

## Chapter six

### The English volunteers of the Tercio de Extranjeros

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#### Abstract

The colonial war that arose when the Protectorate was established in Morocco at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to the recovery of the recruitment of foreigners in the Army. A practice extinguished throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an evolution of the transition from the royal armies of the Old Regime to the constitutional ones of a national nature. The creation of the *Tercio de Extranjeros* in 1920, known as *la Legión*, was the organic instrument that allowed its recruitment and framing. The presence of foreigners in their ranks never exceeded 20%, being those of English origin a minority, with a very short stay due to the diplomatic problems that arose, the object of analysis in this work.

#### Keywords

Army, Legion, Third Foreigners, legionnaires, Morocco, United Kingdom, British, Protectorate, recruitment.



The presence of foreigners in the Spanish Army gradually disappeared throughout the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as part of the transition from the royal armies, characteristic of the Old Regime, to the national armies that emerged from the French Revolution. The enlistment of foreigners in royal armies – basically into complete units – cannot be surprising given the dynastic character of the armies and the transnational nature of the monarchy.

Although the Cádiz Constitution established the concept of a national army as opposed to the king's army and therefore denied the presence of foreign troops, the Peninsula War itself and subsequent events would delay the extinction of foreigners in the Spanish army until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With the reform of June of 1818, in which the foreign-named regiments were extinguished, the last of them, The Regiment of the Royal Walloon Guards became the 2nd of the Royal Spanish Guards. With this, foreign units disappeared definitively in Spain, although old Swiss soldiers from the dissolved units were still in service<sup>1</sup> and even some foreigners bought as replacements until the Law of 10 January 1877—which re-established compulsory military service—expressly stated that only Spaniards could serve in the army, a principle that was confirmed by the Law establishing the Army of 29 November 1878, article 20 of which states '*To belong to the army, it is a precise circumstance to be Spanish*'.

Shortly before this date, and as a unique case that we want to recover, in 1868 Lieutenant Colonel Valeriano Weyler organised, on the occasion of the *Ten Years' War* of Cuba, a unit formed by volunteers and financed by the merchants of Havana that would receive the name of the *Hunters of Valmaseda*. This unit, formally outside the Spanish military organisation, recruited both Cubans and European foreigners. Weyler points out in his memoirs that no documentation was required of them, which is why many escapees or former prisoners were enlisted and *not a few who had outstanding accounts with the justice system*<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Order of 30 June 1835 of Queen Governor Maria Cristina solving the life problems of the former soldiers of the Swiss regiments, which had been dissolved in 1822 and were in an anomalous situation. Some were employed on surveillance missions in Catalonia during the first Carlist War.

<sup>2</sup> WEYLER, Valeriano: *Memorias de un general* (Memoirs of a general). Destino, Barcelona, 2004, p. 69.

It would be precisely a new colonial war, together with the extension of compulsory military service to the whole population in 1912, that would bring foreigners back to the Spanish army.

The lack of volunteers to cover the staff of the African units during the Moroccan War, which began in Melilla in 1909 and would last until 1927 as a result of the establishment of the Protectorate in Morocco, would drive a search for foreigners to cover military needs. This would lead to the creation of the 'Tercio de Extranjeros', similar to the French Foreign Legion, in 1920.

Although this unit aimed to cover its staff mainly with European foreigners from the armies defeated in World War I, the reality was different. On one hand, France raised serious objections to the recruitment of Germans to prevent its Legion from losing this important recruitment niche. On the other, the government's fears of the Bolshevik ideology entering Spain imposed restrictions on foreign recruitment and, as a result, the 'Tercio de Extranjeros' was mainly manned by Spaniards, with foreigners accounting for no more than 20% of the Moroccan campaign.

However, the so-called 'Disaster of Annual' in July 1921, with its international resonance, and the doubling of 'Tercio' forces that required an increase in recruitment, led to propaganda and recruitment campaigns being conducted in foreign capitals, both in Europe and America, with varying results, as in the case of the United Kingdom and the United States that are the subject of this analysis.

