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PROPERTY AND THE END OF EMPIRE IN INTERNATIONAL ZONES, 1919–1947*

Tangier, 17 March 1941. At noon, the German consul, Herbert Nöhring, and representatives of the German government gathered in the city's largest marketplace, the Grand Socco, to take part in an 'imposing ceremony' in which the Moroccan and Spanish authorities handed over to them the grand mansion known as the Mendoubia (see Plates 1 and 2).[1] The Mendoubia was a striking building. Until 1914 it served as a German legation. Shortly thereafter the sultan of Morocco acquired it through the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which, according to Article 144, allocated all property and possessions of the German empire in Morocco to his government without payment. With the creation of the International Zone of Tangier in the mid 1920s, it had gone on to house his representative, the mendoub, and the international assembly he presided over. But now the Germans demanded it back. The Spanish, who were occupying the zone in the name of 'neutrality', were not pleased about this and only the fascist party (Falange) showed any enthusiasm for collaborating with the Germans.[2] Yet the latter were too powerful not

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[1] James Rives Childs, United States Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 17 Mar. 1941: National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD (hereafter NARA), RG59/881.00/1865.

[2] See esp. Herbert Richter, German Consul, Tetouan, to Foreign Office, Berlin, 27 Dec. 1940: *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, 1918–1945*, 75 vols. (Baden-Baden, 1950–95) (hereafter *ADAP*), Ser. D, Band xi/2, doc. 573, 805–7; *España: diario de información mundial*, 17 Mar. 1941, unpaginated; Norman J. W. Goda,

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to get their way. To the tune of the German national anthem, they hoisted the swastika over the building before retiring to the Rif Hotel to host a celebratory luncheon. As they saw it, the return of the old German Legation represented the restoration of Germany's pre-1914 status in Morocco and, more than that, it provided a conduit through which to rally Arabs across the Maghrib in support of the Third Reich at war.[3]

The Mendoubia was one of a vast number of pieces of imperial patrimony to change hands at the end of the First World War. As central European empires collapsed, Germany, Austria and Hungary agreed not only to cede all territory marked by the peacemakers, but to relinquish their claims to all property and possessions situated therein.[4] They also agreed to hand over property in former colonies and areas of imperial activity, precipitating a wave of redistribution around the world.[5] New owners thus came to the fore, but their possession of imperial patrimony was rarely uncontested. This was certainly the case for the sultan of Morocco, who inherited the Mendoubia as well as a small number of subsidiary buildings associated with German diplomatic activities in Tangier.

A closer examination of the sultan's inheritance and the contests it precipitated is worthy of our attention as it does not fit into the usual story we tell about the material break-up of empire at the end of the First World War.[6] As empires gave way

(n. 2 cont.)
Tomorrow the World: Hitler, Northwest Africa, and the Path toward America (College Station, 1998), 130–1. For general observations made by the American legation, see Childs, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 18 Mar. 1941: NARA, RG59/881.00/1866.

[3] Herbert Nöhring, Tangier, to Foreign Office, German Embassy in Madrid, 22 July 1940: Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin (hereafter PA AA), RZ 616, 128219.

[4] For details, see Treaty of Versailles, Part IX, Article 257; Treaty of Saint Germain-en-Laye, Part IX, Article 208; Treaty of Trianon, Part IX, Article 191. On state succession and its effects on cultural property more broadly after the First World War, see Andrzej Jakubowski, *State Succession in Cultural Property* (Oxford, 2015).

[5] Treaty of Versailles, Part IV, Articles 118–58; Treaty of Saint Germain-en-Laye, Part IV, Articles 95–117; Treaty of Trianon, Part IV, Articles 79–101.

[6] For a general introduction to the end of empire, see esp. Robert Gerwarth, '1918 and the End of Europe's Land Empires', and Ryan Gingeras, 'An Empire Unredeemed: Tracing the Ottoman State's Path towards Collapse', both in Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2018); Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (eds.), *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington, 2013).

1. Spanish authorities returning the Mendoubia to representatives of the German Foreign Office, 17 March 1941. The National Archives, London, FO 371/39684.

to nation states in Europe, imperial palaces, government buildings and offices became home to new national bureaucracies. Here, officials used this patrimony to promote nationwide affinities, blocking rival political futures with varying degrees of success.[7] Yet the formation of nation states was not the only process in motion after the war. As Susan Pedersen has shown, the creation of mandates subject to indirect international control constituted a very different course for curtailing imperial rule and reallocating property. Here, ceded state property passed to the mandatory powers, which used it to carry out many of the same administrative activities that their German colonial predecessors had established.[8] But while colonial rule looked similar on the ground, new claims to economic sovereignty went unchecked.[9] Mandatory powers used private property purchases, among other tools, to cultivate new forms of dependence in the territory under their control. And when their buying schemes stalled, former German plantation owners were able to repurchase lost assets, including almost all of their former plantations in Britain's sector of Cameroon and many in Tanganyika.[10]

Yet mandates were not the only means by which the tools of international administration were used to redistribute imperial property after the First World War. The situation in Morocco alerts us to yet another way in which empires were brought to

[7] On property transfers in central Europe, see Máté Rigó, *Capitalism in Chaos: How the Business Elites of Europe Prospered in the Era of the Great War* (Ithaca, 2022); Dieter Gosewinkel and Stefan Meyer, 'Citizenship, Property Rights and Dispossession in Postwar Poland (1918 and 1945)', *European Review of History*, xvi, 4 (2009); Dieter Gosewinkel, Roman Holec and Miloš Řezník (eds.), *Eigentumsregime und Eigentumskonflikte im 20. Jahrhundert: Deutschland und die Tschechoslowakei im internationalen Kontext* (Essen, 2018).

[8] Treaty of Versailles, Part IV, Article 120, and Part IX, Article 257.

[9] Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015); Susan Pedersen, 'Empires, States and the League of Nations', in Glenda Sluga and Patricia Clavin (eds.), *Internationalisms: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge, 2017).

[10] Richard A. Goodridge, '"In the Most Effective Manner"? Britain and the Disposal of the Cameroons Plantations, 1914–1924', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, xxix, 2 (1996); Caroline Authaler, *Deutsche Plantagen in Britisch-Kamerun: internationale Normen und lokale Realitäten, 1925 bis 1940* (Vienna, 2018); Olisa Godson Muojama, 'The British Control of the German Plantations in the Cameroons Province of Nigeria during World War II, 1939–1945', *COOU Journal of Arts and Humanities*, v, 3 (2020).

2. The return of the Mendoubia, 17 March 1941. The National Archives, London, FO 371/39684.

an end and their property disposed of: the creation of international zones. These zones were spaces of strategic tension placed under the direct administration of the League of Nations. They included the Saar Basin and the Free City of Danzig, located in the German–French and German–Polish borderlands respectively. The later role played by both of these zones in Nazi expansionism has ensured that they have attracted significant interest from historians.[11] But this new landscape of international zones also included lesser-known cases like Tangier, where a multilateral administration conversant with League initiatives formed in the wake of the war after what had been decades of jostling between European powers to control trade in the region.[12]

Relatively little research has been conducted on international zones as a whole, despite their importance to the 'engineering of peace'.[13] The studies we do have focus on their legal architecture, as well as their role in preventing or failing to prevent further conflict.[14] But historians are yet to explore the quotidian

[11] On the Free City of Danzig, see Hans Viktor Böttcher, *Die Freie Stadt Danzig: Wege und Umwege in die europäische Zukunft. Historischer Rückblick, staats- und völkerrechtliche Fragen* (Bonn, 1999); Christoph M. Kimmich, *The Free City: Danzig and German Foreign Policy, 1919–1934* (New Haven, 1968); John Brown Mason, *The Danzig Dilemma: A Study in Peacemaking by Compromise* (Stanford, 1946). On the Saar Basin, see Simon Matzerath and Jessica Siebeneich (eds.), *Die 20er Jahre: Leben zwischen Tradition und Moderne im internationalen Saargebiet, 1920–1935* (Petersberg, 2020); Maria Zenner, *Parteien und Politik im Saargebiet unter dem Völkerbundsregime, 1920–1935* (Saarbrücken, 1966).

