

The Moroccan Colonial Archive and the Hidden History of Moroccan Resistance

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Although the period 1900-1912 was replete with numerous important social upheavals and insurrections, many of which directly threatened the French position in Morocco, none of them generated a contemporaneous French effort to discover what went wrong. Instead, the movements were coded as manifestations of supposedly traditional Moroccan anarchy and xenophobia and as such, devoid of political meaning. On the face of it, this finding is surprising. How could a French policy that billed itself as “scientific imperialism” fail to consider the socio-genesis of Moroccan protest and resistance? Despite its impressive achievements, the Moroccan colonial archive remains haunted by the inability of researchers to pierce the cloud of orientalist stereotypes that occluded their vision of Moroccan society as it actually was.

For most historians, the period of Moroccan history between 1900 and 1912 is primarily known as “the Moroccan Question.” A Morocco-centered history of the Moroccan Question was impossible for Europeans to imagine. Moroccan history was of interest only insofar as it shed light on the diplomatic origins of World War I. European diplomats were the main actors in this drama, while Moroccans were pushed to the sidelines or reduced to vulgar stereotypes: the foolish and spendthrift sultan Abd al-Aziz and his fanatic and anarchic people. Such an approach has a degree of plausibility, since the “Moroccan Question” chronology does provide a convenient way of structuring events: the Anglo-French Accord (1904), the landing of the Kaiser at Tangier (1905), the Algeiras conference (1906), the landing of French troops at Casablanca (1907), the Agadir incident (1911) and the signing of the protectorate treaty (1912). But while these dates helped define the available options to Moroccan leaders, they didn’t constitute essential developments in a more specifically Moroccan context and do not provide much assistance to those seeking a stronger grip on events.

Any review of Moroccan history in the period 1900-1912 must necessarily come to terms with the ubiquity and importance of Moroccan protest and resistance, which runs as a leitmotif through the entire era. Protest and resistance began early, and was persistent over the entire national territory. Thousands of Moroccans, both elites and popular classes, rural and urban, Arab and Berber and all types of people--tribesmen, peasants and city dwellers fought against the French and other Moroccans. Other Moroccans decided to play the French card, while most Moroccans preferred to remain on the sidelines. Those who could not, recalculated the odds and shifted sides continuously, all the while trying desperately not to be noticed. By the time of the signature of the Treaty of Fez (March 31, 1912), most elite Moroccans were prepared to acquiesce in the French takeover and to accept the obvious. Because French efforts to conquer Morocco

were both uncertain and piecemeal, Moroccan protest and resistance itself was partial and unsystematic. A brief overview of the main chronological markers of this more specifically Moroccan history is useful before we proceed further.¹

An alternative Moroccan chronology of the period begins in 1900 with the death of the regent, Ba Ahmad, and the French conquest of the Tuat oases in the Sahara. Tuat was the first piece of Moroccan territory to be lost to France (the Algerian colonial administration disagreed with this perspective). This event coincided with the coming to power of the boy sultan, Abd al-Aziz.² Already by the end of the previous century powerful rural magnates (the famous “Lords of the Atlas”) had emerged in the High Atlas Mountains. Armed with modern rifles and artillery provided by the *makhzan*, they lived like *grands seigneurs* in picturesque castles, and imposed their rule over a newly servile peasantry. At the time Moroccan society was wracked by numerous struggles, as corrupt elites vied for political favors at court and juicy contracts with European firms while rural society stagnated, and urban artisans found themselves increasingly undermined by an influx of cheap imported goods. Rural elites along the Atlantic coast to the south of Casablanca avidly sought business partnerships with European merchants. As protégés, they enjoyed extraterritorial status, as well as exemption from local taxes and local justice. Wealthy Jewish merchants sought to make themselves useful to the new Moroccan elites, while themselves seeking foreign connections and protégé status. Ordinary Muslims and Jews were mostly left to their own devices. Unstable political coalitions dominated the politics of the pre-protectorate period, as the social question and the national question pulled groups and individuals first one way, then another. That is, beneath the political turbulence, different strategies can be perceived. Before discussing them, we first continue with the chronology of Moroccan political events.