### Recruitment in the UK

Inflation and unemployment were the scourges of Europe after World War I, the latter reaching mass proportions from 1921<sup>3</sup>. This social crisis also affected the United Kingdom, which in the summer of 1921 had thousands of repatriated soldiers who could not find work, as the Ambassador in London, Merry del Val, explained to the Minister of State when he reported the presence of more than two thousand individuals in the consulate general in London and hundreds in provincial consulates willing to enlist if they were provided with transport to Spain<sup>4</sup>. He even announced

<sup>3</sup> JACKSON, Julian. *Europa, 1900-1945 (Europe, 1900-1945)*. Critica, Barcelona 2003, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup> AGMAE H-2883. Telegram from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 18/8/1921.

the possibility of recruiting two regiments, with only officers<sup>5</sup>, and another 12,000 through an English colonel who had already recruited 800 for the French Foreign Legion<sup>6</sup>.

The Ministry of War did not hesitate in taking advantage of this opportunity, which allowed it to quickly complete two flags which had been authorised, and in this respect the Ministry of State said that «up to two thousand can be accepted if they meet the appropriate conditions for campaign life aged up to 40 years and of robust constitution». Transport is requested from the Minister of the Navy for transfer to Ceuta, where they would be enlisted<sup>7</sup>.

This huge influx of English to the consulates, which even led to altercations requiring police presence, alarmed the British authorities and attracted the attention of the press. On 18 August, the ambassador warned of the possible contrary attitude of British military authorities and the negative comments made by the press about the Spanish army, claiming that «our troops are incapable of controlling the Moor and that we intend to replace them with foreign forces»<sup>8</sup>. On the 19, the first official reaction was published by the newspaper *ABC*.

London 19, 9 pm. The Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, replying to a question on this matter [Spanish recruitment in England], states that he has news that the Spanish government is enlisting former British and other soldiers in England with the aim of sending them to Morocco.

He adds that he cannot say more about the matter until he has consulted the other ministers concerned; but that a statement on the subject will be made as soon as possible.

To further questions on the same issue, the Undersecretary answered that the law of foreign recruitment is still in force, and that the good relations during the war between the Riffians and Gibraltar must be taken into consideration<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Dispatch no. 933 from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 19/8/1921.

<sup>6</sup> AGMAE H-2883. Telegram from the Ministry of State to the Ministry of War dated 20/8/1921.

<sup>7</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram from the Minister of War to the Minister of State dated 20/8/1921.

<sup>8</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Dispatch no. 933 from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 19/8/1921.

<sup>9</sup> ABC 8/20/1921.

The Minister of State, in a telegram dated 21 August, consulted Merry del Val on the accuracy of these statements in the British Parliament and whether recruitment for the 'Tercio' could be completed under normal circumstances. On the same day, 99 volunteers began to board the 'Almirante Lobo' transport, docked in Southampton where it was stowing military equipment acquired from the United Kingdom<sup>10</sup>. However, on 23 February, Merry telegraphed Minister Hontoria informing him that, owing to the hostility shown by the press *to an indescribable extent* and the government's unfavourable attitude, as the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs had told him, he considered that «in order to avoid serious displeasure and friction we should merely accept isolated volunteers in this country as we have done up to now», suspending large-scale recruitment<sup>11</sup>.

The English press would play a decisive role in the crisis that was beginning. The first news items included complaints concerning the «detention of bonuses and payments, lack of food and clothing, and discipline imposed in a somewhat old-fashioned way»;<sup>12</sup> complaints which had already been reported to the Ambassador by the British Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and brought to the attention of the Minister of State, who transferred them to War.

But the real storm would break out once the volunteers on board the 'Almirante Lobo' arrived in Ceuta. Those who were rejected for being useless or for refusing to sign the commitment were abandoned on the Peninsula, as their return ticket was not paid,<sup>13</sup> their complaints were added to those of the first defectors that were beginning to be published in the British press. On 27 September, the UK Ambassador to Spain wrote to the Minister of State with complaints and enquiries about recruitment conditions, to which the Minister replied that misinterpretations of recruitment conditions are «very understandable with people such as volunteers, mostly from a certain social class»<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> AGMM Africa Box 86 Communication from the Ministry of State to the Ministry of War dated 31/8/1921 communicating the names of 99 volunteers on board the 'Almirante Lobo' and one volunteer travelling on his own by the Irun border.

<sup>11</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram dated 23/8/1921 from the Ambassador in London to the Ministry of State.

<sup>12</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 24/8/1921.

<sup>13</sup> AGMM. Africa, Box 86. File on passage and appeals for eight individuals from Ceuta rejected as useless.

<sup>14</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Letter from the Minister of State to the British Ambassador to Spain dated 4/10/1921.