[12] For the most comprehensive history of the zone, see Graham H. Stuart, *The International City of Tangier*, 2nd edn (Stanford, 1955). On Tangier's urban development and the history of Tangier more generally, see Susan Gilson Miller, 'Making Tangier Modern: Ethnicity and Urban Development, 1880–1930', in Emily Benichou Gottreich and Daniel J. Schroeter (eds.), *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa* (Bloomington, 2011); Susan Gilson Miller, 'Finding Order in the Moroccan City: The *Ḥubus* of the Great Mosque of Tangier as an Agent of Urban Change', *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, xxii (2005); Susan Gilson Miller, 'Apportioning Sacred Space in a Moroccan City: The Case of Tangier, 1860–1912', *City and Society*, xiii, 1 (2001); Susan Gilson Miller, 'Watering the Garden of Tangier: Colonial Contestations in a Moroccan City', *Journal of North African Studies*, v, 4 (2000); Philip Abensur, *Tanger: entre Orient et Occident* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire, 2009).

[13] Stella Ghervas, *Conquering Peace: From the Enlightenment to the European Union* (Cambridge, MA, 2021), 7.

[14] Carsten Stahn, *The Law and Practice of International Territorial Administration* (Cambridge, 2010); Ralph Wilde, *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never Went Away* (Oxford, 2008); Meir Ydit,

(cont. on p. 6)

realization of internationalization in them, including the reallocation and repurposing of imperial property. This is surprising given the fact that in each of the zones' international administrations inherited imperial property and used it to house their operations. As per the Treaty of Versailles, the Governing Commission in the Saar was granted 'full right of user of all property, other than mines, belonging, either in public or in private domain, to the Government of the German Empire, or the Government of any German State, in the territory of the Saar Basin'.[15] In Danzig, all property belonging to the German empire or to any German state passed to the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, who then determined which individual structures should be transferred to the international administration of the Free City of Danzig.[16] In Tangier, representatives of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers also looked to unravel central European interests in the city. They specifically banned Germany, Austria and Hungary from participating in the administration of the zone, and in the Paris Convention of 1923 regarding the Tangier International Zone they affirmed the principle of *uti possidetis*, in which all public property belonging to these states was transferred to Sultan Mawlay Yusuf's government for use as part of the international administration.[17]

(n. 14 cont.)
Internationalised Territories (Leiden, 1961); Gregory H. Fox, *Humanitarian Occupation* (Cambridge, 2008). For the limitations of this literature, see the helpful discussion in Anne Orford, 'International Territorial Administration and the Management of Decolonization', *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, lix, 1 (2010). For work which seeks to explain the shifting basis for justifying and rationalizing international rule, see Anne Orford, *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge, 2011).

[15] Treaty of Versailles, Part III, Section IV, Saar Basin, Annex, Chapter II, p. 22.

[16] Treaty of Versailles, Part III, Section XI, Free City of Danzig, Article 107.

[17] See Convention Regarding the Organization of the Statute of the Tangier Zone, Paris, 18 Dec. 1923, Articles 8 and 9, in Stuart, *International City of Tangier*, 201–17. Central European, especially German, interests came about in Tangier through involvement in free trade imperialism. For an excellent exploration of the politics of German free trade in Morocco, see esp. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, *The Kaiser and the Colonies: Monarchy in the Age of Empire* (Oxford, 2022), ch. 6. For an introduction

(cont. on p. 8)

While the collective number of buildings transferred to administrations in international zones was modest, their symbolic potential was noteworthy. The repurposing of prominent public buildings offered the opportunity for vivid displays of international political ordering for local audiences, especially manifestations of the League's prestige. In addition, the accumulation of wider portfolios of private property by Europeans in the zones was used by consuls to bolster claims to increased control for their home states in international administrations.

This article explores the fate of the German Legation, or Mendoubia, in Tangier as it became integrated into the international administration. While making reference to the broader phenomenon of property reallocation in international zones, it focuses on Tangier, taking its cue from recent pioneering studies that embrace localized perspectives on the end of empire.[18] This literature reveals the competing interests that came together in post-imperial spaces but which are often conflated by historians when we seek to capture imperial collapse in its entirety. Building on these insights, this article offers a close analysis of the Mendoubia's fate. It seeks to show how the process of internationalizing property made former imperial powers like Germany compete ever harder to reclaim property portfolios,

(n. 17 cont.)
to the large body of work on German involvement in free trade imperialism more generally, see Erik Grimmer-Solem, *Learning Empire: Globalization and the German Quest for World Status, 1875–1919* (Cambridge, 2019); Dirk van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt: deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2005); Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History* (Cambridge, 2012), ch. 11. On Austro-Hungarian involvement in free trade imperialism, see Alison Frank, 'Continental and Maritime Empires in an Age of Global Commerce', *East European Politics and Societies*, xxv, 4 (2011); Florian Krobb and Jon Hughes (eds.), *Colonial Austria: Austria and the Overseas*, special issue of *Austrian Studies*, xx (2012).

[18] Dominique Kirchner Reill, *The Fiume Crisis: Life in the Wake of the Habsburg Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2020); Paul Miller and Claire Morelon (eds.), *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918* (New York, 2019), esp. Gábor Egry, 'Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: Local Societies and Nationalizing States in East Central Europe'. See also Gábor Egry's ongoing work in the European Research Council consolidator project NEPOSTRANS (Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: From Remobilization to Nation-State Consolidation. A Comparative Study of Local and Regional Transitions in Post-Habsburg East and Central Europe), which compares transitions from Austria-Hungary to the successor states in the wake of the First World War at the local level.

and how, in parallel, it encouraged existing imperial powers to expand their private property holdings in international zones to secure advantages in the international administration.[19] In other words, it argues that internationalization entailed widespread competition for property that is omitted from the usual historical accounts of international zones. Property became an important avenue for securing influence in these spaces, which were celebrated as a means of defusing strategic tensions around the world, ensuring that international competition took on a different form within the structures of the new order.

In demonstrating how states secured strategic advantages in international administrations through the use of non-state actors and property, the article seeks to realize the exhortation of international historians to 'shift focus away from the top-down histories of institutions that have tended to dominate past accounts' and instead provide insight into 'how people have been "doing internationalism"'.[20] As part of this corrective, it draws attention to the promotion of rival nationalist futures advanced by Moroccans in the process.[21] Indeed, some Moroccan nationalists viewed the changes in ownership of property as an opportunity to demonstrate the consolidation of Moroccan governing prestige on the international stage. It certainly afforded an indication of how they would deal with foreign property investment

[19] For previous work on Germans unsettling sovereignty in Morocco, see Sasha D. Pack, *The Deepest Border: The Strait of Gibraltar and the Making of the Modern Hispano-African Borderland* (Stanford, 2019), chs. 6, 10. On Nazis in Morocco and Nazi war aims more generally, see Goda, *Tomorrow the World*; Simon Ball, 'The Mediterranean and North Africa, 1940–1944', in *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, i, ed. John Ferris and Evan Mawdsley (Cambridge, 2015).

[20] David Brydan and Jessica Reinisch (eds.), *Internationalists in European History: Rethinking the Twentieth Century* (London, 2021), 7 (editors' intro.).

[21] On Moroccan nationalists, see, above all, David Stenner, *Globalizing Morocco: Transnational Activism and the Postcolonial State* (Stanford, 2019). See also Daniel Zisenwine, *The Emergence of Nationalist Politics in Morocco: The Rise of the Independence Party and the Struggle against Colonialism after World War II* (New York, 2010); Charles-André Julien, *Le Maroc face aux imperialismes, 1415–1956* (Paris, 1978); Stéphane Bernard, *The Franco-Moroccan Conflict, 1943–1956* (New Haven, 1968); John P. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912–1944* (Cambridge, MA, 1967).

should decolonization from France and Spain, the dominant colonial powers in the region, become a reality.[22]

I

IMPERIAL HERITAGES

Imperial heritage ran deep across the international zones formed in the inter-war era. The Saar Basin and the Free City of Danzig, the two major zones placed under the League of Nations, had both been part of the German empire since its founding in 1871. The Saar, on the empire's western border, consisted of a mix of Prussian and Bavarian territory acquired in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1920, in light of Franco-German disputes over the region, the League assumed direct control of the zone through a five-person governing commission. The port of Danzig on the empire's eastern border consisted of Prussian territory first secured in the Second Partition of Poland, but after the First World War, Polish–German disputes over the port led to the League assuming international control through the appointment of a high commissioner.

