance map Croquis de la bahía de Alhucemas: E(jército de) M(arruecos), formado en la Sección Topográfica dirigida por la Comisión Geográfica, con Trabajos de Aviación y referencias [c. 1924], SHM 24/1, and various maps in David M. Hart, The Aith Waryagħar of the Moroccan Rif (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1976).

Abbreviations used

AF-Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française et du Comité
du Maroc.

AM-Archives Marocaines; Publication de la Mission Scentifique
du Maroc.

RC-Renseignements Coloniaux et documents publiés par le Comité
de l'Afrique Française; monthly supplement to AF

RTC-Revista de Tropas Coloniales.

SHM-Servicio Histórico Militar, Madrid.

TR-Telegrama del Rif.

PART A
BEFORE THE PROTECTORATE

CHAPTER I

"THE TEAPOT AND THE CUPS"

Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition; and when Allah intends evil to a people, there is no averting it, and besides Him there is no protector.

Quran, 13:11

To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

R. Kipling, *The White Man's Burden*

Politics and Police

Power politics in Northern Morocco in the early years of this century was a matter of powder and prestige. The first could be had fairly readily as a result of the burgeoning contraband trade in arms, especially in the favoured regions of the Rifian coastline, and the latter was mostly a derivative of the first, if funds were available. Wealth was measured in terms of flocks, land and cash; the possession of these elements in sufficient concentration made one a notable. The revenue, arms, prestige and clients associated with a·yan status afforded one the opportunity of being able to participate in what was termed *puliteca* by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim in 1919.¹

Puliteca, politics, was the term used to designate the highly profitable but risky business of becoming pensioners and informers of the Spanish, who after their defeat in the war of

¹SHM 3/7. Letter from Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to Manuel Civantos dated 21 February 1919.

1898 against the United States, had become increasingly interested in transferring their dashed hopes of imperial glory to Morocco. The Spanish approach to expansion in the Rif was based at first on a limited military presence; they relied on cash payments and other privileges to attract the a·yan. Those notables who collaborated could also become leaders of Spanish-paid Muslim contingents, or 'police', which were the front-line troops well into the Protectorate. The highest degree of ambition for the powerful was to be a player in this binomial of police and politics. The politically-minded notable could cajole the Spanish into paying him to try to keep his clansmen, clients and labourers quiet whenever clashes occurred, or conversely use the power accruing from collaboration to overcome local rivals.

With Spanish penetration of the Rif and Jbala areas, beginning in earnest in 1909 in Melilla, the possibilities, and perils, of this political activity were doubled. When the Spanish took over the job of the Makhzan in 1912, it was naturally the expectation of many of these collaborating notables that they would fill the new centralized government's posts. But while this could be highly profitable, it also exposed the a·yan to persecution by their own tribesmen. The resistance to the advance of the always hated and despised Christian was popular in every sense of the word; thus the slight difference between playing politics or actively policing on behalf of Spain was meaningless for the populace of the Rif

when faced with a traditional enemy. The notables had a choice, either ride at the head of resistance or be swamped by it. For years before the outbreak of the famous Rif War, the 'Abd al-Karim see-sawed back and forth between the Spanish and their fellow Rifians, benefitting from the possibilities and overcoming the perils.

The notables' tribal power base was exercised traditionally through the two types of war parties that existed in the Rif: the haraka and the mahalla. The familiar concepts of Bilad al-Siba and Bilad al-Makhzan can be seen at work here. Government forces made up of mostly regular troops, makhazni, were called a mahalla, that is 'encampment', while for the local armed groups, the significant term haraka ('harca' in the Spanish sources) was used.² Haraka literally means 'movement, action' and if the Moroccan proverb 'In action lies the baraka'³ is correct, and all indications are that it was at the beginning of this century, then the relation between the inadequate Government and the active autonomous 'local boys' is

²See the interesting analysis by Aberrahman El Moudden, 'Etat et société rurale à travers la haraka au Maroc du XIXème siècle,' The Maghrib Review 8 (1983): 141-45, and D. Hart's glossary, The Aith Waryagħar s.v. (r-)harxth and mhalla; W. Harris' knowledge of Morocco did not always serve him in good stead: he mistook haraka for haraqa and translated the term as 'the burning', Morocco that Was (Westport, Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970) 2. Cf. E. Burke, Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 14.

³Fi l-harakat, al-baraka. Baraka, see glossary, is the saintly quality of God-given good luck. It is acquired through proof of strength, invulnerability, etc., and forfeited through failure, weakness, etc.. It may, however, be transmitted through touch, pieces of clothing or even such items as teeth and hair.

revealed. One stood while the other ran.

It is impossible to understand the politics of the Rifian notables like the 'Abd al-Karim without grasping the dynamics of the haraka. Rifians did not need to get themselves worked up to pick up their rifles; male adulthood was traditionally intimately linked with initiation into the world of guns and fighting. Rifians did not form haraka-s only for ideological reasons, but because there were very practical benefits, namely the right to claim support (muna) from the tribesmen who did not participate and loot. Dominance within the tribe, therefore, depended on the size of the haraka one could command. Any notable who could afford to pay muna and gather men at the local markets, the usual recruitment centre, could bolster his power in the face of those notables who could not. That was where Spanish money came in handy in the local struggles for power.

Before the Spanish took an active interest in the Rif, the only centralized authority that existed was the Makhzan, which periodically materialized in the region in the form of a mahalla, a super-haraka representing not a small group of interests but the Sultan's Islamic prestige and legitimacy. By steps, however, the central authority became associated with the Spanish efforts to help organize, 'civilize', the Rif. Even before it was stipulated in the 1906 Act of Algeciras, the policing of the coast and the supervision of customs came under Franco-Spanish supervision. The first body of police was established in Tangier in 1904 under Franco-Algerian supreme

command.⁴ The Spanish contributed to the force in Tangier, but preferred to delegate their job in the Rif, even near Melilla, to patrols made up of Rifians under some pensioned influential notable. From their instatement, the patrols were known as ipulisen in Berber.⁵ The term 'police' came to be associated with anyone who collaborated with outsiders; Si 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi himself was known to some as a pulis.⁶

Whether they led haraka-s against personal enemies, enemies of the Spanish, or the Spanish themselves, it was the notables who were in charge. They were the ones who profited from the interplay between the two poles of power, the local and that which was provided by the outside, the Sultan's Makhzan and the Spanish administration in its plazas de soberanía. They were in effect the brokers in this power game.

⁴AF (September 1904): 285-286. The Algerian troops (zouaves) brought in were referred to as 'turcos' by the populace.

⁵See D. Hart, The Aith Waryagħar, 375, where he quotes two folksongs still sung in the 1950's about ipulisen versus the mujahidun at the battle of Abarrán. Al-Raisuni also referred to the Spanish troops as police on many occasions, R. Forbes, El Raisuni, Sultan of the Mountains (London: Thornton Butterworth), *passim*. In my own research at the SHM, many of the Rifian informers constantly used police as a synonym in their confidencias for the colonial troops.

⁶SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim*. Letter by a Banu Waryaghāl informer dated 14 May 1915.

The Notables

The most powerful player in the northwestern part of Morocco was a notable of sharifian descent called al-Raisuli (1868-1924). In 1915, General Fernández Silvestre, in charge of the Spanish penetration of that area, indignant at al-Raisuli's stirring up of the Jbala tribes against Spain, rebuked him angrily, accusing him of using his influence to fan the flame of rebellion. Unperturbed, the sharif answered: 'You are right, and it was my influence which kept them quiet for so long.'⁷ Like al-Raisuli, the rest of the notables in Northern Morocco were aware of and utilized the special position they held.

This situation is not unlike the one that Albert Hourani has described for the Ottoman Empire in its last stages, except that, as in many other respects, the Far West of the Muslim World (al-Maghrib al-Aqsa) was both cruder and much more decentralized.⁸ The politics of 19th Century Ottoman notables was present in Rifian society, even if diluted by distance and differing historical circumstances. The basic components of the power of what Hourani calls the patriciate, access to authority, representing the ruler, and independence from this same ruler in the exercise of local 'natural' leadership, hold true for the 'Abd al-Karim family in the Rif. Hourani's separation of the

⁷R. Forbes, El Raisuni, 168.

⁸For a brief examination of the differences, see E. Burke, 'Morocco and the Near East' Archives Européennes de Sociologie 10 (1969): 70-94.

notables into three kinds, the 'ulama, the garrison commanders and the 'secular notables', can be applied to the situation in the Rif.⁹

By 1912 the 'Abd al-Karim had garnered the Rifian equivalent of all three positions. Consequently they faced much the same problematic situation as their political counterparts in the Eastern half of the Dar al-Islam.

Thus in general their [the a'yan's] actions must be circumspect: the use of influence in private; the cautious expression of discontent, by absenting themselves from the ruler's presence; the discreet encouragement of opposition -but not up to the point where it may call down the fatal blow of the ruler's anger.¹⁰

All of this describes admirably the position of the Rifian notables who collaborated, especially in the case of the 'Abd al-Karim. The basic difference lies in the extreme centrifugal nature of Moroccan society which allowed coarser discontent and a less discreet encouragement of opposition. The dependence by the Spanish until well into the Protectorate on the notables' representation gave the latter almost a free hand in the handling of Spanish interests locally.

It was also the notables, the powerful men of the Rif's

⁹A. Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables', in The Beginnings of Modernisation in the Middle East, ed. W. Polk and R. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 43-49; cf. Philip S. Khoury, Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁰A. Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform,' 46.

'dog-eat-dog' world according to Hart¹¹, who profited the most from the complexities of the transformations which hit northern Morocco. This they could do due to their privileged position as middlemen between Spain and the Rif. The 'Abd al-Karim became fervent believers and participants in this *pas de deux*. It was a tricky dance, where tripping could mean being tossed out of the dance-hall. It entailed combining the right amount of external subservience with internal domination and, above all, keeping the Rifian peasants and the Spanish military far from each other. There could be no middlemen without a middle ground. East of al-Raisuli, the 'Abd al-Karim fought their rivals in the Rif and managed to dominate this middle ground.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim himself jockeyed ruthlessly to acquire the most prestigious post in Melilla, the gadi-ship. His father, 'Abd al-Karim, an agent for Spanish interests as well as his own, controlled the most important local Makhzan position, as well as becoming economically proponderant and being able to pay and arm his own soldiers. Muhammad's younger brother covered yet another base, as an Engineering student at Spain's most reknowned school in Madrid.

The kaleidoscopic involvement of this a'yan family in all the possible aspects of 'notability' was mutually advantageous to them and to Spain. As long as the balance of the various poles of power and influence was not unduly upset, both could

¹¹D. Hart, The Aith Waryaghar, 12.

hope to increase their command of the situation. If the balance were upset, then the 'Abd al-Karim would have no choice but to throw their weight behind whoever they thought held the upper hand. Before World War I, the scales rested precariously in the Rif, and in all of Morocco, in favour of collaboration with the Europeans. The scale had not yet been irremediably tipped.

Sitting on the fence had its good side. As middlemen, the 'Abd al-Karim expected to be the 'teapots' that would fill the 'cups' of the common Rifians with the beneficial medicine of modernization.¹² Whether this ideal stemmed from conviction or pragmatism is a moot point; as with most politicians, a judicious amount of both was needed in surviving politically and achieving one's goals. They shared this modernizing aspiration with many other a'yan throughout Morocco, those members of what Jean-Louis Miège has aptly termed the 'seigneurie rurale'.¹³ This social group had arisen during the nineteenth century as a result of Morocco's adjustment to the economic changes caused by Europe's commercial invasion. Administrative reforms carried out by the Makhzan shaped the 'seigneurie', but it was as a result of the central government's weakness that their political power grew. From among this social group, it was the finance administrators (umana) who emerged 'by the close of the century'

¹²I am indebted to al-Raisuli's imaginative analogical prowess for this simile, R. Forbes, El Raisuni, 142.

¹³J.-L. Miège, Le Maroc et l'Europe, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), v. 4, 409-423.

as 'a new bourgeoisie.'¹⁴

The growing importance of the reformed umana represented one aspect of the modernization of Morocco which the European legations demanded. The umana's better interest was therefore to uphold this selfsame process of modernization, which inevitably became inextricable from participating in the increasing European interests in Morocco. The early part of this century was still 'the age of Europe' and the up-and-coming notables, like the umana, did not doubt that 'to be modern was to be in communion with her'. ¹⁵ Modernization was, give or take some religious grumbling, mainly a matter of Europeanization.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim reiterated this on many occasions, both publicly and in his private correspondence.

Oh Muslims, oh my brothers, listen to my advice, because the only goal which I pursue with all my strength, with Allah's help to whom I look for success, is reform and progress. Confide in us, for we have only your good and this land's renovation in mind...Take the Europeans as a model, and your lands will cover you also with abundance and profits. What a good and beautiful land if only it were cultivated as in Europe! Over there, you know, things are studied beforehand to avoid needless toil. To overcome agricultural difficulties, people there have invented and manufacture machines. But you, alas, you are still using the plow, the hoe, and other 'antiques'.¹⁶

¹⁴E. Burke, Prelude to Protectorate, 34-35; we must be careful, though, in assuming that European social models can be transcribed to Moroccan realities; this bourgeoisie was not by any means a solely urban phenomenon.

¹⁵A. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 346.

¹⁶Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, article in El Telegrama del Rif, 4 October 1910, quoted in G. Ayache, Les Origines de la Guerre du Rif, (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1982), 180-181. This

To bring about the much needed transformation, there had to be leaders. Naturally, the enlightened a'yan concluded that they would fill the positions in government, finance and society, that would be generated from the Rif's 'reform and progress'. Moreover, they could kill two birds with one stone by leading the country's modernization and at the same time buttressing the power they already had as influential notables.

It was clear to the 'Abd al-Karim for example that the time had come to reinforce their strength at the expense of the atavistic elements of their society. In the Rif, the myriad heads of family fought against the seigneurie rurale that was trying to concentrate power in its hands.¹⁷ It was the extremely diluted power base that the new style of politicians, such as the 'Abd al-Karim, wanted to do away with; this caused frequent violent confrontations between the supporters of the 'old style' and the reformers. One armed conflict occurred on 25 February 1915, between the followers of tradition, under the sharif Sidi Hamid al-Shadli, and Si 'Abd al-Karim's partisans at the Wednesday Market (sug) of Ajdir. 'Abd al-Karim was opposed to the idea that village councils (aghraw-s) should bring together all the family heads; instead he wanted only those who qualified

¹⁶(cont'd) was written at the height of his Europeanizing stage. The Telegrama del Rif articles proved as elusive for me as they did for D. Hart; I have therefore had to rely on Ayache's excerpts, 178-186.

¹⁷The number of ethnological and anthropological works on the Rif far surpasses the small corpus dedicated to its history. D. Hart's work, the best known representative of the former breed, stresses the segmentary nature of Rifian society, whose politics functioned as organized 'acephaly', The Aith Waryaghar, 12.

as a'yan to be present. He was prepared to impose his view with his repeating rifles. Faced with 'Abd al-Karim's superior arms, al-Shadli retreated from the sug. ¹⁸

Spain's support afforded the a'yan advantages in their efforts to bring the Rif under their control.¹⁹ This even reached the point where the implementation of Spanish policies, such as the system of pensions, was to be under the control of the notables. In 1913, as gadi in Melilla, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim advised the military administration to 'strengthen the authority of the notables in the cultivated lands ('campo'), beginning with Ajdir (his home town)'.²⁰ Among its tribal fractions²¹ all those who received pensions without their shaikh's approval, should no longer receive them.²² Moreover, he threatened that if the Spanish failed to support the notables, he and his entire family would literally have to 'hit the

¹⁸ SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim*. Note from the Commanding Officer in Alhucemas to Melilla of the same day.

¹⁹ In an only slightly different context, al-Raisuli also stated that he wanted to create 'a united party among the educated which would be able to benefit from the advent of civilization,' R. Forbes, El Raisuni, 15.

²⁰ SHM 2/1. *Informes, Oficina Central de Asuntos Indígenas*. 19 September 1913.

²¹ Rifian tribes were divided into clans and then fractions, usually five; political factions, equated by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim in 1925 with the Spanish juntas, were organized according to these fractions, the basic political block, Abd el-Krim et la République du Rif (Paris: Maspéro, 1976), 109.

²² Shaikh was the singular of a'yan in Rifian use. D. Hart is wrong in ascribing the beginning of the use of shaikh to the rise of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim in the 1920's, The Aith Waryaghar, 464.

hills'.²³

This was the sort of pressure the 'Abd al-Karim tried to exert on the Spanish. If collaboration with Spain was contingent on Spain's acceptance of the notables' role, it also hinged on the assumption that Spain was interested in and would follow the notables' guidelines. This the Spanish military became increasingly less willing to do. Furthermore, Spanish verbal support, usually forthcoming, was frequently subsumed in unfulfilled plans and fruitless backstabbing.

In an article published in 1911, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim pointed out the flaws of French intervention in North Africa. His comments were as much for the benefit of his Muslim readers²⁴ as for the Spanish colonial office.

France has used force, she has struck the Muslim's leaders and has known how to destroy their unity with provocations...she led astray the notables she tempted with the promise of high office, if they chose her friendship and placed themselves at her service, while, contrary to this, in reality she was threatening all those who were recalcitrants.²⁵

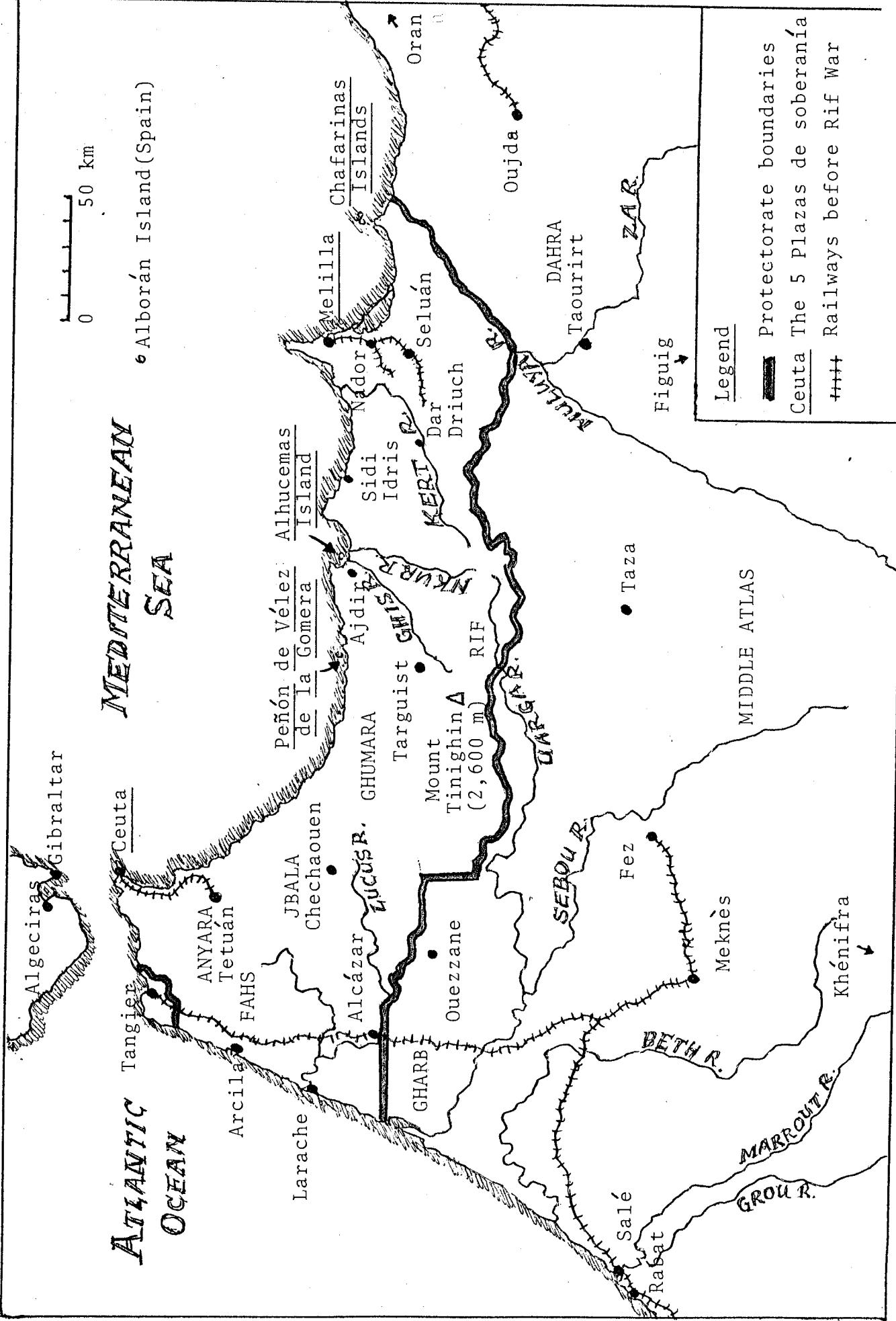
Ironically, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim could not foresee at the time the disillusionment he too would suffer as a result of the militarization of Spain's mission in Morocco. For now the 'Abd al-Karim remained, in their dealings with the Spanish, staunch

²³SHM 2/1. *Informes, Oficina Central de Asuntos Indígenas*. 19 September 1913.

²⁴I use the term Muslim instead of Moroccan because according to Muhammad that was 'the term they use to designate themselves,' TR 12 October 1910.

²⁵TR 9 July 1911; cf. AF (June 1904): 203-204.

Figure A: Northern Morocco



advocates of the 'trickle-down' theory: benefits from the Europeans for the a'yan would lead to the civilizing of Morocco. An excellent example of this is the introduction of modern medicine into the notables' lives.

It was Ahmad al-Raisuli who stated that Spain would conquer the country with her doctors.²⁶ Access to the advances of science was one of the most obvious advantages of the 'Abd al-Karim's early collaboration. At the time of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's advice to the colonial administration in Melilla, his father was spending a week in a French spa in Oran at Spain's expense, being treated for his recurrent rheumatism.²⁷ As early as October 1906, the fateful year of the Act of Algeciras, 'Abd al-Karim senior had frequented Melilla's hospital to be treated for a chronic eye illness, possibly glaucoma.²⁸ In later years, he made other paid visits to the clinic and pharmacy on Alhucemas Island.²⁹

Unfortunately, neither the 'trickle-down' theory nor Spain's good offices panned out in the end. There were several reasons. For one, the Abd al-Karim seem to have considered most of their

²⁶R. Forbes, El Raisuni, 77.

²⁷SHM 1/5.

²⁸An Indigenous Hospital was set up sometime between 1907 and 1910 in Melilla, AF (September 1910): 280-290.

²⁹SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim*, and SHM 1/3. *Informes, Oficina Central de Asuntos Indígenas*. As a result of his growing estrangement with the Spanish, 'Abd al-Karim refused to go to Alhucemas on 2 October 1914, although the Spanish doctor there urged him to, based on reports of his failing eyesight.

fellow countrymen to be, in their own words, savages. In his correspondence with his Spanish friends, 'Abd al-Karim often referred to the armed peasants who resisted the foreigners as mutuhhishun, 'savages'. ³⁰ Even as late as 1919, when all hope of reconciliation with Spain had apparently vanished, both of 'Abd al-Karim's sons restated their belief in the need to civilize the Rif. Muhammad's letter to a personal friend, from whom he had nothing to gain by stroking his Spanish ego, summed up the 'Abd al-Karim stance.

We are, and always will be, supporters of Spain's civilizing mission. As you well know, with respect to what our people might say about our conduct, we do not value it in the least because they are a backwards people with very limited horizons and they always speak ill of those who aren't like them.³¹

Later that year, his brother repeated the belief that it would only be by supporting the a'yan, the 'important' and the 'intelligent' versus the 'anarchy' which had plagued the Rif, that Spain would be able to civilize the Rif. ³² This was of course as much an indictment of the Spanish failure in the past as it was a weak attempt to keep the Spanish connection alive just in case a reconciliation with them became necessary.

³⁰In a letter to General Jordana, he laments the fact that a Spanish soldier, a policeman by the name of Concha, 'fell into the hands of these savages'. SHM 3/1. 'Abd al-Karim to Jordana, 18 June 1913.

³¹SHM 3/7. Letter from Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to Manuel Civantos, 21 February 1919.

³²SHM 1/5. Letter to Manuel Aguirre, Secretary of the Moroccan Section of the Ministry of the Interior, dated 15 August 1919.

Furthermore the 'Abd al-Karim had mistaken Spanish interest in Morocco for Spanish interest in the reforming notables' plans for Morocco; if accident, and convenience, brought the Spanish and the a·yan together at first, it became obvious after 1912 that the Spanish intended to enter, conquer, and rule their assigned zone without reforming it along the lines preferred by the 'Abd al-Karim. Naturally this was, from the point of view of the enlightened a·yan, unpardonable. It was, however, predictable even before the establishment of the Protectorate and the outbreak of war.

On a Sunday in the spring of 1907, the sports club of Tangier, mostly Spanish, challenged its rival in Gibraltar, mostly British, to a football game, to be held thereafter on every Sunday following. The natives were not invited to play. Nor were they really inclined to, if the Europeans intended to play and make the rules as they went along, which was a political vice at which the Spanish excelled. The French reporter of the Comité de l'Afrique Française wrote with conviction in his column: '*C'est la civilisation qui commence.*'

³³The Rifian and Jbalan notables whom the foreigners themselves had often labelled 'progressive', such as the 'Abd al-Karim, had imagined that civilisation was a wholly different affair.

³³AF (April 1907): 155.

CHAPTER II

THE 'ABD AL-KARIM, 1901 TO 1906

O you who believe! obey Allah and obey His Messenger and obey those in authority from among you.