Between 1900 and 1904 Moroccan politics revolved around the fear of the long threatened French colonial offensive. The complex diplomatic puzzle known as the Moroccan Question found Morocco the object of attention of four European states. Britain, which already held Gibraltar, sought to gain control of both sides of the straits and to exploit its important commercial and diplomatic position in Morocco. Unfortunately, it lacked a concrete plan for annexation. France, already in control of Algeria and Tunisia, aspired to add Morocco to its Maghrebi domains. Then there were Italy and Spain, both of which (rather less plausibly it is true) claimed a stake in Morocco, Spain more plausibly. While French diplomats pursued bi-lateral accords with Italy (1901) and Spain (1904), along the Algéro-Moroccan frontier the French *armée d’Afrique* engaged in hot pursuit of known and suspected rebels. In 1900 there were persistent (mostly French) rumors of a British plan to take over Morocco. Well-connected British individuals (“Qaid” Harry Maclean, for example) concluded deals with *makhzan* officials for everything from the construction of a railroad and telegraph line between Fez and the coast to the sale of a motor car to the sultan (there were as yet no paved roads in Morocco). A British reform plan that would make Morocco a British dependency seemed in the offing.³ When preliminary construction on the railroad began near Meknes in 1902, a show of force by the Berber Aith Ndhir

tribe helped block further progress. This was the first of many times when the intervention of ordinary Moroccans helped define the course of events.

In early 1902 David J. Cooper, a British doctor, was murdered in Fez by an aggrieved tribesman. After the latter took sanctuary in the Qarawiyin mosque, he was extracted and summarily executed on orders of the sultan, an unprecedented violation of custom. This provoked Abu Himara, a former military cadet to rebel, and when he claimed to be the sultan's elder brother and a rightful claimant to the throne, this drew support from credulous townsfolk and nearby tribes. After the pretender (known by the derisive nickname of Bu Hmara) defeated a hastily organized makhzan military expedition, his cause gained new life. Constantly shape-shifting over the next months, Abu Himara's movement attracted backers among French Algerian business interests who were interested in using him for their own purposes. The rebel leader eventually established a base in Selouan in northeastern Morocco more than one hundred miles from where he started. There he remained ensconced to vex a succession of sultans until his capture and execution in 1909. The first of a series of protest movements in this period to link rural and urban participants around the figure of a pretender to the throne, the Abu Himara rebellion revealed the depths of popular anger at makhzan weakness in the face of European penetration, as well as at the rapacity of government tax collectors. Ironically, his principle achievement was to open the path to a French colonial offensive.

A rash of political kidnappings of prominent Europeans from around Tangier soon followed. The kidnappings were directed by al-Raysuni, an important religious and tribal leader in the region who sought to profit from makhzan impotence in the wake of the Bu Hmara rebellion. In 1903 al-Raysuni seized seriatim a number of prominent British individuals ("Qaid" Harry Maclean, Walter Harris) and Americans (Ion Pedricaris and his stepson, Cromwell Varley). The latter kidnapping provoked the anger of President Theodore Roosevelt who dispatched an American warship to threaten Tangier in an effort to compel the release of its citizens. In a speech to the Republican convention T.R. stated his aims: "Perdicaris alive, or Raysuni dead!"⁴ Not for the last time, better informed European diplomats refrained from supporting American expressions of muscular diplomacy. These events further revealed the incapacity of the makhzan to impose peace on a restive countryside. They also convinced European observers that Morocco was in full melt-down. This in turn emboldened the French.

While French Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé actively pursued a diplomatic arrangement with Great Britain over Morocco in late 1903, he also finalized a major loan agreement to be presented to the makhzan. Its purpose was to give France financial leverage over the impecunious Moroccan government, while simultaneously linking the survival of the makhzan to French support. In this way he sought to resolve the divisions within the colonial lobby between the proponents of the so-called "makhzan policy" and the "tribes policy" (on which see Chapter 4). The loan agreement would position France to propose a major reform program to the Moroccan government, and thereby acquire an unassailable position of dominance in Moroccan affairs, a protectorate

in all but name. On April 8, 1904 Delcassé obtained British agreement to a diplomatic accord by which it renounced its residual claims on Morocco, in return for France surrendering its residual claim to Egypt. The *entente cordiale* prompted a diplomatic revolution in the European alliance systems, and opened the way for a French protectorate.⁵

When the news of the Anglo-French accord broke, Morocco's diplomatic position changed over night. The news soon circulated throughout the countryside: "Britain has sold Morocco to France." The makhzan, caught between the desire to make an international protest (which could only have led to its further embarrassment) and acceptance of its fate, temporized. The French moved rapidly to secure their advantage. By May the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas had worked out the terms of a loan agreement in Paris with representatives of the makhzan. Several months later, agents of the bank were sent to Fez to finalize the deal, which was signed on June 12. By its terms, in return for a loan with the face value of 62.5 million francs, the Moroccan government agreed to surrender 60 per cent of its customs revenues as collateral, and to establish a Debt Control Administration staffed by European agents to oversee its collection.⁶ While not clear to most observers at the time, the 1904 loan agreement marked the moment at which Morocco definitively lost its fiscal independence.