By contrast, Germany never governed territory in Morocco as it had in the French and Polish borderlands. Rather, in the second half of the nineteenth century it had sought to consolidate consular and commercial privileges in the region alongside Britain, Spain and France. In 1875 the German government purchased 1.47 hectares of land outside Tangier's medina for the construction of a legation (see Plate 3).[23] The legation's envoy and his family, along with its personnel, formed the core of an intimate German colony in the city, somewhere between seventy and a hundred people in 1914.[24] While numerically small,

[22] In writing this article, I am conscious that I have a blind spot to North African perspectives on imperial collapse except where Moroccan nationalists came into conversation with European consuls. A starting point for exploring North African perspectives more broadly might be with the Arabic literature on Moroccan nationalism. See 'Abd al-Karim Ghallab, *Tarikh al-haraka al-wataniyya bi-l-Maghrib* [History of the Moroccan Nationalist Movement] (Casablanca, 2000); Abu Bakr al-Qadiri, *Mudhakirati fi-l-haraka al-wataniyya al-maghribiyya, 1930–40* [My Memoirs of the Moroccan Nationalist Movement, 1930–40] (Casablanca, 1992).

[23] Frhr. v. Ungelter to Foreign Office, Berlin, 28 June 1940: PA AA, RZ 616, 128219.

[24] Gunther Mai, *Die Marokko-Deutschen, 1873–1918* (Göttingen, 2014), 49 n. 1, 65.

3. Interior of the German Legation, *c.* 1880. University of Aberdeen, George Washington Wilson photography collection, GB 0231 MS 3792 C1599.

the influence of this community was amplified by the relatively widespread use of protégés: protected persons in the sultan's territory consisting of non-European secretaries, interpreters and brokers essential for facilitating commercial activities in North Africa.[25] German protégés reached around 450 by 1903, representing a striking 57.2 protected persons per German citizen.[26] Following Germany, the Austro-Hungarian empire formalized relations with the sultan of Morocco in 1885. In the mid 1890s, Vienna established a consulate-general in Tangier, which bore responsibility for two further consulates in Fez and Casablanca, as well as consular agents in eight other Moroccan cities.[27]

This network of consulates enabled German and Austro-Hungarian traders to criss-cross the Mediterranean. To consolidate their economic activities, they bought up property in Morocco, with the aid of consular staff.[28] Chief among these entrepreneurs was the successful petroleum importer Adolf Renschhausen, who secured contracts to expand the port of Tangier and funded the construction of residential properties in the city.[29] The employees of German industrial concerns, such as the Krupp engineer Walter Rottenburg, also purchased residential properties in Morocco.[30] Others, like the banker Otto Haessner, played instrumental roles in the consortiums embarking on real-estate ventures. Haessner was involved in the Rentistica real-estate holding company, which financed some of the most expensive buildings in the city, such as the new British

[25] Hugo C. M. Wendel, 'The Protégé System in Morocco', *Journal of Modern History*, ii, 1 (1930).

[26] Mai, *Die Marokko-Deutschen*, 185, 189.

[27] *Jahrbuch des k.u.k. Auswärtigen Dienstes, 1913* (Vienna, 1913), 19–20, 199–200.

[28] In 1880 Europeans gained the right to purchase property in Morocco without Muslim intermediaries: see Treaty of Madrid (1880), Article 11; Act of Algeciras (1906), Article 60.

[29] Renschhausen's best-known constructions are a row of buildings along the avenue d'Espagne and rue Portugal, which would come to be known as the Terraza Renschhausen, as well as the Maison Renschhausen, a four-storey residence which offered space on the ground floor for the offices of import and export companies, shipping agencies and banks: see 'Terraza Renschhausen', in ARCHNET, <http://archnet.org/sites/9994> (accessed 13 June 2023); 'Majestic Hotel', in ARCHNET, <http://archnet.org/sites/10587> (accessed 13 June 2023).

[30] Mai, *Die Marokko-Deutschen*, 65.

consulate, the Café Central, the Bristol Hotel and the Eastern Telegraph office.[31]

By the turn of the century, a new wave of German companies, mining prospectors and engineers had arrived in Morocco, buying up land in the Tangerine hinterlands and mines in the Tingitana peninsula and the Rif region of northern Morocco. This included five mining enterprises, the most powerful of which was the Mannesmann Rif company, owned by the brothers Max and Reinhard Mannesmann.[32] In 1910 the Mannesmann brothers petitioned the Spanish government, which controlled much of the region, to charter a mining company that would entail rights to subdue local populations by force. They were denied such rights but, as Sasha Pack has shown, this did not deter the brothers in their pursuit of profits. Pressing forward on their own, they established direct tribal liaisons and access to mineral deposits through the use of large payments and German protection cards. In 1910 it was reported that Germans owned some sixteen mining concessions, and by 1918 the Mannesmann brothers alone had amassed 3,000 square miles of subsoil rights in the Rif.[33]

But political events soon put pressure on central Europeans and their accumulation of property in Tangier. In 1912 the French and Spanish formalized their position in Morocco through the creation of two protectorates. The French assumed control of a Southern Zone, and leased a Northern Zone to the Spanish. Tangier was excluded from this arrangement, with all parties involved agreeing that it should, at some future time, be internationalized. Exactly what this meant was left open, as was participation in its administration by other European powers currently active in Tangier.

The outbreak of the First World War clarified this uncertainty. The French ejected Germans and Austro-Hungarians from Tangier on 19 August 1914, and the mendoub, on behalf

[31] Miller, 'Making Tangier Modern', 134.

[32] The other companies included L'Union des Mines, Marokko Minen Syndikat, La Compagnie marocaine and Braunschweig.

[33] Pack, *Deepest Border*, 145–6. On clashes between prospectors and the German Foreign Office, see The National Archives, London (hereafter TNA), GFM 33/3131/8235, GFM 33/3131/8236, GFM 33/3131/8237.

of the French, took possession of the German and Austro-Hungarian legations in the city. The German chargé d'affaires, Hans Heinrich Dieckhoff, and his interpreter were stripped of their passports and escorted by police onto a French warship before any communications could be sent to Berlin.[34] However, this did not stop them from incinerating classified documents thanks to a tip-off from the chief of the Tangerine police, Abd el-Malek el-Meeheddin.[35] Following the delivery of Dieckhoff to the French carrier, the mendoub personally took down the German flag to signal the end of the German mission in the city, before doing the same at the Austro-Hungarian premises. German diplomats complained at the time and for years afterwards that this was a humiliating series of events. As Dieckhoff put it in 1940, 'the French deliberately carried out the expulsion of the German representative from Morocco in a spectacular manner in order to make the natives (*Eingeborenen*) aware of Germany's weakness'.[36] Others, including the future German consul Herbert Nöhring, levelled their complaints on legal grounds, arguing that the French had ultimately broken international law in overseeing an eviction on neutral territory.[37] Yet, despite such protests, the French continued to close down other German and Austro-Hungarian legations across Morocco, and initiated programmes of internment and sequestration.[38]

[34] Dieckhoff, Berlin, to Foreign Office, 22 Oct. 1940, and 'L'Expulsion de deux ministres à Tanger', *La Dépêche Marocaine*, 10 May 1916: both PA AA, RZ 616, 128219.

[35] It seems that Abd el-Malek was a German agent at the time: see Pack, *Deepest Border*, 151.

[36] Dieckhoff, Berlin, to Foreign Office, 22 Oct. 1940.

[37] Nöhring, Madrid, to Foreign Office, 22 July 1940.

[38] On internment and sequestrations during the First World War in general, see Daniela L. Caglioti, *War and Citizenship: Enemy Aliens and National Belonging from the French Revolution to the First World War* (Cambridge, 2020); Daniela L. Caglioti, 'Property Rights in Time of War: Sequestration and Liquidation of Enemy Aliens' Assets in Western Europe during the First World War', *Journal of Modern European History*, xii, 4 (2014); Mahon Murphy, *Colonial Captivity during the First World War: Internment and the Fall of the German Empire, 1914–1919* (Cambridge, 2018); Matthew Stibbe, 'Civilian Internment and Civilian Internees in Europe, 1914–20', *Immigrants and Minorities*, xxvi, 1–2 (2008); Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (London, 1991).

It was in this atmosphere that Tangier's international status was formalized, cementing the exclusion of Germans, Austrians and Hungarians from the city. In 1923 Britain, France and Spain jointly placed the city under a 'regime of permanent neutrality', apportioning power among themselves. Through what came to be known as the Tangier Protocol, they established a series of multilateral institutions in the city, complemented by rights and regulations to ensure that the free trade imperialism, or the 'equality of nations' in trade, which had come to characterize the city in the nineteenth century could continue.[39] Arab and Jewish residents had only limited representation in the international apparatus of the zone, with control of most of the day-to-day affairs of Tangier's North African populations coming under a staff directly appointed by the sultan, who nominally shared sovereignty with the European powers. In addition to new institutions, the build-up of munitions or military fortifications by any party was strictly forbidden in Tangier.[40] A neutral internationalism, it was hoped, would prevent a single power from dominating the region and, with it, the gateway to the Mediterranean.

