



A NOTE ON TANGIER AND THE SPANISH ZONES IN AFRICA

By Isaiah Bowman

At Paris, on December 18, 1923, the representatives of Great Britain and France signed the Tangier Convention. The Spanish representatives at first signed *ad referendum*, but have since been instructed from Madrid to make Spain's adherence unconditional. This new convention affects the control of the city and port of Tangier, besides 140 square miles of adjacent territory. The action of Spain in joining the other two powers in adhering to the new régime puts an end to a most complicated and unsatisfactory chapter in political history and geography.

The background of the controversy may be outlined as follows. In 1856 and 1861 there was inaugurated at Tangier a system of capitulations by which the Sultan of Morocco delegated authority to the diplomatic corps. These capitulations have continued in effect down to the present time, with modifications due to the Convention of Madrid in 1880, the Act of Algeciras in 1906, and the Franco-Spanish Convention of 1912. During this period international rivalries have often paralyzed the procedure of the diplomatic corps and led to delay and confusion that made condominium government a reproach.

The Straits of Gibraltar are only fifty miles wide opposite Tangier, and it is natural for Spain to wish to see no further growth of French and British strength in territory which she deems vital to her defense and important in her future development. In addition, the interests of the Spanish "northern zone" in Morocco are concerned in the status of Tangier, as part of its commerce passes in and out through that port. Great Britain, for her part, having given up her claims to the back country, cannot afford to let go her share in the control of Tangier, which in hostile hands might interfere with Gibraltar's command of the Straits, on Britain's highway to Egypt and India.

The beginning of the latest phase of the North African question was marked by the treaty of 1904, according to which England recognized French predominance in Morocco in return for French recognition of England's position in Egypt. Germany's opposition, which several times brought Europe to the verge of war, was terminated after the Agadir incident by the treaty of November 4, 1911, according to which Germany recognized the French protectorate in Morocco in return for cessions of territory in the French Congo. (It is interesting to note that in the Treaty of Versailles Germany finally relinquishes all rights and interests in Moroccan matters.) A further step was

taken in 1912, when France signed a treaty with the Sultan of Morocco, reaffirming his sovereignty; and in the same year France and Spain came to an agreement as to the limits of their respective spheres and signed a protocol dealing with the projected Tangier-Fez railway.

The new régime at Tangier provides for the permanent neutrality of the zone, economic equality between the powers, and a period of rational government in hopeful contrast to the confused and capricious control hitherto exercised. Though the sovereignty of the Sultan of Morocco over the Tangier zone is to be maintained, and though he has a representative at Tangier who is to be entrusted with the administration of the natives, the real government will be in the hands of a committee of control consisting of eight consular officers of the powers signatory to the Act of Algeciras and of an international legislative assembly consisting of twenty-six members. Four of these will be French, four Spanish, three British, two Italian, one Belgian, one Portuguese, one American, one Dutch, in addition to six Moslems and three Jews. The assembly is to have complete legislative authority over the native and European population. The representative of the Sultan will be president of the assembly. The head of the customs will be nominated by the Shereefian Government but under the control of the international administration, and customs accounts are to be approved by the assembly. There is to be economic equality in the working of the port. The convention runs for a period of twelve years or longer if desired. No fortifications or other preparations for war are to be allowed. Italy has protested against her exclusion from the negotiations. If she signs the convention, however, she will share with the other states mentioned in the administration of the zone. But the attitude of the Mussolini Government is still in doubt, nor has the American government yet expressed an opinion.

The Spanish occupation of the "northern zone" of Morocco (area 7,000 to 8,000 square miles) began early in the sixteenth century. Melilla was occupied in 1496. The Zafarina Islands were occupied in 1844—the last of a string of *presidios*, or military posts, that include, among others, Ceuta and Alhucemas. Spaniards often claim that France persistently opposes Spanish policy in the northern zone, an allegation which the French deny, though pointing out that opposition on their part might be justified by the fact that Spain is unable to maintain order in her territory and because disorder there incites disorder in French Morocco. In addition, Spain finds the northern zone a source of constant domestic trouble. There is a strong division of sentiment in Spain itself as to the desirability of maintaining possession there. The numerous disastrous defeats that Spanish forces have suffered at the hands of the tribesmen, the expense and difficulty of mountain warfare, the uncertain economic value of the territory—

these have all had a deadening effect upon one section of Spanish interest and an opposite effect upon those who hold it a point of national honor not to withdraw and thereby acknowledge military defeat.

On the accompanying map the southerly boundary of the northern Spanish zone of Morocco is shown according to both French and Spanish unofficial versions. The interior has not been surveyed because of the opposition of the native tribesmen, and except at its western and eastern ends the exact boundary is still undetermined. For the greater part of its length the boundary has been described according to maps that are known to be inaccurate.

