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The Case For
Gold Coast
Independence

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CEYLON IN REVOLT

By M. BANDA

NATIONWIDE revolt is brewing in Ceylon, and the cause is basically economic.

Its economy is highly sensitive to foreign trade and rests on a very tenuous foundation—tea, rubber and coconut. The aggregate exports of these three industries constitute approximately 90 per cent. of the total exports of Ceylon and account for about 40-50 per cent. of the national income. Moreover, 40 per cent. of the Rubber Estates (in terms of acreage) and 80 per cent. of the tea estates are owned by Europeans, mostly British.

Thus most of the profits derived from the tea and rubber industry are not used to develop the national economy but are instead siphoned off into the City of London.

In 1950 the amount paid out in the form of interest, profit and dividend to European companies was Rs. 72 million (approximately £5 million). The average wage of an estate worker, with cost-of-living allowance included, is approximately 3s. daily!

TEMPORARY PROSPERITY

In 1948, Ceylon like the rest of the capitalist world, was affected by the recession in the U.S.A. The rubber industry was on the verge of collapse. Then came devaluation, re-armament, stock-piling and finally the Korean war. These combined factors gave the tea and rubber industries a new lease of life.

In 1950 the U.S. took 50 per cent. of her rubber exports. As a result, Ceylon became one of the principal dollar earners of the Commonwealth.

Ceylon's prosperity, however, was temporary and superficial. The Socialist opposition warned the Government of it.

Mounting inflationary pressure and the increasing supply difficulties caused by Western re-armament soon revealed the inherent weakness of Ceylon's economic structure. Once more tea and rubber prices began to slump while import prices continued to rise—a trend which was reflected by an adverse balance of trade and an enormous budget deficit.

In April, 1953, the Government—like a drunkard searching his wallet on the morning after a spree

—suddenly found itself confronting a financial crisis of the first magnitude—and this after five years of "independence"!

There was only Rs. 150 million available for Government expenses! According to the most liberal estimates, this sum would last only five months.

CAPITALIST SOLUTIONS

The United National Party (the governing Tory Party or the local foreman of British Imperialist interests) with despicable but characteristic callousness, decided to place the major burden of the crisis on the backs of the already impoverished people.

It did this by slashing the social services, cutting the rice ration, increasing the price of basic foodstuffs, imposing a 20

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Unemployed Ceylon Plantation Workers. When they lose their jobs—they lose their homes.



3 Million Workers Demand More Wages N. Dinning on Engineers' Conference

THREE million organised engineering workers have submitted a claim for a 15 per cent. wage increase.

Speaking at the recent conference of the Engineering Confederation in support of this claim, Mr. J. Mathews, of the General and Municipal Workers, referred to the "reactionary antics of the Tory Government" and then made this significant comment:

"Unless it (the Tory Government) is very careful, something like what is happening in France could happen here."

The "News Chronicle" describes Mr. Mathews quite correctly as

"the most moderate man in the Conference"!

The resolution for the full claim was carried unanimously. The rank and file must do something about more "bite", by ensuring the implementation of Jack Tanner's statement: "... the 38 Unions in the Confederation (now 39) will organise a giant self-run publicity campaign to convince the electorate that our claim is a justifiable one".

Also unanimously carried were resolutions on **Redundancy, Over-time, Guaranteed Week, 40-hour Week, and Full Employment.**

On the latter, the "Manchester Guardian" comments that the President's statement that "they would take the earliest opportunity of making this resolution work" was made "somewhat drily". Yet this remark cannot be separated from the notable political realism throughout the proceedings.

This same realism drew from the President the remark that "Challenge to Britain" falls seriously short of the Confederation's 'Plan for Engineering'".

The proposals of the Labour Party's N.E.C. merely tinker with a few sections of the industry, in a way that brings economic planning no nearer. The Confederation's "Plan" advocates **public ownership of Aircraft Production, Builders Castings, Heavy Electrical Equipment, Wagon Manufacture, Machine Tools, Marine Engineering, Heavy Motor Vehicles and Textile Machinery.** (A table of comparison can be seen in the "Outlook", July 10, 1953).

These differences have inspired the Press, eager to see a split between the Trade Unions and the Labour Party, to discover a divergence on Nationalisation policies between the Confederation unions and the Party. Nothing could be further from the truth.

"Challenge to Britain" is the view not of the Party, but of the N.E.C. The Party has yet to decide.

In moving the implementation of the "Plan", J. Mortimer (A.E. & S. Draughtsmen) "re-affirmed the necessity for the extension of public ownership", because he was "... concerned with the maintenance of living standards". He said: "the main test before the Confederation was to make sure that the rank and file, as well as the leaders, understood the need for nationalisation. If that could be done, an extension of public ownership was certain."

Bro. Mortimer need have no qualms about the rank and file. Thirty-four resolutions on the Labour Party agenda are for the extension of nationalisation. Nine of these are specifically for the "Plan for Engineering". My own party, Tottenham, has submitted the "Plan" as an amendment to "Challenge to Britain".

The Confederation was unanimously "for" the "Plan", but G. I.



Brinham (A.S.W.) reserved the right to adopt another attitude at the T.U.C. and the Labour Party Conference. Our qualms arise here.