Rather than intimidating Moroccans, the loan agreement appears to have galvanized a spirit of resistance among the Fasi elite. One sign of this came on the eve of Saint-René's departure for Fez on December 17, 1904 when a letter arrived from Fez. It informed the French Minister that the makhzan had summarily dismissed all European employees in its employ. It also imposed a change in procedure for the up-coming talks. Instead of presenting the reform plan to the sultan and his closest advisors, Saint-René was required to formally present it in all its details for the consideration of an elected *majlis al-a'yan* (Council of Notables). The decision reflected the influence of members of the Fasi elite and younger makhzan officials who, impressed by the Ottoman nineteenth century reforms and its 1876 constitution and parliament, saw in the *majlis* a means of thwarting French plans. Their strategy also sought to attract German and Turkish diplomatic support for the indigenous Moroccan reform program. The plan was for the makhzan to hire Turkish advisors to assist with the reform process, replacing the fired European ones.⁷ The *majlis al-a'yan* initiative bought time for the Moroccan government as it vigorously pursued secret diplomatic talks with Germany and the Ottoman empire. While the French considered how to respond, Saint-René's trip was postponed.

By January 1905, having bullied the Moroccans into dropping mention of Turkish advisors, the French embassy to Fez was rescheduled. In his luggage Saint-René carried a draft protectorate treaty, the *plan des réformes*, that if approved as drafted would have made Morocco a French colonial dependency in all but name. However by this time the political context had changed dramatically. Instead of quickly obtaining Moroccan agreement on the reform plan, the French Minister was obliged to spend months immobilized in Fez while the council debated every clause of the reform proposal. In the meantime,

Moroccan diplomatic efforts began to bear fruit. Germany expressed its diplomatic support for Moroccan independence several times during that winter. On March 30, 1905 Kaiser Wilhelm II made a surprise visit to Tangier and announced his opposition to the French reform plan, setting off what is called "the First Morocco Crisis." Although the Moroccans were optimistic about its outcome, the result of the ensuing international conference at Algeciras was a disaster. The Moroccan position was never taken seriously and the conference basically endorsed the French position on reforms. The Act of Algeciras consolidated European control of Morocco's ports through the establishment of an international port police while also creating a Moroccan State Bank dominated by the French banking consortium as the sole financial agent of the Moroccan government. European agents were authorized to supervise the Moroccan customs administration, strengthening its links to the Debt Control Administration set up by the 1904 loan agreement.⁸

The period 1905-1907 was not only marked by Morocco's public loss of economic sovereignty but also by widespread drought, crop failures and economic distress. Despite (perhaps because of) the economic downturn, the export of agricultural products flourished (hides instead of wool, for example). Working through Moroccan intermediaries, European (especially French) speculators took advantage of the situation to acquire extensive property holdings in the vicinity of the major ports. The political atmosphere became steadily more hostile both to the French presence and to Sultan Abd al-Aziz and his supporters. French citizens were attacked by angry mobs in the markets on several occasions. Informed observers like Edmond Doutté noted the changed environment in 1905, in comparison to what he had known during his earlier visits. Most French observers missed the significance of the growing politicization of Moroccan society, or the direction in which things were tending.⁹

As a result, they were blind-sided by events when on July 30, 1907 workers on a railroad construction project at Casablanca attacked their French supervisors, killing eight of them. In an effort to restore order, the *Galilée*, a French cruiser that happened to be in port, landed troops. However, this only further inflamed the crowd, which began to pillage the markets. When the cruiser began shelling the city, the townsfolk joined the revolt, and as the news spread among the tribes in the surrounding Chaouia province, it provoked a major mobilization. Even the landing of several thousand additional French troops a few days later failed to end the insurgency.¹⁰ A major contributory factor to the growing fiasco was the information vacuum in which they French operated. Despite their greater firepower, they proved vulnerable to surprise attacks, which only further stoked the fires of Chaouia resistance.

Soon the mobilization spread to southern Morocco. In a scene orchestrated by the *grands quids* in Marrakech, Sultan Abd al-Aziz was deposed on August 16 by the ulama and his brother Abd al-Hafiz was sworn in to replace him "for purpose of [leading] the jihad." From this point onward the resistance became a national movement, albeit one riddled with contradictory impulses. By autumn Abd al-Hafiz had been endorsed by the *a'yan* (Ar. pl., notables) and ulama of most of the cities of southern Morocco. More than 10,000 tribesmen and pro-

Hafiz volunteers flocked to the Chaouia to join the fighting against the French troops. Within a few months the political mobilization had spread throughout Morocco, from Oudjda in northeastern Morocco, from Fez and Meknes in central Morocco to the Tafilalet oasis (the birthplace of the Alawi dynasty), where insurgents gathered to attack French posts along the Algerian frontier.¹¹