Explicitly written into the Tangier Protocol was the stipulation that the former property of the Central Powers, now in the possession of the sultan, be used as the basis for the international administration. The sultan's mendoub took up residency in the former German Legation, now renamed the Mendoubia, and several of its rooms were used as the meeting place for the Legislative Assembly, the organ of the administration responsible for passing the zone's many new laws and regulations. The Legislative Assembly consisted of twenty-six Tangerine residents, including Moroccan Arabs and Jews appointed by the mendoub, and European representatives appointed by their respective consuls in the city. Its mixed composition positioned it as a highly symbolic element in the new administration, implying that the zone was carried out in partnership with Moroccans.

[39] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *Economic History Review*, vi, 1 (1953); Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge, 2013), 22–4.

[40] Convention Regarding the Organization of the Statute of the Tangier Zone, Paris, 18 Dec. 1923.

The redistribution of imperial property for use by the international administration in Tangier echoed the situation in both the Saar Basin and Danzig, where former German state-owned buildings housed the new League of Nations administrations. In the Saar, German court buildings in Saarbrücken became the meeting place of the League's governing commission, draped with the blue, white and black flag of the international zone (see Plate 4). In addition, the complex which had housed the administration for Saarbrücken was converted into the seat of the commission president. In Danzig, the high commissioner took up residence in a stunning turn-of-the-century building which had housed the Prussian general command stationed in the city before the war (see Plate 5).

Commissioners saw these buildings as essential to establishing 'the prestige of the League of Nations'.[41] In addition, some believed that the League's use of these buildings prevented rivals from undermining international administration. For example, one of the first high commissioners in Danzig, Richard Haking, considered it his duty to 'win the battle' for the building of the Prussian general command when he detected a desire among local Germans to retain it as a parliamentary meeting place, writing:

> I am determined to obtain the house as my residence because I know that it carries with it a great deal of prestige and further it is absolutely necessary for the future success of my work . . . The post-war German official must be dominated by the High Commissioner if his decisions and advice are to carry any weight.[42]

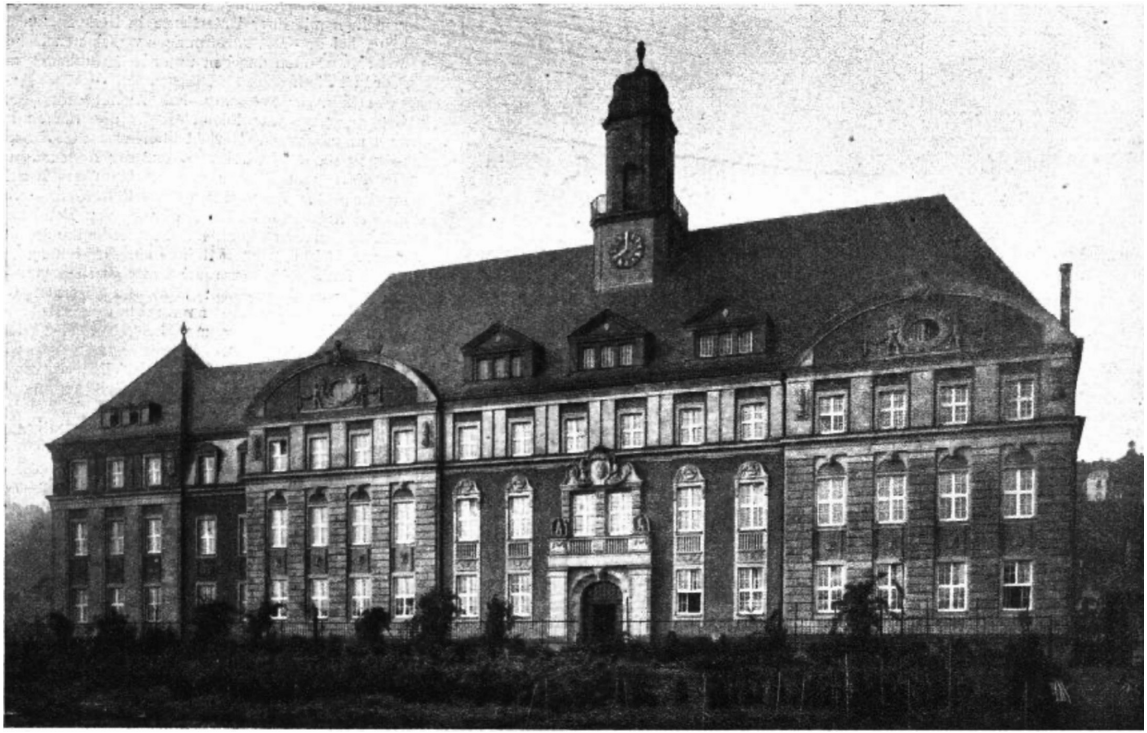
Others were less convinced by such attempts to ride roughshod over local interests, but even they acknowledged the importance of occupying 'the most representative house in the whole town'.[43]

As in Europe, international administrators considered the recently inherited buildings in Tangier as a prestigious boon for

[41] Richard Haking, High Commissioner of the Free City of Danzig, Danzig, to Secretary-General of the League of Nations, 3 Feb. 1921: United Nations Geneva Archives, United Nations Office at Geneva, R142/4/10672/10672/Jacket 1.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] See Secretary-General, 'Minute Sheet', 29 Dec. 1924: United Nations Geneva Archives, United Nations Office at Geneva, R142/4/10672/10672/Jacket 1.



4. The old *Landgerichtsgebäude* (district courthouse) in Saarbrücken was used as the meeting place of the international administration in the Saar until 1935. *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung*, vxxii (1917), 459.

the new administration. The Mendoubia offered the administration a patch of real estate in a fashionable part of the city outside the old medina, closely connected to European consulates. Moreover, its large terrace and gardens offered sufficient space to perform the purported Moroccan–European partnership on which the administration was based. For example, Moroccan–European symbolism was given vivid expression as the Paris Convention came into effect on 1 June 1925 on the terrace of the Mendoubia. There, the mendoub, Legislative Assembly and consuls gathered to celebrate the new international venture before the press and crowds of onlookers, presenting themselves as a collective of officials committed to an international administrative agenda (see Plate 6).[44]

Yet, in contrast to the European zones, the use of the former German Legation by the international administration in Tangier did not initially provoke hostility in the inter-war years, precisely because, unlike in the Saar or Danzig, there was not a majority German population in the zone to protest the move. Rather more contentious in the first instance was the fate of private properties formerly owned by central Europeans. In Morocco, enemy citizens suffered expropriations throughout the war and a loss of their property rights thereafter. This contrasted with the experience in the Saar and Danzig, where German nationals retained the rights to their own movable and immovable property.[45] The Paris Convention confirmed this expropriation of private properties owned by Germans, Austrians and Hungarians, as did the royal decree of 3 July 1920, which allowed for onward sale.