On 17 October, the *Devon & Exeter Gazette* and the *Liverpool Daily Courier*, and on the 22nd the *Pall Mall & Globe*, *Territorial Service Gazette*, *Star*, *Evening News* and the influential *The Times* reported a long and appalling list of allegations concerning the treatment received, which they compared to the worst horrors of German prison camps<sup>15</sup>. On the 23, the British Ambassador to Spain addressed the Minister of State, communicating the *distressing reports* received, not only from British ex-legionaries, but also from other nationalities through consular agents. The ambassador went on to say that the seriousness of the complaints and the impression their publication has created in public opinion make it very likely that Parliament, which is «extremely sensitive in matters of this nature», would intervene in the matter and requests, in order to clarify the facts, that the Military Attaché or the Secretary of the Embassy be allowed to travel to Morocco to «question some or all of the English legionnaires» *privately* and to obtain the discharge of those who, on reasonable grounds, express their wish to rescind the commitment undertaken<sup>16</sup>.

On the 25, the Marquis de Lema met with the Viscount of Eza at Congress, expressing his concern about the evolution of events and the severity of the English request. The next morning, Lord Winterton MP addressed the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons, asking if he was aware of the allegations against the Spanish military authorities and if there were any plans to investigate. The Undersecretary, Mr Harmsworth, replied that the Spanish Government has already been asked to conduct an independent and impartial investigation and he was awaiting a reply<sup>17</sup>.

The Minister of State was unwilling, on grounds of national sovereignty, to grant the British request, and required Merry del Val's opinion. The ambassador agreed with this position, but recommended that an investigation be carried out by a Spanish authority outside the 'Tercio' and that, if necessary, English subjects who wish to do so be granted discharge, recommending in this case that they be given a generous gratuity and their return trip be paid as the best way of putting an end to the *irritating incident*.

<sup>15</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Dispatch no. 1173 from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 24/10/1921.

<sup>16</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Note from the British Ambassador to the Minister of State dated 23/10/1921.

<sup>17</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Copy of the Journal of the House of Commons sent by the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State along with dispatch no. 1194 dated 27/10/1921.

The Minister of State summoned the British Ambassador and informed him of Spain's refusal to carry out the investigation, a decision which the latter understood, stating that the British government's intention was not to «cause the slightest disturbance to national self-esteem, but simply to have a practical means of responding to parliamentary enquiries with the truth of what was happening»<sup>18</sup>.

The ambassador proposed, as an alternative solution, a private visit by the British Consul in Spain to his nephew, a former British army captain serving as a sergeant in the 'Tercio de Extranjeros' and hospitalised in Melilla because he was wounded. With the information obtained, the British Government could respond to the parliamentary questions, settling the matter. The minister did not agree with the new proposal and pointed out that we are «very fond of the British recruits, but as they are few in number and we can do without them, if their stay there is going to give rise to so many press comments and complaints from the British government, the most comfortable thing would be to dismiss them, making the reason public». A comment which, in the Minister's opinion, impressed the Ambassador<sup>19</sup>.

Comments continued to appear in the British press, which reported on the request for an independent investigation (*The Times* 27/10), the description of the war that maintained Spain in negative terms (*The Observer* 30/10) or the declarations of three defectors (*Star* 25/10). All the articles contained allusions to the shortcomings of the Spanish Army. The Spanish press also reported on the incident. The newspaper *El Sol*, in its 29 October edition, echoed the article in *The Times* dated 22 October and blamed it on an international campaign to discredit the 'Tercio' de Extranjeros, dismissing the accusations made by the defectors, who have no defence other than to justify their cowardice. On the 31, the same newspaper published a letter from the head of the 'Tercio', Millán Astray, stating that the matter was in the hands of the Minister of War and he could not give his opinion, but that the heroism with which the 'Tercio' was fighting in Morocco can only be the result of the high spirit of its soldiers, which is incompatible with the accusations made by the English newspaper.

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<sup>18</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram no. 250 dated 31/10/1921 from the Minister of State to the Ambassador in London.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.



The British government, eager to find a solution that would enable it to deal with questions in Parliament, encouraged by media pressure, proposed a new formula to the Spanish government: the affidavit or sworn statement of the British Legionnaires stating their complaints and wishes to remain in the 'Tercio' or not, and those who so wished would be licensed. In this way, said the British government, Spanish demands to «avoid foreign intervention in the investigation» are reconciled with the British need to «satisfy public opinion and Parliament». The ambassador was in favour of this formula and passed it on to the Minister, saying that «we will have solved an unpleasant incident and established in London a high concept of our rectitude and loyalty»<sup>20</sup>.