Over the next six months, the “cold war of the two sultans” tested the strength of two opposing coalitions, one pro-French and pro-Abd al-Aziz, the other pro-Abd al-Hafiz and opposed to a French protectorate. By December, with the French expeditionary force still bogged down in the Chaouia and Abd al-Aziz more and more obviously a French puppet, the sultan lost the support of the ulama and people of Fez. On December 15 angered by the gate tax and rumors of a French protectorate, tribesmen from the surrounding area invaded the city and joined with townspeople to compel the ulama to sign a document deposing Abd al-Aziz. On January 3, 1908 after a lull of several weeks, the ulama were once again pressured by the crowd to approve a conditional *bay'a* (oath of allegiance) to Abd al-Hafiz. Its authors, mostly younger makhzan officials, insisted that the new sultan renounce all foreign loans, as well as the Act of Algeciras treaty. They also sought to revive the 1904 plan to ally with Germany and the Ottoman empire. Such innovations however proved unplayable on a Moroccan stage however.

Reflecting the varied social forces engaged in the struggle, regionally organized resistance movements (Casablanca, southeastern Morocco, Oudjda) employed the language of jihad to rally support for resistance to French incursions. But the language of jihad could also generate a moral critique of flagrant corruption and maladministration. It was thus a two-edged sword. The final arbiters were the ulama of Fez, themselves divided as whether they should emphasize the blatant corruption of the former sultan and his supporters, or the patriotic duty to defend the national territory. In the end it proved much more convenient for them to soft-peddle the social question and encourage the pro-Hafiz crowds to fight in the Chaouia--where confronted by the disparity in weaponry and organization deployed by the French, their enthusiasm soon flagged. Nonetheless the Hafiziya movement (1907-1908) was a veritable political earthquake which culminated in the deposition of the pro-French Abd al-Aziz and the accession to the throne of his brother, Abd al-Hafiz on a platform of resistance to the threat of a French protectorate.¹² For these reasons, one might have thought it would have attracted the interest of French policy circles. Instead, it went virtually unstudied.

No sooner on the throne than Abd al-Hafiz was compelled to accept the facts: the French banks owned Morocco, lock, stock and barrel. Once in power the sultan refused to accept the conditional bay'a of Fez. He spurned the demands of the crowd for the strict application of the shari'a, the abolition of non-Quranically sanctioned taxes, and stringent controls on European presence in Morocco. The divisions within his unlikely coalition (which had united popular classes of Fez with a segment of the city's elite and the quasi-feudal great qaids of southern Morocco) were not long in appearing. When a group of younger makhzan intellectuals published a proposal in *Lisan al-Maghrib*, a

Tangier Arabic language newspaper, recommending that Morocco adopt a draft constitution modeled on the Young Turk constitution in October 1908, he showed no interest in it. While Hafiz's government hovered on the brink of insolvency, his erstwhile allies the great quids retreated to their fiefs in the south.¹³

Alarmed by the new sultan's passivity, die-hard patriots like Abd al-Kabir al-Kattani, the leader of the anti-Aziz faction at Fez, began openly to express their hostility. This brought him to the attention of the sultan, who vowed to arrest him. Seeking to avoid capture, al-Kattani fled Fez in March 1909 and sought sanctuary among his supporters in the Aith Ndhir, a Berber tribe in the foothills of the Middle Atlas. However, he was soon betrayed, captured and killed. His *tariqa* (sufi order), the Kattaniya, was closed down by royal decree and the Aith Ndhir were compelled to provide hostages to the makhzan.¹⁴ Around this time, Abd al-Hafiz enjoyed a number of other political victories. These included the surrender of Bu Hamara and regaining the friendship of Madani al-Glawi and the other grands quids, who had for a period withdrawn to their estates in the High Atlas. The new context made it possible for the makhzan to reactivate its attempt to ally with Germany and the Ottoman empire in an attempt to break the French diplomatic stranglehold. But renewed French financial pressure soon brought this to an end. There was no diplomatic egress for Morocco from the threat of a French take-over. By 1910 the French fully occupied the Shawiya and had begun to restore order and a measure of economic prosperity. This served as an advertisement of the benefits of collaboration with the French.¹⁵

