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## **MOROCCO - FRANCE'S NORTH AFRICAN** **CRISIS**

After decades of mounting discontent, French North Africa has finally burst into open revolt. In one day of savage attack and counter-attack, some 200 Frenchmen and 650 Arabs lost their lives, and nobody yet knows how far the flames will spread through this explosive corner of France's dwindling empire. Bloodiest episode of all was at the little Moroccan town of Oued Zem with its well-kept French hospital, where thousands of Berber horsemen smashed in to massacre every white man, woman and child they could find. Those who escaped held out for 4 hours until French troops arrived - and when they did arrive, they took no prisoners.

The seeds of the present tragedy were sown two years when France deposed Mohammed Ben Yusef, Sultan of Morocco and spiritual leader of nine million Moroccan Moslems, because he supported their demand for greater national independence. Moroccan nationalists have never accepted his deposition. In exile in Madagascar, he has grown into a national hero.

In Ben Yusef's place the French enthroned the aged Sidi Mohammed Ben Araf, whom Moroccans regarded as a political puppet and a religious usurper. Too late, the French Government realized that concessions must be made. The day before the revolt, they began talks at Aix-les-Bains with Moroccan leaders, including the veteran Grand Visier El Mekri.

French premier Faure, foreign minister Pinay, and defence minister Koenig put the suggestion that the present Sultan should abdicate and that he the Grand Visier should take over the reins of government.

Sultan Ben Araf's unpopularity had already led to two attempts to assassinate him, recalled in these exclusive Pathe shots. First a car broke through a religious procession, and charged at the Sultan's horse, but the killer lost his own life in the attempt.

The Sultan was fortunate to escape, and it was not long before his life was once again in jeopardy. In the second attempt, a bomb was thrown as he was leaving a mosque.

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Bleeding but safe, he was escorted away. But this was only the beginning; on the second anniversary of Ben Yusef's deposition, the storm broke. This time the victim was not one aged Sultan, but hundreds of Arabs and French in a vicious battle which nobody seemed able to stop. Deep-seated bitterness on both sides has flared up into colonial war.

Delay in tackling Morocco's problems has left the field wide open for extremists. Now the friends of France and Islam alike are saying: "A solution must be found - and quickly"