The Government finally decided to withdraw from the front and gather all the British legionnaires in Ceuta, where they would be invited to declare whether they were happy to continue in the 'Tercio'. The British Government was satisfied with this solution and asked if it could make it public. The Spanish government did not consider it appropriate at the time, given the consequences that it could have among legionnaires of other nationalities, an aspect that was of serious concern in the 'Tercio'. On 6 November, the Anglo-Saxon legionnaires met in Ceuta with the following outcome.

Having questioned English legionnaires in Ceuta, only a few expressed their desire to withdraw from the commitment for insignificant reasons. The others would have been willing to continue, but as it has been noted that they found payment low and that the questioning aroused a general desire and hope to seize the opportunity to collectively get a raise, I have advised Minister of War that, in order to avoid angry incidents, they should also be amicably discharged. I ask that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs be informed. Around 40 would be discharged; the others questioned so far have strongly insisted on staying and so they are kept. On publicity of the matter I will reach an agreement with the English ambassador<sup>21</sup>.

On 9 November, the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs replied in Parliament to a new question from Lord Winterton, informing

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<sup>20</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram no. 475 from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 2/11/1921.

<sup>21</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram no. 260 from the Minister of State to the Spanish Ambassador in London. 13/11/1921.

him that he expected a satisfactory solution to the matter very soon<sup>22</sup>. On the 17, 41 English and 14 American soldiers were discharged; we will study these cases later. Four more Englishmen, one Anglo-Egyptian and one American remain pending discharge, as well as eight to ten injured and sick people left in hospitals. The discharged men were helped with four pesetas a day and their journey to England via Bilbao paid, as well as being given warm clothes and blankets, as recommended by the ambassador in London and despite the contrary opinion of the Minister of State, who considered that they should not be treated differently from the rest of the legionnaires who had been discharged, as this created an inconvenient precedent, as well as economic losses for the State's coffers. The price of the tickets from Bilbao to England was 4,529.40 pesetas.

As was to be expected, the arrival of the former legionaries in England was widely covered by the press, which had not failed to cover the events of the preceding days despite Spanish interest in preventing it. The Spanish authorities were particularly outraged by an article in *The Times* on 26 November, which reported the arrival of the discharged English soldiers at Victoria Station under the headline: *HOME FROM MOROCCO. SUFFERINGS OF THE LEGION. HARDSHIP. CRUELTY. AND DISEASE. THE SPANISH RABBLE.*

Merry del Val addressed the newspaper in protest at the *rude* way in which it treated Spain and its army, as he had done on previous occasions with similar news items in other newspapers, without better success, as *The Times*, when publishing the Ambassador's note, added the footnote «the news did not express an opinion on the matter, but that they had reason to believe that the article was an impartial account of the facts»<sup>23</sup>. This news received wide international coverage, as the diplomatic representations in Lisbon, Switzerland and even Japan informed the Ministry of State of similar information reproduced from English newspapers. News that would feed similar claims from other nations.

On 30 November, the now retired sergeant legionnaire Walter May, former army captain and nephew of the British Consul mentioned earlier, appeared at the Spanish embassy in London

<sup>22</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Journal of the House of Commons for 9/11/1921.

<sup>23</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Dispatch no. 1346 from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 29/11/1921 enclosing press cuttings.

to protest at the conduct of his compatriots, who in his opinion should not have been recruited without the advice or intervention of English officers, as the worst had been gathered. This sergeant handed over to the embassy a copy of the written statement he had submitted to the Foreign Office refuting the accusations made against the 'Tercio de Extranjeros'<sup>24</sup>.

Merry del Val immediately used this statement to counteract the press campaign which, although declining, had already lasted several weeks. He referred to the *Morning Post* the text by Sergeant May, which was published on 7 December «not without some small resistance from certain editors of the newspaper whose patriotism exceeds their spirit of justice, but instead the editor and majority of the editorial staff understand the injustice that Spain has been subjected to»<sup>25</sup>.