By spring 1911 Abd al-Hafiz's passivity in the face of a renewed French threat and growing pro-French feeling in the Chaouia alarmed his opponents in the Fez region. They once again began to plot his overthrow. (Heavy-handed makhzan administrative measures, including a round of new taxes also played a role). Tribes in the Fez/Meknes region led by the Aith Ndhir planned a major rebellion on the occasion of the festival honoring the birth of the prophet ('Id al-Mawlid). However the plot was disclosed prematurely, and without having fully intended it, the rebels found themselves laying siege to Fez on March 11 instead. They demanded that all French employees of the makhzan be fired (in particular the French military mission), that the Aith Ndhir hostages be released, and that unjust taxes be refunded. As the siege tightened, Fez was cut off from the coast. The test of wills between the rebels and the makhzan intensified over the next few weeks. One sign of this was the rebel demand that Abd al-Hafiz be deposed and his brother, Zayn al-Abidin, be proclaimed the new sultan.¹⁶

Meanwhile in Paris, the Moroccan colonial lobby was busy scheming after the fall of the Briand government in March. The delay in formation of the new de Monis government and the ensuing Easter recess provided just the opening they needed to secretly order French troops to relieve the siege of Fez. By the time the de Monis government had been formed, it found itself confronted with a fait accompli. By early May four battalions were already in place on the coast. They were rapidly dispatched to Fez and Meknes. Surprised by this turn of events and exhausted by the efforts of maintaining the siege, the rebels were soon defeated.

Within weeks, French troops occupied the corridor from the coast to Fez, as well as the cities of Meknes and Fez.¹⁷ Because the consent of the great powers had not previously been obtained by the French for their intervention, Germany protested its illegality and dispatched a warship to Agadir in protest. While the French scrambled to deal with the diplomatic fall-out of the Second Morocco Crisis, they solidified their control on the ground in Morocco. But they appear not to have noticed that in the wake of the occupation of the Rabat/Fez corridor, Moroccan opponents of a protectorate had redoubled their efforts.

It took the French some months to plan their next steps. Was a formal treaty necessary to ratify its control of Morocco? Or could they just take over? Who should be the French proconsul of empire? A general like Gallieni or d'Amade? or a diplomat? In the end Eugène Regnault, a career diplomat, was selected. Even before his appointment was confirmed he proceeded to Fez. On March 31, 1912 Regnault obtained Abd al-Hafiz's signature on the Treaty of Fez after a prolonged bargaining session (the proponents of a formal agreement have won out). From the documents available in the French archives it seems clear that the French believed that moving toward a formal protectorate was unproblematic. No Moroccan responses were anticipated. The previous political upheavals were not viewed as in any way cautionary. Thus it was that French authorities were taken entirely by surprise on April 17 by a mutiny of Moroccan troops against their French officers.¹⁸ In retrospect there seems no doubt that Moroccan resistance to the French takeover should have been expected. The only question was what form it might take. A few old hands with in-country experience understood that the atmosphere had become threatening. But their warnings were brushed aside. Only a moment of truly inspired ineptitude could have produced what in fact occurred. The mutiny of Moroccan troops on April 17th provided the impetus for a major conflagration. It quickly morphed into a general insurrection of the urban population against the French and their perceived local supporters. French businesses (including the offices of the *Compagnie marocaine* and the *Credit foncier de l'Algérie*) were pillaged, the European section of New Fez attacked, and the Jewish quarter burned to the ground. Only after two days of mayhem did the fighting come to an end. To bring about this conclusion the French had had to turn their cannons upon Old Fez, where the rebels were based. Six hundred Moroccans, sixty-six Europeans and forty-two Jews were killed in the course of the affray.¹⁹ For the French it was a political and diplomatic catastrophe. Encouraged by what they saw as a moral victory, the insurgents resolved to continue the struggle, and this time to succeed.

Fasis (not unreasonably) became convinced the French intended to abolish the government and rule the country directly when General Moinier imposed martial law without consultation, assessed a major fine, and ordered more than one hundred Moroccans executed by firing squad. While a few native affairs officers in Fez warned of the danger, Regnault and his staff were busy with the transition to the protectorate, and paid no attention to the darkening cloud. Managing Abd al-Hafiz had in any event become a full time job. In return for the his cooperation, the sultan sought to extract the maximum in land titles and money from the French. At the same time he encouraged the rebels to resist.

There's even some evidence he considered leading the jihad. The April mutiny and uprising overturned French plans for Morocco. Instead of a diplomat the cabinet decided only a general would do as Resident General. Regnault sought to maintain his composure at the news that General Hubert Lyautey had been named Resident General rather than himself. On May 24 Lyautey arrived at Fez, escorted to two battalions of reinforcements. They soon proved necessary when the city came under sustained attack from all sides the evening of the following day. Simultaneously, French posts at Sefrou and El Hadjeb were attacked as well.²⁰ The second siege of Fez had begun. Unlike the disorganized siege of 1911, this time the rebels were highly motivated and well organized. Although the French were able to repulse them, several groups of fighters succeeded in breaching the walls and penetrating into the center of the city. Lyautey's telegram of June 22 paints an eloquent picture of how much had changed since 1911 :

It can be affirmed that the column which operated June 1st and 2nd around Fez had to deal with an almost homogeneous army, having but one flag and one spirit, whose various elements obeyed voluntarily to one discipline, and affronted death for the same idea. This is the first time, perhaps, since the beginning of our action in Morocco that as many tribes have been grouped together against us in a relatively intimate union, forgetful for a moment of their rivalries and quarrels.

