

Why Are the French Fighting in Morocco?

By JAY LOVESTONE.

WHY are the French militarists investing so much energy so much gold and so much proletarian and colonial blood in their campaign of subduing the Riffs?

What interest does the French militarist clique, which has taken the place of the Prussian militarist group as the leading military power of capitalist Europe, in waging such strenuous warfare in Africa at this time?

A Powder Magazine.

When the writer was present at the sessions of the last Enlarged Executive of the Communist International, he had occasion to discuss at length the whole Moroccan question with Comrade Doriot, whose arrest by the French government has just been reported. Comrade Doriot told me that Morocco is a virtual powder magazine for the French imperialists. Comrade Doriot said that the smallest spark might serve to influence and mobilize Morocco against French imperialist control.

The victory of the Riffs over Spanish imperialist forces has evidently been more than a small spark in arousing and inflaming the national aspirations of the Riffs against subjugation by French imperialism.

THE French imperialists look upon the contest in Morocco as much more than a local contest. With their hands full in European difficulties and entanglements the French ruling class might conceivably be more anxious to make temporary secondary concessions to Abd-el-Krim in order to secure peace in Morocco. But the French imperialists know that a defeat or a disgrace for them in Morocco means a smashing blow at their entire imperialist colonial policy. Such a disaster for imperialist France in its campaign against the Riffs would shake the foundations of all French colonies and spheres of influence throughout Asia and Africa.

In discussing this question with Comrade Doriot I said that Morocco is to French imperialism what the Philippines are to American imperialism. A free Morocco is a mortal blow struck against French imperialism. Free Philippines are a mortal blow against Yankee imperialism. Morocco and the Philippines are the Achilles' heels of French and American imperialism.

An examination of recent developments in Moroccan trade and a perusal of the role of France in Moroccan development shows that not only politically but also economically Morocco is virtually a key to French imperialist colonial prowess, just as the Philippines are potentially the key to American imperialist colonial prowess in the Far East.

In fact, Morocco serves to illustrate very well the why and wherefore of the tremendous importance attached by European capitalist powers of their control and domination of the development of their colonies and protectorates.

In recent years France has been particularly aggressive in its colonial policy. Imperialist France has more and more become dependent on its colonial possessions for the sources of raw materials for its developing industries. In 1924 France had for the first time in 19 years a favorable trade balance. The French imports from its colonies in 1924 were most instrumental in making it possible for France to show this favorable trade balance.

Agricultural development has been making rapid strides in Morocco. In the last few years the exploitation of Morocco's rich mineral resources have drawn world wide attention.

The Political Divisions of Morocco.

IN order to have their regime function efficiently from an administrative and political point of view, the international imperialists have subdivided Morocco into three zones.

The first and most important section of Morocco is the French protectorate. Here are found nearly 85 per cent of the area and inhabitants of all Morocco. Fez is the capital and Casablanca is the leading commercial center and port of this area.

Secondly, we have the dwindling,

and now limited practically to the coast line only, Spanish protectorate. This is a narrow strip of land, covering an area of about three hundred miles, from the Atlantic ocean along the Mediterranean. The towns of Tetton, Ceuta and Melilla are the chief centers in this section.

Thirdly, we have the so-called international Tangier section. This covers an area of about 150 square miles. Tangiers is governed according to terms of a treaty signed in Paris on December 18, 1923, by France, Great Britain and Spain. Since the signing of this treaty American financial interests have protested against its terms and have in the last few months succeeded thru the pressure of the state department to secure certain modifications of the Paris convention provisions.

Agriculture Leading Industry.

PRICIPALLY Morocco is an agricultural country. Timely rainfalls are essential to enable the Moroccans to exploit fully the advantages and the possibilities of their soil. Practically speaking there is a dearth of irrigation facilities. The exploitation of the good natural agricultural resources is further hindered by the use of backward, crude implements. The last year was an especially favorable one for Moroccan crops because there was plenty of rain. Inclusive of cattle the first nine months of 1924 show a total value of 356,000,000 francs for the agricultural exports from Morocco. This sum was more than twice the size for the corresponding period for the preceding year.

Barley, wheat, beans and certain seeds are the most important agricultural products of Morocco in the year named. Sheep, cattle and hops lead in the live stock industry of the country.

Great Timber Areas.

THERE are more than three million acres of the total area of Morocco covered by forests. But poor transportation and lack of irrigation, as well as increasing dissatisfaction on the part of the natives with the treatment by their foreign oppressors, are responsible for the present condition whereby only one-sixth of this vast forest area is utilized.

Tremendous Mineral Resources.

MOROCCO teems with rich mineral deposits. Yet, for the reasons mentioned in explaining the stunted development of the lumber industry, the utilization of the vast mineral deposits of Morocco is likewise retarded. There are no coal deposits to be found in Morocco, but the phosphate mines in the neighborhood of Casablanca are continually increasing their output. In 1923 the phosphate output totaled about 191,000 metric tons. These mines are exploited by the government and their products are the subject of government monopoly.

