

# Economic Causes of War

## Article No. 12.

MOROCCO, on the African coast, opposite Gibraltar, is one country above all others that brought about the cessation of the hostile attitude of England towards France, which had existed for centuries. The first International Convention over the affairs of Morocco was held in 1880, on the question of trade being extended to all nations, largely owing to German influence. In 1890 Germany signed a commercial treaty with Morocco for five years, and informed the signatory powers of the Convention of 1880 that she would not ratify the treaty if they objected. Britain supported Germany at this time. It was at this period that the Emperor visited England, once in August, 1889, and again in July, 1891, where he became exceedingly popular. Heligoland was transferred at this time, and there were other transactions with Germany in 1890, to withdraw her opposition to British enterprise in Egypt. Yet we are told that Germany prepared for forty years to make war on Britain.

In 1891 Lord Salisbury dispatched a commission to Morocco, defining British policy as having as its aim the independence and integrity of Morocco. This commission was supported by Germany, but was a complete failure because of the intrigues of France. The Moorish Minister prevented the Sultan from concluding a British treaty, having received \$10,000 from the French agent at Fez, the capital of Morocco. The French cause during the nineties advanced slowly, but in 1901 when Britain was busy with the Boer war, France pushed ahead with a burning wish to avenge her collapse in Fashoda, where she had challenged Britain's position in Egypt, but had to withdraw owing to the failure of her ally, Russia, to come to her aid.

France annexed the Tuat oasis together with two other places she had threatened in 1891. A French subject was murdered at the psychological moment, and the French Minister in Morocco demanded the dispatch of a couple of men-of-war. The Sultan, seized with panic, made an agreement with France. This was the time the British press said: "If the French cannot cease their insults their colonies will be taken from them and given to Germany and Italy." This was but fourteen years before the Great War. The "Daily Mail," November 9th, 1899, said: "The French have succeeded in thoroughly convincing John Bull that they are his inveterate enemies, and that all attempts at conciliation are useless. There will be no more such attempts. England has long hesitated between France and Germany, but she has always respected the German character whereas she has gradually come to feel a contempt for France. . . . Nothing like an entente cordiale can subsist between England and her nearest neighbor. Enough of France; she has neither courage, foresight, nor sense of honor."

In 1902 France approaches Spain secretly to divide up Morocco. The British lion hears of it, and although France promises diplomatic support, the Spanish Prime Minister takes cold feet and resigns. The opposition returns to power at the general election. The new Prime Minister, who favored the treaty in the opposition, refuses to ratify it, and then France begins to make overtures to John Bull.

The young Sultan of Morocco, who had become Europeanized and extravagant, was unpopular. In 1903 he borrowed \$4,800,000 from French, Spanish and British syndicates. In the summer of 1904 these loans were paid off, but only at the price of contracting a much heavier liability towards France alone, amounting to \$12,500,000 bearing interest at five per cent. This loan was confined to French banking establishments and was practically forced upon the Sultan by M. Delcasse. M. Jaures in the French Chamber, pointed out that by clever manoeuvring on the part of the French bankers in Morocco, that Morocco actually obtained \$9,500,000 the banks made a profit of \$2,500,000, Morocco paying interest on the full amount of the loan. To

secure the interest on this loan, the Sultan consented to set aside 60 per cent. of the customs receipts, which virtually gave France control over the customs to that extent. Further small loans were contracted in 1905 and 1906. A portion of these loans was spent in purchasing guns and ammunition from the French war industry, Le Creusot. This firm, I may say in passing, refused to supply Britain with war material during the Boer war.

In 1904, Spain, France and Britain signed treaties regarding Morocco. They published that part of them which dealt with the upholding of the integrity and independence of Morocco, but they secretly agreed to divide her up when the opportunity arose. This secret arrangement became public when the crisis of 1911 arose, when Germany wanted to maintain the independence of Morocco. In April, 1904, when the secret treaties were unknown, Prince Buelow, answering a question in the Reichstag, declared he had no reason to believe they were directed against Germany. Britain's opposition to France in Morocco was bought off by France withdrawing her opposition in Egypt, but Britain stipulated that Spain would control Morocco opposite Gibraltar, and build no fortifications or lease this to any other Power.