The continuity of the efforts, the simultaneity of the shots, the rapidity of the deployment and crossing of open areas were on the side of the enemy, the positive signs of a real organization and a complete entente.

The actual battle plan...found in one of the tents of an enemy encampment during the day of June 1, which was addressed to more than twenty tribes (of whom several until recently had been traditional hostile to one another) is a particularly eloquent sign of their common hatred of 'roumis,' of their invincibility.

If to this is added the mobility and endurance of these tribesmen, their great skill in the art of utilizing the terrain, one can appreciate the worth of the adversary whom we find ourselves confronting ad against whom we will need more than ever before well trained and officered units in sufficient quantity.²¹

Ending the second siege of Fez required everything the French could bring to bear. The fate of the protectorate really hung in the balance. Had the two battalions of reinforcements not accompanied Lyautey, there's good reason to doubt whether the French could have remained. In retrospect, this episode points to a major intelligence failure.

Further unforeseen armed uprisings, equally unsuspected, lay in store. By June 1912 most of Morocco was bubbling with rumors about what the French were planning and what Moroccans ought to do about it. In different regions of

the country tribal coalitions came together and sought to link up with one another. The tribes in the Fez region, though badly mauled by Gouraud's forces, remained a potent threat. Around the edges of the Chaouia province, local groups planned their next moves. The powerful Zaian confederation of Middle Atlas Berbers, much feared by all, showed signs of wanting to enter the fray. Most importantly, the situation in southern Morocco was becoming seriously destabilized. All this was covertly encouraged by Abd al-Hafiz, even as he bargained with the French over the terms of his resignation.²²

By the summer of 1912 the security of the Marrakech region had been unraveling for some time. The rapaciousness and greed of the great *qaid*s had by July pushed tribes like the Mesfioua to rebel against al-Glawi. Also, the rivalries of the great *qaid*s themselves were increasingly becoming a factor in the changing situation. Just off stage in the Sous valley a vast peasant jacquerie with overtones of a millenarian revolt under the leadership of Ahmad Haybat Allah (known as El Hiba) was emerging. El Hiba was able to capitalize upon social tensions in the Sous that pitted the local tribes against the governors appointed by the great *qaid*s. Over the course of the spring and early summer they or their representatives were chased out or overthrown. El Hiba preached the Islamic social gospel: no taxes except those sanctioned by the Qur'an, no loans at interest, no coinage except that which conformed to Islamic models, no tribal governors chosen from outside the tribe. In the atmosphere of social crisis that pertained, the words galvanized large crowds to flock to his banner. El Hiba suggested that he was heaven-sent figure, perhaps a companion of the *mahdi*, and had himself proclaimed sultan by his local supporters. (It later developed that El Hiba was in secret correspondence with Abd al-Hafiz, who informed him in advance of the date of his resignation).²³

The complex social and political setting of the Sous valley was ideal for the emergence of a powerful resistance movement. Fueled by social grievances, El Hiba's forces, many of them desperate peasants clothed only in rags and armed with muzzle-loading rifles, clubs and stones, marched over the High Atlas passes and took Marrakech on August 14 without firing a shot. The small group of Frenchmen resident in the city and the great *qaid*s never knew what hit them. When the pretender himself arrived four days later, word filtered out that Abd al-Hafiz had abdicated. This opened the way for El Hiba to be formally proclaimed sultan by the ulama of Marrakech. Lyautey found himself suddenly confronted with the potential loss of all of southern Morocco to the El Hiba insurgency. The news went from bad to worse. The French became aware that El Hiba was in regular correspondence with tribal groups in the Shawiya and the Zaian, as well as the resistance forces in the Fez/Meknes region.²⁴ The future of the French protectorate was suddenly in doubt.