The Ambassador asked the former British Army captain to visit the offices of some newspapers and to give an sworn statement referring to the falsehoods of the former English legionnaires at the offices of the British Legion, an association of former British combatants that had been charged with investigating the claims of the discharged English soldiers, a statement that, in the words of Merry del Val, «has resulted in the complete failure of the slanders referred to and the withdrawal by the British government of support for their unjust claims»<sup>26</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Minister of State sent these declarations to the diplomatic offices of those nations where negative news had been published about Spain and the 'Tercio de Extranjeros'. They put into perspective the punishments imposed on some of the legionnaires, comparing them to those they would have suffered in the British army if they had committed the same faults. They also reported on the food and equipment provided to the English, and the warm welcome they had received on arrival in Ceuta. The diplomatic representatives of Chile, Lisbon and other nations reported to the Minister that they had managed to get them published in newspapers in their area.

In December, as a reaction to the press campaign against the Spanish government and its army, a British general who had

<sup>24</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Dispatch no. 1371 from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 5/12/1921.

<sup>25</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram no. 544 from the Ambassador in London to the Minister of State dated 07/12/2021.

<sup>26</sup> AGMAE H-2887 Dispatch no. 65 from the Ambassador in London dated 16/1/1922.

officially visited the Protectorate and specifically the 'Tercio' at its Dar Riffien barracks prior to these events, wrote a long and balanced article in *The Times* defending the Legion and the Spanish government's behaviour with his compatriots, whose credibility was undermined.

Franco Salgado-Araujo, at that time captain of the 'Tercio' with several of these Englishmen in his company, remembering the harshness of operations in Melilla in September 1921, would declare years later:

«The brave English soldiers in my company suffered a lot from this absolute lack of comfort and the inconvenience of not being able to drink tea, which they could not do without, and also from not being able to obtain tobacco<sup>27</sup>».

Legionnaire Nuez Comín, part of the 20th company, would write in his diary on 12 November:

«The English and the Yanks have returned to their countries demanded by their governments. From the Company I have only felt the departure of Remintong Mackarney, always with his monocle, as he had a personality that was out of the ordinary. Of tall stature and strong constitution, he was a formidable swimmer. Even on rainy and cold days (which are being felt) he would not fail to come early in the morning. Then he would arrive at the Company on time before reveille. He came to say goodbye to me and I thought he didn't speak Spanish, but I was surprised to hear him say in perfect Spanish that even though he was happy to leave he would always remember with affection the days he had spent in the Legion. He was always accompanied by a miniature English edition of Don Quixote. He had been a captain in the English army of the Dardanelles. Go with God Mackarney!, if only because he wanted to see Quixotes among the Spanish legionnaires<sup>28</sup>».

Despite the press campaign, British subjects continued to apply for recruitment in the Legion, as Merry del Val reported to the Minister; they were not accepted. In the sample of Legion Archive

<sup>27</sup> FRANCO SALGADO-ARAUJO, Francisco; *Mi vida junto a Franco (My life with Franco)*. Ed. Planeta. Barcelona 1977, p. 53.

<sup>28</sup> NUEZ COMIN, José. *Diario inédito (Unpublished journal)*. The Inspection Lists of the 'Tercio de Extranjeros' have been checked with a new recruit appearing with the name Remigton Macariney Wufrod in the list of November and in December as discharged on 17 November according to R. O. Manuscrita dated the 8th of the same month.

files, an Englishman appears enlisted at the Office of Valencia in December 1924, which suggests that they were still admitted if they visited recruitment offices in Spain. However, the recruitment list by nationality up to August 1930 in the Legion Museum in Ceuta shows only two more than those listed in the already known list of April 1922, a quantity which seems meagre to us. Fermín Galán, in his novel *La Barbarie Organizada (Organised Barbarism)*, tells of the case of an Englishman enlisted under a false identity, which could have been a remedy for them if they were prevented from doing so by the diplomatic problems that arose in 1921.

«[...] He is an Englishman who is not English. He signed up as a Romanian. England is opposed to its rejects being used on peoples it does not oppress. An Englishman must always die for England. Even if he is just a reject.<sup>29</sup>».

Pablo La Porte maintains that British pressure to free its subjects from their commitment to the Legion was linked to Britain's desire to maintain strict neutrality with respect to Morocco.<sup>30</sup> However, at the same time that the issue of the British legionnaires was being discussed, British companies were selling Spain surplus military material from the European War, including aircraft, thousands of sandbags<sup>31</sup> and uniforms, whose buttons stamped with the British emblem were used by the Riffians to fill the eye sockets of the mutilated bodies of the legionnaires<sup>32</sup>.

