

Walther L. Bernecker

Die spanischen Diktaturen des 20. Jahrhunderts (1923-1930, 1939-1975) und das Mittelmeer

The Spanish Dictatorships in the XXth Century (1923-1930, 1939-1975) and the Mediterranean

Long before Franco erected his dictatorship in Spain (from 1936/39 on until 1975), the country had a very special relationship to the Mediterranean and the northern part of Africa. In modern times, the Crown of Aragon exercised a decisive influence in the western part of the Mediterranean, and in the XIXth century Spain tried to expand her imperial power over major parts of North Africa. The beginning of the new Spanish colonialism in North Africa started with the loss of the last Spanish overseas colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines) in the year 1898. From then on, the Spanish governments tried to compensate this loss with the acquisition of larger territories in the Mediterranean region. The Spanish efforts concentrated in the northern part of Morocco, where they collided fastly with the French troops. In the first two decades of the XXth century, the Spanish troops had to fight continuously against the caïds of the Rif, and only during the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera in the 1920s, the Spaniards could "pacify" more or less the Spanish Protectorate in the northern part of Morocco. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the North African colonies of Spain adhered to the Francoist side. In 1956, the French dismissed their colony French Morocco into independence, and soon later the Spanish government followed this example (7th April, 1956), and the northern part of Spanish Morocco obtained its independence. The Spaniards maintained, nevertheless, the sovereignty over their colony Spanish West Sahara (Río de Oro) until November 1975.

The paper will discuss the importance of North Africa as Spanish colony / protectorate and the "character" of the new Spanish imperialism in Africa in the XXth century.