

# AGAINST COLONIAL OPPRESSION

## The New War in Morocco.

By E. C. (Paris).

The "glorious annals" of the conquest of Morocco by the French imperialists has been enriched by a new and extremely sanguinary battle. A strong body of troops, which was composed of Moroccan rifles and soldiers of the Foreign Legion (forming part of the garrison of the newly conquered position of **Ait Yacub**), proceeded into not yet occupied territory for the purpose of relieving an action undertaken farther to the north, located in the centre of the **Atlas** range on the **Ued el Abid** river. On June 8th this troop was attacked by a strong detachment of the tribe of **Ait Haddidu**, almost all the officers being killed and the unit dispersed. The Moorish riflemen, who were but little inclined to fight against their countrymen, threw away their arms and ammunition. On the French side, nearly 100 soldiers and officers were killed. For several days the position of **Ait Yacub** was besieged by the rebels and could only be held by the reinforcement of the garrison and by recourse to air-planes.

Such a significant occurrence could not but create a great impression throughout France. The Government of the "National Unity" immediately mobilised its apparatus of mendacity and attempted to shift the entire blame onto the responsible officer, who had allegedly acted contrary to his instructions. But the workers are not to be hoodwinked so easily. Both in its press and through the mouth of Comrade **Cachin** in the Chamber, the **Communist Party** pointed out the full responsibility of the Government and the Supreme Command and proved that the battle of **Ait Yacub** was anything but a matter of chance, being, indeed, part of a whole series of military operations which have been long in preparation for the purpose of occupying territory not hitherto subjected.

In Morocco there are, as a matter of fact, very considerable areas which have not yet been subjected by the French imperialists, viz. the **Central Atlas Region** and the region

of **Tafilalet**, both situated on the southern border of the "protectorate". In 1925 and 1926, France, then busily engaged in the Rif war, was obliged to shelve this task, which had long been envisaged. It was only towards the end of 1927 that attention could once more be turned in this direction. After the sanguinary Rif war, however, which had cost the French proletariat and the natives more than 10,000 dead, the imperialists hesitated to initiate another great and unmasked operation of the same kind. Their tactics rather tended in the direction of a complete blockade of such areas as had not yet been subjected, on which all the tried methods of corruption were brought to bear. So as to render more effective this starvation and demoralisation of the enemy, their camps were bombarded by air-planes, and small military operations were undertaken against them. As far as possible, no European soldiers were employed in this connection, the unfortunate Algerians and the Moorish partisans being used as cat's paws. In this way it was hoped to avoid any irritation of public opinion.

However, the unsubjected tribes are determined to defend their independence, knowing only too well what lot awaits them if they bow to foreign rule. They know that immediately after the termination of the Rif war the natives of the area chiefly concerned were deprived of 40,000 hectares of their best ground. They know that the primitive democracy which prevails among them will be replaced by the unrestricted autocracy of a Caid in the service of the imperialists. They know many other things, too, and are therefore determined to fight desperately for their liberty, their ground, and their belongings.

Their resistance, moreover, is strengthened by the fact that they appear to have recognised the necessity of uniting against the invaders. The bourgeois press is right in surmising that the attack of the **Aid Haddidu** tribe on the outpost of **Ait Yacub** is intended to divert attention from the struggle of other tribes against the French offensive in the region of **Ued el Abid**, which is situated at some distance from **Ait Yacub**. Though they have not at their disposal such first-rate war material as the Rif warriors had, they are at any rate fighting in a mountain region every feature of which is intimately known to them.

The war thus commenced by the French imperialists is likely to call for great sacrifices both in money and in lives. The occupation of the regions of **Tafilalet** and of the Central Atlas is considered by all military experts as a very serious and difficult matter.

The French imperialists, however, are determined to carry out their intentions at any price. Nor are they without good reasons for this determination.

In the first place the existence of a yet unsubjected area in the centre of Morocco constitutes a great danger for the French rule. The tribes already subjected pay minute attention to all that passes in the independent regions. The heroic resistance of the valorous **Berbers** has awakened an enthusiastic echo throughout Morocco and constitutes a danger to the imperialist rule in that country. On the other hand, the economic wealth of the **Tafilalet** and central Atlas regions is very considerable, the occurrences of ore being particularly promising. In the region of **Tafilalet** there is hard coal, and in the central Atlas region iron ore. The valley of the **Ued el Abid** contains extensive areas of extreme fertility, the river alone being a potential source of exceptional wealth (for Moroccan circumstances), since its rapids would render possible the artificial irrigation and consequently also the agricultural exploitation of a great area. Besides this, water-power stations might well be erected on this river.