Quran 4:59.

Aide-toi, et le ciel t'aidera.

J. de La Fontaine

The Makhzan in the Rif

Moroccan reform in the last decades of independence before the 1912 partition into Spanish and French zones hinged on three basic factors: the delimitation of Moroccan sovereignty, the establishment of an efficient local administration, and the effective collection of taxes. None of these three factors had been accomplished by the time of Sultan 'Abd al-'Aziz's succession to the throne in 1900.¹ If this was true for the heartland of the Sultanate, the Bilad al-Makhzan, it was especially so for the outlying regions such as the mountainous Rif.

Despite the fact that the Rif has been traditionally considered by historians to lie in the Bilad al-Siba, or land of dissent, the Sultans in the late 19th Century had repeatedly not only sent mahalla-s to patrol and collect taxes, but they had

¹See E. Burke's, Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco, 41-47. Most French observers of 'Abd al-'Aziz thought they were dealing with another impatient, and maladroit, Europeanizer, AF (April 1902): 150.

also appointed qaids and gadis sporadically. However, the effectiveness of regular central authority was limited by the fluctuating interest of the Sultan in keeping the fringe areas under his control and by the local reality of these officials' power.² After all, a governor who attempted to control tribes that were armed to the teeth might at best be considered a primus inter pares. Selecting the governor from outside the area usually led to only nominal control, and choosing him from among the local tribal groupings increased one fraction's power within the tribal aghraw.

The qaid's power was notoriously limited and ineffectual. In 1898, to punish some Rifian pirates who had attacked European ships in 1894, 1895 and 1896, the only qaid in the central Rif near Alhucemas, al-Hajj al-Arbi of the Banu Ulishik, came up with 30 soldiers. Having been soundly defeated by a haraka of more than 2,000 Buqquya tribesmen he fled to the Spanish fortress on Alhucemas Island. Eventually, a reinforcement mahalla of over 3,500 of the Sultan's regular troops had to be sent from Fez under the command of Bushta al-Baghdadi. The resounding victory of the Makhzan army bears repeating in detail.

Al-Baghdadi sent for the Buqquya notables before the 'battle', announcing that the simple payment of 25,000 duros³

²G. Ayache, Les Origines, 357, claims to have constructed a list, albeit incomplete, of qaids from 1835 to 1900 for the Rif, but he gives neither the list nor his sources.

³One duro is a Spanish coin equivalent to 5 pesetas; despite

would suffice as atonement for their past piracies.

The tribesmen, not suspecting anything and prepared to pay, began to arrive at [al-Baghdadi's] encampment where all seemed to be calm. At sunset, everyone got ready for the prayer, guided by the great voices of al-Baghdadi's faqih-s... just at that moment, a bugle sounds and, like a pack of hungry animals, the askari-s fall on the surprised notables, wielding their swords and cutting off the heads of most of them.⁴

A few managed to escape towards their gabila, more disposed to secure their families' flight, as the Spanish officer observed, than to resist. Upon arriving at the Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera, a Spanish island outpost to the West,⁵ the survivors of the mopping up carried out by the mahalla, telegraphed for French ships whose commanders agreed to take them to Oran.

Having thoroughly destroyed the Bugquya's villages with the help of a Banu Waryaghil haraka, Bushta al-Baghdadi settled down for 10 months, during which he took care to send the booty, prisoners to be sold as slaves, valuables and 'various barrels full of salted heads', to the Sultan's capital. Upon its departure, the mahalla left behind a new qaid for the area, Si Bukar al-Waryaghali, who would, no doubt, exercise as little

³(cont'd) Makhzan financial reform, Spanish currency was the only one commonly accepted among the tribes. In 1903, for example, Casablanca's umana refused to accept anything but pesetas, AF (November 1904): 350.

⁴SHM 256/7. *Informe histórico sobre kabilas de Alhucemas del Capitán Juan Soler*. February, 1920, pp. 6-10.

⁵Alhucemas and the Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera, the two Spanish island outposts on the Rifian coastline had been ceded to the Spanish by Sultan Abd Allah al-Ghalib bi-llah in the mid sixteenth century on condition that they keep the Ottomans out of the Moroccan coastline, E. Michaux-Bellaire, 'Le Rif', AM 26 (1927): 191-92.

authority as his unfortunate predecessor. By the coming of the Protectorate, this Si Bukar had become a pensioner of the Spanish.⁶ In 1915 he joined 'Abd al-Karim's Turkish-inspired propaganda group for the Germans.⁷

In most cases, the lack of actual power at the local level was reflected in the absenteeism of the qaids who preferred the secure surroundings afforded by European guns. One such state official was the qaid of the Banu Sidal appointed in 1900 by Sultan 'Abd al-'Aziz, who travelled right through his jurisdiction and promptly took up residence in a comfortable apartment in downtown Melilla.⁸ The qaid of all the Rif appointed by 'Abd al-'Aziz a few years later, Si al-Bashir, fled to Melilla from his advance post in Seluán on 13 April 1903 and never returned to the gasba which he had briefly occupied.⁹ Again, Si 'Abd al-Rahman Majub, his successor in 1908, made the strenuous trip from his former post as pasha of Figuig via Tanger by steamer to Melilla. It was rare for the qaids to venture outside the city into the territory where the notables were dominant.¹⁰

⁶Ibid., 10; a French commentator 3 years later stated that the Buqquya were punished 'because some of their tribesmen had enlisted in our Algerian *Tirailleurs*', AF (July 1901): 237.

⁷SHM 1/1. *Informes*. Note, O.A.I. bureau in Alhucemas, 11 April 1915.

⁸SHM 20/1. *Nombramiento del nuevo kaid de la kabilia de los Beni Sidel. Oficina de Asuntos Indígenas*.

⁹AF (May 1903): 163.

¹⁰AF (May 1908): 188.

'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi as Amin

Next to the governor, the Makhzan was represented at the local level by its financial administrator, the amin, who was in charge of tax and customs collection, the government payroll in his local jurisdiction, and any Makhzan warehouses. Often, arms depôts were also under his control. According to one European observer, George Salmon, the amin seemed to be more important than the governors; his salary was equal, 10 duros per day, and customs duties furnished the Makhzan's most regular revenue. In an attempt to summarize the character and role of the new officials, he added:

The public officials who are in charge of them [customs posts] are held in high esteem by the people for their probity...in a way, they are the government's bankers.
¹¹

Another European described the umana as 'Moroccan notables belonging to the bourgeois aristocracy.' ¹² This was a clumsy classification. It serves to illustrate how Europeans were at a loss in trying to pinpoint the true position of the 'seigneurie' that was struggling for power at the time. They were nonetheless aware of its existence.

The amin of the Eastern Rif in 1902 was a Banu Waryaghali notable by the name of 'Abd al-Karim ibn Muhammad al-Khattabi.

¹¹G. Salmon, 'L'Administration marocaine à Tanger' AM 1 (1904): 14. G. Salmon was the leader of the French 'Mission Scientifique' in Tangier; he died of dysentery contracted in Fez in 1906, AF (June 1906):178.

¹²AF (September 1904): 285.

The Khattabi-s had been residents of the lowlands around the town of Ajdir for centuries. They had become notables not only by serving the Makhzan, but by acquiring lands, involving themselves in local trade, especially with the Spanish Island post of Alhucemas, and holding prestigious positions, such as being the faqih-s of the town mosque. In the early 18th Century, one Abdallah ibn Ahmad al-Khattabi al-Waryaghali owned dikes and irrigated plots in the Plain of Alhucemas, which spread out at the foot of Ajdir. We know that he was also one of the amghar or tribal leaders who signed a qanun in 1737, regulating fines to be collected by the amghar for specific crimes.¹³ Marriage with other notable families also enhanced the Khattabi-s' position; 'Abd al-Karim married the daughter of the local qadi. His two sons by her would later become the best known Rifians of all history.

'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi's appointment as amin probably dates to the 1901 re-structuring of the financial administration by Sultan 'Abd al-'Aziz, although the earliest documented proof of his tenure of the post dates to 1902.¹⁴ 'Abd al-'Aziz's reform re-instituted the post as a means of collecting taxes and controlling customs more efficiently. The new umana were part of

¹³E. Blanco Izaga, El Rif (2a. Parte): La Ley Rifeña (Ceuta: Alta Comisaría de España en Marruecos, 1939), 83ff; this is the oldest known qanun from northern Morocco.

¹⁴SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim*. According to one cynical member of the 'Comité du Maroc', the Sultan was busy in the spring of 1901 'dismissing and replacing minor officials' to make a fast buck, as these changes were inevitably consequent on the candidate's offering of 'bachichs', 'to have themselves chosen,' AF (March 1901): 88; cf. AF (May 1902): 188.

the changes imposed on the administration by European diplomatic opinion, which was scandalized at the lack of a responsible public treasury. As a measure of the relative modernizing objectives of the Sultan, this centralizing move was also designed to curtail the corruption of the qaids, who had used the traditional ways of collecting taxes in a notoriously haphazard and self-indulgent manner.¹⁵

As amin of the Mazuza area 'Abd al-Karim was in charge of customs and tax collection in a zone stretching along the Rifian coast from Nador to Alhucemas Bay, his home. The centre of his jurisdiction, however, was in Nador.¹⁶ The fact that 'Abd al-Karim's tribe lived far from the Mazuza is indicative of the Makhzan's attempt to curb corruption by appointing notables from one gabila as officials in a different area.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the Spanish treated 'Abd al-Karim as the only Makhzan financial administrator east of Tetuán; he was the 'amín de la aduana' by default. Consequently, he attempted to control trade along the entire coast from Gomara to the Muluya rivermouth. In order to

¹⁵Part of the failure of the 'universal tax', the tartib, was attributed to the qaids personal razzias against the tribes. There was a crucial difference between the tax-collecting romp of a mahalla that usually set off from the Melilla area under the qaid and the local armed power and influence of an amin such as 'Abd al-Karim. For a description of the traditional ways see Jacinto Bassols, 'El régimen tributario en Marruecos: el "tertib",' RTC (February 1924): 17-18.

¹⁶According to G. Delbrel, who was conversant in all things Rifian, Nador was the capital of the Mazuza district. G. Delbrel, Geografía general de la provincia del Rif (Melilla: Telegrafo del Rif Press, 1911), 87.

¹⁷G. Salmon, 'L'administration marocaine à Tanger,' 14.

fulfill his duties, 'Abd al-Karim had to do quite a bit of travelling and, as the Moroccan government could not provide transportation, the Spanish willingly granted him and his clients free passage on the Mail steamer between Ajdir and Melilla.¹⁸ Commuting between Ajdir and Nador via Melilla, 'Abd al-Karim became increasingly familiar not only with the Spanish in general, but with the benefits of cooperation with them.

'Abd al-Karim's role as a Makhzan official, holding what was undoubtedly the most important financial post in all of northeastern Morocco (with the possible exception of the Ujda amin¹⁹), has been overlooked by the studies carried out up to the present time. An understanding of 'Abd al-Karim's involvement in Rifian politics in later years is contingent to a great degree on a thorough appreciation of his role as a financial administrator. Unlike the gaïd's position, the amin's was based on money; the governor's salary was paid by the financial administrator, who also controlled the police instituted in 1904 by Spain and France as a guarantee for Morocco's external debt in his capacity as customs collector. George Salmon's comment elevating the amin to the level of a Makhzan banker must be seen in the light of the lack of continuous legislative and administrative authority at the local

¹⁸SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim*. On 13 February 1902, he received his first pass, valid for one year, 2nd class, which was renewed in 1903 and on 19 January 1904. In just one year, 1902, he made the trip from Alhucemas to Melilla 6 times.

¹⁹See RC 5 (May 1905): 202-204.

level.²⁰ It was the amin, not the gaid, who in effect represented whatever permanent government authority there was in the Rif. In all certainty, as was the case in other regions where effective power was concentrated in the hands of one amin, it was the umana who took it upon themselves to collect all taxes, including the controversial tartib, 'à leur gré' as George Salmon put it.²¹

Moreover, many powerful notable families that formed part of the seigneurie rurale based their fortunes to a great degree on the amin-ships and other lucrative posts.²² In his study of the Salé area, Kenneth Brown has traced the common ladder to success for the 'seigneurie'. For the new class of Fasi 'nouveaux riches', he has stated:

These positions in the ports provided the key to the fortunes of many men in Sale just as they did in Tetuan, Rabat and Fez. The Fasis claim that for every powerful family in the city of Fez today [1960's] they can identify an ancestor who was an amin and made them that way.²³

²⁰ Compare Mohamed Lahbabi's comments cited below, Chapter III, footnote 21.

²¹ G. Salmon, 'L'administration marocaine à Tanger,' 15. A fairly detailed presentation of the organisation of Moroccan financial administration is to be found in E. Michaux-Bellaire's, 'L'Organisation des finances au Maroc' AM 11 (1907): 224ff.

²² The Sa'idiyun and Timsamaniyun rural dynasties, this latter of Rifian origin, are two examples in the Fahs hinterland of Tangier, according to G. Salmon, 'Une tribu marocaine: Les Fahçya' AM 1 (1904): 254.

²³ K.L. Brown, People of Salé (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), 162. Fasi was more than just an indicator of origin; an entire social group of merchants, professionals and government employees was known as the Fasi-s irrespective of home town because Fez was the principal of the 3 civilized

For the landowning a'yan, control of the tax system was a fundamental aspect of their growing leadership in society. The loose supervision by the distant central office in Fez allowed the insouciant notables to reap the harvest with little outside intervention.²⁴ European observers cynically relished reporting that, although customs dues were fixed, Moroccans still haggled over the actual 'weight and importance of the merchandise' as well as settling accounts with more or less voluntary gratuities.²⁵

Despite the fact that the coastal area under 'Abd al-Karim's control was not traditionally a main trade route, economic transformations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had altered the flow of commerce, especially at the local Rifian level. This change was characterized by the increasing importance of Melilla as an entrepôt for its natural economic hinterland west of the Muluya watershed; the port functioned as a depot for manufactured goods from Europe and agricultural produce from the Rif and even the Taza area. Melilla came to be known, much to the chagrin of the French, who hoped Oran would become the major port for northeastern Morocco,

²³(cont'd) cities (hadriya), Fez, Rabat and Tetuán. Edmond Doutté, 'Une mission d'études au Maroc', RC 8 (December 1901): 169.

²⁴Cf. Hourani's analysis for the 19th Century Ottoman a'yan, 'Ottoman Reform,' 50-53.

²⁵Edmond Dechaud, 'Une croisière de reconnaissance commerciale au Maroc,' RC 2 (February 1904): 46. E. Dechaud was the secretary of the Oran Chamber of Commerce.

as the farthest 'suburb of Marseille'.²⁶ Melilla, according to Camille Fidel, L'Afrique Française's diligent and worried correspondent, 'is currently the great entrepôt, where not only the Qal'aya come to get supplies, but all the eastern Rif, all of the Dahra as far as Figuig and all the eastern part of the Jbala.'²⁷ Officially, all of this trade had to pass through 'Abd al-Karim's post in Mazuza which, Camille Fidel observed, was the very last Moroccan hamlet before entering the Spanish zone of Melilla. There is no need to emphasize the importance that must be attributed to 'Abd al-Karim's role as the last independent amin of the Makhzan north of Taza.

Despite the considerable influence that the amin at Nador exercised, most of the early correspondence that has survived deals with apparently minor affairs.²⁸ On 29 June 1905, 'Abd al-Karim wrote to Francisco Marín in the Melilla military administration.

²⁶This process has been described by D. Seddon, Moroccan Peasants (Folkestone, U.K.: Dawson, 1981) 22ff; the population of Melilla, 3,651 in 1885, had jumped to 9,177 by 1905 and thereafter exploded, increasing 400% in the next 10 years overtaking the only other port on Morocco's Mediterranean coast, Ceuta. E. Vincent estimated the population of Melilla at 25,000 in 1910; he also noted that since his last visit in 1907, it had 'almost taken on the look of a great city', AF (September 1910): 289-290. Data taken from Spanish port records, cited in V. Morales Lezcano, El colonialismo hispanofrancés en Marruecos (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1976), 55. Cf. RC 7 (July 1904): 178-179.

²⁷RC 11bis (November 1904): 297.

²⁸This is no doubt a consequence of there being almost no archival work published using Moroccan documents, studying the economic and financial administration of the area.

To our esteemed friend, the General. Our askaris (soldiers) came across two goats yesterday while making the rounds at night and confiscated them. Some Christians came to me asking for the goats but I did not hand them over. I am sending them with my messenger, Hajj 'Abd al-Rahman who acts as my interpreter. We consider ourselves your best friends and wish to serve you in anything that might arise. And peace.²⁹

We should not chuckle, however; whenever livestock and Christians got mixed up, the politics and livelihood of many Moroccan peasants invariably followed. All parties concerned, the Moroccans especially, whose main export at the time was livestock, had an interest in keeping track of which goats belonged to whom.³⁰ This time, 'Abd al-Karim favoured the administration in Melilla rather than some Spanish *colonias*.

Three months later, the amin was demanding the return of one of his black slaves who had apparently escaped to Melilla.³¹ Like the Jews, the blacks in the Rif were concentrated in Ajdir; slaves, however, were not common in the sedentary rural environment of the Rif and they were mostly a luxury permitted only those notables who could afford to buy them in one of the slave markets, of which Fez was the most famous in the north. David Hart's assertion that the blacks were 'of course entirely pacific' and that 'they never bore arms and... sought safety in

²⁹ SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim.*

³⁰ Melilla was the centre of pseudo-legal re-exportation of Moroccan Atlantic-coast livestock, which would travel thence overland into Algeria bound for France; thus even the French were interested in keeping track in the area. See 'L'exportation du bétail en France' AF (May 1900): 186, and AF (June 1900): 215.

³¹ SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim.* 'Abd al-Karim to the Military Governor, Melilla, 6 September 1905.

humility' cannot be taken seriously.³² The present author has a 1912 photograph of 'Abd al-Karim's 'personal bodyguard' who happens to be both black and well-armed.

Another example of 'Abd al-Karim's status as a notable in close contact with the Spanish is the pass which he received from the Military Governor of Melilla. Unlike the previous example, this one points with greater precision to the amin's exceptional privileges. This document allowed 'Abd al-Karim to enter and exit Melilla with 3 of his askari-s without being searched, 'even if they are carrying arms'.³³ This was a highly esteemed and much sought-after privilege. One Muhammad Abd Laish, a notable in the Ceuta area known as 'Valiente', tried for years to obtain it from the Spanish commander. He even went to the extreme of kidnapping two British officers on leave in the Anyara in 1905 to pressure the Spanish; despite this, or perhaps because of it, he never received the much wanted document.³⁴ As far as we know, 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi was the only Moroccan notable allowed this privilege at the time.

Within his own tribe, all of this special treatment must have greatly increased his prestige, but in any case his role as head faqih in Ajdir was in itself already a mark of religio-political authority. According to Gabriel Delbrel, who

³²D. Hart, The Aith Waryaghār, 280.

³³SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim. Nota del Comandante Militar de Melilla respecto del faqir*[sic]FONT 2> Si Abd el Krim. Dated 18 February 1905.

³⁴AF (March 1907): 105.

visited the Banu Waryaghala area various times during this period, the most famous mosque-schools in the Rif were those in Targuist and the Banu Waryaghala. 'This last kabilia possesses more than 30 such establishments.'³⁵

Being the main faqih of the most important town in the Banu Waryaghala, 'Abd al-Karim wielded a respectable amount of influence. As a literate notable, he was usually referred to by the Spanish and his own tribesmen with the honorific title of Si;³⁶ his eldest son's fame in the 1920's hardly overshadowed his own among his own tribesmen, as is clear from the fact that the Rifians knew Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim as Si 'Abd al-Karim's son.

Educating a Son of the A'yan

As a member of the elite that dominated fiscal, legal and religious affairs in northern Morocco, 'Abd al-Karim had ambitious projects for his two sons, Muhammad and Mahammad.³⁷ Having garnered enough financial stability for his two sons to

³⁵G. Delbrel, Geografía , 57-58.

³⁶D. Hart, The Aith Waryaghar , 259; cf. his comments on p. 391

³⁷The similarity of names caused endless confusion; al-Raisuli, who offered to teach one of 'Abd al-Karim's sons, thought there was only one and confused them even in 1923, R. Forbes, El Raisuni, 311-312. In most of the letters and documents, the common Rifian forms of Mohand and Mhammad respectively were used. A short Spanish biographical report of 1918 confused all three: the sons, who used 'Abd al-Karim as a last-name when writing in Spanish, and 'Abd al-Karim himself. The result is unfathomable. SHM 3/1.

opt for the best possible education in Morocco, 'Abd al-Kar sent them to the Qarawiyin University in Fez, either in 1902 or 1903.³⁸

Once a prestigious centre of higher learning, the Qarawiyin retained little of its former intellectual vigor.³⁹ Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, the eldest son, could not have come into sustained contact with the modern trends of Islamic thought then prevalent in the East during the two years he spent at the Qarawiyin; likewise, European influences had not yet begun to make themselves felt in Fez's closed cultural environment. Sultan Mawlay al-Hasan (1873-1894) had attempted a reform of the university, but interest had lapsed under 'Abd al-'Aziz, who fell under the technological trance of European innovations. In fact by abolishing the exclusive right of the Qarawiyin 'ulama' to issue fatwa-s, al-Hasan had multiplied the political clout of minor faqih-s, even the rural ones such as 'Abd al-Karim.⁴⁰

The movement of Muslim reform which has been credited with having inspired Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, called Salafiyya,

³⁸G. Ayache chooses 1902, basing himself on a purported autobiography of Muhammad written thirty years later during his exile on Réunion, Les origines, 161 n.17. Hart follows Sánchez Pérez who was stationed in Alhucemas and knew the 'Abd al-Karim personally; cf. D. Hart, The Aith Waryaghar, 371-372, and Andrés Sánchez Pérez, Abd el Krim (Tetuán: Alta Comisaría de España en Marruecos, 1950), 64-65.

³⁹Cf. E. Burke's description of the Qarawiyin before 1912, Prelude to Protectorate, 36-38.

⁴⁰A. Pérétéié, 'Les Medrasas de Fez,' AM 18 (1912): 314.

was not of importance in the Qarawiyin during his years there. In fact the only instructor who managed to infuse some intellectual vigor into the stagnant university, Abu Shu'aib al-Dukkali (1878-1937) was not appointed by the Sultan to his 'chair' in the Qarawiyin until 1908. It was al-Dukkali who was to be the fountainhead of Salafi reform among the intellectuals of the next generation.

Salafiyya reform was centered on the teaching of tafsir, that is, exegesis of the Quran. This was only grudgingly admitted by the 'ulama of the Qarawiyin, for, as they saw it, this invariably led to bid'a, or 'unlawful innovation'. ⁴² Tafsir had not been taught for over 30 years by the time Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim began his studies at the Qarawiyin.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that his education lacked the influence of the latest currents of Islamic reformist thought, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim did receive the best legal education available at the time, under the head lecturers Tahami Guenoun and Muhammad al-Qadiri, who held 2 of the 3 'chairs' for full professors. ⁴³ His courses were limited to the only ones

⁴¹ Its history for the period in question will be found in Jamil Abun Nasr, 'The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco: The Religious Bases of the Moroccan Nationalist Movement,' St. Anthony's Papers 16 (London 1963).

⁴² J. Abun Nasr, 'The Salafiyya Movement,' 97-98.

⁴³ G. Ayache, Les origines, 161. The sons of both of these professors were later to be nationalists; see J. Halstead's listing for Abdallah Guennoun and Bukker Kadiri in Rebirth of a Nation (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1967), p. 279.

available, mainly the usul and the hadith, both elements of what could be termed Islamic canon law. There was no history, geography, medicine, pure sciences or mathematics and only a few extramural tutors made a precarious living in the fields of sufism and astronomy.⁴⁴ All in all, the Qarawiyin resembled more a medieval college than a modern institution. Augustin Bernard, who visited Fez in 1904, stated that a Qarawiyin education was, in essence, 'pur psittacisme'.⁴⁵ Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim himself was aware of the limits of his education. In 1911, he wrote that Moroccans would not be able to equate themselves to 'the advanced peoples', until schools different from the traditional madrasa-style ones were set up.⁴⁶

Despite these limitations, Muhammad and Mahammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's education provided them with a thorough grounding in Islamic sciences, gave them the prestige associated with the famous Muslim university, and brought them into contact with other members of Morocco's urban and rural elite. It is totally within the logic of Morocco's political circumstances in 1902-1904 that the stress was laid on legal education by these notables. They saw the growing influence of those who formed part of the administration that was being reformed under European pressure, and as a knowledge of Islamic law was the key to upward mobility, that was what their sons preferred to study.

⁴⁴A. Pérétéié, 'Les Medrasas,' 334ff.

⁴⁵RC 11 (November 1904): 260.

⁴⁶TR, 27 July 1911.

A. Pérétié noted in 1912 that there was a saying in Fez about these notables' sons, 'Every verse⁴⁷ brings in a lamb,' explaining that students, especially those from the north, 'wanting to become qadi-s, adl-s, and lawyers, studied nothing but Law.'⁴⁸

A certain amount of social coherence among the educated was a hallmark of literate power in Morocco.⁴⁹ Distinction by geographical or racial origin was less important than one's position within the guild-like unofficial corporation of the educated. In fact, as in many traditional societies, literacy in itself was a distinguishing mark of notability; in those years, it was not what you read that mattered, but *if* you read.