G. I. Brinham is on the N.E.C. which produced the timid "Challenge to Britain". There are other Trade Union leaders with similar views, whose organisations are part of the Confederation.

The Constituency parties are clamouring to support the "Plan for Engineering". Its fate rests with the Confederation unions themselves. They can carry their "Plan" through Conference and, at one blow, destroy the Constituency parties' present prejudice against the block vote.

Jack Stanley's (C.E.U.) contribution at the Confederation's Conference seems particularly apt: "Belief in state ownership and control of industry should embody the willingness to fight for it."

If all members of the Confederation fight—and really fight—for the "Plan for Engineering" its adoption is certain.

We Must Aid French Strikers

IT is clear, even from the garbled reports in the capitalist press, that the French workers are in a mood for decisive action. Five million railwaymen, postmen, builders, civil servants, engineers, printers and miners have defied millionaire Laniel's ultimatum to use troops on a large scale unless the strikers returned to work today (Tuesday).

When Laniel says that the strike is a strike against the Government he is speaking the simple truth. The "Daily Worker" reports the Secretary of the Paris Railwaymen as saying: "I don't think there is a single French worker in whatever union who doesn't want to get rid of this Government." "And", added a railwayman member of the Socialist Union, "we're going to get rid of it"—and he emphasised his point with a tremendous thump of his fist on the table.

The slogan of a joint Socialist-Communist Government would, therefore, receive tremendous

support from the strikers and give a real perspective to the strike. Such a Government, coming to power by meeting and defeating the challenge of Laniel's discredited collection of big businessmen and neo-fascist politicians, would change all of France's domestic and foreign policies—and

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thus transform the entire international situation.

That is why this great French strike has such international significance. France is on the edge of a revolutionary struggle which can inspire all of Europe's workers to take similar action against their own reactionary governments—the Italians and the Germans especially.

All the plans for war in Europe can thus be disrupted by decisive workers' action of this kind. It is a great perspective.

However, the leaders of the French Socialist Unions are little

different from the leaders of our own trade unions. They, no more than J. H. Thomas and Co. in 1926, will relish a showdown struggle for power. On the other hand, the Communist trade union leaders, if they lead a decisive struggle for a revolutionary change of government, are bound to clash with the present diplomacy of Russia which is very clearly not in favour of a violent disruption of the present "status quo".

But—and this is where the British workers can play a decisive rôle—sufficient international support to the French workers can encourage the strikers to a point where it will be extremely difficult for their leaders to call it off.

Internationalism—so long absent from the world situation—is now beginning to emerge as a new and, for the capitalists, an alarming feature in politics. But internationalism is a very concrete thing.

It is a matter of money, of support, of a refusal to scab on one's fellow workers. Above all, it is a recognition of the fact that the interests of the working class

of any country are above the interests of the so-called "nation".

The T.U.C. wasted no time in declaring its support for the strikers in East Germany, but they have so far remained silent on this magnificent struggle in France.

It was right to send aid to our fellow workers in East Germany fighting—not for capitalism—but for democratic socialism. All the more so it is necessary to support the French workers fighting reactionary French capitalism.

We therefore call upon all our readers to fight for the success of the French Strike. Demand in your trade union branches that the T.U.C.—as well as individual trade unions—send substantial sums of money to help the strikers.

The leaders of the capitalist world have signed a secret 16 nation agreement to make war on China. Let us fight now for an agreement among Europe's workers to aid one another in every possible way in the fight for decent living conditions and socialist governments. It is the workers' answer to capitalist secret diplomacy.

Profiteering In Drugs

Dr. J. Martin Raynor

THE Ministry of Health has issued a circular and pamphlet to General Practitioners and Hospitals, listing 600 proprietary drugs which were not to be prescribed under the National Health Service.

The Committee headed by Sir Henry Cohen, after many months of intense research, discovered that these drugs had no better therapeutic value than the drugs listed in the National Health Form U.L.A.E.

Many of these proprietary drugs were exorbitant in price and after many months of pressure by the Labour Members in Parliament, a Committee was formed by the Ministry of Health many months ago to carry out this work. When the large combines of drug firms discovered this circular had gone out, their representatives swooped down on the General Practitioners and Hospitals, carrying with them a new price list of all drugs made and supplied by their individual firms. The new price list showed how great the reductions on drugs had come down over night.

Obviously, the colossal profits made by these firms under the National Health Scheme showed the percentage of profit being outrageous, since these firms are still making profit with the prices

slashed. Some form of Government enquiry should be instituted immediately.

STOP THE SHILLING CHARGE

The shilling charge on prescriptions should be abolished immediately. The cost of living is on the increase but wages are being maintained at a low level, causing severe hardship among working people with families who have to pay a shilling on each prescription.

Obviously, each shilling is a great sacrifice to families when it could be spent in meeting the increased cost of living. Furthermore, this charge of prescriptions has stopped many people from seeking medical attention who may need it, and also prevented some working class families from having their prescriptions dispensed, not having the available shilling at hand.

Fifty per cent. of illnesses today are indirectly caused by the hardships experienced by working class families in meeting the daily cost of livelihood.

If people had better housing and were able to buy the food necessary for their health, **doctor's surgeries would be greatly reduced and more time spent on medical cases which needed true medical attention.**