Unfortunately for the Moroccan resistance, things did not go well between El Hiba and the inhabitants of Marrakech. The fierce puritanism of El Hiba's rude tribesmen alienated many townsfolk, while local merchants resented his men's efforts to pay with highly depreciated Saharan coinage. The coalition proved evanescent, perhaps to be expected for a millenarian movement. The September 6 defeat of the pretender's forces in the battle of Sidi Bou Outhman

was a classic in the annals of colonial warfare. El Hiba's force numbering in excess of ten thousand confronted five thousand seasoned troops under General Mangin. The Moroccans were poorly armed (many had only clubs or stones) and other than millenarian zeal, had no effective battle plan. Convinced by El Hiba's assertions that French bullets would turn into rain drops and French artillery shells into watermelons, the credulous Moroccans risked all in a frontal assault on French positions. The French were deployed in a square formation, with ranks of riflemen along the sides, machine guns at the corners and the artillery in the center. In a few hours it was over. More than two thousand Moroccan were killed outright, and thousands more wounded. For their part, the French suffered four deaths and twenty-three wounded.²⁵ One is reminded of Commandant Fariau's cynical observation: "Real peaceful penetration consists of putting a thousand with rifles against a hundred fellows with popguns."²⁶

As soon as he learned of the defeat El Hiba fled over the High Atlas Mountains back to the Sous Valley, whence he challenged French rule for the next several years in the weeks that followed. The authority of the great qaids was reestablished in the Marrakech area in the next few months with the help of French bayonets. The alliance of the French with the great qaids remained a principle prop of the protectorate until the end of its dramatic end in 1956. With the defeat of El Hiba, the prospect of a general insurrection was ended. However, resistance forces based in the Sous remained active for the next several years. It had been a narrow escape for Lyautey and the French. The persistence and effectiveness of the Moroccan national (but not yet nationalist) movement had narrowly missed accomplishing its objectives.²⁷

Conclusion

The Moroccan protectorate allegedly derived from the advice of trained native policy practitioners. French "militant ethnography" was central to the Lyautey system and Morocco was the primary example of an intelligence state among France's colonial possessions.²⁸ But there's good reason to discount the claims of omniscient social engineers quietly going about their business. The realities of the Lyautey style of "peaceful penetration" were more like the oxymoron of "painless dentistry" than to images of social bodies etherized upon the table. Not for the last time did delusions about socially informed warfare and surgical strikes seek to structure a spectator's battlefield so as to deemphasize the real costs born by colonial populations (and metropolitan taxpayers).

This becomes clear when we examine the historical record. In *The Conquest of Morocco*, military historian Douglas Porch provides his assessment of Lyautey's much-touted the Beni Snassen campaign of 1908 (widely seen as a model of the Lyautey system in action): "As an academic organization drawing up ethnographic studies it was a great success. As a spy service it was largely a flop."²⁹ Porch goes on to ask why the myth of the peaceful conquest of Morocco continued to be so influential? His explanation is devastating: "... hearts and minds' was more a public relations exercise than a workable military formula. As in all guerrilla wars, the problem for Lyautey was to deprive the determined

handful of warriors of the support and sympathies of the noncombatant population." For Porch, the Lyautey doctrine was a failure both in practice and as military theory. "If Lyautey continued to retail "hearts and minds" it was for reasons connected far more with the political situation in France than with that in Morocco."³⁰ Equally critical is the assessment of William A. Hoisington Jr. (another historian of the Lyautey period) about the conquest of Morocco: "In Morocco, the ultimate testing ground of the Lyautey method, pacification came everywhere through armed and bitter contests with resistant townsmen and tribesmen. Pacification was war, not peace."³¹

Although Lyautey claimed that the structures of the Moroccan protectorate were shaped by "scientific imperialism" ie., applied sociology, the realities were far different. Instead, the native policy Morocco was a high modernist project that claimed derivation from the ethnographic record. French policies derived not from the advice of ethnographically trained policymakers but from the racist binaries of pre-existing (mostly Algerian) stereotypes about North African culture and society. There was thus considerable slippage from colonial science to the verities of the Moroccan colonial gospel. In the end, native policy was carried out by soldiers, not social scientists. Complex sociological understandings only got in the way of fighting and governing Moroccans. Science (ethnography) did not drive Lyautey's native policy. Despite the earnest belief of many of its proponents, a scientifically-driven native policy was more of a marketing device than a reality. The reality of Moroccan resistance was swept under the rug.

Conclusion

The Moroccan protectorate allegedly derived from the advice of trained native policy practitioners. French "militant ethnography" was central to the Lyautey system and Morocco was the primary example of an intelligence state among France's colonial possessions. But there's good reason to discount the claims of omniscient social engineers quietly going about their business. The realities of the Lyautey style of "peaceful penetration" were more like the oxymoron of "painless dentistry" than to images of social bodies etherized upon the table. Not for the last time did delusions about socially informed warfare and surgical strikes seek to structure a spectator's battlefield so as to deemphasize the real costs born by colonial populations (and metropolitan taxpayers).