It appears that the sons of the 'seigneurie rurale' stuck together at college. These young notables lived in the oldest and the most prestigious madrasa-s of the Qarawiyin, the Saffarin and the Attarin respectively.⁵⁰ Such was the case of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim who stayed at both, even though traditionally Rifian students had attended the Sharratin.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Referring probably to the verses of the Tuhfa of ibn al-'Asim, one of the three classic Malikite treatises, G. Salmon, 'Contribution à l'étude du droit coutumier du nord-marocain,' AM 3 (1905): 331.

⁴⁸ A. Pérétié, 'Les Medrasas,' 300.

⁴⁹ See Dale F. Eickelman's incisive, Knowledge and Power in Morocco (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

⁵⁰ A. Pérétié, 'Les Medrasas,' 271; Pérétié used the term 'bourgeois' as a European approximation.

⁵¹ Andrés Sánchez Pérez, Abd el Krim, 64.

This was where the aspiring legal student made the acquaintance of other similar notables, such as Idris ibn Sa'id of Salé, whose father also held a government post. They struck up a friendship which was to last, as we shall see, well into the 1920's.

It is difficult to piece together a coherent picture of what, if any, political involvement Muhammad might have had during his Qarawiyin days. The political inclinations that motivated him at the time can only be indirectly determined. D. Hart, following F.S. Vidal's insinuations, hints that Muhammad could have belonged at the time to the Darqawi tariqa.⁵² There is no proof for this suggestion; there is, however, proof for something else.

All political struggles in Fez were couched invariably in religious terms. While there were Salafiyya partisans who opposed the tariqa-s as un-Islamic, these latter considered themselves the torch-bearers of the legitimate Muslim reaction to Christian encroachment. In the series of crises stretching from 1904 to 1909 that brought 'Abd al-Hafiz to power, the enemies of this Salafiyya-inspired Sultan entrenched themselves under the leadership of Muhammad al-Kattani. His followers were members of his Kattaniyya tariqa. The French, along with most

⁵²D.Hart, The Aith Waryaghar, 199, and F.S. Vidal, 'Religious Brotherhoods in Moroccan Politics' (Middle East Journal 4 (1950): 435. Vidal was a Spanish tribal administrator, in the O.A.I. during the 1940s and recorded the rumours that were current about the legendary figure of 'Abd al-Karim's son.

other Europeans, considered him to be a 'fanatical shaykh'.⁵³ At all events, he and his disciples were intransigent militants, the hardliners of Islamic resistance to Christian imperialism. They were only done away with through force; 'Abd al-Hafiz closed all of their zawia-s and hunted down Muhammad al-Kattani and his tribal supporters in the Middle Atlas in 1909. When he was caught, al-Kattani was summarily tortured and executed.⁵⁴

If Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was involved in any of these political activities, or indirectly sympathized with either after 1905, all indications are that he took al-Kattani's side, not 'Abd al-Hafiz's. Although much later, in 1925, Muhammad called the last independent Sultan of Morocco, a renegade, 'a liar who lit the fire of jihad in Marrakech pretending to have good personal qualities, when all he is [he died in 1937] is an ignoramus of infamous character who only knew how to obtain large quantities of money and then fled to Spain seeking protection.'⁵⁵ In contrast to this stark image, al-Kattani, the renegade's opponent, was seen by Muhammad in 1911 as a great savant, 'full of nobility' who took it upon himself during the 'troubled times of political upheaval' to defend truth: 'This

⁵³E. Burke, Prelude to Protectorate, 116; cf. Edmond Doutté, 'Une mission d'étude au Maroc,' RC 8 (December 1901): 174.

⁵⁴E. Burke, Prelude to Protectorate, 128-35; cf. J. Abun-Nasr, 'The Salafiyya Movement,' 98-99.

⁵⁵SHM 1/7. Letter Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to al-Zuwak, 22 August 1925.

excellent hero paid for it with his life.⁵⁶ Moreover, as far as friendships can be considered proof of anything, Idris ibn Sa'id's father was also a pro-Kattaniyya agitator and pro-German activist in Salé. He was put on trial for his activities and expelled from his post as governor of the city.⁵⁷

This indirect information suggests that Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim sympathized with the hardliners. This tendency towards the traditional forms of elite resistance stands in marked contrast to his father's close contact with the Spanish at the time, and Muhammad's own policies after 1906. It is an example of how the practical benefits of collaboration outweighed the ideological scruples of the a'yan. It was in the 'Abd al-Karim family's best interests to further the Spanish connection as a means of furthering their own ambitions as notables. National resistance took a back seat to class privilege.

⁵⁶ TR, 9 July 1911.

⁵⁷ K.L. Brown, People of Salé, 187-88.

CHAPTER III

ASSIMILATION, 1906 TO 1912

O you who believe! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; ...whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them.

Quran 5:51

It is enough for practical men to fend off present evils and secure existing interests.¹

Elie Kedourie, *The Middle East and the Powers*

The Algeciras Act

The 1906 signing of the Algeciras Act by the major Powers and Morocco offered the 'Abd al-Karim an opportunity to enhance their already privileged position. Historians have tended to misunderstand the Moroccan reaction to this treaty. Burke, Ayache and Julien all have in common the assumption that Moroccan society reacted violently to the 'selling out' by 'Abd al-Aziz and 'Abd al-Hafiz to the Europeans. One comprehensive, even if not authoritative, history of Morocco goes so far as to state that the Algeciras Act 'marked the end of the independence of the Cherifian Empire (and) was received with indignation by Moroccan public opinion.'²

¹E. Kedourie, 'The Middle East and the Powers,' in his The Chatham House Version and Other Middle-Eastern Studies (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 2.

²Jean Brignon et al., Histoire du Maroc (Casablanca: Librairie Nationale, 1967), 330.

Morocco was a divided country in 1906 and the response to the Algeciras Act was consequently split along many social and political lines. While it is certainly true that some 'ulama tended to see the cause of all of Morocco's malaise in the European presence, there were diverging opinions among the elite. On the one hand stood the famous fatwa of the 'ulama of 1905 in which they stated that, having conscientiously examined the spectacle of Morocco's decadence, they had reached the conclusion that 'the foreigners are the original cause of our problems.' ³On the other hand, there were 'ulama and faqih-s who took a more prosaic look at Morocco's situation and saw a different picture.

All sensible men who hear and see are aware of the Muslims' lack of unity, of the absence of a Public Treasury, totally indispensable, and of the inferiority of their arms against those of the Christians... It should be noted, moreover, that the Christians' conduct is that indicated in my proposition, namely, that not only do they not oppose our religious practices, but they support them by having mosques built, appointing qadi-s and organizing everything well. They repress robbery and brigandage and keep the peace between the unconquered tribes of this country without a government...⁴

The polemic was heightened by the involvement of the elite in the political turmoil of Sultan 'Abd al-Hafiz' struggle and

³M. Xicluna, 'Le Fetoua des 'oulamâ de Fès,' AM 3 (1905): 142. This is followed by the traditional description of a Golden Age before the arrival of the Europeans, a near mythical period also evoked by Ahmad al-Nasiri in his history of the Alawite Dynasty, Kitab al-istiqa fi akhbar al-Maghrib al-Aqsa, trans. E. Fumey in AM 10 (1907): 381-383.

⁴Fatwa of Shaikh Sidia ibn Muhammad of the Ulad Biri, 1902. Quoted in a French translation by E Michaux-Bellaire, 'Le Fetoua de Cheikh Sidia,' AM 11 (1907): 137-38.

the rise of local war lords and pretenders throughout Morocco, al-Raisuli, Bu Himara and 'Abd al-Malik being the most famous in the north. We will see below just where the 'Abd al-Karim family stood on this issue, but even in 1925 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim would harken back to the 1906 accord as the legal document most clearly indicative of what relations between Europe and Morocco should have been like. In Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's eyes, the Algeciras Act established Morocco's independence vis-a-vis the foreigners.

The Moroccan Empire, with its Sultan Mawlay 'Abd al-'Aziz, is a free and independent Empire and as such was recognized by the Powers that signed the Treaty of Algeciras, but France, which is a nation of usurpers and tyrants, abandoned that treaty signed by the Nations⁵ and, because of that, was destroyed by Prussia to such a degree that for many centuries to come it will not be able to recover, since its casualties amounted to 12 million from bullets and machine-gun fire and 3 million from cannon-shot... As for its territory, it is in the hands of the Americans, as collateral for the innumerable debts France has contracted.⁶

Far from being an abdication of Morocco's sovereignty, then, the Act meant a step towards the recognition of its maintainance, much like Kaiser Wilhelm's visit of the previous year, instead of being a demonstration of German imperialist

⁵The notables often referred to the European states as 'the Nations' and their politics as 'the politics of the Nations'; in a letter to Captain Barbata from Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim, dated 29 April 1914, he speaks of the 'friends of the nations', meaning the pensioned notables of Spain and France, SHM 2/1.

⁶SHM 1/7. Letter from Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to Sidi Ahmad al-Zuwak, the chief alim and former qadi of Tetuán, 22 August 1925; curiouser and curiouser, in this scathing stricture of Morocco's traitors, Muhammad spoke not of Morocco, but of the 'Alawite Nation': the irony that the Alawi dynasts from 1894 to 1925 were considered traitors in the same letter, did not dawn on Muhammad.

interest in Morocco, was a reaffirmation of the country's independence. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim blamed France for not *adhering* to the accord, as he would later take Spain to task for not keeping the promise of civilising the Rif. But what exactly did the Act stipulate and how was it seen by the 'Abd al-Karim in 1906?

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was right in pointing out that the Algeciras Act ratified 'the principle of the sovereignty and independence of his Majesty the Sultan', but in 1906 it was almost as important for the notables that it guaranteed 'the peace and prosperity' of Morocco.⁷ Without fully comprehending the diplomatic reasons for and consequences of the Act, the 'Abd al-Karim concentrated their faculties on these last two words: peace and prosperity.⁸ What better description of their plans for the Rif? If frustration arose at the time, its source was not immediately the Spanish, but rather the armed peasants. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Karim stated that his father 'thought it wise and perspicacious to help Spain in the tasks that had been ascribed to her', although 'this attitude caused him many troubles because the Rifians had not understood the treaty at

⁷This is part of the opening paragraph of the Act; see K.U.K. Ministerium des Aussern, Diplomatische Aktenstücke und Dokumente über die Internationale Konferenz von Algeciras (Vienna: Druck der K.K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1906), 413.

⁸The French observed in 1906 that 'there are many learned and educated Moroccans who ask for nothing better than to become the agents of this process.' In fact they observed a certain 'fonctionnarisme' that was rampant among the administrative class, AF (June 1906): 259.

all.'⁹

What interested the 'Abd al-Karim, evidently, was the development of the Rif under their leadership, for which end the Spanish would be able to provide the money, expertise, and experience of having developed their own country. This was clearly stated in an article in the Telegrama del Rif by Muhammad four years after the Act had been signed:

If they have multiplied their railways, which are the purveyors of wealth, in Spain, why should the Spanish not do the same in this Morocco where, up-till now, bridges have been destroyed, roads cut, and mountain paths let deteriorate, to the point of threatening total commercial ruin? And if they suffocated revolt at home, why should they not give peace to this Morocco that is being devoured by sedition? ¹⁰

Years later, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, by that time the amir of the jihad in the Rif, restated his analysis of the failings of the Spanish in an interview with Luis García de Oteyza, chief correspondent for the Madrid newspaper, El Liberal. The policy of protecting Morocco, he explained, was to have hinged on reinforcing the 'native authorities', not, as he thought had ultimately been the case, in undermining their position and forcing their subservience. ¹¹ We will see later

⁹G. Ayache, Les origines, 166 n.26.

¹⁰TR, 11 October 1910. The 'revolt' is an indirect reference to the bloody crackdown on dissidence in the Barcelona area carried out by Martínez Anido in 1909, known as the Semana Trágica.

¹¹Retold with rather nasty Hispanophobe commentary amidst a barage of the 'red scare' conspiracy theory that haunted the French after 1917 by J. Ladreit de Lacharrière, Le Rêve d'Abd el Krim (Paris: Peyrennet et Compagnie, 1925): 105.

whether Spain's policies after 1906 actually led to a diminished political and social capacity for the 'Abd al-Karim.

In any case, the clearest indication of what the 'Abd al-Karim thought is to be found not in their verbal communications, but in their actions immediately following the spring of 1906. Already a faqih, and amin of the Moroccan Makhzan, 'Abd al-Karim became a pensioner of the Spanish. At least from 16 September 1906, he received the monthly amount of 10 duros, equivalent to half the salary allotted to an amin by the Makhzan.¹² The usual start-off pay for informants and pensioners, moreover, was much less, hovering around 3 duros for notables.¹³

Money from the Spanish was not the only benefit accruing from jumping on the Algeciras bandwagon. Spanish supervision of the Rifian coastline customs was stipulated in Chapter I of the Act, and its enforcement was to be carried out by patrols of Moroccans, usually under either direct Spanish command or the command of one of Spain's pensioners.¹⁴ This is probably the explanation for 'Abd al-Karim's next move. Only five days after the first payment of 10 duros was in his hands, 'Abd al-Karim

¹²SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim*. Official note from the Military Governor, carried by Mukhtar ibn Bu'izz Buri to 'Abd al-Karim. Although the number of umana was cut by one half in November 1906, we cannot be sure if 'Abd al-Karim was among those dismissed, AF (December 1906): 372.

¹³As gathered from a letter from seven a'yan to General Silvestre, dated 6 November 1920, SHM 256/1.

¹⁴Diplomatische Aktenstücke, 416-17.

obtained Spanish approval for his passage free of charge via Melilla to Málaga on the southern coast of Spain, for himself and his clients, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, Haddu ibn Muhammad and al-Hajj Haddu Amar.¹⁵ The object of his first trip outside of North Africa was to purchase Mauser rifles, pistols and ammunition for himself and his men. Moreover, this would not be the only trip of this kind; in October of that year, he received passeports from Melilla to be distributed among another 5 of his clients for them to go to Málaga with the same purpose.

In these dealings with the Spanish, 'Abd al-Karim was acting beyond the limits imposed by the Hispano-Moroccan treaties. Then again, the Spanish military administration paid as much attention to these treaties as he did. The Act itself outlined in unmistakable terms that authorization for the importation of European arms, even for Makhzan officials' use, had to be granted by the Sultan's representative in Tangier *before* proceeding to approach the sellers, invariably Europeans;¹⁶ furthermore, since the Act was ratified by the Sultan on 18 June, it is obvious that 'Abd al-Karim was not overly disturbed in bypassing the government in Fez.¹⁷ No authorization exists in 'Abd al-Karim's petitions to the Spanish in Melilla, who seemed to ignore the respect due to the international treaty as

¹⁵ SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el-Krim*. Again this is a letter sent directly by the Military Governor of Melilla to 'Abd al-Karim on 21 September 1906.

¹⁶ Diplomatische Aktenstücke, Chapter II, Articles 15, 16 and 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 449.

much as the Rifian notable. In any case, 'Abd al-Karim should have petitioned the Spanish ambassador in Tangier, not the commanding officer in Melilla. This had been stipulated in one of 'Abd al-'Aziz' early laws, in 1900, instituted to control the flourishing contraband trade in arms.¹⁸

It seems no other notable received the privileged treatment accorded the Banu Waryaghala notable. The purchasing of modern arms was always a crucial factor in the position of any notable within his own tribe. Owning a superior weapon was the mark of the superior leader. Politically, the more or less free hand given 'Abd al-Karim by the Spanish, overriding their own government's treaties, exemplifies the character of the ties linking the Rifian notable to the Spanish; in essence, 'Abd al-Karim was put at the same level as the Spanish military commanders, and his family would become increasingly accustomed to dealing on a one-to-one basis with 'Spain'. The personalized power of the 'Abd al-Karim, boosted by Melilla's choice of them as the spokesmen for the central Rif, augured well for their position within the tribes.¹⁹

¹⁸ AF (October 1900): 342-43.

¹⁹ Even a sympathetic David Hart qualified the top notable, called amghar in Berber, in the following terms: 'a successful amghar in Waryaghlarland ... resembles nobody so much, perhaps, as a successful capo mafiosi of La Cosa Nostra,' The Aith Waryaghlar, 445.

The Sales Representative

The Spanish connection was therefore a trump for any notable willing to approach the Christians. By 1905 'Abd al-Karim had garnered Spain's support as amin, local armed leader of pro-Spanish haraka-s, and paid propagandist for Spain's influence. While powerful, 'Abd al-Karim's position was nevertheless politically fragile by reason of its contingency on the weakness of anti-European feeling among the Rifian peasants. For the time being, neither the Spanish nor the Rifians had come into direct prolonged contact. If 'Abd al-Karim purposefully ignored dealing with the possible future consequences of his collaboration, he can be credited, nonetheless, with having emminently secured his present interests.

There were few practical interests which he did not look after. Sometime after 1906, 'Abd al-Karim, no doubt because of his intimate knowledge of Rifian trade with the outside, notably Spain, Gibraltar and Marseille, managed to obtain the Cédula de Agente Comercial from the Spanish Legation in Tangier, the commercial capital of Morocco.²⁰ The Cédula was the authorization needed to be able to represent European firms that had commercial dealings with Morocco.²¹

²⁰SHM 3/2. Letter from the Spanish Legation in Tangier to General José García Aldave, Military Governor of Melilla, dated 17 August 1911, informing him that 'Abd al-Karim's annual Cédula had been renewed.

²¹Mohamed Lahbabi ascribes the Makhzan's lack of control of economic development to the Sultan's established incapacity, according to the traditions of government in Morocco, as a

The step from amin to agent was indicative of a generalized Moroccan phenomenon. 'Abd al-Karim's progression upwards in commercial influence and social power was paralleled along the length of Morocco's coast; K. Brown has highlighted the role of these Makhzan officials-turned-agents in the port city of Salé from 1860 to the 1920s. Like the 'Abd al-Karim, these men took advantage of their position and the fluctuating land prices to control the land. As the crisis of independent Morocco took its course, the enrichment of these few fed on the troubles of the many.²² In the Rif we are dealing with a relative backwater of commerce, and this is reflected in the short period during which 'Abd al-Karim functioned as an agente comercial; nevertheless, for the years preceding the establishment of the Protectorate, it formed part of the foundations of his fortune.

Since records were seldom kept, despite European insistence, we can only guess at the sort of trade in which 'Abd al-Karim was engaged; in all probability it comprised the export of grain and livestock and the import of manufactured goods into the central Rif.²³ His licence was renewed at least three times, in

²¹(cont'd) legislator. Thus notables engaged in trade were more or less forced to become European agents and protégés. See his polemical but incisive La délégation viziriale dans le droit public marocain (Rabat: Agdal, 1957), pp. 37-39. See also Leland Bowie, The Impact of the Protégé System in Morocco, 1880-1912, Papers in International Studies, Africa Series, no. 11 (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, Africa Program, 1970).

²²Cf. K.L. Brown, People of Salé, 155-74.

²³A tantalizing piece of quantification is that the value of Spanish exports to the Alhucemas Bay area in 1902 and 1903 was 19,353 and 21,056 pesetas respectively; this probably reflects

1909, 1910 and 1911. During these years, the 'Abd al-Karim family cornered the import-export market, and thus were in a position to monopolize the local sug-s. ²⁴ Although there is little direct proof of their financial status before 1912, if we judge from the fact that the 'Abd al-Karim owned houses in Tetuán, could afford slaves, and practised the typical activity of the a·yan, land speculation at a huge scale, then they can clearly be considered wealthy.

As with their distant Ottoman parallels, control of the marketplace was another aspect of their political power, both, locally, and as notables representing their 'people' to the Europeans. Certainly Spanish and French interest in the area was not lacking; already in 1906 the Spanish had commented (and the French reprinted) that Alhucemas Bay was probably the best route of political and economic penetration into this area of Morocco. After all, they argued, Ajdir stood at the closest available Mediterranean harbour emplacement to the old capital, Fez. ²⁵ Here we have an insight into the sort of practical benefit and

²³(cont'd) but a fraction of all trade as most imports into the Rif, which exceeded Rifian exports, came from France and Britain, AF (December 1904): 383.

²⁴The economic ties between the various areas of northern Morocco have not been sufficiently studied; a brief overview of Hispano-Moroccan trade will be found in Víctor Morales Lezcano, El colonialismo hispanofrancés en Marruecos (1898-1927) (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1976), 89-105 specially. The Melilla area is better known; D. Seddon Moroccan Peasants (Folkestone, U.K.: Dawson, 1981) has a useful chapter on 'A Local View of Moroccan History', 3-27, although Marxist economic description gets the better of historical relevance.

²⁵RC 6 (June 1906): 178; the distance calculated, 250 km, moreover, surpassed reality by 90 km.

political interest that the 'Abd al-Karim expected from Europe. It was the sort of 'peace and prosperity' that they gathered would be the upshot of the Act of Algeciras.

Muhammad in Melilla

'Abd al-Karim's ascent up the ladder of success convinced him to send his two sons to serve the Spanish in the mutually beneficial process of making the Rif peaceful and prosperous. This decision was to prove crucial in the political history of this notable family.

In the summer of 1906 he sent Muhammad, who had returned from his two years at Fez, to Melilla where, no doubt, he was intended to participate in the 'opening up' of Morocco by the Spanish. One of the effects of Spanish intervention in Morocco had been the setting up of schools in the plazas de soberanía, that is Ceuta and Melilla. These were not meant originally for the notables, but rather for the formation of a cadre of administrators and military personnel to run the colonial office in Morocco, known as the Oficinas de Asuntos Indígenas and the Oficina de Policía y Tropas Coloniales after 1910.²⁶ Although the first strictly speaking ran civil affairs only, its use of

²⁶The O.A.I. officers were set up before the Protectorate in anticipation of its inevitability. E. Vincent, who visited Melilla in August 1910 stated that the Spanish 'have instituted an indigenus service a few months ago destined, like our Arab Bureaus, to work as liaison between the administrators and caids, and the military authorities', AF (September 1910): 287-90.

Muslim pensioners turned it into the intelligence service for the latter, the O.P.T.C., the military arm.

The original idea for the schools formed part of the more altruistic, and illusory, side of post-1898 Spanish colonialism. It can be exemplified in a letter sent on 30 April 1904 by Cesáreo Fernández Duro, the president of the Real Sociedad Geográfica, to the Spanish government. In it he outlined a suggested course of action for Spain in Northern Morocco that included, naturally, railways, port developments, telegraph and road communications, and the demilitarization of Ceuta and Melilla.

We have to forget the Melilla of the Treaty of November 14, 1863²⁷... instead, we should convert the city into a mixed population where Christians and Muslims can live in a fraternal atmosphere...

Schools of higher learning where the Muslim notables' sons can be educated, professional colleges to teach profitable crafts, hospitals where the room and board are in accordance with the Moroccans' customs and beliefs, and clinics and pharmacies which would extend the benefits of science and charity, all of these things would contribute to the task of attracting them to our policy. By such means France, England, Germany, Russia, and Italy gain prestige and influence in the Orient.

The national cause must appear totally separated from the religious cause in Africa. It is paramount to renounce all propaganda of our religion and all acts of proselytization... This is the only way of effectively attracting fervent Muslims. Tolerance is not enough; we need to inspire confidence, a profound respect and even

²⁷This was actually not a treaty in itself, but simply an adjunct diplomatic note signed by Merry y Colón, Spain's negotiator, and Prince Mawlay al-Abbas, following the treaty imposed by Spain on Morocco after the latter's defeat in the 1859-1860 war. T. García Figueras, La acción africana de España en torno al noventa y ocho (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1966), v. 1, 291-92.

protection of their religious institutions...²⁸

This policy was to be put into practice not only by building mosques but also by bringing the notables' sons to universities in Spain, as well as fostering economic and commercial ties between the Rif and Spain. Most of these plans remained *lettre morte* until the 1930's or even later. The 'Abd al-Karim in 1919 complained precisely that the development of the Rif had not been carried out as the Spanish had promised.

The leader of the government in Madrid in 1904, the Count of Romanones, was enthusiastic about Spain's role in Africa. Indeed, he was an avid investor in such notorious enterprises as the Minas del Rif mining consortium. Despite his official endorsement of the sort of development described in the Real Sociedad Geográfica's letter to the government, he managed to implement very few concrete policies. One of them was the setting up of the schools, Academias Arabes, in Ceuta and Melilla in late 1905. ²⁹

All of this proposed development was in the air in Northern Morocco in the years preceding 1912; 'Abd al-Karim was not about to let another opportunity of increasing his influence with the Spanish go to some other notable. In little under a year, at

²⁸T. García Figueras, La acción de España, v. 2, 164-69. This colonialist programme was duly commented on by the Comité de l'Afrique Française, cf. AF (June 1904): 212-18.

²⁹SHM 1/4,5. Memorandum regarding the end of the first course of the Arab Academies of Ceuta and Melilla, 20 August 1906. All of the first year graduates were Spanish Army officers and sub-officers, destined for the O.C.A.I. and O.P.T.C..

least by July of 1907, his eldest son, Muhammad, had become a professor at the Academia Arabe in Melilla. ³⁰

For the 'Abd al-Karim, the years following the turning point in 1906, leading to 1912, were full of hope and frustration. They had embarked on a policy of close relations with the Spanish, led on by the illusion of possible development and the reality of the benefits of European protection for their status within the Rif. What would be clear by the end of the first decade of the century to the Rifian peasants was that the 'Abd al-Karim had chosen the side of the Christians. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's career in Melilla was the hinge between Spanish interests in the central Rif and the 'Abd al-Karim's own personal ambitions. They were years marked by their role as middle men; they had not yet contravened the paramount rule for being successful notables, that they not 'lose touch with either pole of their power'. ³¹ The Makhzan in Fez had been almost eliminated from the politics of the Rif by 1906. For the 'Abd al-Karim, the juggling game appeared to be paying off, but there were strains in the Spanish connection.

