

Behind the Riots in the Gold Coast

BY C. VAN GELDEREN

Eleven people lost their lives when police fired on a peaceful, unarmed demonstration in Accra. Many more were wounded.

A "red plot" to set up a "United Socialist States of Africa" has been unearthed, and on this pretext many of the Labour leaders on the Gold Coast have been arrested.

The conditions under which the people live in this, the richest of Britain's African colonies, have led to strikes and demonstrations which have partially paralysed the life of the colony.

In the leadership of the movement are the ex-Servicemen who joined up in the recent war believing that they were fighting for the "Four Freedoms" of the Atlantic Charter. They have returned to their native land after helping to "liberate" Europe from the Nazis, and Burma, Malaya and India, from the Japanese, to find that there has been no change in their own status. They remain colonial slaves.

One-in-Four Unemployed

In reply to a question in the House of Commons on March 17th, Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary admitted that out of 170,500 men from the West African colonies who served in the Forces during the war, 45,100 were now estimated to be unemployed. But even those lucky ones who found work on their discharge are by no means living in an earthly paradise.

The report on the trade union movement on the Gold Coast presented to the World Trade Union Conference in February, 1945, draws the following grim picture of economic conditions in what is usually described as the most advanced of the African colonies:

1s. 6d. Per Day

"The problem of increase of wages is a pressing one. The average labourer earns 1s. 6d. a day which is 9s. a week as compared with 65s. a week for his British labourer comrade. It is true we are comparing two classes of workmen in different categories, but it is also true that disparity in the ages of the two is enormous and unkind. The popular formula that the standard of living of the African is low and must therefore be paid such ridiculously low wages can no longer be applied. Most of the working class live in the big industrial towns where house rents and the cost of food are very high. An average living-room measuring 10 ft. by 10 ft. costs at least 15s. per month to rent. Into this the worker, his wife and children pack themselves: The room is used as bedroom, dining-room, lounge, and for many other purposes. This leads to overcrowding with consequent bad health and inefficiency at work. Food costs at least 2s. a day: this figure represents the absolute minimum level: it does not take into account extras which are something needed for a change! With medical expenses, children's school fees and clothing, the minimum wage that any labourer should earn in order to have a fairly comfortable living is 3s. a day, which works out at 18s. a week; anything below this is inhuman and a denial of the bare minimum standard of living for the worker."

Since the above statement was made in 1945, the cost of living in the Gold Coast, as everywhere else in the capitalist world, has soared, with no parallel increase in the workers' earnings.

Capitalists Thrive

By contrast, British capital investments in the colony have reaped a rich harvest. The greatest industry in the country is the cultivation of the cocoa bean. Because of lack of scientific cultivation, the industry has fallen into decay. As a result, the cocoa-farmers have become the victims of the thirteen European firms who handle the entire trade in the cocoa bean, (one firm, Cadbury-Fry takes half).

Through intermediaries, and money-lenders, the buyers have succeeded in making the small farmers entirely dependent on them. Over 70 per cent. of the farmers now pledge their crop to the buyers—who before the war fixed the price of the crops. Today all buying is done through the British Government—it is a profitable source of dollars. Recently the price of cocoa was doubled on the world market—as every working class housewife knows from the increased cost of the kiddies' chocolate ration—but this rise has not been passed on to the growers.

The Gold Coast is also rich in minerals, chiefly gold. This industry, too, is highly profitable—for the British investors. In 1939, the 4s. shares of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation, were being quoted at over £2. Dividends have ranged from 257 1/2 per cent. to 95 per cent. in 1936-7. Shareholders in one of the larger diamond companies have got back nine times the value of their original investments since 1924. In 1938, the Hailey Commission reported that the 38,000 African miners were getting £26 10s. a year.

No Representative Government

These are some of the economic facts which provide the background to the current unrest on the Gold Coast. Responsibility for this lies entirely on the shoulders of the British Government, for the inhabitants of the Gold Coast have no representative Government. Its Legislative Council consists of fifteen officials, five nominated Europeans, three representatives of town Natives, six from Whitehall. But the people of the Gold Coast are not looking to Whitehall for salvation. In 1941, the Gold Coast Trade Union Movement was born. It was illegal till that year. Already it has behind it a record of heroic struggles, notably the great strikes of railway workers in 1939 and 1941. Today thousands of Gold Coast workers are enrolled in the unions and it is this growing strength of the Labour Movement which has struck fear into the hearts of the white rulers of the Gold Coast and which has led to the introduction of the present reign of terror there.

