

## **BEGINNINGS AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE SPANISH PROTECTORATE IN NORTHERN MOROCCO (1912-1956)**

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Tourism has become one of the fundamental bases of the relaunch strategy of Moroccan economy since the beginning of the current century. The several sectorial plans that has been approved since then, has specially paid attention to Northern coasts of the country, doubtlessly due to their great attractions and enormous amenities for the establishment and development of this activity, though also due to the proximity to the two more active centers of tourists emission to Morocco in the last years, sited in France and Spain, in this order of importance.

In large part of this coast bathed by the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, tourism enjoy an extensive tradition which go back since the period of Spanish Protectorate over that one (1912-1956). Like it is well known by everyone, all this zone was scene of frequent brushes and armed conflicts of wide range, very little favourable for the development of an activity like tourism. Nevertheless, the fact is that the Spanish civil authorities, since they assumed the commitments included in Franco-Spanish convention firmied in 1912, insisted on reaching that this portion of territory that Spain had to administer was known beyond its borders and had an attraction that motivated the touristic visit to this portion of Moroccan territory. The authorities not only were interested in the economic and social benefits that this activity could provide to the receiver society, also because those ones considered to tourism like a way to publicize the Spanish activity in this part of African territory, where the presence of our country was not always well understood. Due to both reasons, the High Commission, when there was availability of means, made an intensive advertising activity and a lot of other initiatives were supported to reach the establishment and development of tourism in the several regions in which the Spanish Protectorate was divided.

After the problems that this task found in the beginning, since the end of the war of Rif in 1927, not only the improvement of interior and external transport network was realized, as well as several hotels with certain quality were created to take in to the potential visitors to Protectorate. Between all these roads built in this moment stood out the one

that connected Melilla to Tetouan through the complicated Rif Mountain Range, without a doubt the road with largest strategic interest, though also the most expensive due to the enormous topographic difficulties along its route.

Another improvement followed to that one, not less significant from a touristic point of view, like it was the establishment of several bus lines between the main cities of the zone, all of them assisted by diverse firms supported by Spanish capital. With this kind of vehicles, which were improving in outputs and comfort with the years, the tourists could travel to the chosen place when they made a trip on their own terms, counting on a wider selection of routes that they covered in every time shorter periods.

These advances in travel systems were supported by a notable increase in the number of hotels and hotel vacancies, as well as by a considerable improvement in quality of outputs offered by several kinds of lodgings, these ones always attentive to the more and more refined requirements of guests. Naturally, among all the other cities in the Protectorate stood out Tetouan, where more than half of hotels (only one of them was a guesthouse) and almost 60% of the whole hotel vacancies were located; an appropriated selection to meet to the needs of visitors which used this kind of lodgings with the great comfort. The rest of hotels located in other cities along the Northern Morocco had got less quality than the hotels in Tetouan. Those ones were created to attend the continuing movement of troops and civil servants posted to the Protectorate. A great number of this kind of temporary residents from Spain usually arrived to those cities every day, which had temporarily to turn to hotels, inns and guesthouses to stay, while they found a long-term accommodation to settle with the family that had remained in our country. The only exception was the Parador of Xauen, promoted by Tourism Official Committee of Protectorate, to which we will refer later, and supported by the Council of Municipal Services of this city located in Yebala region. This solution was the most appropriate to imitate the creation process of some state-run Paradores of Tourism that were coatanously being built in some Spanish cities, which got, like Xauen, a relevant historic meaning and a indisputable artistic and cultural attraction.

The set of this infrastructure was aided by several public actions that were carried out by the Tourism Committee, in the first years, and by the Tourism Service during Franco regime, which achieved to spread and to popularize the Morocco's image. Thanks to them a minority tourist flow, but with great significance, was increasing and becoming established. Both of these institutions, attending their targets, developed a wide propaganda campaign in the beginning, to publish the diverse attractions, not only to Spanish visitors, but also to the European tourist flow, specially the one coming from France, which it was the most interested in these lands when it visited the area controlled by this country. In order to get this target, those institutions made a lot of studies in collaboration with the National Board of Tourism, and they published several tourist brochures and posters in diverse languages, whose drafting of documents was asked to the most brilliant and recognized figures of the intellectuals resident in the Protectorate, standing out the previously mentioned Mariano Bertuchi (Bouzaid, 2013).

Maps were another resource of tourist promotion used by the Committee, conscious of the high utility of this kind of information. The first one was edited in 1929 and concerned to the Southern Spain and the Northern Morocco, with advices in French, English, Ger-

man and Spanish. To this one was followed another ones with a more precise scale, which were limited to the occidental part of Protectorate, where the main road infrastructure was completely finished, and the military control of territory become more intense, due to this one the security in the routes was guaranteed and it is not necessary to take no type of “exceptional precaution”, like assured some tourists that have travelled by them.

By means of these whole actions there is not the least doubt that the image of Protectorate was popularised and was generated a certain attraction to these lands, where an incipient tourist flow, but with enormous interest, had its origin, even recognized by technicians of francoist Administration. Even though the notorious low official rates of tourist movement during the Protectorate, we know that an amount of 17.000 tourists have visited Tetouan in 1929, and the visits had grown respect the same period of previous year in the first semester of 1930. Estimating an average expenditure of 17 pesetas per person and day, the tourism had left 225.000 pesetas in the capital of Protectorate, “number that represents an acceptable beginning of tourist flow”. We are completely convinced, in spite of we have not nowadays had reliable data to confirm, that this flow grew during the six years of Republican Government. Nevertheless, as soon as the Spanish Civil War began this rising trend broke off, going to ruin with the economic expectations that had been created. And this situation not only by the events happened in the Protectorate, where the repercussion of that terrible war barely affected, but also the situation unleashed in Spain since the fateful date of 18<sup>th</sup> july 1936.