Part of these strains were evident in Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's experiences in Melilla. There is some confusion concerning his career there. From 1907 to 1910 he was professor

³⁰G. Ayache, Les origines, 169, n. 33; this is confirmed by information contained in the papers of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's trial in 1915, SHM 2/6. *Información instruída para investigar la conducta del Kadi de la Oficina Central de Asuntos indígenas de Melilla SI MOHAN BEN SI ABD EL KRIM*, folio 33.

³¹A. Hourani, 'Ottoman Reform,' 46.

at the Academia Arabe and on 27 January 1910, he was named professor at the Escuela Indígena, a school for notables' sons set up that year as a means of winning them over.³² This post he would not abandon until sometime in the summer of 1913. Although Muhammad had probably learned Spanish from having accompanied his father to Alhucemas Island as a child, most of his work in the schools was carried out in Shluh (Berber) and Arabic.

While living in Melilla, the young notable was in for some rude introductions into the colonialist atmosphere of the port city. Despite the well-meant phrases of the president of the Real Sociedad Geográfica, Melilla was far from being civilian, or even civil, towards the Muslims, contemptuously known as 'moros'. The prejudice of the European population in Melilla did not distinguish between the Rifian notables in Melilla and the peasants that came to the city to work and trade. They were all 'moros'.

According to an official memorandum from the central native affairs bureau in Melilla (the O.C.A.I.), Muhammad ran up against this in a peculiar situation in 1910. On December 5 of that year, Muhammad stepped into the O.C.A.I. office and filed an official complaint against a Spanish cafe owner.

According to the professor of the Escuela Indígena, 'Abd al-Karim, upon entering the Cafe Marina a few days ago, accompanied by his confidant Mukhtar and two other

³² SHM 2/1. Appointment of 'Si Mohand Abdelkrim' to the post of professor in the Escuela Indígena, 27 January 1910; a Spanish school for notables' sons went into operation as early as 1908 in Tetuán, but it was privately owned and sponsored, AF (April 1908): 138.

Muslim notables, all well dressed, and having asked for beer and coffee, he was informed that he would have to pay .75 pesetas for the first and .50 for the latter. Payment having been effected, they were surprised at the difference in price compared to the other patrons of the cafe and were told that it was a way of preventing the entry of 'moros' into the establishment. Since they behaved themselves correctly and as notables, they do not think that this conduct is legal.³³

The O.C.A.I. officer in charge scribbled on the side that the cafe owner was to be fined, ignoring all the while the blatantly obvious question of what four respectable Muslim notables were doing asking for beer. Perhaps the Spanish officer knew that the notables in question were among those interested in adopting European mores.

Incidents such as this one, no doubt fairly common, exasperated Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim. Despite his collaboration with Spain and his hopes for being treated as an equal, he found the reality of Hispano-Moroccan relations in the tense environment of Melilla difficult. While the official response was usually positive, the unofficial one was disrespectful and stereotypical. The modernizing notable expected better of those same Europeans he urged his compatriots to take as a model. Even when Muhammad began to write articles for the only local paper, the Telegrama del Rif, defending Spain's role in Morocco, there was no respite from the colonialist mentality. Notwithstanding the frequently exaggerated and histrionic pleas in his articles for the Rifians to support the a'yan who collaborated with Spain, he did not

³³ SHM 2/1. *Asuntos Indígenas*.

convince most of the Spaniards he collaborated with of his sincerity.³⁴ They simply took his support for sycophantic self-interest. At the paper, he was unaffectionately known as 'el morito' (the little moor).³⁵

The Muslims in Melilla themselves contributed to this animosity. Before the cafe incident, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim had officially complained to the O.C.A.I. about the treatment he received from various Muslims passing through Melilla. As he was exiting the school

he was approached by al-Shadli who was accompanied by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Hajj Tayyib of the Banu Sikkar and his relative Amar 'Chalao'³⁶ and after asking him about some of those that had died in the Banu Waryaghil fighting, al-Shadli accused him as well as his father 'Abd al-Karim of being Christian, in very insulting terms...
³⁷

As with the other case, the commanding officer defended Muhammad, instructing his secretary to write to al-Shadli, stating that ibn 'Abd al-Karim 'is a good courteous Muslim who mistreats no one and that the class he gives deals precisely

³⁴The following is an example of his style: 'All of Morocco is prey to a disorder so general that even the sun itself is about to hide its face... How can peace be found in these troubled times, if we do not place ourselves under foreign protection, or end our lives?' TR, 14 October 1910.

³⁵Andrés Sánchez Pérez, Abd el Krim, 64.

³⁶In colloquial Spanish this means 'the lunatic'.

³⁷SHM 2/4. *Asuntos Indígenas*. 28 September 1908. According to unofficial French reports, al-Shadli was one of the principal Rifian 'meneurs' against the Spanish before 1910; there were two equally picturesque versions of his sudden death on 12 December 1909 rumoured about in Fez: either he was poisoned or he 'died of grief' because the Sultan ('Abd al-Hafiz) would not let him lead a mahalla against the Christians, AF (January 1910): 33.

with the Quran and the "Mohammedan" religion, whereby it is plain that he is in no way a Christian, neither he nor his father.³⁸

No amount of slaps on the wrist and fines could assuage the friction between Muslim and Christian in Melilla, or in the rest of the Rif. Although notables such as the 'Abd al-Karim and Spaniards such as the commanding officer at the O.C.A.I. could see eye to eye on most matters, the undercurrents present on both sides made reconciliation increasingly difficult.

An Identity Crisis

Al-Shadli had his reasons for calling the 'Abd al-Karim Christians; in fact, the incident mentioned reflected the political inclinations of the 'Abd al-Karim even in 1908; it is interesting in two respects. The fighting among the Banu Waryaghil involved the 'Abd al-Karim in the wider field of Moroccan politics. Secondly, 'Abd al-Karim's political involvement was subservient to the family's financial interests in the fluid political situation.

In 1905 the most powerful claimant to the Sultanate had established his base in Seluán, just south of Nador. He was the notorious Bu Himara, who attempted to establish his own Makhzan and thus to displace the Sultan's own officials in the

³⁸ SHM 2/4, *ibid.*

Northeast.³⁹ Part of his parallel Makhzan consisted in the appointment of two amin-s to manage his financial affairs in the area, which included control of the Nador-Melilla corridor.⁴⁰ Since 'Abd al-Karim was still amin al-Mazuza after 1905⁴¹, it is probable that after Bu Himara established his Makhzan in Seluán, 'Abd al-Karim remained there at his post. Even at the risk of being identified with the progressively discredited rebel,⁴² 'Abd al-Karim remained at his lucrative post. This would explain why he was fined 1,000 pesetas by the victorious anti-Bu Himara haraka of the Banu Waryaghil in September 1908, which accused him of being an agent of the pretender.⁴³ French observers calculated customs revenue at Mazuza at this time to be from 10,000 to 15,000 francs per month. If these figures are correct, then 'Abd al-Karim senior must have been easily capable of paying the fine imposed on him by the haraka from his

³⁹For Bu Himara's career see Ross E. Dunn's two articles, 'The Bu Himara Rebellion in Northeast Morocco: Phase I,' Middle East Studies 17 (1981): 31-34, and 'Bu Himara's European Connection,' Journal of African History 21 (1980): 235-53, especially 240-50 for this section.

⁴⁰As early as March 1903, Bu Himara urged the umana to use 'Muslim revenue' with care in a good cause, AF (March 1903): 95. From 1903 the Moroccan customs post moved right into Melilla, AF (June and May 1903): 193 and 165 respectively.

⁴¹AF (May 1908): 189; by August 1910 there was no longer any Makhzan amin in the Melilla area, AF (August 1910): 259.

⁴²Bu Himara was involved in selling mining concessions to the Christians.

⁴³SHM 3/6. *Breve historia de los Abdelkrimen*. Compiled by the O.C.A.I. of Melilla in 1912.

share.⁴⁴

Because they were in charge of the financing of the Sultan's external debt and thus inevitably became the principal agents of both centralized power and the Europeans, the umana were favorite targets of popular discontent all over Morocco. In July 1903 for example, the government's tax collectors and customs officials in the Sus area of southern Morocco were the first to be killed by an excited popular haraka. ⁴⁵

Like other umana throughout the country, 'Abd al-Karim was vulnerable to the suspicion that he used his post to serve the interests of two outside forces, the Makhzan and the Europeans, as well as his own. The Makhzan's periodic extraction of taxes was not popular and neither was the traditional threat of Christian invasion. The 'Abd al-Karim represented a coming together of these two unpopular elements as collaborators, ambitious for power and reform. Naturally, the notable family had ideological reasons, or justifications, for its acts; we have already seen how the 'Abd al-Karim's plan for a reformed Rif revolved around a subtle and yet committed policy of collaboration. For the peasants, this was tantamount to their a·yan selling out to the Christians under the protection of the Sultan's parasol. This imbalance, which the 'Abd al-Karim weathered with the coming of the Protectorate, was nevertheless

⁴⁴R. Dunn, 'Bu Himara's European Connection,' 240.

⁴⁵AF (August 1903): 260.

at hand. Instead of seeing it, they chose to ignore it.

No stronger sign of this stubborn refusal to follow the growing popularity of resistance can be seen than the policy they adopted in 1910. And in this case the two head representatives of the family had a concerted plan of action. On 18 May 1910 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim filed a petition for Spanish nationality with the O.C.A.I. office in Melilla, intending it to be sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Madrid.⁴⁶ Muhammad's decision reflected the state of affairs. The petition for Spanish nationality came at a moment of heightened Franco-Spanish rivalry for spheres of influence in Morocco.

One of the systems used by Spain and France diplomatically to prove that they had real interests in Morocco was to nationalize as many of the Sultan's subjects as possible. In 1910, the Spanish government had taken to urging its representatives in Morocco to 'naturalize and protect by any means possible the greatest number of Moroccan subjects.'⁴⁷ A Spanish company was set up in Madrid and Tetuán, called enigmatically the Centro Jurídico, which catered to the Moroccans, mostly Jews, who wanted to become Spanish citizens.⁴⁸ The owner of this company, according to some Rifian

⁴⁶ SHM 2/1. *Instancia de nacionalidad del profesor de la escuela indígena Si Muhand Abd el-Krim.*

⁴⁷ AF (September 1910):297; the policy dated from the spring of that year.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

informers in Melilla was the famed 'evil genius of North Africa'⁴⁹, the German Mannesmann company.⁵⁰ The Germans also took a more direct approach to increasing their influence. According to a Spanish report marked 'Top Secret', the German military attaché in Madrid, Walter von Kalle, accompanied by four other Germans 'dressed like "moros"', were running around in the Banu Abu Ifrur and Banu Sidel, selling arms and attempting to form haraka-s. In all likelihood, these were aimed at providing trouble for the French.⁵¹ Herr von Kalle, 'Kuol' to the Rifians, was arrested and expelled from Melilla, but returned within a week to the Alhucemas area.⁵² The German connection at the time did not contradict working for the Spanish, although there are no direct indicators of any collaboration by the 'Abd al-Karim with the Germans.

With Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's petition for Spanish nationality, the path of assimilation had apparently reached its logical conclusion; the chaotic state of the Rif no doubt influenced Muhammad in his decision. There seemed to be no route

⁴⁹This is Rosita Forbes' phrase, El Raisuni, 26.

⁵⁰SHM 24/1. *Informes, mes de mayo (1914)*. This Ruhr-based industrial and mining consortium that was to eventually dominate German interests in Morocco first entered the country via Melilla; in 1906 the eldest son of Reinhard Mannesmann arrived there searching for possible iron and lead mines in the Rif. Pierre Guillen, L'Allemagne et le Maroc de 1870 à 1905 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 865.

⁵¹SHM 60/15. *Detención y expulsión del súbdito alemán Kuol*. 24 October 1910.

⁵²SHM 60/16. *Notas, O.C.A.I.*, February 1911. The Rifians called von Kalle's men 'policías'.

to change for the better but the one that passed through Madrid. When in 1910 the Spanish were able to extricate themselves from the defeats of 1909, the notorious Barranco del Lobo incidents, and re-establish some sort of control over the tribes surrounding Melilla, Muhammad wrote in the Telegrama del Rif:

Up until the present time, the Qal'aya have not had any sort of government. But they have one now. It is Spain who exercises it. We and Spain have united our hands in understanding and peace.⁵³

This is obviously an attempt to rub the Spanish authorities the right way; Muhammad's first petition had not been answered and it was in October that he once again sent off the required documents.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, there is an element of sincerity in his statements. These were not the hurried words of an upstart, but the reflection of his family's many years of collaboration with Spain. The 'we' he so confidently used is the most succinct example of the heart-felt affiliation of the 'Abd al-Karim to their status and role as 'seigneurs rurals' with a mission. The months passed disappointingly; no answer came from Madrid. They were difficult months in the Rif.

The 'Abd al-Karim were targeted as collaborators of the hated Christians. The final moments of Morocco's traditional form of independence were coming to an end, leading to a feeling among the tribes that something had to be done. During 1910 and 1911, a mujahidun haraka combed the countryside, raiding known

⁵³ TR, 12 October 1910. Emphasis added.

⁵⁴ SHM 3/7.

sympathizers of the Spanish and launching abortive attacks on Alhucemas Island;⁵⁵ the entire Rif from the outposts of the newly reconquered Mazuza area to the west was, as one Spanish officer commented in his monthly reports, in a state of 'complete anarchy'.⁵⁶

The antagonism toward collaborators was so great in the rarified political atmosphere of the last 3 years of independence, that 'Abd al-Karim was forced to flee Ajdir to Alhucemas on 6 November 1911. This was a result of the public denunciation in the main sug of Ajdir of his plan to help the Spanish land a force in Alhucemas Bay.⁵⁷ Although it was a setback, 'Abd al-Karim was able to flee with most of his possessions and family to Tetuán, in which city he owned 'some houses'. Upon hearing of the defeat of the haraka opposed to the Spanish in the summer of 1912, he congratulated General Gómez Jordana.

I have just learned with immense joy of your victory over the Rifians. But what really makes my cup overflow is the fact that Amizzian, their haraka's amir, was among the dead. Bravo. My congratulations for this magnificent coup, and all my best wishes for further success.⁵⁸

⁵⁵This was the same group of resistance fighters who had fined the 'Abd al-Karim in 1908; G. Ayache, Les origines, 189.

⁵⁶SHM 10/44. *Defensa de Alhucemas contra cabilas*, September 1910.

⁵⁷A. Sánchez Pérez, Abd el-Krim, 67.

⁵⁸SHM 1/3. 'Abd al-Karim to Jordana, 16 August 1912.

He then followed his son's example and on 19 November 1912 petitioned for Spanish citizenship; it was the second day of the most important Muslim feast of the year, the 'Id al-Kabir.

PART B
THE PROTECTORATE

CHAPTER IV

DISSIMILATION: ALLAH'S WAY

Surely Allah has bought the believers' persons and property, that they shall have Paradise: they fight in Allah's way, so they slay and are slain.

Quran 9:111

Islam forbids the Muslim to accept money from Christians at any time.¹

· Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi, 14 May 1915.

A week after the celebrations of the 'Id al-Kabir of 1912, the French ambassador in Spain and the Spanish Minister Plenipotentiary met in the town that was the scene of the 1906 Act of Algeciras and signed an accord formally establishing the Spanish Protectorate in northern Morocco.² A reading of both the 1912 Franco-Sharifian Treaty and the Franco-Spanish Accord reveals the pre-eminent position accorded 'the interior order and general security which would permit the introduction of reforms and assure the economic development' of Morocco.³ As with the previous European treaties concerning the state of Morocco, these laudable aims were the theoretical reasons for the establishment of a Protectorate in the last sovereign part of the Maghrib. The 'Abd al-Karim were among those Moroccans who thought the 1912 move into Morocco meant what the treaties said

¹SHM 1/1. *Confidencias e informes*.

²See extract of text cited in F. Díaz-Plaja, La España política del siglo XX, vol. 1, Del arranque del siglo a la dictadura (1900-1923) (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1971), 199-206. Cf. AF (December 1912): 474, and RC 12 (December 1912): 444.

³Part of the preamble of the Franco-Sharifian Treaty of 30 March 1912, AF (June 1912): 219.

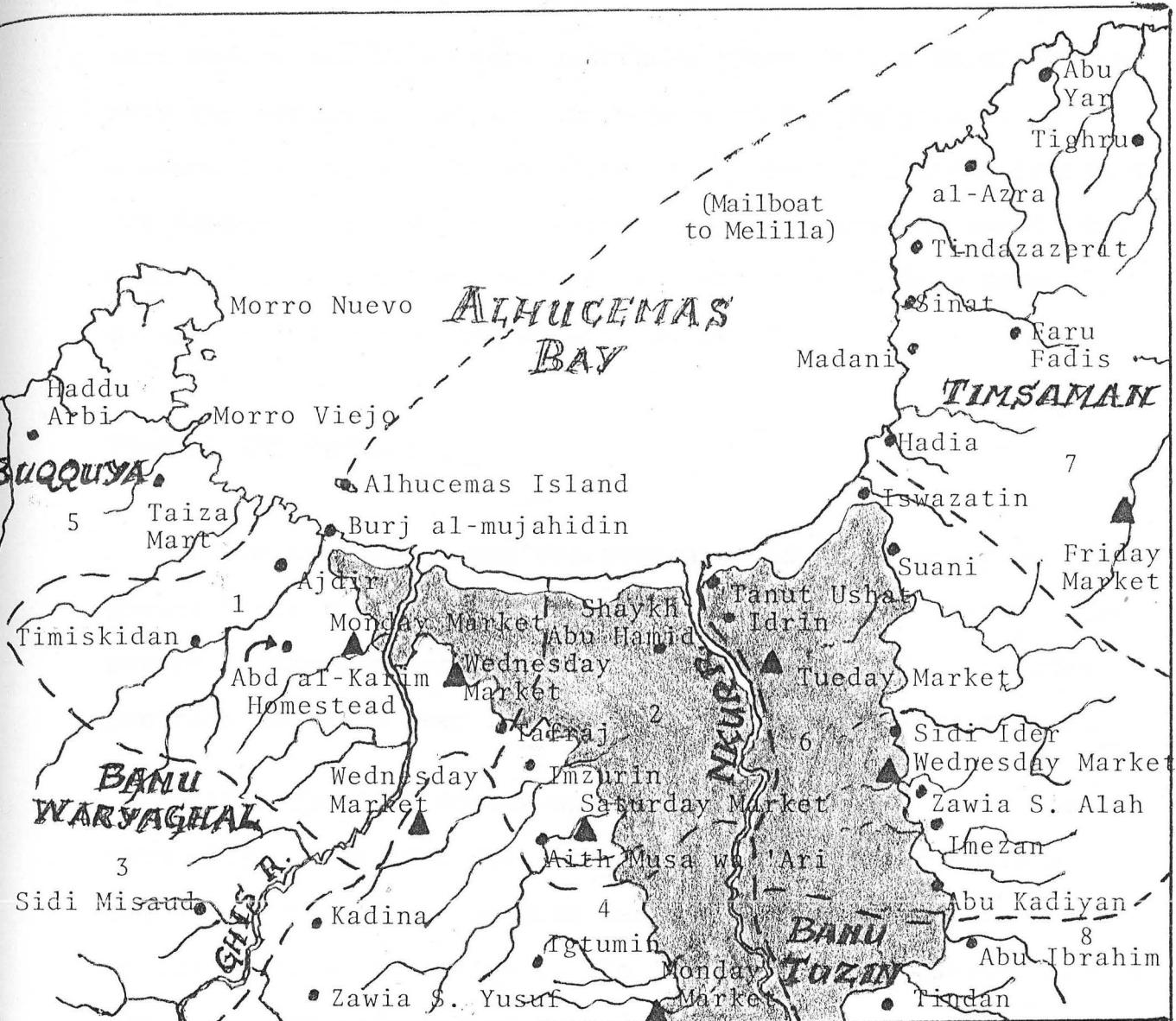
it did, economic development stimulated by Europe through order and integration into the wider world of the twentieth century. As right-hand men of the Spanish, they believed they would naturally inherit the power that would be concentrated as a result of this process. The outcome of protection, however, was to be significantly different from the expectations of 1912.

For many Moroccans, these expectations could surface in dramatic scenes. An incident that occurred on 15 January 1912 illustrates how the take-over by the Christians was seen at the popular level as a cataclysmic event, although with ironic twists. On that day a group of ambitious Spanish protégé peasants illegally occupied habus lands in an area known as the Fuwara, south of Alcázar. When confronted by a French-led mahalla sent from Fez and charged with the protection of the Sharifian status quo in property matters, the peasants answered that 'they were Spanish and had nothing in common with the Makhzan anymore.' ⁴ The French Resident, Boisset, immediately complained to the Spanish consul in Alcázar that the religious endowment lands in question were 18 km into what he considered French territory. It took military action on the part of Boisset to dislodge the Gharbi peasants, who did not benefit in the least from any Spanish protection.

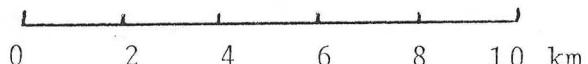
The terms of reference had been changed on the Moroccans by the Europeans. Before 1912, the European powers had protected their protégés in the mad scramble for zones of influence; now

⁴ AF (February 1912): 69.

Figure B: The Alhucemas Bay Area



Legend



Qabilas:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Banu Waryaghil</i> | 1. <i>Aith Yusuf wa 'Ari</i>
2. <i>Aith 'Ari</i>
3. <i>Imrabdhin</i>
4. <i>Banu Abu 'Ayyash</i> |
| <i>Buqquya</i> | 5. <i>Izimmurin</i> |
| <i>Timsaman</i> | 6. <i>Truguth</i> |
| <i>Banu Tuzin</i> | 7. <i>Banu Abu Idhir and Banu Marghanin</i>
8. <i>Banu 'Akki</i> |



Irrigated lowlands



Markets

that France and Spain were assured a place in the Moroccan sun, both the capitulations and the system of protégés could be dispensed with. Only a few years later, in a different region of the northern part of the country, the 'Abd al-Karim would find that being intimately involved with Spain could be a severely disappointing and dangerous proposition.

Reaping the Benefits

In the beginning, the Protectorate did mean more power and prestige for the 'Abd al-Karim, due mainly to two reasons: the nature of the Protectorate and, stemming from this, the ideal position in which they found themselves as ambitious notables.

Unlike the 1904 Franco-Spanish plans that had never come into effect, the 1912 division of Morocco allotted Spain a smaller area, one of the most densely populated ones in the entire country, to the west, the Jbala, Arabic-speaking, and to the east, the Rif, Berber-speaking. However, too much importance must not be granted this linguistic distinction. The Jbala and Rifian tribesmen were first and foremost Muslim, then members of the various tribes, and finally notables or peasants; language was not an issue.⁵ What united almost all of the Spanish zone was the autonomy it had indulged in as part of the Bilad al-Siba for decades, if not centuries.

⁵Magali Morsy, 'Arbitration as a Political Institution: An Introduction of the Status of Monarchy in Morocco,' in Islam in Tribal Societies, ed A. Ahmed (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 41.

Granted the Protectorate, the Spanish government sought to procure it. They would no longer secure economic and political interests strictly by currying the favour of influential intermediaries. Spanish colonial policy, like the French, was based on direct occupation; however, the adoption of this policy implied a three-fold problem. First, Spain did not have an Algérien administrative and military corps from which to draw suitable administrators. Furthermore, along general lines the Spanish were facing from the start of the race for 'pacification' what the French would only deal with much later. While Lyautey could fit comfortably into the traditional political space of the Makhzan, governing more or less the areas that had been the Sharifian Bilad al-Makhzan, the Spanish faced the fiercely independent areas in the mountains that surrounded the meagre footholds of Alcázar, Larache, Arcila, Tetuán, Ceuta and Melilla. Finally, the unpopularity of extra-peninsular military involvements among Spaniards slowed the Spanish colonial machine and weakened its bargaining position vis-a-vis the Moroccan notables intelligent enough to realize that Spain's Commissioner was not another Lyautey. It took the World War for Lyautey to fully appreciate the possibilities of delegating authority to tribal despots; the weakness of the Spanish, coupled with a fierce révanchisme among the military, impeded the Spanish from using local notables in the same way.⁶

⁶No documented and analytical history of the Spanish Protectorate exists in English; I have found of particular use G. Ayache's critical evaluation of the Spanish position, 'Les problèmes de l'Espagne,' Les origines, 77-93 as well as T. García Figueras' España y su protectorado en Marruecos

All of this led to Spain pursuing a haphazard and spotty policy of occupation. Both al-Raisuli and the 'Abd al-Karim scolded the Spanish for their inconsistency and lack of commitment. From the very beginning, nevertheless, the final goal of military conquest prevailed, displacing the pre-Protectorate notion of peaceful penetration, under civil not military command. The collaborating notables were thus faced with their own dilemma: did their long-term advantages lie in siding with the Spanish military, hoping to maintain their privileged positions, or was it the best course to side with or even encourage resistance? After all, they had Islamic mujahid' credentials to employ, and protect.