The Anti-Trotskyist Campaign in Russian-Occupied Germany

Zurich, January 22rd.

Today's "Weltwoche", well known conservative weekly, features an article signed Thomas Vandenberg on the Communist Party schools in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany. The article obviously written by an eye-witness describes at length the Institute of the Soviet Military Administration located at Konigswusterhausen, near Berlin, where hundreds of Stalinist functionaries, trade union officials, Russian-trained returned prisoners of war, are educated for taking over high ranking responsibilities in the zone's political economic and cultural life.

Students at the institute are completely cut off from the civilian population during the time of their training, and receive many privileges in their food supply and material living conditions.

"America and Trotsky are the red Scars for Konigswusterhausen"—writes this reactionary, certainly not too well-disposed writer towards Trotskyism. "It is against both of them that a much fiercer struggle is waged than against the remnants of fascism and militarism."

Without doubt this "fierce struggle against Trotskyism," declared dead and officially buried

dozens of times by the official Russian authorities, is not without connection with the fact that the average German C.P. functionary cut off from the rest of the world during 10 years of the most thorough putrefaction of the Comintern, is not yet "immunised" against Trotskyism as completely as the average Stalinist apparatus men in other countries.

Or perhaps, intolerable living conditions in the Soviet occupation zone and wholesale looting by the occupation authorities are "favourable conditions" for a development of the Trotskyist disease?—I.P.S.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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from above. Although they are called by the same name there is a vast difference between the two. The Action Committee of the National Front appoints all the officials of the different parties, which is a caricature of democracy.

They have made it clear that the Action Committees will not play the role which the Soviets or Workers' Committees played in the Russian Revolution in 1917. The Russian Bolshevik Government under Lenin was based on the Soviets, which were the most flexible and democratic form of organisation. These had direct representation of the workers and peasants on its bodies based on the localities. By this means Lenin pointed out there was no need for any separate state structure. The workers and peasants would administer the state. Because of the backwardness of Russia and the isolation of the revolution they did not succeed in carrying this out. In a highly cultured and industrialised country like Czechoslovakia, a genuine communist regime could be introduced. The workers and peasants could begin immediately to administer the state themselves, without a special state apparatus which will be utilised for the protection of privilege.

A parliament elected on a constituency basis is far less democratic than the system of direct representation on the basis of committees. The parliamentary form of representation is the most easily bureaucratized and far removed from the people.

The economic basis for a workers' state has been achieved. But for a state to act in the interests of the working class, the expropriation of the capitalists by itself is not enough. Democratic control of the state apparatus is an essential prerequisite for the march towards a communist society. All the great Marxists emphasised this.

Lenin On A Workers' State

Lenin reduced the essence of a workers' state to four fundamental

principles. After the expropriation of the capitalists and the nationalisation of the means of production, there would be:

1. The election of Soviets with the right of recall of all officials.
2. No official to receive a wage higher than that earned by the average worker.
3. The abolition of the standing army and its replacement by the armed people.
4. No permanent bureaucracy. Each in turn would fulfil the functions of the state. When everyone was a bureaucrat, no-one could be a bureaucrat.

"We organise large scale production, starting from what capitalism has already created; we workers ourselves relying on our own experiences as workers, establish a strict, an iron discipline, supported by the state power of the armed workers, shall reduce the role of the state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, moderately paid managers (of course, with technical knowledge of all sorts, types and degrees). This is our proletarian task, with this we can and must begin when carrying through a proletarian revolution. Such a beginning on the basis of large-scale production, of itself leads to a gradual 'withering away' of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of a new order, an order without quotation marks, an order which has nothing to do with wage slavery, an order in which the more and more simplified functions of control and accounting will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit, and will finally die out as special functions of a special stratum of the population."

The backwardness of Russia and the isolation of the revolution rendered this process impossible. But on the basis of the cultural level in Czechoslovakia the advantages of communist methods would be apparent to the whole world. Under real Communist leadership they could be immediately implemented. But this is

not what Stalinism desires. Stalin has stated that what is required is a stronger and stronger state in Russia. Czechoslovakia under Stalinist leadership will develop in the same direction. There will not be a process of the withering away of the state, but a strengthening of the state apparatus and the G.P.U.

