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TWOPENCE.

400 WELSH MINERS STRIKE

Horner Supports Coalowners

DURING OCTOBER, THE GELICEIDRIM COLLIERY IN WEST WALES, AT WHICH SOME 400 MINERS ARE EMPLOYED, WAS RENDERED IDLE FOR 17 DAYS BECAUSE OF THE REFUSAL OF THE MANAGEMENT TO CARRY OUT THE MEN'S DEMAND FOR AN ELEMENTARY SAFETY TEST.

On October 2nd, the men working underground had very good reason to suspect that there existed the possibility of a sudden and catastrophic inrush. Such a thing had occurred at this colliery previously in 1922, and again in 1929. On each occasion a terrible inrush of water took place in the Old Slant in 1922—the second in the New Slant in 1929.

During October the Gelliceidrim colliery in West Wales, at which some 400 miners are employed, was rendered idle for 17 days because of the refusal of the management to carry out the men's demand for an elementary safety test.

On October 2nd, the men working underground had very good reason to suspect that there existed the possibility of a sudden and catastrophic inrush of water. Such a thing had occurred at this colliery previously in 1922 and again in 1929. On each occasion a terrible disaster was only narrowly averted. The first inrush of water took place in the Old Slant in 1922—the second in the New Slant in 1929.

On October 2nd, the miners were working the Lower and Middle Vein seams which are under the Old Slant workings... They had every reason to believe that water had collected in the old Herbert Morris Bully which was driven from the Big Vein in the Old Slant directly above where work is now going on. The miners legitimate fears could only have been dispelled by real evidence that the Bully had reached the Lower Vein workings of the New Slant.

When approached for such evidence, the management produced maps to show that there was a sufficient barrier of coal to prevent any inrush of water. Unfortunately for the management, however, these maps had been produced prior to the inrushes of 1922 and 1929... The miners demanded that a boring test be conducted—10 yards forward and 10 yards up. This the management refused to do and, since their very lives depended on this test, the men refused to work. But every morning they returned to work ready to start work as soon as this elementary safety test had been carried out.

One of the five Inspectors of Mines who visited the colliery during the

"stoppage", Mr. Prescott, is said to have stated that "maps have been proved wrong in the past, and I can remember that 60 lives were lost because of inaccurate maps." Yet despite this statement—expert proof of the correctness of the miners' action—every one of the five Inspectors supported the management's refusal to carry out the boring test!

On the 18th day of the "stoppage" the management finally consented to bore, and, the test having been successfully carried out, the men immediately returned to work. By their stupid and criminal refusal to meet the miners' demands for safety, the Gelliceidrim management have been directly responsible for a loss in coal production of nearly 4,000 tons!

The only reason for this deliberate sabotage on the part of the management was their desire to avoid paying the guaranteed wage to the 400 miners involved. Had they agreed at once to bore, it would have been an admission by them that the stoppage had occurred through no fault of the miners and that, consequently, the men were fully entitled to their guaranteed wage during the period of the pit being idle. This is no mere guesswork on our part for the Manager of the Colliery has been brazen enough to admit it. In a statement made to a very reliable Gelliceidrim Lodge committeeman he said: "If we bore, you and the rest will claim the guaranteed wage." In other words, the Company was quite ready to risk the lives of 400 miners rather than pay the guaranteed wage!

The Gelliceidrim miners have a clear claim to the Guaranteed Wage for the 17 days they were idle—but the President of the S.W.M.F., Mr. Arthur Horner, doesn't think so! On October 7th he was asked point blank by Mr. E. Phillips, the Gelliceidrim Lodge Secretary, whether the guaranteed wage was safe. Horner replied:

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T. U. C. HELPS GOEBBELS

Labour and Stalinist Leaders Betray German Working Class

BY TED GRANT

THE T.U.C. HAS LINED UP WITH THE VANSITTARTISTS IN THE MOST COWARDLY WAY IMAGINABLE. THE KEPT CAPITALIST PRESS FROM THE "DAILY MAIL" TO THE RENEGADE "DAILY WORKER" HAS HAILED WITH GLEE THE ATTITUDE ADOPTED BY THE T.U.C. AGAINST THE GERMAN PEOPLE.

One headline, taken at random, reads: "ALL GERMANS GUILTY SAYS T.U.C."

"Daily Sketch."

On a card vote of 5,056,000 to 1,350,000 the position of the T.U.C. bureaucrats was carried. Anyone who has the slightest contact with the miners, the railwaymen, and other workers knows that this resolution is a travesty of the feelings of the organised working class and even of the more backward sections who are unorganised. But the T.U.C. claims to speak in their name although the workers in the unions were not consulted on this matter.

CITRINE IN THE VAN OF THE PACK

In the van of the pack, in full cry against the German workers was Sir Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the T.U.C. He said:

"There is no dispute about the punishment of war criminals. The point of controversy arises over the responsibility of the German people as a whole..."

"It was utterly impossible," Sir Walter argued, "on the one hand to affirm the principle of restoration unless side by side with affirmation they realised that restoration must be done in the main by the German people."

Assuming they accepted that reasoning, how in the name of heaven could they affirm that the German people were innocent?

"They would be punishing the innocent by compelling them—the people who, they thought ought to be absolved from blame—to make good the devastation and make some form of reparation."