The 'Abd al-Karim, conscious of Spain's political and military weakness in Morocco, thought they could afford to postpone a final decision with regards to this dilemma; a healthy dose of *both* attitudes, although compromising at times, was not necessarily prejudicial to their political fortunes, or so they thought. Thus, for example, 'Abd al-Karim flirted with the resistance, when the World War brought German support for the a'yan in the form of money and arms. Why should 'Abd al-Karim stand aside and let other notables take advantage of these possibilities, just because Spain had treated his family

⁶(cont'd) (1912-1956) (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Africanos, 1957). See also J.A. Chandler, 'Spain and Her Moroccan Protectorate, 1898-1927,' Journal of Contemporary History 10 (1975): 301-22, and J.M. Cordero Torres, La organización del protectorado español (Madrid: Ed. Nacional, 1943). V. Morales Lezcano's España y el norte de África: El protectorado en Marruecos (1912-1956) (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1986) promises more than it delivers.

well? If he did not accept the German funds, others would, and his own local hegemony might be jeopardized. This dilemma would come to a head in 1915; for the first few years of the Protectorate, Spanish hesitancy to move and the 'Abd al-Karim's fairly stable politics meant that the ambiguous middle ground between imperialism and resistance remained relatively undisturbed.

When the Protectorate was declared, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was posted in Melilla at the O.C.A.I. office as principal faqih, or secretary-counsellor for Muslim affairs. He had been given this job on 22 October 1910, possibly as some sort of conciliatory compensation for the refusal to grant him, or his father, Spanish citizenship.⁷ 'Abd al-Karim himself was installed at the time in his house in Tetuán, whose residents offered no resistance to the Spanish column under General Alfau that occupied the city on 19 February 1913. During 1912 and 1913, 'Abd al-Karim's younger son, Mahammad, studied in what was to be the Protectorate's capital in a school for notables run by the Alliance Israélite.⁸

The family's relations with the Spanish were definitely cordial from 1912 to 1914. The 'Abd al-Karim believed that their best interests as notables were served by supporting the Spanish

⁷ SHM 3/7. *Nombramiento de Sid Mohand Abdelkrim como alfaquí de la Oficina Indígena.*

⁸ SHM 2/4. Minute to letter to General Gómez Jordana by the High Commissioner, Marina, in Tetuán, dated 27 February 1915, explaining that in 1912 both were in the capital.

administration and its proclaimed development policies. The attention showered on them by the Spanish administrative apparatus confirmed the wisdom of this decision. Muhammad became a knight of the order of Isabel the Catholic on 13 January 1912, which honour was accompanied by a raise in his personal pension from 75 pesetas to 250 pesetas per month.⁹ This award was followed by the White Cross of Military Merit on 18 March following, the Red Military Cross, Class One, with a pension of 50 pesetas per month, on 21 May, the First and Second Class Crosses of Military Merit, also granted his father, on 21 August and finally the Medal of Africa on 1 October 1913.¹⁰ Moreover, the Spanish were more than just decorating the 'Abd al-Karim, they were making them the most important men east of al-Raisuli.

Muhammad's rewards for the services he was perceived to be able to provide Spain in its occupation of the Protectorate were combined with the first moves by the Spanish to establish a centralized Makhzan in the area. He was already receiving 1,250 pesetas as faqih, an unknown amount as professor at the Escuela Indígena and a steady pension of 250 pesetas plus the pensions accruing from the medals. Muhammad emerged as the wealthiest and thus one of the most successful claimants for the most

⁹The Spanish thought that he had been offered 225 pesetas by the French to become an agent of theirs, SHM 3/1. *Informe*.

¹⁰SHM 3/1. Ibid. All of this was a personal policy of King Alfonso XIII; between 1909 and 1912, 100,000 promotions and medals were awarded in the army, almost entirely to those serving in Africa, Gabriel Cardona, El poder militar en la España contemporánea hasta la guerra civil (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1983), 58. Compare Pennell's comments, A Country with a Government, 50.

privileged positions in the Spanish-supervised Makhzan. He was named gadi in Melilla on 28 July 1913 with a yearly salary of 36,000 pesetas. Scarcely a month afterwards, he was promoted to gadi qudat on 12 August, although it did not mean a raise in salary.¹¹ Four months after that, Muhammad acquired the highest legal post in the eastern half of the Protectorate. According to the official announcement in the Protectorate's bulletin, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was named by a dahir dated 7 February 1914 'Qadi of the Qabila of Farjana in the Mazuza and President of the Tribunal of Appeals of the Rif.'¹² The meteoric rise of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim up the ladder of success had come to its culmination. In his hands lay the power to apply the law and decide in all those cases associated with the Muslims of the Rif. It was an awesome power which, however, he was to enjoy for less than two years.¹³

'Abd al-Karim had faded partially in the light of his son's progress, but he too received significant recognition from the Spanish administration. In November 1912, he was paid 10,000 pesetas as compensation for his precipitated flight from Ajdir, which he blamed on the failure of the Spanish to carry out the occupation of the Banu Waryaghala via a disembarkment on the

¹¹SHM 3/1. *Informe* and 2/5, 3/7, *Memorias de la O.C.A.I.*

¹²Boletín Oficial de la Zona de Influencia Española en Marruecos 22 (Madrid, 25 February 1914), 19.

¹³Muhammad did not take possession of his new post until 25 May 1914, SHM 3/7. *Memorias de la O.C.A.I.* He had abandoned the teaching job at the Escuela Indígena a year earlier, in March 1913, SHM 2/1. *Nota del Director Escuela Indígenas de Melilla*, 31 March 1913.

beaches of Alhucemas Bay.¹⁴ During this time 'Abd al-Karim was receiving 3,810 pesetas per month plus periodic bonuses of 500 pesetas from the O.C.A.I. 'for work in favour of the government.'¹⁵ This was probably part of the Spanish scheme to buy the principal notables in the Alhucemas area so as to be able to enter the Rif by way of the Banu Waryaghala, a plan that was especially favoured in and after the spring of 1912.¹⁶ Although apparently the most important activity of the 'Abd al-Karim at the time was their co-operation with the Spanish in these schemes, the notable family was buttressing the power that being in the Spanish camp provided them with by increasing their position within in their own tribe.

The 'Abd al-Karim as Landowners

The 'Abd al-Karim's notability was in large part due to their increasing ownership of large tracts of land. It is difficult to estimate exactly how much belonged to them at the beginning of the Protectorate, but thereafter they were involved in land acquisition at what must have been, for the Rif, extremely unusual proportions. By 1919 they were without doubt the most important landowners in the Rif, and probably among the top ten in all of the Spanish Protectorate.

¹⁴ SHM 3/1 *Informe*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ AF (May 1912): 200.

The money that being pensioners, informers and functionaries of the administration brought in was not wasted on futile attempts at actually buying off Spain's political enemies; there were much better things to do with it. 'Abd al-Karim, having returned in April of 1913 to Ajdir purportedly to organize the pro-Spanish party, invested the 10,000 pesetas he had been paid the previous November in land.¹⁷ During that summer, he took to buying up any land in the irrigated plain of Alhucemas that the continuously poverty-stricken peasants were willing to sell.

But the 'Abd al-Karim holdings spilled out over tribal boundaries. By September of that year, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim began to purchase land in the Timsaman area far from Ajdir. In a report dated 17 September, the commanding officer of Alhucemas wrote to the O.C.A.I. office in Melilla that the recently named qadi

has bought land in Truguth in the Timsaman and that they [Muhammad's family] had begun to build an adobe house, when some Banu Waryaghil found out and went there at night and destroyed it, explaining that he was constructing it to serve the Makhzan because it was near the sea. [The qadi] says that although that was not his original intention, since his only object in building the house was to be able to take his flocks there and house his labourers, he does admit that it could be useful whenever we decide to enter that gabila because he is of the opinion that it would be better for us to go first to Truguth in Timsaman, than to Ajdir, where there are mountainous districts that it would dangerous to occupy.¹⁸

¹⁷ SHM 3/1. *Informe.*

¹⁸ SHM 3/5. Letter Commander of Alhucemas Gavilá to Commander of Melilla, 17 September 1913.

Like his father before him, Muhammad also petitioned the Spanish in Melilla for authorization to buy himself the latest model Mauser pistol for his frequent visits to his lands in the central Rif. The request came a few months after the incident mentioned above, a sign of the problems associated with being both rich and influential, and a collaborator of the Christians.¹⁹

Despite the problems associated with the 'Abd al-Karim's juggling of politics for the Spanish and their own politics as landowning notables, they continued to enlarge their holdings. Perhaps the most indicative acquisition was the purchase of 'a large tract of irrigated plots' belonging to the Ulad al-Hajj Haddu, the sons of Hajj Haddu wa 'Aisa al-Sa'id, the qaid quyad named to the area by Sultan Mawlay al-Hasan back in the 1880s.²⁰ Si Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim bought them out of all their lands, some of the richest in the plain stretching between the only two rivers in the area, the Ghis and the Nkur, in the summer of 1915. He also bought other 'unspecified holdings.'²¹

It was more than symbolic that one of the most powerful traditional families in the area had lost both their political ascendancy and lands to the new seigneurie rurale. David Hart has pointed out that one of the changes then taking place within

¹⁹ SHM 3/7. *Solicitud del 31 de mayo de 1914 de Si Mohand...*

²⁰ D. Hart, The Aith Waryaghar, 356-357.

²¹ SHM 1/3. Informer's note dated 15 July 1915. The purchase was made by his uncle 'Abd al-Sallam, although the mulkiyya was in his name.

the structure of central Rifian society was the progressive colonisation of the coastal flatlands by powerful families expanding from the hills. The Ulad al-Hajj Haddu had been among the first to build houses in the plains; now the 'Abd al-Karim had taken over.²² The former had based their social status on the position of the family head as military leader of the Rifian contingents to the mahalla-s, a precarious base at best. The latter achieved a status with the support of the Spanish that al-Hajj Haddu would have envied.

In 1919, probably to finance his budding plans of becoming a haraka commander, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim contacted, or was contacted by, a land speculator in Madrid, a Spaniard by the name of Francisco Letuain. Letuain was interested in acquiring lands in the central Rif; Muhammad estimated his total possessions at 1,100 hectares, of which 200 were in the hills and the rest in the irrigated lowlands around the Nkur and Ghis rivers.²³

In the letter to Letuain dated 23 February 1919, Muhammad described the 900 hectares as excellent land, near the sea, 'good for tea and sugar cultivation' and added, quite businessman-like, that there was another foreigner residing in Tangier who was also looking to make investments in land. We have no record of whether the Spaniard ever completed the deal

²²D. Hart, The Aith Waryghar, 242-43.

²³SHM 3/1. Letter Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to F. Letuain, 23 February 1919.

with Muhammad.²⁴ But what is significant is the fact that by 1919 the 'Abd al-Karim owned somewhere in the neighbourhood of 18 percent of all the available irrigable land in the central Rif.²⁵

The revenue from this must have been impressive, even more so since, whatever the price fluctuations, the 'Abd al-Karim's preponderance meant they could set the market value of fruits, vegetables and wheat. This economic and social influence, coupled with their political and legal power, was what made them the number one notable family in the eyes of the Spanish.

The issue of the 'Abd al-Karim as major landowners has been almost entirely ignored. This is to underestimate a crucial factor in the persistence of their power, since the a·yan's political and social dominance was intimately connected with their economic clout. It would be inexact to equate the 'Abd al-Karim's position in Rifian society with that of other notables in other parts of the Islamic world, such as for example Muhammad Sultan Pasha in Egypt;²⁶ but mutatis mutandis,

²⁴Francisco Letuain did acquire land rights in the central Rif; in 1925 he owned over 2,000 hectares in the Banu Tuzin southeast of the Banu Waryaghil as a mining concession, AF (July 1925): 353.

²⁵This is based on D. Hart's estimate of 4,000 hectares for the Nkur river basin and 1,000 for the Ghis, The Aith Waryaghar, 24; cf. Hart's discussion of landholdings in the 1950s, *ibid.*, 97-101.

²⁶See F. Robert Hunter's succinct application of the Hourani model to this Egyptian grandee, 'The Making of a Notable Politician: Muhammad Sultan Pasha (1825-1884)', International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 15 (1983): 537-44.

the pattern of upward mobility based on government service, in the 'Abd al-Karim's case, mainly Spain, and on the building up of their landholdings repeats itself.

Too much has been taken for granted regarding the continuous predominance of small plots in the Rif. At the time of the 'Abd al-Karim, drastic realignments in social structure were taking place in northern Morocco. The assumption that large landowners could not arise is, as can be seen from their example, false. The money pumped into the hands of Spain's collaborators was changing the role of the notables, increasing their wealth and power at a time of overpopulation and incessant warfare.

In the immediate short run, the greatest losers in these realignments were precisely the small plot cultivators that, as Henry Munson has demonstrated, it would be better to treat as peasants than 'tribesmen' when dealing with socio-economic matters.²⁷ The peasants were faced with various options in the face of these social alterations. Emigration, seasonal and permanent, was common, especially towards the Oranie in Algeria. There is even one case in mid-1920 of a plea made by these ruined peasants to the Spanish administration to be allowed to

²⁷Henry Munson Jr, 'The Mountain People of Northwestern Morocco: Tribesmen or Peasants?', Middle Eastern Studies 17 (1981): 249-55. Although Munson is describing the Gharb, the author feels the distinction is valid also for the Rif; cf. D. Seddon, Moroccan Peasants, *passim* and also E.G.H. Joffé's seminal 'Local Society in Morocco on the Eve of European Occupation: The Southern Jbala in 1911,' Revue d'Histoire Maghébine 25-26 (1982): 51-64.

go to Andalucía *en masse*; the plea was ignored.²⁸ They could also make a few pesetas by enlisting in the many haraka-s that roamed the countryside. Finally, they could become 'labourers' for the notables that had bought them out, on the lands that had previously belonged to them; this latter case is exemplified in Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's explanation that the house he was building on his lands in the Timsaman was intended for his 'flocks' and 'labourers'.²⁹

This was something new in the Rif. The altered economic conditions were inevitably accompanied by an imbalance in traditional social relationships; this was reflected in a loosening of the tribal fabric and its political forms of representation, of which possibly the decay of the democratic nature of the traditional aghraw, or tribal council, might be

²⁸SHM 256/7. *Memoria quincenal*, June 1920; the peasants calculated their numbers at 2,000. The Spanish military compiled a detailed study of these emigration patterns in 1912 for the O.C.A.I. reports, SHM 90/21.

²⁹It is interesting to make a comparison here with the changing role of the tribal shaikh-s in Syria as described by Philip Khoury, 'The Tribal Shaykh, French Tribal Policy, and the Nationalist Movement in Syria Between Two World Wars,' Middle Eastern Studies 18 (April 1982): 180-193. Most of the economic changes and the adaptation by the urban and rural elites to these changes, are comparable. Unlike the Syrian shaikh-s, though, the 'Abd al-Karim were not merely rural tribal chiefs; the Rifian notable family rolled into one the various social castes described by Khoury, centralized government representatives, absentee landowners, commercial agents for modern companies, urban educated elite, moneylenders, traditional Islamic leaders (as faqih-s and qadi-s), and of course tribal chieftains. In this sense the 'Abd al-Karim combined the roles of the Lebanese village zu·ama, the Syrian bedouin shaikh-s, and the Syrian religious minority commercial elite.

the most apparent example. Even if this institution had been democratic before the period in question, there is little, besides D. Hart's folkloric recollections of a Ripublik, to substantiate the theory that the aghraw remained so. Only property owners who were heads of families were allowed in the council³⁰; with the diminishing number of landowners, as notables such as the 'Abd al-Karim concentrated the lands in their hands and asserted their power over the aghraw³¹, the representativeness present in the council system was progressively restricted.

Spanish observers who witnessed the changes from the turn of the century were not at a loss in describing the nature of Rifian society as they saw it; indeed they only had to look in the direction of southern Spain to remember the endemic 'caciquismo' based on 'latifundias' that characterized their own country. They therefore did not split hairs, although the modern-day anthropologist might scorn at their use of outmoded Eurocentric terms. One indignant Spaniard called the seigneurie rurale that had taken control, 'usurers and feudal tyrants.'³²

³⁰G. Ayache, 'Société Rifaine et pouvoir central marocain (1850-1920)', Revue Historique 259 (October-December 1975): 349; Ayache is intent on proving the democratic nature of pre-Protectorate Berber institutions and therefore states that despite the limitation of property, the aghraw remained 'a fairly large democracy'. This view must now be modified.

³¹We should keep in mind their frequent scuffles with the 'traditionalists' such as al-Shadli, described above.

³²SHM 279/1. *Memoria quincenal*. December 1920.

On 23 February 1919, the commander on Alhucemas Island, Manuel Civantos, wrote a letter to his equivalent in Melilla in which he tried to explain 'Abd al-Karim's hesitancy in taking a clearly defined stance for or against the Spanish advance: 'The faqih is now indeed rich and...that is the cause of his being afraid to commit himself.'³³ The faqih's eldest son, however, had decided that there was nothing to be gained anymore from playing up to the Spanish. His immediate reasons, however, were more political than social, and dated to the second year of World War I.

The War

On the morning of 19 August 1914, following the 'Night of Power' which is the culmination of ramadan, Sidi Muhammad al-Tazi, the head of 'Affaires Chérifaines', handed Herr Dickoff, chargé d'affaires of the German Embassy in Tangier, his passports and asked his legation to leave Morocco immediately. Al-Tazi and Dickoff were extremely courteous to each other and unable to control their emotions. Morocco's steadfast supporter among the European powers was being expelled by her host, forced by treaties to obey the Résident Général in foreign affairs. It must have been a moving spectacle on that summer morning in ramadan, the Suq al-Kabir packed by thousands of sympathetic Muslims seeing the 'Prussians' off.³⁴ Just how sympathetic they

³³ SHM 2/4. *Resumen de informes y confidencias, mes de febrero.*

³⁴ The Germans were known as 'Prussians', 'Burush', in Morocco,

were, and not only in Morocco, can be seen in the song that spread among the rebellious North African countryside at the beginning of the war, entitled, as the French reported it, 'el Hadj Guillaume'.³⁵ The Germans, kicked out of one part of Morocco, could not be kicked out of the Spanish zone by a non-belligerant. It was there that German interest in the area remained alive until the defeat of 1918.

The war that had broken out that month was to change the course of the 'Abd al-Karim's involvement in politics completely, especially in the case of Muhammad.³⁶ If up until August 1914 they had been the staunchest allies among the Rifian notables of Spain's presence, by the beginning of 1916 an irreparable break had occurred between Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim and the Spanish military administration; and even though his father and brother did manage to reconcile themselves partly with Spain, things would never be as they had been in 1912.

³⁴(cont'd) report in AF (May 1915): 117.

³⁵A. Djeghloul, 'Hors la loi, violence rurale et pouvoir colonial en Algérie au début du XXe siècle: Les frères Boutouizerati,' Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine 33-34 (1984): 59ff.

³⁶No monograph has been published recently on the effects of the war on Morocco's internal state; the following are of use: Edmund Burke III, 'Moroccan Resistance, Pan-Islam and German War Strategy, 1914-1918,' Francia 3 (1975): 434-64, Charles-André Julien, Le Maroc face aux impérialismes (Paris: J.A., 1978), Philip H. Stoddard, 'The Ottoman Government and the Arabs, 1911 to 1918: A Preliminary Study of the Teskilât-i Mahsusa,' Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1963, and R. de Ségonzac, 'Le carnet de route de Fritz Bottjer,' AF (April 1917): 124-27.

With Spain's neutrality, the close co-operation envisaged by both the French and the Spanish high commands in Morocco boded ill for the Rifian notables. The alliance was not born only of the necessities of the European war, but also of the touchy Hispano-French problem of pacifying their respective zones. In the early fall of 1913, at the conclusion of a meeting between Romanones, the head of the Spanish government, and M. Pichon, the leader of the French delegation, General Luque, commander of the Ceuta-Tetuán comandancia, issued the following statement:

France and Spain should co-ordinate their efforts...Each should regard the other's enemies as its own; the 'Moros' that fight us should be considered adversaries by the French and those that fight the French should never find us indifferent or neutral.³⁷

An official visit by Poincaré to Madrid later that fall sealed the official policy of co-operation; the French took the opportunity to praise the adoption by Spain in her Moroccan possessions of 'French tactics'.³⁸ It was precisely these policies, no neutrality by either France or Spain when either of them had to face resistance to their advances, and the adoption of the tache d'huile by the Spanish military, that the war was to exacerbate. It doomed the Spanish connection for Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim.

³⁷ AF (October 1913): 349.

³⁸ AF (November 1913): 386.

The Jihad

The war provoked unrest among North Africans; but it was not in and of itself enough of a disturbance to radically alter the relations of the 'Abd al-Karim with the Spanish. The change in attitude of 'Abd al-Karim in 1914 was not a reaction to Spanish policies at the outbreak of the war, but rather a decision made by the 'Abd al-Karim unilaterally for various reasons.

The particular split in the European powers helped the 'Abd al-Karim in their political decision-making. Like the crowd that filled Tangier's main sug, they could consider the Germans as the only Europeans present in Morocco who 'lent an ear' to the sort of Europeanization by way of the notables that had been the 'Abd al-Karim's main goal. The Spanish military presence persistently impeded Madrid from adopting this policy full-heartedly. Far-off Germany was not a colonial contender in 1914, and some Germans had already shown that their interests and the 'Abd al-Karim's were consistently parallel. A document that appeared in both the French and Spanish press in 1913 reflects this.³⁹ In it, the notorious Mannesmann firm that controlled important segments of the zone's economy proposed to the Spanish government to run the Spanish Protectorate 'under charter', as the Mannesmann put it, like the British or Dutch East India Companies. The suggested arrangement was for a *civil* administration run conjointly by company representatives and a

³⁹The complete text will be found in RC 12 (December 1913): 427-431.

board of Muslim 'notables' from the 'more than twenty republics' in the area stretching from the outskirts of Tetuán to Melilla.

Needless to say, the Spanish government took this as an unjustifiable meddling by the already too powerful Mannesmann consortium into the affairs of the Protectorate. The Moroccan reaction was different; in al-Raisuli's case, because he is explicitly mentioned in the text, there can be little doubt that he was involved in some way in the plan. The 'Abd al-Karim, though not explicitly mentioned, were implicitly present as influential notables, and Muhammad, as one of the main qadi-s of the Spanish zone would have benefited greatly from the implementation of the Mannesmann scheme.⁴⁰ The French believed that the ultimate inspiration for the idea of a 'charter administration' of the Rif came from 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi himself.⁴¹ In any case, this plot coincided so neatly with the hopes for a civil modernizing administration in the hands of local middlemen, that the 'Abd al-Karim must certainly have remembered it when Germany and the Ottoman Empire formed an alliance in the fall of 1914. The possibility of actually implementing this plan just one year after it was publicly suggested weighed heavily in their decision to promote German propaganda in the region.

⁴⁰There were Mannesmann agents active in the Banu Waryaghala, two apparently, Si Dadi ibn Si Mesaud ibn Bukar and Si Muhand ibn Asmar, who belonged to 'Abd al-Karim's political group, SHM 1/1. Telegram Gavilá to Gómez Jordana, 11 April 1915.

⁴¹AF (October 1921): 323.

'Abd al-Karim, being a shrewd politician, knew that there were advantages to be had in protecting and using his Islamic credentials as a member of the a'yan. Furthermore he expected the Germans to defeat the French, making a direct Spanish occupation less probable and thus reaffirming the need to establish his own independent control of the Rif. Supporting German intrigue was a calculated risk; accepting money from them to fight the French would prevent others from being able to concentrate larger haraka-s than his own, and 'Abd al-Karim believed the Spanish military, known sympathizers of the Germans, would look the other way.

The political weight of Islamic resistance must have also influenced 'Abd al-Karim's decision.⁴² The religious fervour associated with ramadan, coinciding with the outbreak of the war, complicated the Rif's already labyrinthine politics. Many Rifians thought the moment was right for a holy war against the Christians; the question of which Christians- French, Spanish or German -were the prime targets was not one that they bothered with. The problem for the notables lukewarm to lead the resistance was that the really keen, the murabitun, upset the power balance. These murabitun had set up a garrison opposite Alhucemas Island at a place known appropriately as the Burj al-mujahidin. Being defenders of the faith had side benefits that were appealing, such as the right of collecting muna from the peasants, in kind or cash, and, naturally, being able to

⁴²G. Ayache, Les origines, 199-201, has stressed this as one of the possible motivations.

pillage any who dared oppose the mujahidun. In diminished numbers, there had been a mujahid haraka operating in the area for a while. In the summer of 1913, having pillaged a Spanish coast guard patrol that ran aground on 11 June, the haraka rented the captured arms, including a 40cm cannon and machine-guns, to another tribal haraka investing Tetuán.⁴³ If 'Abd al-Karim did not attempt to dominate this situation, it would end up by dominating him.⁴⁴

At first 'Abd al-Karim's decision was reflected in reduced visits to Alhucemas Island; he insinuated to the commander there that he could no longer be counted on as Spain's front-line man. According to the report sent to head office in Melilla, nevertheless, 'Abd al-Karim was still well disposed to inform the Spanish 'if anything abnormal occurs.'

The fajih added that he visited the Wednesday Market last [the same morning of the Germans' expulsion from Tangier], summoned by the local notables and murabitun who were assembled in a tent outside the market, to read them a letter that had been received, signed by the other distinguished a yan of the Banu Waryaghil; in the letter, these last make a call for Muslims to declare a jihad against Spain as soon as ramadan ends, since the French have already abandoned Taza and some other posts...⁴⁵

⁴³ AF (July 1913): 288 and (January 1914): 40.

⁴⁴ This prompted Ayache to state, Les origines, 206, 'To avoid a catastrophe and recover his [political] virginity, he could not ... just content himself with leaving off and seeking peace in retreating [from political involvement].' The present author feels, however, that Ayache exaggerates the dangers to which the Rifian notable was exposed and underestimates the benefits of being the amir of a haraka.