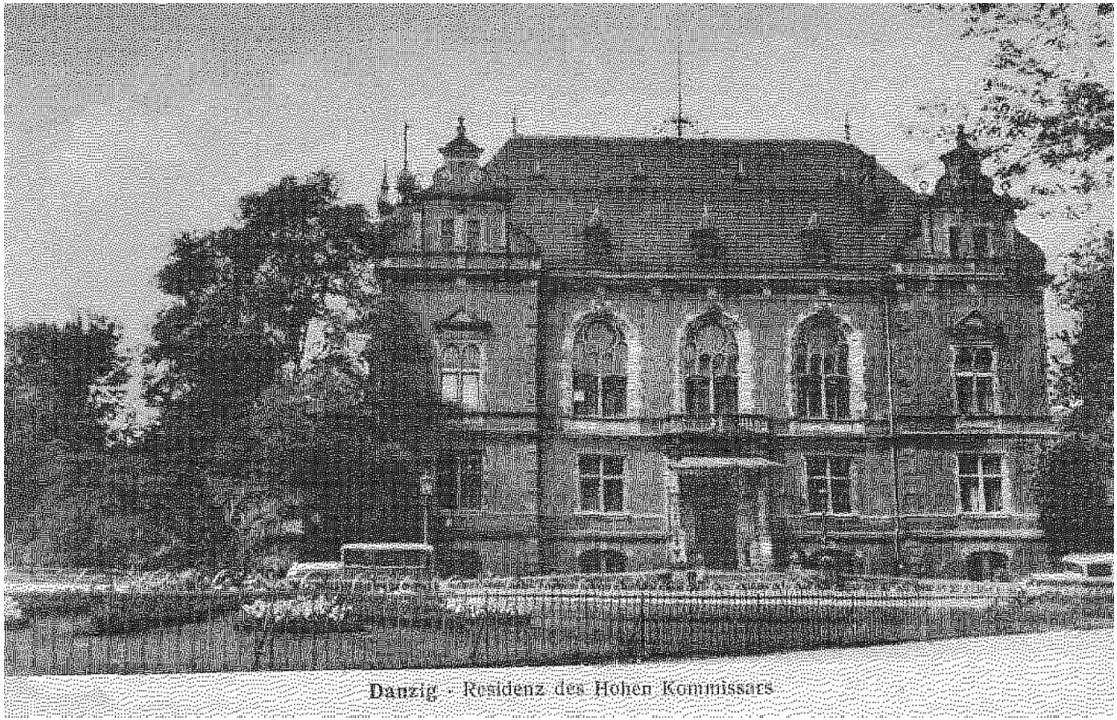
As a result, over the course of the 1920s and early 1930s, 168 liquidation proceedings took place in Morocco, with over thirteen hundred sales.[46] Sales were slow at the start. This was clear to see in 1923, when a large bundle of sequestrated German land in and around Tangier, including parcels at Tanja Balia and Moghoga, was offered for sale at the mansion of Dar Niaba. The reserve price of 520,000 francs was not reached, but as local newspapers reported, had the properties been offered separately they would have found buyers.[47] Indeed, local land dealers and

[44] 'Le Statut de Tanger', *L'Afrique du Nord Illustrée*, 13 June 1925, 3.

[45] Treaty of Versailles, Part III, Section XI, Free City of Danzig, Article 106.

[46] Mai, *Die Marokko-Deutschen*, 782.

[47] 'Sequestrated Property in Tangier', *Al-Moghreb Al-Aksa and Tangier Gazette*, 14 July 1923, unpaginated.



5. The old Prussian general command served as the residence of the high commissioner in Danzig until the Second World War. Postcard, *c.* 1934. United Nations Geneva Archives, United Nations Office at Geneva, 48697.

investors were eagerly awaiting the announcement of a second auction for these lots when it became known that the sequestrator had sold the land by private treaty.[48] But sales soon gained momentum. Both the French and the Spanish governments made notable purchases at public auctions. This included the estates of leading figures and major companies such as Adolf Renschhausen, the Mannesmann brothers, Friedrich Brandt, Heinrich Toël and Carl Ficke, which the French celebrated as glamorous symbols of Germany's defeat and the expulsion of Central Power nationals from Morocco.[49] In addition, French officials secured further symbolic properties belonging to the Mannesmann brothers in the French Zone.[50]

French and Spanish interest in private properties was largely about securing prestige, but it was also due to the fact that the relative size of property holdings for each of the signatory powers was used as a measure for apportioning administrative posts in the international administration, especially in the Legislative Assembly.[51] As a result, the two powers encouraged their nationals to spend lavishly at auctions. As one newspaper reported, French officials encouraged their investors in Morocco 'to replace the activities of the expelled Mannesmann brothers'. Indeed, the French government 'promised them its encouragement and help in replacing German influence'.[52] Such reports certainly rang true for onlookers, with Francisco Serrat y Bonastre, Spain's senior diplomatic figure in Tangier, complaining that 'French capitalists' had an excess of cash that they were seeking to place abroad 'so as to avoid the considerable taxes in France'. He lamented that 'our capitalists' had not been propelled into similar action, and that few companies had been

[48] 'Sequestered Properties', *Al-Moghreb Al-Aksa and Tangier Gazette*, 28 July 1923, 1.

[49] 'La Liquidation des biens allemands', *L'Afrique française: bulletin mensuel du Comité de l'Afrique française et du Comité du Maroc* (Paris, 1923), 540; Mai, *Die Marokko-Deutschen*, 783.

[50] On sequestration in French Morocco, see Centre des Archives Diplomatiques, Paris, 73CPCOM/240.

[51] See Tangier Protocol, Article 34.

[52] 'Colonisation in Morocco', *Al-Moghreb Al-Aksa and Tangier Gazette*, 14 Apr. 1923, 1.

6. The mendoub inaugurating the Tangier Statute. 'Le Statut de Tanger', *L'Afrique du Nord Illustrée*, 13 June 1925, 3.

created in Spain with a view to the colonization of Morocco, with two or three exceptions.[53] Indeed, property reviews in Tangier made painfully clear the ways in which French investors were strengthening their position in the region through property purchases.[54]

In addition to encouraging purchases by investors in Tangier, the French and Spanish bolstered state power through the consolidation of private property on the back of land dispossessions in the other Moroccan protectorates. In the Southern Zone, the French government helped 'official' colonists and 'private' colonists to purchase about 1,400,000 acres of land by 1925. However, the first French resident-general, Marshal Hubert Lyautey, played only a minor role in facilitating such purchases; rather, the rate of land purchased by French colonists rapidly increased under his successor, Théodore Steeg. Steeg was far less fastidious than Lyautey about the type of colonist he wished to attract to Morocco, distributing about 150,000 acres in the years 1927 to 1929. In addition, he expropriated over 300,000 acres of high-quality land, causing conspicuous displacement among Amazigh farmers, many of whom made their way to Moroccan cities in search of work. The result was that by 1930 three-quarters of all farmland in the south was owned by Europeans, two-thirds of it by the French.[55] In the Northern Zone of the protectorate, the Spanish were incapable of mobilizing anything near the scale of settlers and businesses as in the south owing to geographical constraints and a lack of enthusiasm on the part of Spanish investors. Nevertheless, by 1930 Spanish colonists owned or were cultivating 21,193 acres of land in Morocco.[56]

[53] The exceptions were La Compañía Colonizadora, La Compañía General Española de África and El Banco Hispano Marroquí: see Serrat, Tangier, to Ministry of State, 7 Apr. 1919: Archivo General de la Administración, Madrid (hereafter AGA), box 81/10148, 15 (3.01).

[54] 'Conveniencia de llegar a la inscripción de la totalidad de las fincas pertenecientes al Estado Español en la Zona internacional de Tánger', Tangier, 16 Oct. 1934: AGA, box 81/10418, 15 (2.02).

[55] Coordinator of Information, Near East Section, Research Report 3, 'The Native Problem in North Africa', 6 Jan. 1942, 48–50: NARA, RG59/881.00/2142. On Lyautey's land policies, see Robin Bidwell, *Morocco under Colonial Rule: French Administration of Tribal Areas, 1912–1956* (London, 2012), 201–2.

[56] Victor Ruiz Albéniz, *Monografía sobre colonización rural en Marruecos español* (Madrid, 1930), 146. See also Jesús Marchán, 'Una avanzadilla malograda: colonización oficial y propiedad inmueble en el protectorado español de Marruecos (1912–1956)', *Historia Agraria*, lxxv (2018).

The internationalization of German patrimony encouraged Tangier's signatory powers to increase their property holdings in the international zone. While the post-war settlement saw the German Legation detached from German ownership and placed at the disposal of the mendoub for use in the international administration, internationalization did not stop there. Given that the functioning of the international administration rested in part on the prestige that European members could garner from large private property portfolios, both the French and the Spanish encouraged their nationals to buy up on a grand scale to give them every advantage in the contest to dominate the administration.

II

INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES AT RISK

While the internationalization of the Mendoubia generated only low levels of disquiet on the part of Germans in the 1920s in comparison to the vocal protests in the Saar and Danzig, it became increasingly open to challenge in the following decade. In the late 1930s, administrations broke down as Nazi expansionism and war eroded international governance around the world. In Europe, expansion saw both the Saar and Danzig returned to the Reich. But such territorial seizures were not replicated in Tangier. Rather, competition over the Mendoubia became the focus for Germans seeking to deconstruct the authority of the international administration. This was because the return of the Mendoubia carried with it a renewal of official German representation in Tangier and, with it, free access for Germans to the city.

