

THE NEW WAR IN MOROCCO

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[THE LABOUR MONTHLY is privileged to present to its readers this article on the Moroccan situation, specially written by Jacques Doriot, whose powerful speeches in the French Chamber in defence of the peoples of Morocco against imperialist attacks and exploitation have created a great sensation in France.

Jacques Doriot, who is an engineer by trade, is the most prominent young figure in the French Communist movement. As General Secretary of the French Young Communist League, his persistent anti-militarist propaganda led to his imprisonment. He was still in jail at the time of the General Election in France, in May, 1924 : but his election by a big majority as Communist Deputy for one of the working-class constituencies of Paris secured, after slight delay, his release.]

WAR has broken out again in Morocco with considerable fierceness. Riffs and French are now at grips. The war which Marshal Lyautey has just started will not be as easy as the former ones. It is a modern war. He is no longer faced by Arabs armed with flint-lock muskets against whom he can employ aeroplanes, but by Riffs who possess artillery, machine guns, tanks and even aeroplanes. Moreover they are inspired by the proud memory of the victory which freed them from the Spaniards and they have the moral and financial support of the whole world of Islam. Lyautey has a tough job before him. The chief of the Riff Republic is an adversary to be reckoned with.

The development of events does not surprise us. We have foreseen and denounced it. For several months the whole French Press has been creating a warlike atmosphere. To-day it throws the responsibility for the war on the Riffs.

Let us examine the facts. After his victory over Spain, Abd-el-Krim laid down the general lines of the policy of the Riff Republic. The evacuation of Riff territory and of Spanish Morocco by the

armies of Primo de Rivera ; the right of self-determination for the Riff people ; peace with the neighbouring States, particularly with France. From November to February he repeated to journalists of all countries, French, English and American, his desire to negotiate amicably with France. He wrote to Lyautey, to Muley Youssef, Sultan of Morocco, to assure them of his peaceful intentions. They did not deign to reply. Why? *L'Information*¹ tells us : " According to all the documents which make the actual position of Morocco in international law so complicated (that is to say the Treaties of 1912 which divide Morocco into two spheres of influence : one French and the other Spanish, without consulting the people of Morocco) *Abd-el-Krim has no diplomatic existence.*" With whom can we negotiate ? "

French diplomacy ignores a people which has won its freedom and set up its Republic when this people proposes peace and friendly relations. Lyautey and the imperialist Press which he controls understood this perfectly. To each peaceful proposal of Abd-el-Krim this journalistic rabble replied by warmongering pronouncements. *L'Oeuvre*² and the *Matin*⁴ distinguished themselves in this business. Lyautey himself added unequivocal declarations " on the Riff anarchy, which must be brought to an end."

He did not stop there. The Treaties of 1912 officially separated the valley of the Ouergha from the Riff, that is to say the Riff country, which is rich in minerals, but poor from an agricultural point of view, from its natural granary.

Lyautey recognised the " political and juridical " necessity of starving the Riffs. He commenced the blockade.

For the past year Lyautey has been working to prepare war. The *Petit Parisien* admits it : " Last year the French line had been advanced six miles without a blow being struck, a clever political preparation having prepared the way for the military advance."

Then this year he re-established the blockade by setting against the Riffs, by means of his agent the Derkoui, the tribe of Neni

¹ One of the best-informed political and financial organs of the Paris capitalist Press.

² The italics are ours. — J. D.

The *Manchester Guardian* of France; an ardent supporter of the *Bloc des Gauches*.

⁴ Perhaps the most notorious of the Paris " gutter " Press.

Zeroual, who live in the Ouergha Valley and consequently held up food supplies.

The Riffs have the right to eat. They occupied the Ouergha. It was the moment that Lyautey had waited for to start the war. Had not the *Bloc des Gauches* promised him financial and military support? Had not the Socialists shown by their scandalous abstention that they were ready to excuse all the actions of the Moroccan adventurer? All these facts show clearly *that it is French imperialism which is responsible for the Riff war*. They wish to overthrow the Riff Republic for the profit of the French banking consortium. Slaughter is to start again in Morocco. The war will be long and deadly.

It will not stop as is apparently suggested at the Riff frontier. From now onwards Lyautey means to penetrate into the Riff territory. The most imperialist papers advise him to do so. Our Anglophobes, and they are many, are even casting their eyes on Gibraltar and desire to secure by military successes the revision of the existing international agreements and to make Tangier a French town.

The Riff war, like the former conquest of Morocco, is going to complicate the international situation. Italy, wishing to annex Tunis, is already showing her teeth. England, nervous about Gibraltar, divides her favours between France and the Riffs. Spain, defeated, but still ambitious, will willingly allow the Riffs to be beaten but will protest against the occupation of the Spanish zone by the troops of the *Bloc des Gauches*. This war is not only dangerous in itself, because of the lives it will cost the workers, but still more because of the imperialist bargaining that it brings in its wake and the conflicts that it may provoke between the great imperialist Powers.

Faced with this terrible danger the French working-class must act swiftly and firmly, more solid than ever in support of the Riffs who have been basely provoked to war.

They must force French imperialism to conclude the immediate peace, asked for and desired by the Riffs. They must demand that the Riff Republic be recognised and respected. They must support this young movement of liberation. They must request and enforce the immediate evacuation of Morocco, the grave of the workers' children and of millions of their money.