All the rights which the workers still possess will be strangled and an uncontrolled bureaucracy will ride roughshod over the masses as in Russia.

...In the long run, the Czech workers will not tolerate a tyrannous officialdom. Experience will teach them that Stalinism is not Communism. They will recognise the need to overthrow the bureaucracy with its police apparatus and establish their own direct control of industry and the state in a workers' democracy as outlined by Karl Marx. This on the model of the Paris Commune, and carried into effect in the regime established by the Russian revolution in 1917.

GERMAN PRISONERS

The Annual Conference of the U.S.D.A.W. passed the following resolution, which was overwhelmingly supported. The resolution was moved by Bro. C. Sisley, delegate from the South Suburban Co-op. Branch (London).

This Annual General Meeting expresses its special solidarity with the German Prisoners of War in this country and the Middle East, and considers that the organised Labour and Trade Union Movement should insist upon the immediate end of their use in a system of slave labour. "Further, that they be freed and given both the right and practical possibility of immediately repatriation to Germany."

Help Our German Comrades!



Send Food

To:—
H. CHASE
256 Harrow Rd.
London - W.2

Orphan German Children Queue For Food

PALESTINE: AGAINST THE STREAM

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servility to imperialism. Thus the Communist Party itself held up all its former exposure of imperialist and Zionist deceptions to ridicule.

Why Have They Gone Bankrupt?

The policy of the Palestine Communist Party lacks any consistency. It reflects both the needs deriving from the class war of the Jewish worker in Palestine and the needs of Soviet foreign policy. The needs of class war, however, require a consistent internationalist policy, the negation of Zionism, its discrimination between Arab and Jew. On the other hand, the need to adjust the party line to the diplomatic manoeuvres of Russia calls for an "elastic" policy, one that lacks backbone. As a result, we find the notorious shilly-shallying and zig-zagging which has harnessed the P.C.P. now to the Zionist wagon. The fifth wheel!

A War Of Defence?

The two camps mobilise the masses under the mask of "self-defence." "We have been attacked, let us defend ourselves!" say the Zionists. "Let us ward off the danger of a Jewish conquest!" declares the Arab High Committee. Where does the truth lie?

War is the continuation of politics by other means. The war led by the Arab feudalists is but the continuation of their reactionary war on the workers and the fellah striving to shake off oppression and exploitation. For the feudal Effendis "salvation of Palestine" means safeguarding their revenues at the expense of the fellahin, maintaining their autocratic rule in town and country, smashing the workers' organisations and international class solidarity.

And The Arab Communist Party?

The Arab Stalinists, the "National Liberation League", did not fare better than their Jewish counterparts. They were in a pretty fix having to justify the Russian support of the Jewish state. The Arab workers could not be expected to accept this line. Not by a long way! They knew the meddling of Stalinist diplomacy for what it was: breaking up the "peaceful workers' unity" and a "peaceful blow" after the partition declaration of Zarakin, the National Liberation League found themselves surrounded by scorn and hostility.

The policy of the Soviet Union has undermined the position of the League among the Arab toilers. Thus, it opened a door to the reactionary chauvinist campaign against the "red danger." At present the National Liberation League stands for peace and it is

busy exposing the provocative role of the British Government. But since it had cried out for "national unity" with the feudal Husseinis, the present war instigators) during the past years, its present attitude fails to convince. But the National Liberation League did convince the Arab workers that the driving force behind its policy is not the interests of the Palestinian proletariat, but that of the Kremlin.

What Is To Be Done?

Each side is "anti-imperialist" to the bone, busy detecting the reaction—in the opposite camp. And imperialism is always seen—helping the other side. For the inveigling policy of imperialism is based upon agents and agencies in both camps. Therefore, we say to the Palestine people in reply to the patriotic war-mongers: make this war between Jews and Arabs which serves the end of imperialism, the common war of both nations against imperialism.

We say to the Jewish and Arab workers: The enemy is in your own camp!

Jewish workers! Get rid of the Zionist provocateurs who tell you to sacrifice yourselves on the altar of the Hebrew state.

Arab workers and Fellah! Get rid of the chauvinist provocateurs who are getting you into a blood-bath for their own benefit and pockets.

Workers of the two peoples, unite in a common front against imperialism and its agents.

The problem causing anguish among all in these days is the problem of security. Jewish workers ask: "How to protect our lives? Should we not support the Hagannah?" And Arab workers and fellahin ask: "Ought we not to join the Najada or Futuwah to defend ourselves against the Zionist attacks?"