The German Foreign Office thus led calls for a return of the Mendoubia in the early stages of the war.[57] Others, including Germans in northern Morocco who wanted to capitalize on the trade advantages afforded by access to the Tangier International Zone, joined in. To be sure, many Moroccan Germans had been

[57] German Foreign Office officials were interested in the unique opportunities for espionage and propaganda that a return to Tangier offered: see Ernst Mohr, Counsellor, Tangier, to Foreign Office, 20 Feb. 1944: *ADAP*, Ser. D, Band xi/2, doc. 226, 429–31.

agitating for a return to the zone since at least 1933.[58] In early 1941, the German Foreign Office made numerous requests to the Spanish, who were occupying the city in the name of 'neutrality', for the return of their old Legation. But only after months of pressure did Franco grudgingly capitulate to Axis demands. On 17 March, the Spanish officially returned the building to the German consul, Herbert Nöhring, who entered the city in a whirl of dramatic pageantry, accompanied by German dignitaries and a number of employees who had been living in the Spanish Zone since the First World War.[59]

The return of the Germans to the Mendoubia struck at the heart of the international regime. It displaced the mendoub, who had been carrying out his duties there on a daily basis for over a decade. But, more importantly, the staging of the reoccupation implied an attack on the signatory powers, who had been consolidating their authority and property portfolios in the inter-war years. The jubilance of the German procession through the city, in its route and opulence, evoked parallels with Kaiser Wilhelm II's official visit to Tangier in 1905, which had sought to embarrass Germany's colonial competitors.[60] The staged return of the Germans in 1941 was no less calculating in its attempt to destabilize international power, with the procession designed to enhance their 'prestige among the natives'.[61] Certainly the few photographs of the event and the resulting press criticism reveal not only the extensive use of flags, banners

[58] On Germans in northern Morocco seeking a return to the city, see the numerous propaganda activities run by the Popular League for Germanism in Morocco as described in AGA, box 81/10176, 15 (3.01). See also Daniel J. Schroeter, 'Philo-Sephardism, Anti-Semitism, and Arab Nationalism: Muslims and Jews in the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco during the Third Reich', in Francis R. Nicosia and Boğaç A. Ergene (eds.), *Nazism, the Holocaust, and the Middle East: Arab and Turkish Responses* (New York, 2018).

[59] On Nöhring, see *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes, 1871–1945*, 5 vols. (Paderborn, 2000–14), iii, ed. Gerhard Keiper and Martin Kröger. Nöhring was replaced by Kurt Heinrich Rieth in 1942. Rieth would act as consul-general until 1944, at which time the consulate-general was forcibly closed. On Rieth, see TNA, KV 2/3573, fos. 31–3.

[60] Christopher M. Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II: A Life in Power* (Abingdon, 2013), 142–6; John C. G. Röhl, *Wilhelm II: Into the Abyss of War and Exile, 1900–1941*, trans. Sheila de Bellaigue and Roy Bridge (Cambridge, 2014), 333–47.

[61] Childs, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 25 Feb. 1941: NARA, RG59/881.00/1858.

and stages in the service of a triumphalist spectacle, but the bitter sentiment it engendered among the international authorities. Commentary on the event became especially widespread in 1945 as French newspapers republished material collected during the war without fear of recrimination (see Plate 7).

The ensuing German presence in the zone became manifest throughout the war years. The German consulate (later, the consulate-general) housed in the Mendoubia employed around forty-five people, comfortably more than any of the other consulates held by the signatory powers in Tangier.[62] This was conspicuous, noted the German official Ernst Mohr, given that Germany had no obvious reasons to justify a sudden burst of activity in Morocco.[63] In addition, it created the unusual situation of the Germans working side by side with representatives of the Allies. In their day-to-day tasks, the signatory powers watched German officials with concern, noting a wide range of activities that appeared to contravene the Statute of Tangier.

Moreover, for a disinterested power, the Germans appeared to be spending an alarming amount of money on the Mendoubia. This included calling a member of the German Office of Public Works to Tangier to sign off on plans for its renovation.[64] From painting to masonry, local artisans made repairs throughout the Mendoubia in 1941 and 1942, and German officials oversaw the replanting of its gardens (see Plate 8).[65]

While none of this expenditure was significant in absolute terms, the symbolic fortification of Germany's presence in Tangier further unsettled signatories to the statute, especially when coupled with rumours that the Germans were attempting to retrieve, rent or buy other properties in the city. According to German Foreign Office files and wider intelligence sources,

[62] On the personnel in the consulate, see Mohr, Tangier, to Foreign Office, 20 Feb. 1944. For personnel files more generally, see PA AA, RZ 615, 144492. For the Allied assessment of personnel, see TNA, KV 2/2654.

[63] Mohr, Tangier, to Foreign Office, 20 Feb. 1944.

[64] 'Vermerk', Berlin, 20 Mar. 1941; Nöhring, Tangier, to Foreign Office, 11 May, 17 June 1941; Director of the Office of Public Works, Berlin, to Foreign Office, 2 Apr. 1942; Director of the Office of Public Works, Berlin, 'Reisebericht', to Foreign Office, 7 Apr. 1942: all PA AA, RZ 616, 128219; Rieth, Tangier, to Foreign Office, 20 Sept. 1942: PA AA, RZ 616, 128212.

[65] See the receipts in PA AA, RAV Tanger, 114.

consular officials made contact with former protégés, handing over 'Frs. 300,000,000 (about $4,000 at present exchange rates) to purchase real estate properties'. Owing to a royal decree of 29 November 1940, Germans could not purchase properties without the help of protégés. This decree allowed for the continued sale of properties between Muslims, but insisted on special authorization for sales between all other persons, a measure which, the Americans noted, 'was probably aimed originally at the Germans'. Yet despite these hurdles, Germans bought a 'considerable amount of property'.[66] The most notable purchase was probably that of the German citizen Francisco Mawick, who secured the Erola printing press and made it the conduit for the official publications and propaganda of the German consulate-general. It also became one of the unofficial meeting places in Tangier for Italian neo-Fascists after the fall of Mussolini.[67]The signatory powers viewed the return of Germans to the Tangerine property market as a potential spoiler to the international order they had been creating, and in this atmosphere German purchases precipitated a rush of other acquisitions in the zone. Throughout 1941 and 1942, Spanish officials diverted customs revenue and taxes from public works to the purchase of private property.[68] As the British reported, 'In line with this policy the Spanish have been for the past two years, and notably within recent months, endeavouring to buy up foreign (non-Spanish) properties'.[69] The Americans, too, observed this spate of private property purchases by the Spanish, linking it perceptively to an imagined post-war future. As the American chargé d'affaires, James Rives Childs, put it on 27 October 1942, 'One interesting tendency on the part of the Spaniards has been their ostensible desire to acquire foreign (non-Spanish) properties in the Tangier Zone, evidently with a view to reinforce their claim to this Zone when the negotiations for its future eventually take place'.[70]

[66] Harry Earle Russell, Consul-General, Casablanca, to Secretary of State, 18 June 1941: NARA, RG59/881.50/29.

[67] See the report of the Alta Comisaría de España en Marruecos, Tetouan, 26 May 1942: AGA, box 81/1930, 15 (13.000); Mr David, Intelligence, to CIO, Italian Region, 24 May 1944: TNA, FO 371/39737.

[68] 'Tangier International Regime', 1: TNA, FO 174/319.

[69] British Consul-General in Tangier, dispatch sent by Childs to American Secretary of State, 25 Mar. 1945: NARA, RG59/881.00/2506.

[70] Childs, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 27 Oct. 1942: NARA, RG59/881.00/2366.

7. Bitter commentary among French newspapers on the German and Spanish parades of 17 March 1941, in which the Mendoubia was returned to the Germans, is exemplified by the publication of this photograph in *France-Soir*, 17 Aug. 1945, 1.

Insecurity in response to resurgent German purchases also ran deep through the other signatory powers. While the British had less at stake in the city, they too looked to take action. In early 1942, the acting British consul-general, Arnold Watkinson, was charged with surveying the interests of His Majesty's Government and of British subjects in Tangier.[71] British officials expected that the information contained in Watkinson's survey would 'prove to be of considerable value in connection with the final decision regarding the future status' of Tangier.[72] So, as another British diplomat noted, it was important that 'residents should not dispose of their properties at this time when the Spanish are undoubtedly doing all in their power to purchase real estate within the Zone'.[73]In addition to buying urban real estate, and to the alarm of the signatory powers, the Germans in Tangier also penetrated public utilities and financed infrastructure projects. The countess of Montgomery, a prominent French national living in Marrakesh, provided a glimpse into this investment and the large number of Moroccans helping to facilitate German purchases. On the basis of her lunches with the son of El Glaoui Pasha, she informed the Americans that just over a thousand North Africans were thought to be working with the Germans, including around two hundred members of the Armistice Commission. 'When pressed [by the countess] for details as to this large number', the son explained that 'the Germans had taken back into their pay all of their old protected native Semsars and many others of German leanings . . . their plans seemed to envisage the eventual domination of the Moroccan industrial picture either with or without political and military domination'.[74]

[71] For the resulting exceptionally detailed files on the owners, nature, size, location and worth of British investments in Tangier, see 'Memorandum on British Interests in Tangier', 2 July 1942: TNA, FO 369/2749.