⁴⁵ SHM 3/7. Telegram from Alhucemas, Comandante Militar, to O.C.A.I., Melilla, 21 August 1914.

As tension increased in August 1914, the 'Abd al-Karim began to feel the pressure; collaboration with Spain might cost more now than it had in 1908 or 1911. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, who was visiting Ajdir that ramadan, spelled out the nature of the problem to Captain Barbeta of the Melilla O.C.A.I. in a letter on 29 August.

Last wednesday [26 August, the first market day after 'Id al-Saghir], I went to the sug; I spoke there on behalf of the Makhzan and also spoke with the shaykh-s who came to visit me during Easter [ramadan] and after. People have been talking about the news, which I believe, that a junta composed of Banu Sa'id and tribes from the Kert valley has come to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the dissension among the Banu Waryghal, unite them, and take them back with them on a haraka. It is necessary that you be constantly on the alert about this, but [moreover] you should order all your friends, the notables of the tribes, to exert themselves in their loyalty and to oppose anyone who wants to create trouble and light the fire of rebellion.

You well know that these are extremely difficult times and that a great agitation exists in the Maghrib because of the European war; people in the Rif as well as outside it are restless and the Nations' friends in these regions have found means of agitating with their preachings and mendacious statements, thereby hypnotizing the Rifians' hearts...⁴⁶

The notables were caught between the religiously beneficial fight against the Spanish and the economically advantageous acceptance of Spanish pensions. Jihad, although certainly not a profitable venture in itself, could be put to good use as an excuse for settling old accounts, pillaging, collecting muna and

⁴⁶ SHM 2/1. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to Capitan Barbeta, 29 August 1914. Captain Barbeta was the Distribuidor Político, in charge of the pensions and salaries payed to the O.C.A.I. agents.

gaining popularity as heroes.⁴⁷ The dilemma would be resolved in favour of joining the haraka-s of mujahidun once outside support for the jihad became a possibility. ⁴⁸

As the fall progressed, events were to convince 'Abd al-Karim that the time had come to choose the righteous path. It might be unjust to simplify matters by stating that he 'saw the light' of Islamic resistance to the Christians, but it would also be underestimating the attractiveness, both spiritual and practical, of jihad to neglect religion as a political force in Rifian society. What 'Abd al-Karim had lacked as a notable for many years had been Islamic credibility and legitimacy. The opportunity to regain it appeared in 1914. Ever the careful politician, nonetheless, 'Abd al-Karim did not immediately jump on the mujahidun bandwagon; his decision seems to have been influenced by the appearance of the official Ottoman proclamation of jihad in November.

The 'Abd al-Karim's German sympathies were reinforced by the Ottoman decision to enter the war on the Kaiser's side; in November 1914 the Istanbul 'ulama called for an international jihad, singling out France and Britain as the major enemies of the true Dar al-Islam. ⁴⁹ According to the proclamation, all

⁴⁷Cf. Fanny Colonna's comments regarding Algerian resistance, 'Cultural Resistance and Religious Legitimacy in Colonial Algeria,' in Islam in Tribal Societies, 106.

⁴⁸Cf. E. Burke, 'Moroccan Resistance', 434.

⁴⁹The complete text has been published by Geoffrey Lewis, 'The Ottoman Proclamation of Jihad in 1914,' in Arabic and Islamic

good Muslims would use their 'persons and property' to fight against these enemies. The effect of this proclamation in the Far West of the Muslim world was not as great as had been expected. In fact, it can be said that the contradictory Germano-Ottoman-sponsored jihad in Morocco was ultimately a failure. Nonetheless, 'Abd al-Karim must have been interested in the possibilities of its success early in the war.

Throughout 1914-1915 he showed confidence in a German victory, and the defeat of the Entente powers at Gallipoli only reinforced this conviction. In the case of a German victory, 'Abd al-Karim could count on continuing to play his role as chief spokesman and representative in the central Rif; given the nature of the 1913 Mannesmann scheme, the strength of his bargaining position vis-a-vis the Europeans might even be expected to increase if German interests became predominant. The recognition of the Ottoman Sultan as the Sultan of the Rif was also a calculated political move.⁵⁰ If successful, the distance separating Istanbul from the Rif, guaranteed the virtual autonomy of the 'Abd al-Karim political party. Since 'Abd al-Karim was the first major political figure to endorse such a

⁴⁹(cont'd) Garland: Historical, Educational and Literary Papers Presented to Abdul-Latif Tibawi by Colleagues, Friends and Students (London: The Islamic Cultural Centre, 1977), 159-65.

⁵⁰Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim belonged to the secret service that Enver Pasha directed from Istanbul during the war, but it is not clear when he actually became an agent, see Philip H. Stoddard's 'The Ottoman Government and the Arabs' (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1963), 58a ff. The teşkilât-i mahsusa organization existed before the war and during it had sufficient funds to send agents as far afield as Java; they were extremely well paid.

move, he naturally expected to reap Ottoman recognition of his status as *the* notable of the Rif after the Sultan's victory. Thus 'Abd al-Karim thought his manipulation of the Ottoman jihad and the German subversive campaign in Morocco would bring in not only money and arms with which to bolster his position, but also large scale political connections that in the event of a Central Power victory would leave him as a formidable contender for the control of all the Rif.

The weak link in this chain was 'Abd al-Karim's belief that Spanish neutrality and promises of cooperation with the French would remain *lettre morte*. Absenting himself from the presence of the Spanish, as with Hourani's notables, was not equivalent to breaking off relations completely. It could even be used to garner more attention from the Spanish, given the right circumstances. 'Abd al-Karim's role as a leading notable was more his concern than his advantageous alliance with Spain, which in any case 'Abd al-Karim believed would not be irremediably broken by supporting the Germano-Ottoman propaganda. The Spanish, however, thought otherwise. His 'double jeu', as Ayache calls it, got the better of his over-all political judgement.

In November 1914, the slow estrangement manifested itself in 'Abd al-Karim refusing to be treated for his eye infirmity on Alhucemas Island, despite the Spanish doctor's advice.⁵¹ By January 8, the Spanish were receiving messages from other

⁵¹ SHM 1/3. Note from 'Doctor' to 'Abd al-Karim, 2 November 1914.

informers, faqih-s and tulba-s, that ascribed to the notable the letters 'found thrown about on the ground' in the local markets, on which the Ottoman declaration of jihad was transcribed.⁵²

'Abd al-Karim was still not coming out into the open, leaving enough doubt as to his involvement so that the Spanish would not take repressive measures against him. Events, however, were convincing him that the weight of mujahidun power was growing, and that he would either have to join them, or see his local power base be diminished.

Despite L'Afrique Française' published assertions that Lyautey's 'armour' was ready to defend French Morocco⁵³, the truth was that haraka-s were active from Tangier to Tarfaya. In most cases, the resistance leaders hoped to 'play' both the 'Middle Eastern card' and the German one. The notables leading mujahidun haraka-s could count on both sides, France and Germany, to provide them with arms and money to take sides in the struggle.⁵⁴ Most of these local leaders responded to the Ottoman call for jihad, with the notable exceptions of the three famous qaids of the southern Atlas. Entrenched in their mountain fastness, the anti-French haraka-s were led in the north by al-Raisuli, ibn Jillali, Qasim ibn Salah⁵⁵,

⁵² SHM 1/1. *Documentación de Abd el Krim.*

⁵³ See e.g. AF (January-February 1915): 18 and (October-December 1915): 292.

⁵⁴ Cf. E. Burke, 'Moroccan Resistance,' 461.

⁵⁵ A former Austrian protégé; his haraka was still active in the southern Rif in the spring of 1921, AF (April 1921): 128-29.

al-Hajjani, al-Shanghitti and 'Abd al-Malik. 'Abd al-Malik was the grandson of the famous Algerian 'Abd al-Qadir. After 1915, 'Abd al-Malik's self-proclaimed mahalla, in reality a heterogeneous assembly of haraka-s, dominated the German-financed operations against the French in the central Rif. South of the Uarga valley, Muha u-Hammu, Sidi Rahu, Sidi al-Hawari, al-Hiba and eleven others organized haraka-s.⁵⁶

Given the pledges of cooperation which Spain and France had contracted before the war and the officially imposed neutrality that the comandantes in Larache, Ceuta and Melilla hammered into their subordinates, any sort of involvement by significant notables such as the 'Abd al-Karim could endanger Spain's position.⁵⁷ The tense situation was worsened by the singling out of the Maghrib as the Achilles heel of the French colonial Empire by the Germans.⁵⁸ The Rif became the back door into Morocco proper for the Germans. Furthermore, the Spanish themselves suffered continuously from a perpetual colonial inferiority complex with respect to their southerly African neighbours. The Spanish feared loosing the Protectorate if they were not able to control it. Frontier post officers were paranoid about having notables become French pensioners and also by the frequent French patrols that strayed into supposedly

⁵⁶ AF (June-July 1915): 160-182 and (July-August 1919): 196.

⁵⁷ SHM 130/7. *Disposiciones y órdenes de marcha, mes de octubre 1914.*

⁵⁸ E. Burke, 'Moroccan Resistance', 440-41.

Spanish-controlled areas chasing 'rebels'.⁵⁹ These feelings would culminate in 1921, with the collapse of the Spanish lines in the eastern Protectorate. There was panic and anger among the Spanish in Tetuán.⁶⁰ The French were seen as the ones who benefited immediately from trouble north of the Uarga.

The Spanish were not the only ones worried about the French. The Moroccan officials of the Northern Protectorate administration also harboured suspicions. The chief minister of the Khalifa of the Spanish zone was upset by the continued French intervention in the north. In fact, in quite a twist of irony, he sent a letter on 27 February 1915, to the High Commisioner, Marina, in which he accused Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim of being a double agent in the pay of France. Marina communicated the news to General Gómez Jordana in Melilla who minuted: 'Nonsense... the only connection to the French is when his younger brother studied at the summer Israelite school in Tetuán.'⁶¹

The sympathy the 'Abd al-Karim felt for the Germans, the money that these latter provided, the chance for the 'Abd al-Karim to gain popularity by becoming 'good' Muslim resistors and the weakness of the Spanish position in North Africa all

⁵⁹SHM 256/3. A French column, for example, crossed the Muluya into the Spanish zone at Sidi Ma'arut (Banu Abu Yahya) in the spring of 1920.

⁶⁰See Bernd Terhorst's narrative, With the Riff Kabyles (New York: Frederick F. Stork & Co., [c. 1924]), 148-52.

⁶¹SHM 2/4. Marina to Gómez Jordana, 27 February 1915.

weighed heavily in their decision to become propagandists for the Germano-Ottoman war effort in the Rif. But the deciding factor came late in January 1915. On the twenty-first of that month, while the Germans were setting up a major offensive on the Western front, Lyautey's troops in Morocco suffered one of the worst defeats in French colonial history. Muha u-Hammu, the amir of the largest haraka in the Middle Atlas inflicted a resounding defeat on Colonel Laverdure at el-Herri, a town near Khénifra. Casualties amounted to over 600 dead, not including 33 officers, and all the artillery and camp equipment fell into the hands of u-Hammu's haraka.

The Afrique Française correspondent reported that u-Hammu's envoys were exhibiting their trophies, invariably captured weapons and heads, 'among the tribes, who saw them as irrefutable evidence of a clear victory for the partisans of resistance.' This reaction, he noted, was especially virulent among the tribes in the northern zone.⁶² Two days after the engagement, 'Abd al-Karim categorically refused to visit Alhucemas Island, prompting the officer there to telegraph Melilla that 'he must be involved in some sort of subterfuge.'⁶³

During the winter of 1915, the Middle Atlas area was submerged in all-out war, while in the north the German-financed haraka-s, al-Hajjani and al-Shinghitti's notably, established

⁶² AF (March 1915): 64.

⁶³ SHM 1/1. Telegram, 23 January 1915.

their bases inside the Spanish zone. By the summer of that year the French were not mincing words; they publicly accused the Spanish of harbouring 'agents provocateurs':

They install their centers of espionage and anti-French action in the Moroccan ports or on the islands belonging to neutral Spain.⁶⁴

The commander on Alhucemas Island, convinced that 'Abd al-Karim was preparing to lead the German-financed haraka aimed purportedly at the French, pressed Melilla to do something to keep him in line.⁶⁵ The officer however, outlined clearly that local power was also at stake in the Rifian notable's campaign. He informed Melilla that 'Abd al-Karim's bid for control of the Banu Waryaghala was based on two principles: by-passing the traditional aghraw-s by arming his own haraka-s, and taking advantage of the influence he had by way of his son's post as President of the Muslim Supreme Court in the Rif.⁶⁶ In fact, the unorthodox politics of this ambitious notable were not directed at uniting the Banu Waryaghala fractions, but rather at creating a party loyal only to the faqih. The officer outlined this in a telegram dated 28 February 1915:

The danger present situation rests on Sidi Abd el Krim's struggle disunite families. Seems certain that if attitude Si Abd el Krim family changed we would succeed in uniting all Aydir...I have always carried out Y[our] E[xcellency]'s orders and tried to attract family Si Abd el Krim to us with excessive attentions; if I haven't succeeded... result of this family's independence, which

⁶⁴ AF (June-July 1915):162.

⁶⁵ SHM 1/1. Telegrams dated 9, 25, 27 and 28 February, 11 and 24 April 1915.

⁶⁶ SHM 1/1. Telegrams, 9 and 25 February 1915.

has always affirmed does not need to deal plaza [Alhucemas Island] but only Melilla.⁶⁷

A shrewd politican, 'Abd al-Karim was playing off Alhucemas against Melilla.

The growing anti-Christian fervour was being fed by news brought back from Tetuán, Ceuta and Tangier by migrant Rifian labourers of exaggerated Germano-Turkish victories. Under the pay of the Mannesmann agent Sidi Muhamad ibn Asmar, a haraka set up guard on Morro Viejo overlooking both Ajdir and Alhucemas Island.⁶⁸ The man on the inside in Melilla, in contact with the German Secret Service set up in Spanish territories by von Kalle⁶⁹ was reported to be Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim.⁷⁰

By May 'Abd al-Karim became convinced of the imminent defeat of France and Britain; this, he thought, would lead to the end of the Protectorate administrations as they had been set up in 1912. The Spanish would not be able to keep their privileged control of the northern Moroccan coastline, and 'Abd al-Karim would become the representative of the Rif, both for the Germans

⁶⁷ SHM 1/1. Telegram Gavilá to Gómez Jordana, 28 February 1915.

⁶⁸ SHM 1/1. Telegram Gavilá to Gómez Jordana, 11 April 1915. This was not the same as the garrison of murabitun at the Burj al-mujahidin mentioned above; Morro Viejo, a small promontory in the Buquya, had been bought by a Germanophile aristocrat, the Marquis of Cubas, in 1900 for 20,000 duros, SHM 256/7. *Informe histórico sobre kabilas Alhucemas del Capitán Juan Soler*, February 1920.

⁶⁹ See P.-Louis Rivière, Un centre de guerre secrète: Madrid, 1914-1918 (Paris: Payot, 1936).

⁷⁰ SHM 1/3. *Nota de informes y confidencias*, 24 April 1915.

and the Ottomans. In preparation for this, feeling strong enough to place himself at the head of the local movement of jihad, 'Abd al-Karim wrote to Melilla explaining that 'he was tired of the Makhzan and that the only thing he wanted was to have his two sons with him at his side.'⁷¹ That was not the only thing he wanted. What lay beneath his decision to bring his sons back was the fear of having his sons become hostages, if Spain enforced her neutrality. He knew that the Spanish were aware of his propaganda efforts for the jihad. Apparently, 'Abd al-Karim had started to urge Spain's pensioners to give up their pensions early in 1915, because Islam forbade the acceptance of money from Christians.⁷² Some notables followed his suggestion and began to burn their libretas, or pension-books. It is interesting to note that the jihad was nominally to be under the leadership of a sharif and former qaid by the name of Sidi Amar ibn Muhammad; 'Abd al-Karim would contribute with his own money and what he expected to receive from the outside.⁷³ In essence, he proposed to be the amin of the movement, preferring not to become its amir.

Alarmed by the possibility of a Banu Waryaghil haraka financed by 'Abd al-Karim, the commanding officer in Melilla, Gómez Jordana, instructed Muhammad to write to his father, explaining that the rejection of Spanish pensions was tantamount

⁷¹ SHM 1/1. *Nota de informes*, 8 and 13 May 1915.

⁷² SHM 1/1. Letter 'Abd al-Karim Budra to Gavilá, 15 May 1915.

⁷³ Ibid.

to 'working against [Spain's] mission because it gives occasion for others to follow suit and thus rebellion will spread.'⁷⁴

Gómez Jordana had to crack down on subversives; his promotion to High Commissioner of the Protectorate, about to be granted, depended on the outcome of this problem. The Ministry in Madrid was under pressure from public opinion and the French; an article had just appeared in France on 2 May, written by the French ambassador to Spain, Réné Millet, that consisted of warnings veiled by apparent good wishes:

Spain, the innocent cause of the war of 1870, has wisely remained out of the way in the present conflict. It is an exceedingly wise move, for us, and also for her.⁷⁵

France backed this up by sending French warships to patrol the Banu Waryaghil coastline in mid-May.⁷⁶

'Abd al-Karim was aware of the tense state of Franco-Spanish relations. It led him to conclude, over-confidently and hastily, that 'Spain and France were going to break relations' in June.⁷⁷ The then High Commisioner, Marina, moreover, was known throughout the war for his 'aggressive Germanophilia'.⁷⁸ It was a miscalculation that was to cost the 'Abd al-Karim dearly.

⁷⁴ SHM 1/3. Telegram Gómez Jordana to Gavilá, 27 May 1915.

⁷⁵ AF (May 1915): 151.

⁷⁶ SHM 1/1. Telegram Gavilá to Gómez Jordana, 14 May 1915.

⁷⁷ SHM 2/1. Letter 'Abd al-Karim to Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, 18 June 1915.

⁷⁸ AF (November 1918): 387.

Sidi Amar ibn Muhammad, the sharif, had refused to lead the haraka. 'Abd al-Karim adopted a bolder plan. He gathered the leading notables of the Banu Waryaghil at the zawia of Sidi Yusuf in the Imrabdhin early in ramadan of 1915. The excitement must have been great when 'Abd al-Karim announced that the Ottoman caliph was to be made Sultan of the Rif and that the notables' Spanish pensions would be substituted by pensions from the new sultan.⁷⁹ The next day, at the Monday Market of the Banu 'Ayyash, amid great rejoicing, the proclamation of Mehmet V as Sultan of the Rif was made; letters announcing the event were immediately circulated among the gabila-s.⁸⁰ This was possible because three messengers from the Ottomans were expected for the 'Night of Power'. Everyone waited for the promise of Ottoman support to materialize. The stipulated day came and went and no messengers arrived.

The day after, another council was held to which 'Abd al-Karim was not invited. After due deliberation, it drew up a letter denouncing him to the Spanish. The accusations were as follows: (a) he had attempted to bring the gabila-s in the French zone into the haraka; (b) he had forged letters from Turkey instigating them; (c) these dahir-s, written in Oriental script, had been distributed from the Uarga to the sea; and (d) on 30 July he had tried to convince Sidi Hamidu al-Wazzani to

⁷⁹ SHM 1/3. *Nota de informes y confidencias*, 25 July 1915.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 27 July 1915.

fight the Spanish.⁸¹

The document was the sort of incriminating evidence that the Spanish had been waiting for. Already on August 5, the O.C.A.I. had interviewed Muhammad with respect to his family's allegiance to Spain. Angered at the Spaniards' suspicions, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim had answered that the haraka his father was organizing was aimed solely at the French, 'which is the principal objective of the Turkish manifesto.' Like any good Muslim, he added, he was forced to hate France; he denied that the haraka was to be used by his father to establish a junta in co-ordination with 'Abd al-Malik to govern and drive Lyautey's forces out of Morocco. Pressed relentlessly by the Spanish officer, ibn 'Abd al-Karim became flustered and retorted that if this was the sort of bad faith that the Spanish nurtured towards his family, who had sacrificed so much on Spain's behalf, then he was prepared to espouse total independence for Morocco. Nonetheless, in a last-ditch attempt to appease the O.C.A.I., he swore that 'neither he nor his father will ever do treason to Spain.'⁸² All of this proved that Muhammad's loyalty was lukewarm and his father's activities anti-French; neither fact was criminal.

Unfortunately for the 'Abd al-Karim, General Gómez Jordana had just taken command as High Commissioner and was intent on

⁸¹ SHM 3/1, dated 9 August 1915.

⁸² Taken from the transcript of the conversation, prepared on 21 August 1915 for the records, SHM 3/no carpeta. Folio 22.

pursuing a strictly enforced policy of neutrality, bordering on an almost active pro-French stance. This was not only his personal policy; in Spain the government was definitely leaning towards the Entente powers. The most publicly outspoken defender of the Germans, the police chief of Barcelona, Bravo Portillo, was jailed in June for his subversive activities.⁸³

‘Abd al-Karim's three messengers did arrive, late and German, not Ottoman, on 19 August 1915. The jihad was immediately proclaimed at the Monday Market of the Banu Abu ‘Ayyash, with the letters signed by the caliph that the three Germans had brought.⁸⁴ ‘Abd al-Karim organized a haraka and set off for the Kert river with the three Germans ten days later.

The Spanish took immediate action. General Aizpuru, the commander in Melilla, following Gómez Jordana's instructions, arrested and incarcerated the President of the Muslim Supreme Court, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karim, on 8 September 1915.⁸⁵ A week later, the Spanish High Commissioner made an official visit to Rabat, confident that the necessary measures had been taken. At the closing dinner, he raised his glass to Lyautey and made a resounding speech.

I come on special mandate from my government, to salute the Résident Général and strengthen the bonds that unite our two armies of Africa in their respective zones. I can assure you that I will use all my powers to

⁸³ See F. Díaz-Plaja, La España política del siglo XX, vol. 1, 250-51.

⁸⁴ SHM 2/5. *Informes y confidencias*, 24 August 1915.

⁸⁵ SHM 1/3. Telegram Aizpuru to Gavilá, 8 September 1915.

contribute to the successful conclusion of the work we have undertaken... and that I will use all my energy to prevent any elements in the zone in which Spain exercises her protectorate from causing the slightest perturbation in the course followed by Your Excellency, and all those under my orders will do likewise.⁸⁶

In the case of Muhammad, Gómez Jordana's administration had already fulfilled these pledges of cooperation. 'Abd al-Karim's involvement as a propagandist for the Germans and Ottomans had backfired. The notable had contravened one of Hourani's rules for the politics of the patriciate: dissent must never be indulged in to the degree that the ruler's displeasure is aroused, and his wrath brought down on the notable's head. 'Abd al-Karim's power as a notable could not prevent the Spanish from laying their hands on a hostage, which was in effect what they did in 1915. It was a lesson that Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was to learn the hard way.

⁸⁶Speech made on 16 September, AF (September 1915): 262-63.

CHAPTER V

"OUR POLITICAL SITUATION BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE RIF"

If three [of you] are in a desolate tract of land, one of you must be chief.¹

Hadith.

Eh! Je suis leur chef, il fallait bien les suivre.

Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin

The Trial of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim

The President of the Muslim Supreme Court of the Rif was charged with 'lack of loyalty to Spain's cause.'² Because Melilla was not to come under civil administration until 1918, as a municipality of Málaga Province, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was tried in a military court.³ Being judged by the military was the culmination of the process of militarization in the administration that he had criticized as unproductive and antagonistic.

From the beginning, the prosecution's case was doomed; the little incriminating evidence that there was related to Muhammad's father, not Muhammad himself, and the latter could

¹Cited in Omar A. Farrukh, trans., Ibn Taimiyya on Public and Private Law in Islam, or Public Policy in Islamic Jurisprudence, (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 187.

²A report was prepared at the end of the trial that included all the evidence for and against the defendant, SHM 2/6. *Información instruida para investigar la conducta del Kadi de la Oficina Central de Asuntos indígenas de Melilla SI MOHAN BEN SI ABD EL KRIM.*

³Decree of 13 December 1918, AF (December 1918): 443-44.

always adduce in his favour the two letters he had written to 'Abd al-Karim during the troubled winter, urging him on the administration's behalf to give up working for the Germans. The prosecutor did shoddy work besides. He failed to go through the documents that the O.C.A.I. could have provided and rested his case on the dubious testimony of various witnesses. The 'Young Turk proclamations' found in Muhammad's Melilla apartment were not incriminating, and the many hundreds of business letters with Germans and two Bilbao industrialists, Félix Ortiz de Zárate and Juan Olavarrieta, showed his keen interest in developing the Rif with Spanish help, not in opposing Spain. The judge made a clear distinction, as the 'Abd al-Karim did, between the Spanish military occupation and Spanish-sponsored economic development of the Rif. Unfortunately, Muhammad's clear interest in the latter was not to be sufficient to make the Spanish forget about his father's open involvement in the haraka-s.

The problem was that Muhammad's trial was meant by the Spanish high administration as a warning that the notable family was overstepping the limits of political involvement that were allowed. It was to be more a severe rap on the knuckles than the destruction of their ties with the Spanish. Although the evidence was shaky, there was enough for 'Abd al-Karim senior to have been convicted. Since the real culprit, 'Abd al-Karim, could not be apprehended, his son became a hostage to guarantee his father's behaviour.

