

## AFRICANS MASSACRED BY BRITISH IMPERIALISTS

Despite the efforts of the British imperialists to suppress the news of the recent revolt of natives in the Southern Province of Nigeria, West Africa, press despatches reveal the horrible way in which an uprising of Negro workers was put down. A bloody massacre of native Africans, including eighteen unarmed women by British troops occurred in Apoko, Asako and Calabar a few weeks ago when the natives refused to pay an increased tax imposed upon them by the Government.

British and French imperialism are the dominant political powers on the African Continent. These two nations control the largest territories including the bulk of the populations.

France holds ~~away~~ over 4,100,200 square miles of territory with a population of about 43,550,000; while Great Britain's share amounts to 3,320,274 square miles, inhabited by 30,597,000.

The policy of administration in these territories vary according to certain objective conditions, chiefly climatic. In those regions favourable for colonisation by white men, the administration is entirely in the hands of the European officials,---Governors and Commissioners, who rule over the blacks with the ruthless despotism of colonial czars.

In sections where the climate makes it unfavourable for whites to settle, the Government tends to assume a different form without in any way releasing from the grips of the imperialists a stronghold on the political and economic life of these spheres of influence.

In such cases, the Government is carried on by foreign administrators. This system is known as the Crown Colony form of government, with a limited amount of autonomy for the native rulers, called Paramount Chiefs, who play the role of lackeys for their imperialist masters. Within recent years a thin strata of black petty-bourgeois landlords have come into being, and to these have been granted a few political and social concessions in order to head-off their nationalistic aspirations. All of these classes combine in oppressing the broad masses of workers and peasants.

Nigeria belongs to that type of colony which can be fittingly described a "model" Crown Colony---a jewel in the British crown.

There the Governmental apparatus is entirely in the hands of a Governor, the official representative of finance-capital, who is assisted by a bureaucracy made up of Europeans and middle-class Africans.

3.  
Economically, the country is rich in natural resources, with a large population, excellent harbors and navigable waterways.

Although not considered a very unhealthy land, especially along the coast line, Nigeria has never attracted large settlements of Europeans. There are only 5,200 whites, mostly soldiers, administrators, traders and missionaries, out of a population of 20 million blacks. The fact that Nigeria has never been thickly settled by whites to a large extent determined the hard policy that has been pursued in the past. This policy differs to a considerable extent from that followed in the East African colonies, such as Kenya, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, as well as Rhodesia and South Africa. Nevertheless, the British imperialists through their direct agents and sections of the native population have always been able to entrench themselves and as effectively exploit the natural resources of the country and enslave its toiling masses in other parts of Africa.

Because of the size of Nigeria, which covers an area of 335,700 square miles---four times the size of Great Britain, with a population greater than that of the combined populations of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, one can fully appreciate the tremendous importance such a possession is to British Imperialism. Therefore, any ferment among the masses is looked upon by the capitalists as a bad omen---a sign that their days of robbing are numbered.

It is in this fight that we must view the conduct of MacDonald's "Labor" Government---the lackeys of British finance-capital, whose representative in Nigeria ordered the troops to shoot the unarmed Negroes.

In this, the third period of world capitalism, the British bourgeoisie tremble at every upward move of the workers. With the ever-increasing fighting mood of the proletariat of the metropolitan countries and the spirit of revolt permeating the colonial and semi-colonial masses, the entire international Social-Democracy, headed by the British fakers MacDonald and Henderson are more and more on the alert to show their capitalist masters that they can suppress colonial revolt as barbarously as a Chamberlain or Baldwin. The same "Labor Government that murdered the Arabs in Palestine to-day turns its machine-guns on black slaves in Nigeria.

The people of Nigeria are largely peasants who resent the idea of working for white men. Therefore in order to expropriate them, the imperialist government has a systematic program of taxation levied upon huts, land-holdings, and crops. In this way it is hoped to be able to place the natives in such an economic position whereby they will be compelled to sell their land in order to escape taxation. When this has been achieved millions of peasants will be turned into a class of landless proletarians who will be forced to go and work on the plantations, factories and mines for trusts which are reaping millions and millions of dollars annually in developing the tin, manganese, coal and agricultural products such as palm-oil, cotton and cocoa.

At present all the mines are in the hands of British syndicates. For instance, the Nigerian Tin Combine, a subsidiary of the all-powerful Anglo-Oriental Mining Corporation, employs thousands of workers for the "magnificent" sum of 18 to 24 cents per day for ten and twelve hours labor. Capital is also flowing rapidly into construction work, such as the building of railroads, ports, street-car systems, electric and gas plants. The colonial governments assume these loans through British banks which control the steel and electrical industries of England. In order to guarantee the payments of interest on these loans the natives are taxed to the fullest extent which increases the burdens of their lives.

The revolt was a protest by the peasants against the nefarious scheme of land robbery, and because of the peculiar African social system which imposes upon the women the financial burdens of family life, the women were among the vanguard in the struggle.

These militant and courageous women were the ones who organised the demonstrations in the villages and aroused the broad masses of people to protest against British Imperialism.

So enthusiastic was the response to the slogan of "Down with the Imperialist Oppressors" that the entire districts of APOBO and CALABAR were in a state of revolt. The local administrator, known as the Resident, immediately ordered troops from the garrison in the Southern Province and instructed them to shoot into the unarmed crowds of native demonstrators. Forty-five were wounded, eighteen women killed by rifle fire, and ten dead of wounds.

As a result of this dastardly deed carried out by the direct representative of MacDonald's Socialist Government, the entire native population of South-Eastern Nigeria is in a state of ferment. Native and white troops commanded by English officers are in entire control of the APOBO and CALABAR districts, which have the appearance of military areas.

The international proletariat, ESPECIALLY THE WORKERS OF GREAT BRITAIN MUST CONTINUE TO EXPOSE THE HANGMEN ROLE OF MACDONALD, WHO NOT ONLY "RAILROAD" INDIAN WORKERS IN MEERUT TO GRADUAL DEATH THROUGH INCARCERATION IN COLONIAL DUNGEONS, BUT OPENLY MASSACRE UNARMED BLACK WORKERS WHO DARED TO PROTEST AGAINST THE MOST DASTARDLY AND HIGH-HANDED FORMS OF IMPERIALIST SUBJUGATION IMPOSED UPON THEM BY BRITISH CAPITALISTS.

GEORGE PADMORE.

\* \*

\*