[72] British assets in the city were placed in the 'neighbourhood of three and a half million pounds', with conversions from francs to the pound made at the pre-war rate of 176:1: *ibid.*

[73] Alvary Gascoigne, Consul-General, Tangier, to Foreign Office, London, 17 Mar. 1943: NARA, RG59/881.00/2506.

[74] Childs, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 5 July 1941: NARA, RG59/881.00/2029.

8. The replanting of the German Legation's gardens as captured by the German official Adolf Gustav Sonnenhol. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin, NL Sonnenhol 297/54.

Alongside industry, the most important German purchases related to the reclamation and exploitation of mining rights.[75] This chimed with Nazi economic demands, but it also reflected long-term interests by private investors in the region. As Childs reminded the American Department of State, 'It will be recalled that the Germans before the First World War had evinced a keen interest in mining possibilities in Morocco and had taken steps as early as 1909 to bring about an economic condominium with France in this country'.[76] The Allied Powers sought detailed information on the extent to which Germans were infiltrating Moroccan mines, both reclaiming old concerns and breaking into new ones. Archival evidence does not offer an actual figure of how deep this infiltration went. Most likely it was small, at best. But the very notion sent shock waves into other colonial powers in Morocco and encouraged them to make their own purchases where possible.

Aware of concerns about their resurgent activities, German consular officials sought to protect themselves against Allied recrimination by strengthening relations with Moroccan nationalists. The German vice-consul, Hans Krüger, and his close collaborator Otto Wiedemann, a fluent Arabic speaker who had married into the prominent Mawick family of the Mannesmann Trust, led these efforts in Tangier, making vague promises to local nationalists of support for independence and land reform.[77] They also met with nationalists from the nearby capital of the Northern Zone, Tetouan, including Abdelkhaleq Torres, founder of the Party of National Reform (Hizb al-Islah al-Watani), and Mekki Naciri, founder of the Moroccan Unity Party (Hizb al-Wahda al-Maghribiyya).[78] German advances offered an opportunity for the nationalist movement to strike back at colonial powers in Morocco. Nationalists in the north were somewhat receptive to this idea, but very few saw an alliance with the Nazis as a serious option. Torres had been close with the Spanish

[75] Russell, Casablanca, to Secretary of State, 18 June 1941. The purchase of new mines began at pace in 1938 in the Spanish Zone, and after 1941, in the Tangier Zone. See the correspondence and maps in TNA, FO 371/22586.

[76] Childs, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 8 Mar. 1941: NARA, RG59/881.00/1862.

[77] On Krüger, see TNA, KV 2/525. On Wiedermann, see TNA, KV 2/283.

[78] On the Moroccan nationalists in the Northern Zone, see esp. Stenner, *Globalizing Morocco*.

rebels, and had flirted with Fascism and Nazism, but little came out of his relations with Germany. Likewise, Naciri was tired of broken promises, writing in 1939, 'There are democracies and dictatorships . . . but the colonial politics are all similar . . . Somebody believes that Germany and Italy support the Muslim people . . . this is wrong'.[79] Indeed, he was willing to turn from one power to another as it suited his interests.[80] In the south, nationalists distanced themselves from fascist overtures, until 1944 looking to France to help secure reforms in Morocco, after which a shift to a programme of independence took place. With the formation of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party, Moroccan nationalists increasingly sought to reclaim full sovereignty in all three zones, allowing them to decide the legitimate role of foreigners in Morocco. This would include, in the post-war years, discussions about the rights of foreigners to property and assets more broadly.

Throughout the war years, then, the Nazis used the reoccupation of the Mendoubia to undermine the international administration and as a base from which to direct their own propaganda towards Arabs in the region who they thought might rally behind the Third Reich. But more than this, they sought a revival of private property purchases that would significantly alter power relations in the zone. The Spanish certainly interpreted their actions in this light, and as a response engaged in their own programme of purchasing property in order to shore up their position in the zone at the end of the war. The British did likewise, instructing nationals not to sell property at this crucial juncture before post-war allocations to the international administration had been made.

III

RESTORING INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES?

The return of the Germans to their old Legation was brief. By late 1943, Allied diplomats were already discussing the prospects for expelling Axis representatives and agents from

[79] Anna Baldinetti, 'Fascist Propaganda in the Maghrib', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, xxxvii, 3 (2011), 424.

[80] It later transpired that he was working with the British: Pack, *Deepest Border*, 240.

Tangier.[81] Such talk increased throughout the spring of 1944. With the turning tide of the war, the Spanish moved to align themselves with the British and Americans, finally agreeing to close the German consulate-general. At dusk on 23 May, Emilio Álvarez Sanz-Tubau, the Spanish consul in Tangier, met his German counterparts for an official handover. The building had been stripped bare, and what was left of the archive was prepared for transfer and inventory.[82] All other items belonging to the Reich were packed into ten crates and shipped to Algeciras, from where they were to continue on to Berlin.[83]

Germany's official expulsion from Tangier left the ownership of the Legation up for debate. Should it return to the international administration and continue to house the Legislative Assembly? The Spanish toyed with the idea of retaining the Mendoubia for themselves, revealing their desire to maintain a leading position in Tangier after the war. But they did not have the political power to occupy the property. Nor did the French, who also wanted to exercise greater authority in the city. Indeed, both powers appeared unable to assert their colonial ambitions, given that they could not even flush out individual Nazis from the zone. As Childs wrote in 1944 in a personal letter to Henry Villard, chief of the Division of African Affairs in the American Department of State, only a small number had been expelled from the city, and indeed many lingered *in situ* long after the war.[84]

Alongside the French and Spanish, a third group laid claim to the Mendoubia. Officials close to the sultan interpreted the German exit as one of significant interest for Moroccans. They included Moulay El Larbi, the informal representative of the sultan in Tangier. Larbi arrived in Tangier in mid 1943 to participate in negotiations concerning the estate of the late sultan

[81] See esp. the American correspondence from 21 Oct. 1943: NARA, RG59/881.00/2672.

[82] For the documents pertaining to the departure, including the inventories, see the files in PA AA, S1, 41.

[83] Telegram no. S 948, Madrid, 27 Oct. 1944: PA AA, RZ 615, 144492.

[84] Childs, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 1 Sept. 1944: NARA, RG59/881.00/9-144. On the expulsion of Nazis from Spain and Spanish Morocco, see David A. Messenger, *Hunting Nazis in Franco's Spain* (Baton Rouge, 2014).

'Abd-al-'Aziz. At the sultan's behest, he stayed on, developing close relations with consulate representatives. This included a particularly strong relationship with the Americans, who had become the most popular foreign power in Tangier (and Morocco) by this point. Larbi's immediate response to 'the closing of the Consulate' was that it meant 'the evacuation of the Mendoubia'; that is, that ownership of the Mendoubia should revert to the sultan and his government.[85] Moreover, not only should the building be returned, but the sultan's government should henceforth have an enhanced role in the city's international administration. This included provisional powers 'to deal very severely and without pity against all Moroccan subjects helping or collaborating with the Axis': 'A purging is more necessary than ever among the Moroccan Tangier population'. Larbi wanted to put a stop to the 'insensate colonial ideas' of the French and Spanish by securing a more active role for Moroccans in Tangier's international governance. He also encouraged the United States and Britain to take guardianship of the rest of Morocco in the form of an 'improved' mandate.[86]

German imperial structures therefore became an issue around which the sovereignty of the Alaouite dynasty could be asserted, even in an imagined post-war Morocco transitioning from Franco-Spanish colonial rule to an 'inter-Allied mandate'. As a result, some of the most ambitious plans for ridding Tangier of Nazis and repurposing their property were developed by those around the sultan. Larbi in particular deployed the language of purges within nationalist circles, pitting factions against one another based on their supposed relations with the Germans. On behalf of the sultan, he compiled a list of sixty-three 'German agents' and 'pro-German Moroccans' living in Tangier, outlining their collaboration with Axis officials.[87] These individuals, he felt, would 'permit [the Nazis] after the war to remain, in spite of everything, property owners'.[88] But while polemical

[85] Charles Burke Elbrick, Second Secretary of Legation, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 22 June 1944: NARA, RG59/881.00/6-2244.