The British government never demanded the mass discharge of British legionnaires, but media harassment and Spanish foreign policy, which avoided confrontations with the United Kingdom, were the reasons that forced the British to be discharged in conditions that would in the future cause the increase in the demands by legionnaires of other nationalities and demands by other governments for the same criterion used in the British case.

<sup>29</sup> GALÁN, Fermín; *La Barbarie organizada: novela del tercio (Organised Barbarism: novel of the 'tercio')*. Castro. Madrid, 1931, p. 62.

<sup>30</sup> LA PORTE SAENZ, Pablo; *La atracción del imán. El desastre de Annual y sus repercusiones en la política europea (1921-1923)*.(The attraction of the magnet. The Battle of Annual and its impact on European politics (1921-1923).) Ed. Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid 2001. P. 32.

<sup>31</sup> AGMAE H-2883. Telegram from the Minister of State to the Minister of War dated 20/8/1921.

<sup>32</sup> NUEZ COMIN, José. Op. Cit. Note of 11 January 1922.

## Recruitment in the United States

The case of American volunteers is very similar to the English. Recruitment in the United States began on the same dates and for the same reasons as in the United Kingdom. It was carried out by the Military Attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Washington, Colonel Pérez Vidal, organised with the help of the consuls in New York, New Orleans, Boston and Puerto Rico<sup>33</sup>.

The social situation was very similar to England, with an economic crisis and huge unemployment, which was mainly due to the repatriated European War veterans. This is how the newspaper *ABC* described the situation in its edition of 7 October 1921.

«Imagine, readers that the crisis of the unemployed is worsening by the minute, and that there are already nearly six million unhappy people forced to go on strike today. The lack of work continues, and there is no longer any idea what to do about it. It was of little use that thousands and thousands of men would return to Europe, for there are still no jobs to offer to those who stayed.

The Government is very concerned about this issue, especially about those who left everything to serve their country, giving their lives, and when they returned, the doors of their former jobs were closed. Thus they fill the parks in painful spectacle, and not even to plough uncultivated lands anyone decides to use them. They have come to miss the war, and for this reason they rushed to register in the 'Tercio' de Extranjeros... If our government had not suspended the enlistments more than 20,000 would have signed up<sup>34</sup>».

The situation was not lost on the thousands of Spaniards who had emigrated to this American nation.

«The situation of hundreds of Spaniards in the United States, and especially in New York, is beginning to become unsustainable. The forced strike due to lack of work continues, and winter is looming. We must help our fellow countrymen in need, and this must be done as a matter of the utmost urgency. The best help, given the present circumstances, is to repatriate them; to take them back to their respective land,

<sup>33</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Dispatch no. 426 from the Spanish Embassy in Washington to the Minister of State dated 19/11/1921.

<sup>34</sup> *ABC* dated 7/10/1921.

where, however hard the struggle for life was, it would never have been as cruel as it is now<sup>35</sup>».

The fact that 'Tercio' volunteers were paid a 'relief' and passage to Spain, which cost \$100, ensured the success of the recruitment, with hundreds turning up at the consulates. On 26 August, recruitment was suspended because the 'Tercio' had covered its needs and there were no funds available for more volunteers.

On 14 September, 105 volunteers embarked in New Orleans without hindrance from local authorities<sup>36</sup>, and the same occurred in New York, where nearly 300 did so, as reported by the *Washington Post* in its 17 September edition in an article entitled *Spain's Foreign Legion*, which detailed the Spanish difficulties in Morocco and the unpopularity of the war that had prompted the government to «recruit a mercenary force, a foreign legion, along the same lines as the French foreign legion in Algeria.»<sup>37</sup>

The expeditions were made up of unemployed veteran soldiers, both American and Canadian, as well as Spanish and Hispanic Americans from the Central American republics. Seventeen different nationalities were noted by *The New Orleans Item* in its 13 September issue.

The Spanish press, which had been reporting with great attention on the audacity with which the 'Tercio de Extranjeros' was fighting in Morocco, published the arrival of these expeditions in early October. As did US newspaper *The Christian Science Monitor* in its 19 October issue, in a long and very favourable article on the Legion whose first lines read:

«It is evident that the Foreign Legion, which is now serving in the Spanish army in Morocco, is growing in number and, it should be said, in prestige as well, and it is noteworthy that it is not understood abroad, and it is desirable that it should be<sup>38</sup>».

