



approach in state industries was the same as the topdown system in the state and the CPP.

World Economic Chains

Also, independent national capitalist development in a world dominated by international capitalism was unlikely. To fund the new system, the CPP-led state relied on money from exports, especially cocoa. Cocoa prices boomed in the 1950s and early 1960s. The money went to the state through “marketing boards.” This meant farmers sold to state boards at low prices, which then sold the goods overseas at much higher prices, making big profits.

But the price of goods like cocoa started to fall in the early 1960s, and the state lost money. It then borrowed heavily, going into massive debt.

Attacking the People

The new system did not put power in the hands of ordinary people. The CPP-centred new elite in the state controlled it, decided priorities and targets. The role of the working class and peasantry was to provide labour, funds and raw materials. The radical language and even the genuine socialist views of some CPP leaders (like Nkrumah who was himself generally free of corruption, unlike his followers), did not change this.

The new elite exploited the people, and the new state relied on the repression and control of the working class.

The 1958 Industrial Relations Act centralised unions into a single CPP-run body, with the only negotiating and legal rights. Urban workers were increasingly called a selfish elite (“labour aristocracy”), sabotaging the nation with wage demands. Almost no legal strikes were arranged by the CPP-run TUC. In many sectors all strikes were banned.

In 1961, a huge strike spread from Sekondi-Takoradi, including the railways, against rising taxes and a “forced savings” scheme. It drew in the unemployed and the small traders in the markets: the “common folk” against the CPP elite. After the strike, Nkrumah arrested leaders and politicians involved.

End of an Illusion

Many people had great hopes in Ghana and Nkrumah. The victory over Britain was inspiring and the “black star” of Ghana seemed to show the light to a new, prosperous Africa, free of the legacy of colonialism, racism and strife.