[86] Childs, 'Transmitting Memorandum on Moroccan Aspirations', Tangier, to Secretary of State, 12 Feb. 1944: NARA, RG59/881.00/2806.

[87] Elbrick to Secretary of State, 22 June 1944.

[88] Childs, Tangier, to Secretary of State, 29 July 1944: NARA, RG59/881.00/2944.

attacks against German collaborators and German property did occur, Larbi reassured the Americans and the British of a general respect for property rights. He specifically made clear that in any transition to a new post-war sovereign arrangement, Morocco would still 'recogniz[e] and guarante[e] to the French their rights to private property'.[89] Members of the newly formed Istiqlal Party agreed with this stance. In their letters and proclamations, they made clear that any transition to independence would 'not ignore that [the] French and foreigners have legitimate interest in the country and that these interests must be safeguarded'.[90]

In the end, none of the three groups got their way. The British and Americans applied pressure directly on the other signatory powers so that at midnight on 10 October 1945, the international administration resumed its role. This meant the reinstatement of the mendoub Hadj Mohamed Tazi, who returned to the Mendoubia in a wave of pageantry and, on the basis of Article 18 of the Tangier Protocol, resumed his former public service, but with no enhanced powers as advocated by Larbi.[91] At the same time, the Allies met and verbally agreed to seize German assets throughout the city.[92] Over the course of 1945 and 1946, their respective financial attachés jointly carried out the liquidation of assets, amassing 901,339 French francs and 603,798.50 Spanish pesetas in an Allied account in the Banque d'État du Maroc.[93] In 1948 the Inter-Allied Reparation Agency

[89] Childs, 'Transmitting Memorandum on Moroccan Aspirations', Tangier, to Secretary of State, 12 Feb. 1944.

[90] Ahmed Balafrej, Secretary-General of the Istiqlal Party, to HM the Sultan, Rabat, 21 Moharram 1363 (18 Jan. 1944), in *Morocco Istiqlal Party Documents, 1944–1946* (Paris, 1946), 7.

[91] 'Accueil triomphal à S.E. le Mendoub' and 'Allocution de S.E. le Mendoub Hadj M'Hamed Tazi', both in *Le Petit Marocain*, 12 Oct. 1945, unpaginated; 'À Tanger l'organisation internationale fonctionne à nouveau', *Le Petit Marocain*, 13 Oct. 1945, unpaginated.

[92] Spitzmuller, French delegate, Brussels, to N. E. P. Sutton, Secretary-General, Inter-Allied Reparation Agency, Brussels, 25 Apr. 1949: Archives Nationales, Paris (hereafter AN), AJ/34/304.

[93] 'Tanger', in 'Avant-projet du rapport des gouvernements des États-Unis d'Amérique, de la France et du Royaume Uni à l'Agence interalliee des reparations sur les avoirs allemands dans les pays neutres et ex-ennemis', 70: AN, AJ/34/1635. Initially, proceeds from liquidations in Larache were combined in the Tangier Zone

(cont. on p. 35)

took over the distribution of reparations. By the following year, it had instructed its beneficiaries to make contact with the bank directly to access their share.[94]

Despite what looked like a return to the international status quo, the restoration of international structures now had to compete with influential ideas about the need for a greater recognition of Alaouite sovereignty in the zone. Like Larbi, the sultan recognized the Mendoubia's symbolic value as a site of Alaouite patrimony, especially in 1947. In the late afternoon of 9 April 1947, Sultan Mohammed ben Youssef and his daughter Princess Lalla Aicha arrived by train in Tangier, greeted by massive crowds carrying flowers and singing. The pair made their way to the Mendoubia, where they gave landmark speeches in the struggle for Moroccan independence. Standing in front of the Mendoubia, Mohammed ben Youssef electrified all three zones of Morocco by extolling Moroccan 'unity'. As many historians have pointed out, by establishing the sultan's political importance and propelling him to impressive heights of popularity, these speeches opened a new era in the history of the Moroccan independence movement.[95]

With nationalist politics on the rise across all three zones, discussions of the wider fate of foreign property in Morocco spread apace. While this was henceforth focused on French and Spanish property holdings, echoes of the debates around German property remained. And, unlike in many other post-colonial states, what remained the case in Morocco right up to independence and beyond was an insistence on the part of Moroccan parties that, if they supported independence, the French and Spanish would not receive threats to their property similar to those experienced by the Germans. As Mohamed Lyazidi put it for the Istiqlal Party, 'Morocco does not intend to prejudice the legitimate interest of aliens, and, a fortiori, to shirk its international

(n. 93 cont.)
total, amounting to 731,190.40 pesetas. But this mistake was soon rectified. See 'Sommes provenant de la zone internationale de Tanger', I.A.R.A./AS/Doc. 1010, Annex 2, 22 Nov. 1949, and Alex B. Daspit, United States delegate, to S. E. M. Henry Spitzmuller, French delegate, Inter-Allied Reparation Agency, Brussels, 3 Feb. 1949: both AN, AJ/34/1635.

[94] See the correspondence in AN, AJ/34/1635, AJ/34/304.

[95] Miller, *History of Modern Morocco*, 184; Stenner, *Globalizing Morocco*, 25–7.

obligations, within the framework of the new international organization'.[96] In other words, there was a clear assertion that the end of empire could be completed without fear of loss of property, a line of argument designed to help secure international support for the decolonization of all three zones in Morocco, which eventually came to pass in 1956.

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All the international zones created after the First World War inherited former imperial patrimony to house administrative work. International administrators considered these buildings necessary for projecting prestige, especially in Europe, where League of Nations officials looked to use the symbolic importance of these buildings to visualize their dominance over German administrators and defeated German populations. In Tangier, control of the Mendoubia was similarly evocative, yet, with very few Germans remaining in the zone after the war, the signatory powers emphasized less the subjugation of defeated nations and more the Moroccan–European venture of international governance around which the zone was formed.

But internationalization involved more than the transfer of prestige buildings to international administrations. In Tangier, private property was at least as important to securing international political influence in a way that was not seen in other zones. The sale of German property opened up avenues for the French and Spanish to gain greater influence in the Legislative Assembly, and expanded the size and reach of their colonies across Morocco more broadly. This link between property and political influence was one of the reasons why attempts at repurchase by the Nazis in the Second World War caused such concern among signatory powers. While there is little evidence that the Germans were seeking to increase their formal political control in Tangier, their willingness to exploit international control and its 'open door' requirements for strategic influence drew attention to the unsettling possibility for France and Spain of a major power without an empire dominating politics in the

[96] Mohamed Lyazidi for the Istiqlal Party, Rabat, 2 Aug. 1945, in *Morocco Istiqlal Party Documents, 1944–1946*, 26.

region. Such activity precipitated a rush of further purchases from signatory powers or, at the very least, defensive strategies, as was the case with Britain, to protect their status in Morocco.

In other words, both state and non-state private property became essential to internationalization. The process of creating an international administration after the First World War and re-establishing it after the Second World War did not happen in isolation from the material environment in which it was situated. On the contrary, who owned what mattered to consuls and home governments as it provided an important metric by which to claim influence in international administrations. This observation certainly did not escape Moroccan nationalists, who at the end of the Second World War saw debates about the fate of the property portfolios as a chance to expand their involvement in international administration. Being attentive to this phenomenon helps us, therefore, to see an important new form of competition that emerged within the new international structures that developed after the First World War.

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ABSTRACT

At the end of the First World War, defeated European empires ceded a wealth of imperial patronage, including palaces, government buildings and offices, to newly forming states in central Europe. While we know a great deal about these property transfers, the fate of ceded property in mandates and other newly emerging sovereign spaces, such as international zones, is less well known. This article traces the ways in which central European properties were reallocated and sold in international zones, with special reference to the International Zone of Tangier. While the remains of central European imperialism in Tangier were integrated into the international administration, this process encouraged erstwhile imperial powers to vie ever harder to reclaim 'their' former property, including private property portfolios. Meanwhile, it encouraged existing imperial powers to support private property purchases in order to secure advantages in the administration. In other words, internationalization entailed widespread competition for property that is omitted from the usual accounts of these spaces. Drawing attention to this phenomenon is important as it reveals the new forms imperial rivalries took on within the international structures created after the war.