With repeated pledges of loyalty to Spain, the qadi convinced the judge, Colonel Enrique López Sanz, of his innocence. The trial ended on 5 November 1915. The Judge Advocate who ruled on the application of the military code noted that,

Si Mohamed Ben-Si Abd el-Krim undoubtedly holds very strong opinions, near to being fanatical, concerning the presence of European military forces in Morocco and what this means...since he does not hide that he is also contributing to the bonfire that is being lit in Morocco against France's Protectorate, he does not really feel loyal to Spain. It means that in the deep recesses of his heart lies something that could be transformed, when the occasion arises, into a hatred and rancour against French and Spanish, and thus he would be ready to go against any Europeans, whoever they may be.⁴

Despite his acquittal, the military administration inflicted the most humiliating treatment possible on Muhammad. It had already rescinded his appointment as President of the Muslim Supreme Court on 11 October 1915.⁵ Now the Spanish military took away all his honours and pensions and, to make matters worse, kept him in the Cabrerizas Altas jail for a total of nine months. It was the turning point for the notable.

His frustration at the arbitrary treatment did not take long in surfacing. On 23 December of 1915, he attempted to escape by jumping from the cell window. Unfortunately it was a sizeable drop into a dry moat; Muhammad broke one of his femurs, and was

⁴Ibid.

⁵SHM 1/4. This order came from the Estado Mayor, the Madrid-based General Staff of the Ejército de Marruecos.

caught by the guards.⁶

His father's pleas for his release were of no use.⁷ Consequently, 'Abd al-Karim decided to continue his propagandizing for the jihad. He went back to 'reading verses from the Quran,' urging the Banu Waryaghala to support 'Abd al-Malik, and explaining to them that Islam forbade them to receive money from the Christians, but that they could accept it from him.⁸ The money he was attempting to distribute came undoubtedly from 'Abd al-Malik's German subsidies. He was convinced that the Spanish were bluffing and would release Muhammad.

A Partial Reconciliation

That was precisely what happened in 1916. Sensing that it would be better to have 'Abd al-Karim on their side, the Spanish did an about-face. Before August they freed Muhammad and gave 'Abd al-Karim the job of distributing the pensions paid out to the notables of the Buquya, Timsaman, Banu Tuzin, and Banu Waryaghala, amounting to 6,900 pesetas per month.⁹ There were several reasons for this volte face.

⁶SHM 1/3. Top Secret Telegram Commanding Officer Melilla Luis Aizpuru to High Commissioner Gómez Jordana, 24 December 1915.

⁷SHM 3/1. Letter 'Abd al-Karim to Luis Aizpuru, 1 February 1916.

⁸SHM 3/no carpeta. Telegram from Commanding Officer Alhucemas to O.C.A.I. in Melilla, 13 February 1916.

⁹SHM 3/1. *Pensiones*

In the spring of 1916, under pressure from the Spanish parliament to curtail the excessive costs of the Spanish presence in Africa, Gómez Jordana began to talk of rapid pacification and the possible demilitarization of parts of the Protectorate. Thus the cooperation of the leading notables was of paramount importance; al-Raisuli and al-Khattabi were singled out as the prime candidates for a campaign designed at bringing the active notables into the Spanish camp, or at least keeping their haraka-s relatively quiet. As had been the case before, the bait came mainly in the form of money.¹⁰

Also in the minds of the Spanish administration was the fact that incarcerating 'Abd al-Karim's son was not preventing al-Khattabi senior from supporting the militant mujahidun wing, although it did limit his activities to only being the distributor of German funds. The Spanish hoped to persuade 'Abd al-Karim to change allegiance openly, and bring his financial and political power to bear to counterbalance the latest Rifian addition to the jihad. In March of that year, another pretender had arisen in the Spanish zone, too close for comfort to Melilla; his name was Mawlay Muhammad al-Idrisi, and he gained the support of various tribal contingents by propagating the

¹⁰AF (May 1916): 182-83. The Spanish volte face, another example of the mismanagement rife in the Protectorate, was a disaster. Not very long after being reconciled with the Spanish, for example, al-Raisuli would turn the 2,500 repeating rifles, three machine-guns and one million pesetas he received in 1916 against them. Even before this, though, in June 1916, al-Raisuli was telling European reporters that the Spanish were 'his dupes,' AF (July 1916): 246-48.

news that he was the precursor of the 'Owner of the Hour.'¹¹ Unlike the rest of the amir-s, Mawlay Muhammad preached a jihad against everyone, Germans, Spanish, French and Alawite. This prompted the Spanish administration to seek to regain the allegiance of 'Abd al-Karim, and thereby neutralize al-Idrisi's haraka. This the Spanish did manage to do, but their costly attempts to control the internal politicking of the Rif were inept in the long run.

The reconciliation between the Spanish and 'Abd al-Karim was marred both by events in general and by 'Abd al-Karim's own actions. The Rifian notable was in point of fact milking both the Germans and the Spanish at the same time; he did not renounce the job of pension distributor for 'Abd al-Malik when he became the distribuidor of the Spanish in August 1916. Late that year, he told 'Abd al-Malik that he could no longer work for the jihad because 'Abd al-Malik was not paying him enough. In January of 1917, 'Abd al-Karim told the Spanish to either pay the equivalent of 'Abd al-Malik's pensions, or allow him complete liberty to carry out the Germano-Ottoman propaganda in the area.¹² Furthermore, instead of paying out the pensions that he was receiving from 'Abd al-Malik and the Spanish, 'Abd al-Karim decided to pocket the monthly amounts. All of this double-dealing got 'Abd al-Karim into trouble.

¹¹AF (May 1916): 172. His haraka was made up of mujahidun from the Mtalsa, Timsaman, Banu Abu Yahya, and Banu Ulishik.

¹²Letter Aizpuru to Gómez Jordana, 29 January 1917. 'Abd al-Karim was asking for a further 2,765 pesetas per month.

In late January the notables denounced him to the authorities in Alhucemas.¹³ The Banu Waryaghala were beginning to tire of the Germans and their ineffectual fight against the French. On 13 September 1916, a call was made in one of the sug-s to fine and persecute all those who might be involved with the Germans, French or Spanish: 'All Christians, regardless of nationality, are enemies.'¹⁴ In April 1917, a month after he had visited 'Abd al-Malik's haraka¹⁵, 'Abd al-Karim fled from Ajdir and took refuge with the Banu Marghanin clan of the Timsaman.¹⁶ Rumour had it that he managed to take all his money with him, some two million pesetas.¹⁷

Two months later he turned up at Alhucemas, asking to be reinstated on the list of pensioners. The Spanish paid him 1,000 pesetas but did not give him back his job of distribuidor.¹⁸ Mahammad, who had studied in Madrid from 1913 to October 1915, went back to the Engineering school there on 21 September 1917.¹⁹ It was only a partial and ephemeral reconciliation.

¹³ SHM 3/1. *Pensiones*.

¹⁴ SHM 3/6. *Informes de la O.C.A.I.* . . .

¹⁵ SHM 3/no carpeta. Telegram High Commissioner to Comannding Officer Melilla, 9 March 1917; cf. A. Bartels, who met 'Abd al-Karim in 'Abd al-Malik's camp, Fighting the French in Morocco (London: Alston Rivers, 1932), 189.

¹⁶ SHM 3/1.

¹⁷ Andrés Sánchez Pérez, Abd el Krim, 74.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ SHM 2/1.

In the summer of 1917 everything seemed to have calmed down in the central Rif. 'Abd al-Malik's haraka-s were diminishing in numbers and influence and the Banu Waryaghala had gone back to their farming. The commanding officer on Alhucemas Island, Manuel Civantos, commented in his monthly report to Melilla on 11 August: 'The state of affairs of our politics and the tranquility that reigns in the vicinity of Ajdir and Suani could not satisfy me more...' ²⁰ The cannon on the Island had gone back to its traditional role of announcing the beginning and end of the daily fast during ramadan for the Banu Waryaghala. ²¹

The appearances were deceiving. The partially successful reconciliation with the important notables had not panned out in the case of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim, who had repeatedly refused even to contemplate returning to his old jobs in the Spanish-sponsored Makhzan. ²² Even if Muhammad had wanted to, the High Commissioner in Tetuán did not approve of Muhammad's return, despite the recommendation of the Commanding Officer in Melilla. ²³

²⁰ SHM 3/7. Letter Manuel Civantos to Commanding Officer Melilla, Luis Aizpuru, 11 August 1917.

²¹ SHM 199/8. Telegram Civantos to Aizpuru, 20 June 1917; ramadan began that year on 20 June and the garrison did not have enough shot for the entire month.

²² The first mention of this dates to 20 January 1917, SHM 3/1. Telegram Alhucemas to Melila O.C.A.I..

²³ G. Ayache believes that Muhammad did return to his post; having checked his sources, Les origines, 240-42, the present author disagrees. Ayache relies on two letters, one from Aizpuru to Gómez Jordana, mentioned above, and another from Muhammad himself to the Khalifa of the Spanish zone, both from 1917; in fact, Aizpuru's letter is merely a *recommendation* for his

The end of the war brought new currents to the Rif, although it ended with apparent tranquility. President Wilson's Fourteen Points began to be spoken about in the gabila-s. ²⁴ The four-year war inevitably influenced the political outlook of the enlightened a'yan. Europe had proven that it could be as anarchic as the Rifian tribesmen. The old argument that Europe would bring peace and civilization to Morocco had lost much of its lustre. In the spring of 1921, a French observer commented that 'the war had plunged the Allies into a state of confusion.' ²⁵ Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim echoed this in a statement he made a few years later, although he added a significant dose of ideology to his interpretation of the war.

Europe, which the world war corrupted and threw into anarchy, has lost the right to impose her will on the peoples of the other continents. ²⁶

A Notable Left to His Own Devices

In an interview with Idris ibn Sa'id just after the battle of Annual in 1921, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim described the five years following his release from jail in 1916. He compared himself to another notable that fell out with Spain during the

²³(cont'd) reinstatement, and the latter deals with an indemnity that 'Abd al-Karim senior was requesting for 'properties he possesses in Tetuán' that were vandalized in early 1917 (as a result of his abandoning of 'Abd al-Malik's cause?), SHM 3/1. Letter from the Khalifa to Aizpuru, 9 November 1917.

²⁴AF (November 191): 37.

²⁵AF (April 1921): 129.

²⁶Abd el-Krim et la République, 88.

war, the famed al-Raisuli.

I know that al-Raisuli's distrust undid him and left that tribal notable to his own devices, because at first he showed the qabila-s that he was at Spain's service and that with that Nation's help he was able to maintain himself strong and then came the break [between al-Raisuli and Spain]. Consequently the tribesmen distrusted him, abandoned him and thus al-Raisuli was left on his own, because he did not trust Spain.

In my case, the same has happened; by not remaining inactive after separating myself from Spain I was able to recover the trust of my men and with time they understood that I was not intent on tricking them. Thus now you can see that they are united and obedient under my command.²⁷

Distrust was the operative word. Idris ibn Sa'id's mission, which was to come to some sort of an agreement on behalf of the Spanish, was made more difficult by the fact that Muhammad had not forgotten the legally arbitrary treatment he had received from the Spanish military administration. After all, though he had been found not guilty, he was nonetheless kept in prison for months.

I am afraid that even if the Spanish reach an agreement with me, they will not keep it and for this reason my desire is to sign a solidly based peace with Spain, but to do it in such a way as to have everyone know of the conditions accorded...²⁸

For five years after 1916, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was left to his own devices as an influential, and rich, notable of the Banu Waryaghil. Caught between the Spanish military

²⁷ SHM 1/5. Letter ibn Sa'id to General Berenguer, 13 August 1921, folio 11. The same thing had not actually happened, but what Muhammad probably meant was that the same forces were at work in his situation: serving Spain, distrustful qabila-s, a 'break' with Spain, and being left to one's own devices.

²⁸ Ibid.

administration, to whom he did not want to be subservient, and the popular Rifian mistrust of all collaborators, he still had his lands, his prestige as a former qadi, and his personal wealth. With these he set about building up a haraka of his own.

Facing this notable, who though left to his own devices could be confident of the power his own resources gave him, the Spanish decided to proceed with the direct military occupation of the Rif that they had left uncompleted in 1914. By 1920, with the arrival of General Fernández Silvestre as commanding officer in the Melilla sector, the policy of military colonization was in full swing. This policy was directly opposed to the civil delegation of power by the Spanish to the notables that the 'Abd al-Karim had espoused. From 1919, Spanish expansion progressed at the expense of the middle ground that was the only common ground for a direct understanding between the enlightened a·yan and the European power. However, the immediate reasons for 'Abd al-Karim once again informing the Spanish that he could no longer campaign for their cause were rooted in the defeat of Germany and the Ottoman Empire in November 1918.

In the aftermath of the war, 'Abd al-Karim's greatest worry was that his family would be persecuted as war-time collaborators of the defeated powers. Rifian and Jbalan opinion took a long time to accept the defeat of the Germans. Only when the pro-German Spanish newspapers announced the truth did it finally sink in.²⁹ 'Abd al-Karim senior did not take long to

²⁹Cf. TR, 7 December 1919.

assimilate the news. He was especially concerned in the months following November 1918 with being extradited to French-controlled territory to be judged for his participation on the side of the losing powers. He let the commanding officer in Alhucemas know as much and was not reassured by the latter's answer to the effect that no action had been contemplated on the Spanish side.³⁰ 'Abd al-Karim's fears were not ungrounded. The Spanish administration was indeed carrying out a witch hunt of German sympathizers and collaborators in their zone, in accordance with French petitions to that effect. As a corollary of this, the O.C.A.I. had suggested a general roundup of any suspicious notables.³¹

It was mainly this fear that prompted 'Abd al-Karim to send for his two sons, who were in Madrid and Melilla at the time. They both returned to the Banu Waryaghil in February. Once there, Muhammad and Mahammad wrote to two of their Spanish friends, detailing the reasons for their father's break with the Protectorate government.³² These are two extremely interesting and revealing documents.

³⁰ SHM 2/4. Letter from Manuel Civantos to Commanding Officer in Melilla, 27 February 1919, outlining the notable's worries.

³¹ SHM 18/entire file. *Detención de rebeldes a petición franceses.*; see also P.-Louis Rivière, Un centre de guerre secrète, 29.

³² An intermittent correspondence was kept up by the 'Abd al-Karim brothers with the Spanish right up to the summer of 1921. Even after Abarrán, Mahammad was still writing to try to 're-establish relations', General Dámaso Berenguer, Campañas en el Rif y Yebala, 1921-1922: notas y documentos de mi diario de operaciones (Madrid: Sucesores de R. Velasco, 1923), 17-18, 32, 100.

The first letter was written by Muhammad on 21 February 1919 to Manuel Civantos, commanding officer in Alhucemas. It was short and remarkably amiable. In the best Spanish he could muster, Muhammad explained the reasons for the break.

Because we maintain such close relations with Spain, and because there is no other family in all of the Rif in our special case, we are exposed to great harm and more sacrifices, as we already have been various times, and since we see that Spain does not provide us with the protection and sufficient subsidies to face the enemies that we gain daily because of our political situation between Spain and the Rif, we are forced for all these reasons to make this decision. ³³

Muhammad went on to add that Spain had to modify its policies in Morocco if it desired to have the 'Abd al-Karim on its side.

The letter demonstrates the collapse of the role of middlemen that his family had acquired through a careful and studious policy of favouring the Spanish, up to just the right point, and not cutting themselves off completely from their social status as a yan. The Spanish military advances following the end of the war had narrowed the middle ground that stood between Spain and the Rif to the point of no return.

However, Muhammad still urged the Spanish to consider him a true supporter of Spain's 'civilizing mission' in Morocco; implicitly, he was leaving enough room for a possible re-establishment of a middle ground. What would have been the terms of this ambitious and careful notable? His brother's letter enlarged on the topic, specified more clearly his

³³ SHM 3/7. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to Manuel Civantos, 21 February 1919.

misgivings about Spanish policy in the Rif and offered suggestions for its correction.

Just as his father had played off the central administration in Melilla against the local command in Alhucemas in the early years of World War I, the brothers Abd al-Karim now attempted to play off Madrid against the Protectorate administration. On 15 August 1919, Mahammad wrote to Manuel Aguirre, who was in charge of the Moroccan section of the Ministry of the Interior in Madrid, on 15 August 1919. Stressing, as his brother had done, that the decision to break with Spain was logical and reasonable, and not a rash decision taken in the heat of the moment, Mahammad went on to detail the failings of the Spanish in Morocco.

Above all, Mahammad's criticisms centred on the Protectorate's failure to fulfill its *raison d'être*, the 'protection' of the Rif. The peace and prosperity promised by the Algeciras Act, the treaties of 1912, and the rhetoric of post-1898 Spanish colonialism, had produced few concrete results. A few schools had been set up for the notables' sons, and a hospital in Melilla for Muslims, it was true, but the ultimate results of Spain's Protectorate were disappointing.

At those times that there have been in authority people interested in the Moroccan question, much has been done and various problems have been resolved, but they were quickly substituted by others, and these undo everything the previous [administrators] had done; and clearly this reduces the prestige of Spain and her partisans greatly in the eyes of the indigenous population, making them believe that if Spain continues to follow this path, she will never be able to pacify her zone and when they see

the occupied zone's organization and administration of justice and other affairs that intervene in the country's well-being, and the way that it is governed, they defend themselves against any political or military advance, preferring the situation in which they find themselves.³⁴

Instead of subsidizing those 'projects in which money should be spent,' the Protectorate administration was wasting it by distributing it to too many small notables. Correctly used, this money would have led to the pacification of the Spanish zone and the railway from Tangier to Tetuán or the one leading to Taza-Fez from Melilla via Alhucemas (Ajdir) would have been completed.

...perforating drills and many thousands of workers would now be at work in the heart of the Banu Tuzin and Banu Waryaghil mountains, extracting the great riches that they contain.³⁵

This interest in the mining possibilities of the Rif has been downplayed by most observers. They have attempted to ridicule these notions of development by demonstrating that there were few natural mineral resources in the central Rif. We should keep in mind that Muhammad, a student of mining engineering, was convinced that there were mineral deposits; his brother had also had dealings with mining companies in Spain before 1915, in an attempt to sell them concessions on his lands.³⁶ This is what is important.

³⁴ SHM 1/5. Letter Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to Manuel Aguirre, 15 August 1919.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ SHM 2/6. *Información instruida para investigar la conducta del Kadi...* Among the papers found in Muhammad's apartment in

The 'Abd al-Karim were not the only ones who believed in these mineral resources. The economic push after the world war led the French and British governments to take an interest. J. Gouven, of the Afrique Française 'mission scientifique', stated in early 1920 that 'iron in the Alhucemas Bay area is spoken of from classical times...It can be accepted as a fact based on the scientific data.'³⁷ The British vice-consul in Tetuán produced a detailed Report on the Trade, Industry and Finance of Morocco that same year that focussed in on the same area's mining possibilities, specifically with respect to the famed 'iron mountains'.

It seems probable that in a radius of 25 km from the coast, one or two important exploitable deposits are located; two sites have been located approximately 15 and 25 km from the coast near the Nkur River...Already there are several bidders competing for the concessions.³⁸

There could be 'no doubt', according to the vice-consul, that iron, copper, silver and zinc deposits would be found in the central Rif, in the Buqquya, Banu Waryaghah and Timsaman.³⁹

Private interest was also apparent. In March 1921, just months before Annual, Francisco Caballero, the Melilla

³⁶(cont'd) Melilla were various business letters 'dealing with mines', from two top Spanish industrialists, Zárate and Olavarrieta, who by 1925 owned 1,190 hectares and 935 hectares respectively, in the Banu Tuzin and Banu Waryaghah, purchased before the outbreak of the Rif war in 1921, AF (July 1925): 353.

³⁷RC 2 (February 1920): 28.

³⁸Government of Britain Consular Report (Cmd #975), AF (February 1921): 65.

³⁹Ibid, 66.

representative of the Spanish mining firm of Setolázar wrote to Mahammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim. The Setolázar firm, founded in 1913 with an initial capital of ten million pesetas, was one of the top three mining companies investing in the Spanish zone.⁴⁰ In the letter, Caballero counselled the 'Abd al-Karim brothers not to be too ambitious, hasty or overconfident.

From the reports which I believe to be the most reliable, it is evident that we have acquired the best parts of an area that, by itself, will suffice to make us all rich...

You should not be impatient to earn money. There will be enough gold for everyone.

Concerning politics, I think you should reflect [on matters] and be careful about what you are going to do. Everyone here knows that your brother commands a haraka against Spain and this, you can well understand, will hamper your future relations with our government.⁴¹

In reality, the central Rif, without being as rich as the eastern part around Melilla, did have substantial mineral wealth; in later Protectorate days a Spanish company owned a 1,600 hectare concession in the Banu Waryaghah where it mined high-grade lead.⁴² All of this attention must have contributed to the 'Abd al-Karim's conviction that the development of the Rif and their social position as middlemen might not be eliminated totally by breaking with the military administration.

⁴⁰V. Morales Lezcano, España y el Norte de África, 210.

⁴¹Cited in French translation in Roberto Sánchez Díaz, 'La pacification espagnole,' Abd al-Krim et la République, 77.

⁴²Tomás García Figueras calculated the value of the central Rif's mining production as one half that of the Melilla area, one of the prime mining areas of Morocco; the company mentioned was the Minas del Chekrán, España y su protectorado en Marruecos, 1912-1956, 105.

Continuing with Mahammad's letter to Manuel Aguirre, the former engineering student outlined what Spain should do to improve the situation in the Protectorate.

The Rif calls with all the strength of its lungs to the good Spanish, protesting against the present manner of protection and hoping that they will awaken and look on the Rif with an eye to its interest, and that they will do the utmost to correct the present mistakes in [Spain's] mission, authorizing and facilitating the funds needed to develop the natural resources and greatness of both peoples. Tired of so many years of anarchy and internal strife, we plead with Spain for it to take an interest in our situation and that it modify somewhat its politics in the Rif; we assure it that this zone's pacification depends on a direct understanding between good Spanish administrators and the few intelligent notables here who know the advantages and conveniences which northern Morocco has in an intimate and fraternal union with Spain and who are conversant in the Protectorate's organization.⁴³

In essence, Spain had to forget about occupying the Rif by means of military operations led by Spanish officers like General Fernández Silvestre with a penchant for direct army administration in the zone. The 'Abd al-Karim's call was for the reinstatement of direct negotiations between Spain and themselves. Confident that they would be able to survive locally as influential a'yan, they were giving the Spanish a veiled ultimatum: either delegate authority and power to us to carry out the reform and development of the Rif on Spain's behalf, or face the consequences.

General Fernández Sivestre, uninterested in 'civilizing' anything or anyone, let alone the Moroccans he had always

⁴³SHM 1/5. Letter Mahammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim to Manuel Aguirre, 15 August 1919.

considered irremediably superstitious savages⁴⁴ chose to face the consequences. The Spanish failed to respond to the 'Abd al-Karim cause.⁴⁵ The politics of middlemen was dead.

The Man of the Hour

Events in 1920 turned the verbal break with Spain into the only political policy that the 'Abd al-Karim could follow.⁴⁶ 'Abd al-Karim senior died sometime in the summer, poisoned by the Spanish according to rumour.⁴⁷ Whatever the case may be, his sons were now in charge of the 'Abd al-Karim political and economic fortunes. And Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim seemed to recognize that Spain's military occupation was eliminating the notables' middle ground.

The military's hold on the Protectorate was hardening. In 1920, Millán Astray founded the Spanish Foreign Legion in Ceuta. Two decrees, 25 January 1919 and 1 September 1920, made the High

⁴⁴"This is apparent in, for example, his dealings with al-Raisuni, R. Forbes, El Raisuni, 151-154.

⁴⁵For a discussion of the Spanish military advance into the Rif, see C.R. Pennell, A Country with a Government and a Flag, 63ff; cf. General D. Berenguer, Campañas en el Rif y Yebala, 1-34.

⁴⁶Cf. G. Ayache's use of the sources, Les origines, 'La rupture', 227-251, and 'La croisée des chemins', 289-322.

⁴⁷D. Hart commented on this as one of the explanations among the Banu Waryaghil for the break, The Aith Waryagħar, 371. Years before in February 1916, the commanding officer in Alhucemas, Gavilá, had been accused of wanting to poison the notable. He had retorted to the accusation that it would be a totally justified action, given 'Abd al-Karim's double-facedness, SHM 3/no carpeta. Letter Gavilá to Gómez Jordana, 19 February 1916.

Commissioner, General Berenguer, virtual viceroy in all of Spain's African colonies, from Guinea to northern Morocco.⁴⁸ And the Spanish colonial armies were on the offensive in the Protectorate; not to be outdone by the French occupation of Ouezzane on 2 October 1920, a Spanish column captured Chechaouen, one of Morocco's holiest cities, twelve days later.

⁴⁹

Meanwhile, Muhammad had adopted an old ploy, used by his father at the start of the Great War. In October 1920, he attended a meeting at a sug of the Banu Sa'id, Timsaman, Banu Walishik and Banu Tuzin, and spoke eloquently of forming a haraka, because, in his own words, he came 'with powers from Turkey and Islam to take the gabila-s to fight [Spain] and her religion.'⁵⁰ This was the Turkey that Mustafa Kemal was leading against the invading Greeks, although officially the Caliph remained in power. The fine print is not relevant; for the Rifian peasants, the Ottoman Empire, the core of the Dar al-Islam, existed as long as there was a caliph. However, local circumstances were more important than high-sounding pan-Islamic propaganda, and the reaction to Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's call was divided.

⁴⁸Cf. comments AF (January-February 1919): 73-74. and (April 1921): 130.

⁴⁹AF (December 1920): 376.

⁵⁰SHM 256/2. Cyphered telegram O.A.I. to head office in Melilla, 17 October 1920.