In the so-called Spanish zone, largely retaken by the Riffs, there are found rich iron mines. The development of these mines has only begun.

Growing Moroccan Trade.

BY far the greatest proportion of the Moroccan trade is carried on with France, Great Britain and Spain. There are no accurate official statistics ascertaining the volume of the entire Moroccan trade for the last year. But one can, with sufficient accuracy, say that this total trade was nearly \$100,000,000 in 1924. The exports for this period reached a record mark of nearly \$35,000,000. The French Moroccan zone imported nearly one billion francs, or about \$50,000,000, in 1924. This was more than 80 per cent of the imports into Morocco as a whole.

French Morocco.

IN view of the fact that the commerce of the French zone is obviously the most important and that the struggle of the Moroccan people now centers primarily against French imperialism, it will be appropriate to consider somewhat more at length the French protectorate.

The great dependence of France on its colonial possessions for raw materials is shown by the fact that last year there was a balance of four

million francs in favor of the protectorate in its trade with France. The French imperialists shipped two hundred million francs' worth of commodities into Morocco and took into France from Morocco two hundred and four million francs' worth of commodities. Recently there has been noticeable a heavy expenditure in Morocco for great quantities of equipment and supplies for railways, ports and such other works. Local taxation and revenue of the colonial government monopolies, such as of the phosphate mines, supply the bulk of the source for this expenditure.

Coal, cotton goods, sugar, wine, tea and kerosene are among the leading imports into Morocco. The United States supplies nearly 80 per cent of Moroccan imports of minerals, oils and kerosene. France supplies nearly 70 per cent of the cement and other construction supplies. All in all, the French imperialists supply about 65 per cent of the total Moroccan imports.

The live stock, cork and phosphate constitute the principal agricultural exports from Morocco. France and Spain take more than 50 per cent of the phosphate exports. France and England consume the bulk of Moroccan wheat and the greatest proportion of Moroccan beans, wool, sheepskins, cattle hides, gums and seeds go to France. In 1924 Morocco sent nearly 200,000 head of sheep, hogs and cattle to France.

Moroccan Industrial Development.

THE last decade has seen four years of rapid progress in the development of the transportation system of the country. This is especially true in the construction of highways now radiating in many parts of the country. The passenger and freight traffic have thus been tremendously facilitated.

At the same time railroad construction has been increasing steadily. These are only some of the signs of industrial developments of Morocco which are proving of great help to the French imperialists in decreasing their dependence upon foreign supplies for the raw materials which their industrial machine demands.

Lessons from the Moroccan Conflict.

WE can safely assume, unless presently unforeseen circumstances intervene, that the French imperialists will go to the limit in their efforts to subdue the Abd-el-Krim forces and to smash the aspirations of the Riffs for a completely national independent Morocco. This contest is turning into a tug-of-war between the

economic and military resources of the French imperialists on the one hand and the nationalist enthusiasm and energy, the fighting spirit and military skill of the Riffs led by Abd-el-Krim on the other hand.

The Riffs are flushed with their victory over Spanish imperialism. The Riffs are bent on restoring Morocco to the Moroccans. The French imperialists are still flushed with pride because of their victory over German imperialism. The French imperialists dare not voluntarily yield an inch of ground to the conquering Riffs, lest a sharp entering wedge be driven into their imperialist structure.

In this struggle between the imperialist forces on the one hand and the colonial masses on the other hand we find a classic illustration of the respective roles played by the socialists and the Communists in the international struggle against imperialism, of which the colonial struggles are only a part.

The socialist party of France, after hesitating, wavering, floundering and compromising, has definitely gone over board and baggage to the imperialist camp of Painleve. The interests of the aristocracy, the uppermost strata, of labor are endangered, according to the views of the leaders of the socialist party of France, by the menace to a French military disaster in Morocco.

The Communists, on the other hand, led by such valiant fighters against militarism and imperialism as Doriot are openly resisting French imperialist aggression in Morocco. The Communist Party of France, like the Communist parties of the other countries, are solidly lined up with the colonial people of Morocco, oppressed by their respective national imperialist cliques.

LIKEWISE we may look forward to the British imperialists coming to the rescue of the French and Spanish imperialists, who have already united in their efforts to defeat the conquering Riffs. We may without doubt look to the union of all imperialist forces in this anti-imperialist struggle as well as in all other anti-imperialist struggles. As this Moroccan struggle broadens and becomes more intense we may expect that the participation of the Communist parties of the world under the leadership of the Communist International will simultaneously increase.

Morocco is a great prize for French imperialism. But Morocco may yet turn out to be a veritable graveyard for the hopes of the arrogant French imperialists.

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