A distinction must be made between the practical and the political side of this question. We cannot thwart mobilisation and do not therefore tell workers to refuse to mobilise. But it is our duty to denounce the reactionary character of these chauvinist organisations, even in their own house. The only way to peace between the two peoples of this country is turning the guns at the instigators of murder in both camps!

POLICY OF THE R.C.P.

The Revolutionary Communist Party stands for the establishment of a system of society in which class divisions and the exploitation of man by man have been abolished and the introduction of a communist mode of production and distribution in which people produce according to their ability and receive from society according to their needs. The R.C.P. declares this to be an international task, to be undertaken by the British working class in close collaboration with the workers and exploited masses of all lands, and is united for this purpose on a world scale with revolutionary Marxists of other lands in the organisation of the Fourth International. Towards the attainment of its goal, the R.C.P. strives to win the support of the majority of the British working class for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Workers' Government, on the basis of the following transitional programme:—

1. The nationalisation of the land, all atomic processes, all large financial, insurance, industrial and distributive and transport enterprises without compensation and their organisation on the basis of an overall production plan, with control of production at all stages in the hands of democratically elected committees of workers and technicians.

2. Foreign trade to be concentrated in the hands of the State.

3. Abolition of the national debt with provision for the repayment of small savings.

4. Abolition of business secrets. All company books to be open to inspection by the Trade Unions and Workers' Committees.

5. Luxury hotels and mansions to be requisitioned and all existing housing space, to be controlled and allocated by tenants' committees. An end to luxury building and the establishment of a State-financed national housing plan, drawn up and operated in collaboration with the building trade unions and tenants' committees.

6. Distribution of food, clothes, fuel and other consumer-goods in short supply and the fixing of prices in collaboration with and under the control of committees elected from the co-operatives, distributive trades, factories, housewives and small shopkeepers.

7. A rising scale of wages to meet any increase in the cost of living, to be assessed at regular intervals by workers' and housewives' committees and the trade unions, with all wages based on a guaranteed minimum; a falling scale of hours with no reduction in wages to absorb the unemployed, who must be fully maintained while not working; a maximum week of 40 hours without loss of earnings.

8. Abolition of the Monarchy, the House of Lords and the law of inheritance; the immediate repeal of all strike-breaking and anti-labour laws; and the introduction of full electoral rights for men and women in the armed forces.

9. Dissolution of the standing army and its substitution by a workers' militia; abolition of conscription and military law; clear out the reactionary officer caste; for the election of officers from the ranks. The establishment of military schools by the trade unions at the expense of the State for the training of worker-officers.

10. Withdrawal of police protection from fascist meetings; illegalisation of anti-semitism and the propagation of race hatred of any description. For direct workers' action through the formation of defence guards based on a united front of all working class organisations to combat fascist provocation and defend workers' organisations, premises, and meetings from fascist attacks.

11. Immediate freedom for the colonial peoples to choose their own form of Government and the immediate withdrawal of British troops from all colonial territories.

12. Unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against all imperialist powers; for the overthrow of the privileged Stalinist bureaucracy and the re-introduction of workers' democracy in Russia.

13. An end to secret diplomacy; a peace without annexations or reparations based upon the self-determination of nations; the unconditional withdrawal of British troops together with all occupation forces from foreign soil.

14. Unity with the workers and exploited masses of all lands in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a United Socialist States of Europe and for world socialism.

for national sentiment. It weakens the working class and strengthens imperialism in both camps.

Instead of the abstract "anti-imperialist" phrases of the social patriots which cover up their servility to imperialism, we are showing a practical way to fight against the foreign oppressor. Unmasking its local agents, undermining their influence; so that the Arab worker and fellah will understand that the military campaign against the Jews helps to bring about partition and helps only the feudalists and imperialists, while it is fought on his back and paid for by his blood; so that the Jewish worker recognises at last the illusion of Zionism and understands that he will not be free and safe as long as he has not done away with national discrimination, isolationism and imperialist loyalty!

We have to keep up contact between the workers of both peoples at whatever place of work where this can still be done, in order to prevent provocative acts and to safeguard the lives of workers at work and on the roads. Let us form revolutionary cadres. In this burning hell of chauvinism, we have to hold up the banner of international brotherhood.

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Read:
The Rise and Fall of the Comintern
by K. TILAK of India
6/-

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