To gather more force, the notable dedicated the next few days to doing the rounds of the markets, repeating his message. To interest the peasants more ibn 'Abd al-Karim sweetened his offer. He now offered to arm his followers and pay 'an excellent muna' to all those that enlisted; furthermore, deserters from the Spanish police mías would receive double their usual pay. The guns and munitions were to come from Turkey and Germany, although the popular explanation was that ibn 'Abd al-Karim was being supported by the French.⁵¹ To instill fear in the tribesmen, he told them in December 1920 that if they allowed themselves to be occupied, Spain would enlist them in her armies and take them away from their homes to fight in her cause against the French, since, ibn 'Abd al-Karim said to them, 'an international conflagration is imminent.'⁵²

Despite the limited success of this confusing verbal campaign, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim was able to form a haraka in the Friday Market of the Timsaman, where a jihad was proclaimed in December.⁵³ The men in his pay were unaffectionately referred to by those opposed to Banu Waryaghil dominance as 'the wolves'.⁵⁴ The wolves considered themselves the only true Muslims. This heightened the already tense

⁵¹ SHM 256/2. Cyphered telegram, Alhucemas to Melilla, 19 October 1920.

⁵² SHM 279/1. *Memoria quincenal, diciembre 1920.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ SHM 279/4. Letter Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Sarraj al-Yaqubi to Colonel Morales, 24 June 1921.

religious feelings among the qabila-s. Notables who were identified as having been Spanish collaborators, excepting the 'Abd al-Karim of course, were publicly insulted. Muhammad ibn al-Hajj, who was the principal informer of the Timsamani-s, was accused of being Christian and eating pig's flesh.⁵⁵

Ibn 'Abd al-Karim's was not, however, the only haraka in the Rif. There were others: in the Banu Walishik a pretender had appeared in the early fall who said he was Bu Himara, the rughi who had pretended to be the brother of 'Abd al-Hafiz.⁵⁶ Most of the notables were not deceived and organized a haraka of their own against him.⁵⁷ The shaikh who headed the Darkawi tariqa, Muhammad al-Darkawi, organized his own haraka among the Timsaman to oppose the Banu Waryaghala.⁵⁸ Another group of Timsamani-s was led by the 'pasha' of the Spanish-sponsored Makhzan, Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Hammu Akibbal al-Timsamani, to whom the major notables of the Timsaman had sworn allegiance in the traditional ceremony of 'taarguiba' in December.⁵⁹ Akibbal's Timsamani-s were terrified, apparently, of Banu Waryaghala

⁵⁵SHM 256/1. Letter Muhammad ibn al-Hajj al-Timsamani to Colonel Morales, 13 December 1920.

⁵⁶SHM 256/1. Letter Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Muhammad al-Timsamani to Colonel Morales, 5 October 1920.

⁵⁷SHM 256/1. Letter Muhammad ibn Abu Qaddur al-Timsamani to Colonel Morales, 26 September 1920.

⁵⁸SHM 256/1. Letter Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Hammu al-Timsamani to General Fernández Silvestre, 24 December 1920.

⁵⁹SHM 256/1. Letter Muhammad ibn al-Hajj al-Timsamani to his brother Muhammad ibn al-Hajj Akibbal al-Timsamani, 18 December 1920.

retribution.

More surprisingly still, Muhammad ibn Abu Qaddur, another Timsamani notable, had organized a haraka among the Banu Ta·ban of the Ghiznaya. Hoping to receive French military support, he wrote to Lyautey in August.⁶⁰ A month later the letter containing his petition was returned without an answer by a courier from Fez. Finally, a 'pro-Makhzan' haraka had been brought together in the Banu Tuzin.⁶¹ The Spanish had shrugged off all of this activity in September; for them it was the annual summer haraka-forming rash that accompanied the slow tedious months after the harvest and the emotional build-up to ramadan. 'It will all be over,' an O.C.A.I. officer said, 'when the Rifians realize that what is important is the misery that the winter will bring with it.'⁶²

Things did quieten down during that winter, and some of the haraka-s disbanded. Ibn 'Abd al-Karim's did not. This is indicative of the firm base on which his power as a notable rested. He was not merely urging jihad, or relying on the appeal

⁶⁰ SHM 256/1. Letter ibn Abu Qaddur to 'Dabit al-Maghrib' General Lyautey, (second half of) August 1920.

⁶¹ SHM 256/1. Letter Sidi Muhammad ibn Sallam ibn al-Amin and Sha·ib ibn al-Hajj Muhammad al-Ajdiri to Policía indígena, Melilla, 27 December 1920. It might be better to characterize this haraka as anti-French; its leader, ibn Sallam, rejoiced when he was informed that Abu Qaddur's pro-French haraka was disbanding because 'they have found out that (France's) money and promises are not worth as much as the other Nations'...This news has arrived from Tangier,' SHM 256/1. Letter Muhammad ibn Sallam ibn al-Amin al-Timsamani to Dar Drius Post (Colonel Morales).

⁶² SHM 256/7. *Memoria quincenal*, septiembre 1920.

of resistance to the Christian invader. The practicality of his plans reflected clearly the ambitions of the seigneurie rurale that wanted to modernize its society, but not renounce its privileged status. During the spring of 1921, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim clarified his projects to the members of the Banu Waryaghala that remained loyal to him. He wanted to establish a government in their tribe separate from any other, for which end they would have to create a police in the qabila and the exploitation of the mines would be given to a company that would invest vast sums in the project.⁶³

The tribesmen were hesitant about the foreign company, and expected the new 'government' to guarantee its good faith.

Ibn 'Abd al-Karim next attempted to become gadi of the Banu Waryaghala by distributing cash gifts. It did not work. The peasants still felt, despite the Islamic rhetoric and talk of development, that he was secretly working for the Christians. Possibly, the fact that his haraka had taken possession of the revenue accruing from the habus lands around Ajdir shocked the traditionalist Banu Waryaghala.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, public opinion had it that if he could impose a major fine on the Ajdiri notables that had visited the High Commissioner in Alhucemas Island, then his true adherence to the principles of jihad would be proven and his haraka would swell with fighters.⁶⁵

⁶³ SHM 279/4. O.C. A.I.. Sección 3a. (Kert). *Al-lal Ben Amar Senhayi*, 14 August 1921; this was probably the Setolázar company mentioned above.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ SHM 279/4. *Confidencias e informes*. 6 April 1921.

This his followers accomplished in the second week of April.

⁶⁶ They also captured the musicians from Ajdir who had gone to play for General Dámaso Berenguer, hanged them by their toes in the marketplace, and proceeded to whip and deride them 'for having entertained the Christians.' ⁶⁷ The Spanish retaliated by bombing the Banu Waryaghil town. They were playing right into the hands of ibn 'Abd al-Karim. The Rifian notable harangued his fellow tribesmen at the local markets, telling them that Spain 'was intent on trampling Islam underfoot.' ⁶⁸

Ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's haraka had proven that it could impose fines. Coupled with the excellent pay and the prestige associated with being a mujahid, there was reason enough for the Banu Waryaghil to want to enlist. The excellent harvest that began in April, however, impeded most from joining it immediately.⁶⁹

An example of how 'Abd al-Karim used his position as a wealthy landowning notable is seen in his handling of the harvest of 1921. Having given out generous loans during the early winter of 1920-1921 to needy notables and farmers, whom he entertained in his house⁷⁰, ibn 'Abd al-Karim went on in the

⁶⁶Cf. C.R. Pennell, A Country with a Government, 73-74.

⁶⁷SHM 279/4. Report on informers sent to General Fernández Silvestre, for the week 7-14 April 1921.

⁶⁸SHM 279/4. O.C. A.I.. Sección 3a. (Kert). *Al-lal Ben Amar Senhayi*. 14 August 1921.

⁶⁹SHM 279/1. O.C. A.I., memoria, mes de abril de 1921.

⁷⁰Entertaining in one's house was also accompanied by the giving

summer of that year to demand a tithe, exactly one tenth, of the abundant harvest that resulted from his investment from the Banu Waryaghala peasants. They were forced to accept under the circumstances, since it was for the cause of Islam.⁷¹

During the spring and summer, while Spanish troops advanced towards the Timsaman area, the O.C.A.I. offices received repeated notes from notables from various tribes, warning that if the Spanish refused to give out more pensions, the Banu Waryaghala would win more support.⁷² Other notables complained that the bombardment of 'non-aligned' notables by the Spanish as they advanced was worsening the possibilities of peace.⁷³ General Fernández Silvestre lent a deaf ear to everyone and everything.

Even the French had begun to worry by June about the state of affairs in the Rif. On the 27th of that month, the Commander in Taza, General Aubert, informed General Fernández Silvestre of his unease, brought about by the 'agitation among the Rifian tribes, who could threaten the (entire) region.' Aubert was

⁷⁰(cont'd) of cash gifts if the visits were of a political nature, which they were in this case.

⁷¹SHM 279/4. O.C.A.I.. *Sección 3a. (Kert). Al-lal Ben Amar Senhayi*. Informer's report, 14 August 1921.

⁷²SHM 279/4. Specifically, the Spanish had refused to pay the Banu Abu Frah and the Buqqua; the Banu Abu Frah had in fact abandoned the Spanish cause in secret. From the early summer they were buying arms and munitions smuggled from Gibraltar by a 'Don Frasquito' on four Ceuta-licenced sailboats, SHM 279/4. *Nota, agente secreto, Majestic Hotel, Ceuta*. 30 June 1921.

⁷³SHM 279/4. Letter Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Sarraj al-Yaqubi al-Timsamani to Colonel Morales, 24 June 1921.

especially worried that the Spanish operations might affect the French lines facing the Rif. The Spanish commander answered confidently on 2 July that 'the agitation produced... in the early days of June has been diminishing lately and I expect it will not take long for the situation to return completely to normalcy.' ⁷⁴

The 'agitation' to which both Generals referred was the capture of the Spanish advance post of Abarrán after a three day attack that began on the 'Night of Power' of ramadan, and ended two days later on 6 June. ⁷⁵ The haraka that captured the post was not ibn 'Abd al-Karim's. According to a Banu Waryaghil notable who was at ibn 'Abd al-Karim's side at the time, the leaders of this particular haraka were a group of young notables who had been refused pensions by the Alhucemas commanding officer earlier in the month. ⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Muhammad took advantage of the relatively insignificant Spanish defeat. Rushing from his house near Ajdir, he took control of the battlefield and proceeded to administer the distribution of the loot. He forced the victors of Abarrán to pay 100 pesetas for every gun they took from the dead. ⁷⁷

⁷⁴ SHM 279/4. Telegram General Fernández Silvestre to General Aubert, 2 July 1921.

⁷⁵ To speak of a Rifi attack on Abarrán, as Pennell does, is to ascribe the work of one haraka to the members of an entire geographical area; at best it is premature. C.R. Pennell, A Country with a Government, 81.

⁷⁶ Ali al-Shalinar, SHM 1/5. Letter Idris ibn Sa'id to General Berenguer, 13 August 1921.

⁷⁷ SHM 279/4. O.C.A.I. Sección 3a. (Kert). *Al-lal Ben Amar*

As June progressed, ibn 'Abd al-Karim spread the news that a saint had forecast that he would be a great man among his tribesmen and would lead them to victory over Spain 'which is still a very backwards country;' liberal readings from the Quran dealing with the extermination of the Christians accompanied the calls for jihad in the sug-s.⁷⁸

If the peasants believed in the saints, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim had more down-to-earth beliefs. Allah helps those who help themselves. Sometime in June he contacted a few of the Muslim officials in the Spanish mías belonging to the Timsaman and Banu Sa'id tribes at a secret rendezvous. According to his brother Mahammad, the officers

unconditionally offered themselves for leading a general mutiny against Spain. I [Mahammad] did not trust those who came to my brother's conferences, nor the notable who owned the house in which the meetings were held, because he was a good friend of the Spanish officer in charge of the [nearby] Abu Miyan post, who visited the notable's home with great frequency.⁷⁹

It is not difficult to understand the appeal of ibn 'Abd al-Karim's leadership. He had promised the Rifians who served in the mías double pay; the troops under Spanish command were, moreover, in deperate need of munitions, water and food, and morale was low. Most importantly there was the conviction that

⁷⁷(cont'd) *Senhayi*, 14 August 1921. Pennell is wrong in thinking that he 'was not able to confiscate booty,' A Country with a Government, 82.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹SHM 1/5. Letter Idris ibn Sa'id to General Berenguer, 13 August 1921.

the true Muslim would join the jihad and become a martyr. The Spanish officers added to these reasons by using the Rifian troops as the frontline cannon fodder; the ratio of European to Rifian casualties sometimes reached the figure of one to fifteen.⁸⁰ Most of those garrisoning the post at Abarrán, for example, were Rifians, the famed Regulares, not peninsular troops.⁸¹

The next significant military action took place in mid-July; this time it was ibn 'Abd al-Karim who targeted the post of Igueriben, where a substantial part of the garrison was made up of mías from the Banu Sa'id. The morale among the colonial troops was as low as it could be. As a direct result of the poor organization of the Spanish army, posts like Igueriben were chronically short of munitions and water. When Muhammad's haraka attacked Igueriben, the mutiny of the Rifian troops converted the defeat into a confused retreat from all the advance posts. Faced with this collapse of his hilltop line of defence, Fernández Silvestre ordered a general retreat of the advance posts into the major forts on 21 July. Panic set in; at 5 in the morning on the 22th, he sent his last 'urgent' telegram to the

⁸⁰E.g., the combat of 16 June reported in the official telegrams reproduced in General D. Berenguer, Campañas en el Rif y Yebala, 236-37.

⁸¹One of the mía officers did have the intention of denouncing the mutiny; fortunately for the conspirators, and unfortunately for the Spanish garrisons, he died in combat in early July. The haraka found a memoria semanal (weekly report) on his body in which he outlined the plot and asked for permission to raid the mysterious house. SHM 1/5. Letter Idrid ibn Sa'id to General Dámaso Berenguer, 14 August 1921.

High Commissioner Berenguer and ordered a general retreat of the entire Spanish line towards Melilla.⁸² As soon as Annual fell, even those tribal notables friendly to Spain were incapable of containing the peasants. Silvestre's army disappeared as all the tribes from the Banu Waryaghala to the Qal'aya rose against the Spanish. In a matter of days, it was all over.

Ibn 'Abd al-Karim had not commanded all the Rifians who attacked the Spanish. But he did orchestrate the victory at Igueriben that set alight the entire eastern section of the Protectorate. Despite this fait accompli, even those he had led personally would recall in August that 'they had never dreamed of taking Annual.'⁸³ Nonetheless, the wave swept the Spanish, in total rout, all the way to Melilla. Some thought that the jihad was unstoppable and would reach Tunis.

After what happened at Igueriben, the informer says they did not have any idea of attacking Annual, but when they saw that this position was being evacuated, and after it, all the rest, they did not stop in their wild chase until they reached the Banu Sa'id...⁸⁴

On 6 August, at the Banu Waryaghala aghraw, Muhammad was chosen amir of the jihad. In an interesting combination of the two sides of jihad, externally-directed defence and internal purification, the aghraw authorized him to negotiate with Spain

⁸²D. Berenguer, Campañas en el Rif y Yebala, 242-243; cf. R. Sender, Imán (Madrid: Cenit, 1930).

⁸³SHM 1/5. Letter Idris ibn Sa'id to General Berenguer, 13 August 1921.

⁸⁴SHM 279/4. O.C.A.I. Sección 3a. (*Kert*). *Al-lal Ben Amar Senhayi*, 14 August 1921.

'a formula which under the shari'a's precepts would allow Spain to fulfill the mission that the other Nations have given her.'⁸⁵

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim's adoption of the shari'a and jihad was inevitable. They were the only legitimate controls for organized activity beyond the limited tribal alliances that followed segmentary lines. But it also reflects the culmination of his ambitions as a modernizing notable, needing to fill the ideological void that this modernization left in the Islamic context of rural resistance. Like the Syrian political elite's adoption of Arabism in 1918, ibn 'Abd al-Karim chose the ideology that would allow him to keep, or improve, his standing in society as a member of the a'yan.⁸⁶ He also proposed to mold this jihad into his own image of it as both a mujahid and mujtahid, and a modernizer.

In the aftermath of his election as amir, and with no effective Spanish opposition, ibn 'Abd al-Karim was in a stronger position to control the Rif than when he had been a collaborator of the Spanish. Knowing this, he refused to accept General Berenguer's suggestion that he take a post in the Makhzan. He no longer needed the Spanish administration to rule in the Rif. His was the leadership that had spearheaded the

⁸⁵ SHM 1/5. Letter Idris ibn Sa'id to Berenguer, 13 August 1921; ibn Sa'id was present at the council meeting. Cf. E. Burke's discussion of jihad in the Chaouia incident and 'Abd al-Hafiz's proclamation as sultan in 1907, Prelude to Protectorate, 123-27.

⁸⁶ Cf. Philip Khoury's conclusions, Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism, 75.

continuous jihad for months, and now the hour was his too.

CONCLUSIONS

Rural resistance drew upon a tradition of Islamic populism which threatened the elites in place, and frequently verged on jacquerie. The interests of urban and rural elites led them to seek potentially opposed means of resisting...: modernization, or guerrilla warfare.¹

Edmund Burke III

The Rifian movement is neither religious, nor racial, but political.²

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi

The one clear fact that stands out from the complex process leading to 1921 is the continuing power of the 'Abd al-Karim. Whether as the Sultan's amin, qadi in the Spanish-supervised Protectorate administration or amir of the jihad, the members of the 'Abd al-Karim family dominated the political scene of the Rif for over twenty years. This was not simply a result of the appropriateness or applicability of their political ideology to their circumstances. They were more practical than that.

The basis of the 'Abd al-Karim political fortunes lay in their ability to increase their status as wealthy, landowning a·yan. In great part, this socioeconomic superiority grew out of their use of the material benefits accruing from collaboration with Spain, a 'foreign connection' that they nurtured even before 1912. Eventually, their preponderance reached the point where they felt confident that they could achieve the ultimate ambition of a Rifian notable: complete power over the Rif.

¹E. Burke, 'Moroccan Resistance', 438.

²1925 interview published in AF (July 1925): 365.

To achieve this, the 'Abd al-Karim tapped the traditional forms of political domination and legitimacy in the Rif, the haraka and Islam. At this point, being tainted by nature of their intimate ties with Spain, their political commitments became mutually exclusive: collaboration with the traditional infidel enemy of Islam necessarily contradicted a political dominance legitimised by Islam. The middle ground that had fostered their economic fortunes impeded them from achieving full political power. The narrower the middle ground, the narrower their field of action.

With popular reaction against the Spanish military growing after the Great War, this middle ground disappeared and the dilemma was resolved. Faced with the possibility of being caught in an Islamic 'jacquerie', the obvious alternative for the 'Abd al-Karim was to channel this popular force by becoming its leaders. This Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim accomplished in 1921. In a sense, it was the leader following the followers in order to remain a leader.

The Rifian movement ended up being almost entirely a political experiment: what happens when an ambitious modernizing notable becomes the amir of a tribally-based Islamic resistance to European military expansion? Muhammad provided the answer to this. He blamed the forces of tradition for the defeat of 1926, as much as the Franco-Spanish armies. In his own words, his ideas about government differed radically from the peasants who fought in the Rif War, who supposed that when it ended, they

would be able to return to the siba state of 'anarchy and barbarism'.³ And yet it was the established Rifian, and in general, tribal social context that had elevated him to the position of amir in 1921. Commanding the most powerful and successful haraka, he was elected at the aghraw to represent the jihad.

The political means he had used were fully traditional; his ideological background was not. This is not to say that he was a precursor, a 'proto-nationalist' or 'pre-nationalist'. He was a Moroccan notable who admired European civilization and wished to import the means and ends of this modern civilization to the Rif. The 'Abd al-Karim family as a whole exemplifies a Moroccan rural elite, not cut off from urban trends, that knew neighbouring Europe in the heyday of its self-confidence as the avant-garde of civilization. This elite wanted to get in on a good thing, not to be excluded; they were not, however, prepared to take a back seat to Europe's colonial armies.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karim became a leader of a resistance movement for practical reasons, more political than ideological. Under the circumstances, his ideology of modernization served his personal politics as an ambitious notable, and not vice versa. Had the Protectorate established the European means of political domination, newspapers, political parties, elections, we might have expected the reforming notable to have become a sort of Zaghloul of the Far West, voicing through those means

³ Abd el-Krim et la République du Rif, 483.

his politics and ideology. As it did not, they were interpreted through the barrel of a gun.

APPENDIX A: MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN DATES

It would be pedantic to include the Hijra date with every Christian one; nonetheless, it can be useful in the analysis of events to know when they occur in the Muslim calendar, for example during ramadan, or 'Id al-Kabir. The following table based on G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, The Muslim and Christian Calendars (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) is therefore given as a guideline.

<i>Hijrah Year:</i>	<i>Began:</i>	<i>Ended:</i>
1318	1 May 1900	19 April 1901
1319	20 April 1901	9 April 1902
1320	10 April 1902	29 March 1903
1321	30 March 1903	17 March 1904
1322	18 March 1904	7 March 1905
1323	8 March 1905	24 February 1906
1324	25 February 1906	13 February 1907
1325	14 Febraury 1907	3 February 1908
1326	4 February 1908	22 January 1909
1327	23 January 1909	12 January 1910
1328	13 January 1910	1 January 1911
1329	2 January 1911	21 December 1911
1330	22 December 1911	10 December 1912
1331	11 December 1912	29 November 1913
1332	30 November 1913	18 November 1914
1333	19 November 1914	8 November 1915

1334	9 November 1915	27 October 1916
1335	28 October 1916	16 October 1917
1336	17 October 1917	6 October 1918
1337	7 October 1918	25 September 1919
1338	26 September 1919	14 September 1920
1339	15 September 1920	3 September 1921
1340	4 September 1921	23 August 1922

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

Unless otherwise specified, all terms are Arabic. For purposes of alphabetisation, 'ayn is ignored; consult initial 'Note on Transcriptions and Translations'.

Adl (pl. udul)

A notary or legal secretary. The lowest rank in the semi-structured legal system.

Aghraw (Berber)

The tribal council of notables.

Alim (pl. ulama)

A scholar versed in Islamic interpretation and jurisprudence.

Amghar (Berber, pl. imgharen)

The Big Man of a tribe, a powerful notable.

Amin (pl. umana)

A financial administrator, such as the customs collector.

Amir

A chief or commander in times of war.

Askari

A soldier or policemen, in general.

Ayan (pl. of 'ayn)

Literally, 'the eyes'; the notables.

Baraka

God-given good luck and charisma.

Bida

Unlawful innovation, especially when dealing with Islamic doctrine.

Bilad al-Makhzan

The government lands; that part of the Maghrib accepting both the secular and spiritual superiority of the Sultan.

Bilad al-Siba

The lands of dissent; those areas that refused to accept anything but the spiritual superiority of the Sultan.

Dahir

A written government decree.

Dar al-Islam

The house of Islam, as opposed to the Dar al-harb, the house of war, which included all those lands outside.

Faqih

An Islamic lawyer. In the semi-structured legal system, he stood a step above the adl and one below the qadi.

Fatwa

A written religious ruling or judgement.

Fugara (pl. of faqir)

Men dedicated to religious piety, such as those following a specific tariqa.

Habus

Religious endowment lands; relatively scarce in the Rif.

Haraka

A locally-recruited war party.

Jihad

The struggle to defend and purify the Dar al-Islam.

Khalifa

A successor or delegate. In the Spanish Protectorate, the Sultan's representative, the highest Muslim authority.

Madrasa

A Muslim college.

al-Maghrib al-Aqsa

Literally, the Far West. The term commonly used for Morocco.

Mahalla

A government army.

Makhzan

Literally, 'storehouse', whence any sort of central authority, such as the Sultan or Spain.

Mía (Spanish taken from Arabic)

A company of Moroccans in the police force.

Mujahid (pl. mujahidun)

One who fights in the jihad.

Mujtahid

One who struggles to purify and apply the true Islamic principles.

Muna

Literally, 'provisions'; in the context of northern Morocco, the support claimed by members of a haraka, paid in foodstuffs or cash, distributed by the haraka's amir.

Mugaddam

The leader of a religious group such as a tariqa.

Murabit

A continuous garrison of mujahidun.

Plazas de soberanía (Spanish)

The official term for Ceuta, the Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera, Alhucemas Island, Melilla, and the Chafarinas Island group.

Qabila

A tribal group, be it the entire tribe or just one of its 'fractions'.

Qadi

A Muslim judge. The highest judge was the qadi qudat, only inferior in Protectorate times to the President of the Muslim Supreme Court.

Qaid

A governor appointed by the Makhzan, or a leader of a mahalla.

Qanun

An agreement written by the imgharen of a qabila, stipulating fines or punishments to be imposed for specific misdemeanours or crimes.

Qasba

A permanent Makhzan fortress.

Rughi

A term taken from the name of a nineteenth-century pretender to the Sultan's throne, used generically for all pretenders.

Salafiyya

An intellectual movement founded by Muhammad 'Abduh in Egypt, which stressed the return to the pure roots of Islam.

Shari'a

The body of Islamic law.

Shaikh

The tribal 'elders'; more specifically, used as the singular of a'yan in the Rif.

Sharif

A descendant of Muhammad's family.

Siba

See Bilad al-Siba.

Sug

A market; these were held only once per week per qabila at a central location.

Tariqa

A spiritual 'way', such as the Darkawi Order.

Tartib

A universal tax which successive Sultans tried to implement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Tulba (pl. of talib)

Students of Islamic law. In rural areas, these might be the only legal consultants available, and as such acted as the local 'adl or faqih.

'Ulama

See 'alim.

Umana

See amin.

Zawiya

A building owned by a tariqa; usually refers to the headquarters, where the mugaddam resided.

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