A conquest of the territory not yet subjected to French rule would thus mean the possibility of a really intensive exploitation of the country. The problem, however, is of even farther-reaching significance than this, considering that a construction of the **Trans-Sahara Railway** would be impossible without a previous pacification of the **Tafilalet** region.

The **Trans-Sahara Railway** is a great imperialist enterprise which is intended to join up the French possessions in **West and Equatorial Africa** with **Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis** and thus also with the mother country. It would in the first place render possible an increased exploitation of the "black" colonies. At the same time it would enable France to effect a rapid transport of large numbers of troops in the case of a war or for the purpose of putting down rebellion either of the French workers or of natives in the colonies. Over and above this, it would represent the backbone of any military defensive

system for the African colonies of France. By means of the **Trans-Sahara Railway**, France would be able to move troops and war material from one end of its colonial empire to the other in five or six days instead of the fifteen or twenty days now required by the respective ocean passage, and without having to fear the interference of foreign naval Powers. The **Trans-Sahara Railway** will undoubtedly be a powerful weapon in imperialist warfare. Therefore it may safely be assumed that the subjection of the **Tafilalet** region, through which the **Trans-Sahara Railway** will have to pass, constitutes an essential part of the military plans of the imperialists.

The events in Morocco have given rise to extremely demagogic manoeuvres on the part of the **Socialists and Radicals**. The Socialists "opposed" the military operations, which they suggested should give place to a so-called peaceful penetration. In the Chamber they enthusiastically welcomed **Steeg**, the former Governor of **Morocco**, who is alleged to have employed methods of peaceful penetration and who was a few months ago replaced by **Saint Steeg**'s peaceful penetration had — to judge by the bombardments and battles during his administration — very little in common with pacifism and has led to such fights as that of **Ait Yacub**. In reality the Socialists, like all other bourgeois parties, are faithful and absolute adherents of the colonisation of Morocco; it was but recently that the deputy **Rivière** condemned the Communist motion for the withdrawal of the French troops. The Socialists, who in 1925 sanctioned the credits for the Rif war and thereby incurred the partial responsibility for the death of more than 10,000 soldiers, will no longer be able to deceive the proletariat as to their true intentions.

The **Communist Party** is opposed to all forms of colonisation by the imperialists. As at the time of the Rif war, it again calls upon the workers, peasants, and soldiers both of the mother country and of the colonies to oppose the war now in progress and to fight for the military evacuation of Morocco by the French and for the absolute independence of that country. It is only by an alliance between French and colonial workers and by a fraternisation between the French soldiers and the native peasants that the victory of such principles can be ensured.

## **Persecution of Indian Workers under the MacDonald Government.**

By G. P. (Paris).

The English Government, of which **Ramsay MacDonald** is Premier, the Socialist **Clynes** Home Secretary and, finally, the Socialist **Sidney Webb** Secretary for the Colonies and the Dominions — this government has commenced its existence with a most repulsive act. It has allowed the secretary of the Indian trade-union organisation "**Girni Kamgar**" (Red Flag) to be arrested in **Nagpur**.

This latest victim of British repression in India, **Leslie Hutchison**, is not and never was a Communist. He is a young journalist, who came to India to work on the Indian "**Daily Mail**", but not for long, as, under the impression made by the mighty revolutionary movement and revolted by the regime of terror of the wire-pullers in London and Delhi, he shortly left the "**Daily Mail**" and became editor of the "**New Spark**", the organ of the **Workers' and Peasants' Party**.

With what "crime" is **Hutchinson** actually charged? He was elected by the Indian workers president of the **Red Trade Union**, the so-called "**Girni Kamgar**", which at present embraces about 65,000 members. He is the leader of the big textile workers' strike in **Bombay**, which the reformist union (with scarcely 10,000 members) did its best to sabotage and betray. In spite of threats and persecution of all kinds 90,000 textile workers are still fighting for the reinstatement of comrades penalised by the employers and condemned to starvation.

As is well known, immediately after the victory of the Labour Party the General Council of the trade unions disavowed the workers on strike. The Viceroy, who felt his position thereby strengthened, declared the movement in **Bombay** to be illegal. He had 31 Labour leaders arrested and their trial began a week or two ago in **Meerut**.

The accused in this monstrous trial were arrested in **Bombay** and transported to **Meerut**, where, it was hoped, the law might be violated with impunity. His Majesty's Government declared