It will be interesting to watch developments in the northern Spanish zone if the present Spanish Directorate is superseded by a constitutional government. Should Spain give up the northern zone she would unquestionably make substantial reservations of territory in the neighborhood of Ceuta and Melilla, besides holding out for certain advantages at Tangier. On the other hand, should Spain adopt a more aggressive policy and attempt the complete conquest of the northern zone and the establishment of interior posts on the French model, it would at once involve her in questions bearing upon the trade outlet at Tangier on the one side and upon the question of definitive boundaries with French Morocco on the other.

A word may also be said about Spain's so-called "southern zone," where there has been a corresponding advance and clash of Spanish and French interests. Spain had rights on the Atlantic coast of Morocco dating from the fourteenth century, and as early as 1860 she had made a treaty with the Sultan of Morocco whereby she was granted sufficient territory for a fishing station at Santa Cruz de Mar Pequeña (Ifni). However, on account of the unsettled state of the native tribes, Spain was unable to take actual possession until much later. By the Franco-Spanish conventions of 1904 and 1912 the limits of the Ifni enclave were defined though never actually surveyed, an area of about 1,000 square miles being assigned to Spain. Farther south on the coast, in the Rio de Oro region, Spain made more definite and substantial progress. By treaties with Arab chiefs she set up a claim to a protectorate over an area of about 270,000 square miles as part of the general partition of Africa then in progress and in response to an alleged need "for expanding the national commerce and securing the 'ancient rights' of her subjects abroad." (By the Franco-Spanish convention of 1900, however, the area was reduced to about 60,000 square miles.) The eastern frontier of the Spanish Sahara has never been defined. With Spain established along nearly 1,000 miles of African coast France is unable to make a connection between her west-African and north-African territory in the coastal belt and has taken the bolder course of developing trans-Saharan railway and motor projects.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE BRITISH VOTE, 1918, 1922 AND 1923

	— CONSERVATIVES —			— LIBERALS —			— LABOR —		
	1918	1922	1923	1918	1922	1923	1918	1922	1923
LONDON BOROUGHES...	376,648	552,790	429,187	166,484	311,470	337,706	114,887	332,335	423,206
ENGLISH BOROUGHES...	1,591,504	2,051,360	2,028,944	912,629	1,538,950	1,495,826	886,247	1,581,930	1,728,871
ENGLISH COUNTIES...	1,459,525	2,203,305	2,286,967	1,040,583	1,393,545	1,720,677	886,648	1,353,599	1,318,629
WELSH BOROUGHES.....	30,008	69,114	69,126	78,185	70,199	94,148	56,153	131,634	141,803
WELSH COUNTIES.....	30,152	113,482	108,784	180,648	234,956	208,166	124,722	231,536	215,369
SCOTTISH BURGHES.....	193,131	199,273	219,250	181,766	337,604	226,225	183,266	276,938	305,633
SCOTTISH COUNTIES...	169,283	188,141	217,432	184,251	219,375	168,825	122,462	194,453	214,868
<i>TOTAL VOTE.....</i>	<i>3,850,251</i>	<i>5,377,465</i>	<i>5,359,690</i>	<i>2,744,546</i>	<i>4,106,019</i>	<i>4,251,573</i>	<i>2,374,385</i>	<i>4,102,425</i>	<i>4,348,379</i>

The above figures indicate the development of the county and borough voting strength of the three major parties in Great Britain in the three most recent general elections. They have been compiled from tables appearing in the *London Times* of December 30, 1918, November 17, 1922, and December 8, 1923. These figures are not final, as the results of belated contests are not included. In computing the strength of the Conservative and Liberal parties in the 1918 election, Coalition adherents and non-adherents have been grouped together; similarly, for the 1922 election Liberals and National Liberals have been put under one heading. Minor parties have been disregarded.

The "Victory" election of 1918, closely following the Armistice, found England divided between the Coalitionists who supported the Lloyd George ministry, and an opposition made up of Labor and of non-Coalition Liberals and Conservatives. The Coalitionists

received the endorsement of the country with a vote of 5,091,528, while the non-Coalitionists polled 4,589,486 votes, of which the 2,374,385 in favor of Labor candidates represented more than half.

In 1922 the heavy increase in the vote polled by all parties is accounted for by the extension of the franchise to women. The total vote of the nation increased from 9,681,014 to 14,039,562. Labor's vote almost doubled, and the election of 142 of its candidates (an increase of 85) returned the party as His Majesty's Opposition.

Labor did not sweep the country in the recent election of December, 1923. But though its gain in actual votes was comparatively small, the fortunate distribution of these votes brought the party 49 additional seats. Its total strength in the House of Commons is now 191. The Conservatives lost their former majority, though returning 259 candidates. The Liberals secured 155 seats.

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