However, as in the English case, negative declarations of those who refused to sign the commitment in Ceuta – or were not accepted – and found themselves in Spain without resources,

<sup>35</sup> ABC dated 04/11/1921.

<sup>36</sup> AGMM Africa Roll 76. Telegram from the Captain General of La Coruña to the Minister of War dated 2/10/1921.

<sup>37</sup> AGMAE H-2883. Dispatch no. 365 from the Embassy in Washington to the Minister of State dated 17/9/1921. Newspaper clippings attached.

<sup>38</sup> AGMAE H-2887. The Christian Science Monitor dated 15 October 1921, attached to dispatch no. 391 from the Spanish Embassy in Washington dated 19 October 1921.

appeared in the press at the same time as the news in the British media. On 31 October several American newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, echoed the statements made by a Canadian recruited in New York, Barry Smith Davidson, denouncing that the conditions announced in the United States were not true and, furthermore, his life had been threatened for refusing to sign the enlistment contract<sup>39</sup>. However, the official version stated that he barely stayed in Ceuta for 24 hours since, not wanting to join up, he was deported to Barcelona as he wished, bringing five Americans with him as witnesses who, in the same circumstances, preferred to stay in Ceuta working on benzine depots under construction<sup>40</sup>.

The Ambassador in Washington took advantage of his cordial relations with the editor-in-chief of the *Washington Post* to publish a letter, received by the Military Attaché, in which one of the *soldiers of fortune* enlisted in New York thanked him for the kindness with which he had been treated and the good journey and welcome he had received<sup>41</sup>.

On 17 November, *The Christian Science Monitor* again published an article praising the Legion and its campaign behaviour, and denying reports in some foreign newspapers about the treatment and pay received by the legionnaires, noting in one paragraph that «the Legionnaires' camp is generally the brightest and liveliest place in the general camp, and there is no trace of discontent»<sup>42</sup>. However, that same day, as a result of the press campaign unleashed in the United Kingdom, 41 Englishmen and 14 Americans were discharged in Ceuta, the latter without any prior request.

*The Times-Picayune*, a New Orleans tabloid, and other American newspapers published the news of the discharge of these 14 American citizens and their statements at the end of November. This news, and claims by American Legionnaires remaining in the

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<sup>39</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram no. 168 dated 1/11/1921 from the Ambassador in Washington.

<sup>40</sup> AGMM. Africa. Roll 76. Telegram from the High Commissioner to the Minister of War dated 9/11/21.

<sup>41</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Dispatch no. 412 from the Spanish Embassy in Washington to the Minister of State dated 3/11/1921.

<sup>42</sup> AGMAE H-2887. The Christian Science Monitor dated 17 November 1921, attached to dispatch no. 434 from the Spanish Embassy in Washington dated 20 November 1921.



ranks, mobilise Senators and other influential figures who force the US State Department to intervene<sup>43</sup>.

Both the Spanish Ambassador in Washington and his US counterpart in Madrid asked the Spanish government to grant discharge to those American citizens who request it, under the same conditions as for British nationals. The Spanish ambassador was furthermore informed that «the Department of Justice had wanted to intervene in the matter by prosecuting the Consul General in New York on the basis of Section 10 of the criminal code, which provides for a fine of one thousand dollars or imprisonment for three years for those who enlist soldiers in the United States for another country»<sup>44</sup>.

The effect was immediate. The very recent precedent of the British case and the aim of avoiding a diplomatic confrontation with the United States obliged the Minister of War, who was forced by the Ministry of State, to decree on 15 December the discharge of all American subjects enlisted in the 'Tercio de Extranjeros'. However, on this occasion, the return of enlistment and repatriation rewards were demanded at no cost to the State. The US response was not long in coming. It demanded that the discharge be without payment of any amount, similar to the decree for English legionnaires, as was finally done<sup>45</sup>. However, the costs of repatriation, through French ports, were borne by the United States with the support of the Red Cross. The total number of American subjects discharged, including those who did so alongside the English, was 53<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Several dispatches from the Consulate in N. Orleans and Embassy in Washington.

<sup>44</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram no. 216 from the Ambassador in Washington to the Minister of State dated 10/12/1921.

<sup>45</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Note no. 65 from the United States Embassy to the Minister of State dated 28/12/1921.

<sup>46</sup> AGMAE H-2887. Telegram dated 18/3/1922 from the Minister of War to the Minister of State.