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Endnotes

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- ¹ The section that follows is based upon my *Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco*.
- ² On the significance of the French conquest of the Tuat Oasis, A.G.P. Martin, *Quatre siècles*, 368-369. See also Anon. "Une opinion marocaine sur la conquete de Touat," *AM I* (1905), 416-424, and *Prelude*, 44-46.
- ³ French paranoia about a British plot to take over Morocco is not borne out by an examination of the British Foreign Office records. For a sometimes amusing and always informative view of this period, Walter B. Harris, *The Morocco That Was* (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1921).
- ⁴ The kidnappings are discussed in *Prelude*, 66. On Raysuni, see Rosita Forbes, *El Raisuni: the Sultan of the Mountains* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1924).
- ⁵ On the Anglo-French accord, Christopher Andrew, *Théophile Delcassé* is indispensable.
- ⁶ On the 1904 loan agreement, Pierre Guillen, *Les emprunts marocains, 1902-1904*. Also *Prelude*, 68-75.
- ⁷ On Moroccan responses to the *majlis al-a'yan*, see Jacques, Cagne, "Les origins du mouvement Jeune marocain," *Bulletin de la société d'histoire du Maroc* no. 1 (1968), 8-17, and the same author's *Nation et nationalisme au Maroc : aux racines de la nation marocaine* (Rabat: l'Institut Universitaire de la Recherche Scientifique, 1988). Also *Prelude*, 81-83.
- ⁸ *Prelude*, 83-86.
- ⁹ *Prelude*, 87-93.
- ¹⁰ The Casablanca riot and the origins of the Chaouia siba, John Godfrey, "Overseas Trade and Rural Change in Nineteenth Century Morocco." Ph.D.

diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1985. Also Adam, "Sur l'action du *Galillée* à Casablanca en aout 1907," and *Prelude*, 93-98.

¹¹ The best guide on the initial stages of the Hafiziya remains Martin, *Quatre siècles*, ch. 9.

¹² On the Hafiziya, see my "La Hafidiya (Aout 1907 - Janvier 1908): Enjeux sociaux et luttes populaires," *Hesperis/Tamuda* (Rabat), XXXI (1993), 101-115. Also *Prelude*, 113-117.

¹³ *Prelude*, 133-149.

¹⁴ As related by Informant Mohand N'Hamoucha, August 7 and 9, 1967. Cited in Burke, "Tribalism and Moroccan Resistance."

¹⁵ *Prelude*, 163-166.

¹⁶ On the 1911 rebellion, see my "Tribalism and Moroccan Resistance, 1890-1914: The Role of the Aith Ndhir," in George Joffe and Richard Pennell (eds.), *Tribe and State in Northwest Africa* (London: M.E.N.A.S., 1991), 119-144.

¹⁷ On the French 1911 intervention, Christian Houel, *Mes aventures marocaines* (Casablanca, 1954); *Prelude*, 164-171. On the role of the Aith Ndhir, "Tribalism and Moroccan Resistance."

¹⁸ *Prelude*, 183-186. The reforms were introduced on the morning of an eclipse of the sun with no prior preparation. Moroccan recruits were confronted with the imposition of French army regulations, including commands in French, uniforms and close order drill (none of which they were prepared to accept).

¹⁹ On the Fez mutiny, Félix Weisgerber, *Au seuil du Maroc modern*, 281-299; Hubert Jacques, *Les journées sanglantes de Fez* (Paris: Librairie Chapelot, 1913). Also *Prelude*, 180-189.

²⁰ *Au seuil du Maroc moderne*, 300-306; *Prelude*, 190-193.

²¹ SHAT Maroc. Série A²6, Lyautey to War Ministry, June 22, 1912, no. 115BM¹

Also *Lyautey l'Africain*) 1: 120.

²² *Prelude*, 195-196.

²³ *Prelude*, 199-207.

²⁴ *Prelude*, 203-204.

²⁵ On the battle of Sidi Bou Outhman, SHAT Maroc. Série A²6, Mangin, "Rapport sur les operations de la colonne du sud du 5 au 7 septembre 1912." Also *Lyautey l'Africain*, I: 52-65.

²⁶ Cited by Auguste de Beaupoil, Comte de Saint-Aulaire, *Confession d'un vieux diplomate* (Paris: Flammarion, 1953), 123.

²⁷ *Prelude*, 207-209.

²⁸ See my *The Ethnographic State: France and the Invention of Moroccan Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

²⁹ Douglas Porch, *The Conquest of Morocco* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 187.

³⁰ *Idem.*

³¹ William A. Hoisington, Jr., *Lyautey and the Conquest of Morocco* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 205.

³² Douglas Porch, *The Conquest of Morocco* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 187.

³³ *Idem.*

³⁴ William A. Hoisington, Jr., *Lyautey and the Conquest of Morocco* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 205.