Article 10 of the secret treaty provides that all schemes for public works, railways, etc., mineral development and economic undertakings in general in the French and Spanish spheres respectively, shall be executed by French and Spanish enterprise. Germany being alarmed, managed to get the Sultan to call a general conference in 1906 of all the Powers to discuss the status of Morocco. German trade with Morocco amounted to over 14,900,000 marks. M. Deschanel, President of the French Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, admitted they could not ignore the German efforts in Morocco for half a century; the travels of her explorers, the activity of her colonists, her agricultural and mineral enterprises, her steamship lines and post offices. She participated in the tobacco monopoly, and Krupp and other firms held a preponderant position in the mining interests, extracting iron. Her enterprise developed harbor works and public drainage, a bank, a newspaper printed in German, and a tobacco factory. The Germans held more land paid for in cash in Morocco than all other nations combined, and without massacre or pillage they established industries by the peaceful penetration method.

At the opening of the Conference of Algericas, an act was drawn up in the name of "God Almighty," based upon the sovereignty and independence of the Sultan, and upon economic liberty without any inequality. All existing treaties were to remain, but in case of any conflict the Algericas Act shall prevail. Britain, France and Spain signed this Act with the firm intention of never observing it. The French ignored the Act in 1911, applauded by the British press, and with the open approval of the British Foreign Office the French marched on Fez because it was reported to be blocked by insurgents, and that Europeans were in danger. Spain, despite French protests, proceeded to occupy territory which was promised her in the secret arrangement of 1904. This was the position when Germany made the display at Agadir with the warship "Panther." Lloyd George compared Germany to Dick Turpin, and practically uttered an ultimatum when addressing a meeting of bankers in London, July 21st, 1911. The Sultan of Morocco believed Germany to be his friend because she insisted on the independence of Morocco, but it was discovered that she was willing to let France control the country in return for compensation elsewhere. The crisis was ended by France ceding that part of the Congo known as the Cameroons to Germany, who recognized France in Morocco. So near was war that Jowett, M.P. for Bradford, told us that Britain had her torpedo nets laid, but the

differences in the British Cabinet and the unpreparedness of the German bankers enabled the inevitable clash to be postponed.

This was another example of the methods of the upholders of integrity and independence, and a lesson on how to divide Morocco. Germany upheld that independence, not because she is any better morally than the others, but because of her economic interests.

Tardieu, in his "French Alliances," page 190, quotes Prince Buelow as saying in October, 1905, "In Morocco we have important economic interests; we intend to safeguard them." And on another occasion: "I consider the duty of the German Government to see that in the future our economic interests are not injured. . . . If any attempt is made to modify the international situation in Morocco or to check the open door in its economic development, we must see more than ever that our economic interests are not endangered." And again: "Our interests are first and foremost commercial. . . . We owe it to ourselves to protect our commercial interests in Morocco, and we shall protect them." Germany did not raise her objections to the French attitude in Morocco until Russia, France's ally, had been defeated in the war with Japan, yet Tardieu says on page 194: "In spite of the disorganization (of the Russian army) inevitably caused by an unsuccessful war, England, who, had France been willing, would have made war in 1905."

Although it was 1911 before France carried out her designs on Morocco, she bombarded Casablanca in 1907 because some European workmen, who were building a railway for a French syndicate, had been killed. This road was being built through a Moorish cemetery, the desecration of which created an opposition by the natives that developed into a riot. The French permanently occupied Casablanca as the first step in the greater grab of Morocco. France also used the incident of a Frenchman being killed to enter the interior, and she never withdrew, although Germany protested as she had a right to do under the Algericas Act. This Act also stipulated that tenders for erecting public works or furnishing supplies should not contain any condition of a nature to violate the principle of free competition, or to place the competitors of one nationality at a disadvantage against the competitors of another.

In the British and French agreement regarding Morocco the governments declared themselves "equally attached to the principle of commercial liberty," also that they would not "countenance any inequality either in the imposition of custom duties or other taxes or railway charges . . . that the trade of both nations should enjoy the same treatment in transit through the French and British possessions in Africa."

For information in greater detail on Morocco I would suggest the reading of Ed. Morel's "Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy," or his "Secret Diplomacy in Morocco." A study of history has inevitably led me to the conclusion that British antagonism to Germany did not arise until 1904, and then as a result of German commercial rivalry.

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