"If the principle is laid down that it is just and equitable that Germany should make good the devastation," Sir Walter declared, "it follows that the restoration must be done by the German people."

"What other doctrines can you evolve? I affirm that you will not know for years after the war pre-

cisely what measure of responsibility will devolve on any particular section of Germany.

"When the Allies march into Berlin we shall find so many anti-Nazis that it will be very difficult to know who has been carrying on the war in Germany."

"That is a contingency we shall have to prepare for."

"... There is far too much mushy sentimentality about this question."

"Nobody has wanted to see signs of revolt in Germany more than I have. The T.U.C. has appealed to the German Labour Movement."

"While I would be the last to deny the bravery of individual German trade unionists, I cannot escape the conclusion that there has been no large scale organised resistance in Germany since the advent of Hitlerism."

"It is not pleasant for me to have to say that."

The hypocrisy and mendacity of Citrine is positively repulsive. But it is likely that without the assistance of the Russian Trade Union bureaucrats who were "fraternal" delegates from the Kremlin, the T.U.C. bureaucrats would not have got away with it so easily. They used the prestige of the heroic Red Army and of the Russian Revolution for the filthy purposes of the imperialists.

KUZNETSOV SETS THE TONE

The speech of Kuznetsov set the tone of the whole proceedings. It was the most vicious and chauvinistic of all. Betraying all the teachings of Lenin, he gave the most racialistic speech of the whole Conference. Deliberately and consciously, he identified the German workers and the German masses with their Nazi overlords; the crimes of Hitler's S.S. he pretends were the crimes of the ordinary German workers and soldiers. It was in this manner that he attempted to confuse the issue. From these racialists there were no traces of the elementary

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HYPOCRITE



SIR WALTER CITRINE

CITRINE 1944 T.U.C.: "Nobody has wanted to see signs of revolt in Germany more than I."

CITRINE 1933 T.U.C.: "... A general strike after the atmosphere created by the Reichstag fire and with 6 million people unemployed, was an act fraught with the gravest consequences which might be described as nothing less than civil war."

Thus Citrine justified the betrayal of the German Labour and trade union leaders in allowing Hitler to take power and consolidate his rule without any organised resistance or opposition.

TYNE DOCKERS' LOCK-OUT

There have been startling developments in the Tyneside dockers' strike since the last issue of "Socialist Appeal" went to press. Owing to lack of information and the fact that the men had to rely to a large extent on the capitalist press for news of the developments in connection with the dispute; numerous malicious and fountless rumours found their way amongst the men and disoriented them.

Torn between their loyalty to their Trade Union and the resolution that had been passed not to join the new branch of the Union, sections of the men began to drift into the Union offices to sign the Union's ultimatum sheet.

By the 12th October it was obvious that the only alternative left to the remainder of the dockers was to do the same, and to continue their struggle in the new Branch.

The Union's action in closing down the Branch had had the desired effect of temporarily decapitating the militant leadership and disorienting the rank and file.

On Sunday, 15th October, the inaugural meeting of the new branch was held, and the dockers demonstrated their wholehearted support of their old militant leadership by re-electing Bros. Pearson and Spencer to their original positions of Chairman and Secretary of the Branch by unanimous acclaim. It was also decided at this meeting to resume work the following day on the old basis. Lists

BY HEATON LEE

having given the meeting to understand that he had received the assurance of the employers that the 22 men whose cards were held by the employers would not be victimised. By the old basis was meant the conditions that prevailed before the signing of the Top Hatch Agreement, i.e. hatches of the smaller vessels would be removed by the dockers at an inclusive piece-work rate, while those of the bigger vessels would be handled by riggers and lumpers. The 6 o'clock news that evening reported that the Tyneside dockers strike had ended. Next morning the dockers handed in their Port Registration Cards and Unemployment Books at the Control Point but to their amazement they were not signed on as being available for work. Their employers, the Dock Labour Corporation Ltd. (Bevin's joint collaborationist board) had instituted a lock-out!

Although the local capitalist press has always done its utmost to con-

demn and vilify strikers who were accused of being saboteurs and of "stabbing the boys in the back", etc., etc., no attack was made on the bosses for this, the first lock-out of the war. Rather, they made every attempt to cover up the bosses' culpability and satisfied themselves by merely reporting that:

"The dockers who had been on strike for three weeks expressed their willingness to re-start yesterday, further information from various sources is, however, being awaited by the National Dock Labour Corporation, employer of the men." ("Evening Chronicle" 17/10/44.)

They make no mention of the fact that the men handed in their cards on the Monday and that the bosses had refused to give them work, although soldiers had been put to work on a ship which docked that very day. There appears to be a conspiracy between the bosses and Union officials who constitute the "Board", and the Government authorities. The lock-out is still in operation. The Control Point is locked and no staff are on duty, and although the men are available each morning for work they are not being booked on and are not receiving the lying-on time to which they are entitled. For the last ten days there has been a conspiracy of silence in the capitalist press and official T.U. circles about the lock-out.

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9 MINERS FINED

BY JOHN LAWRENCE

Powell Duffryn, the huge coal monopoly of South Wales has succeeded—this time with the able assistance of the capitalist court—in striking yet another dirty blow at the miners unfortunate enough to be in their employ.

On October 19th, in the Police Court of the little Welsh mining town of Abercynon, nine colliers from the Penrhylceiber Colliery were convicted for having "failed to work with due and proper diligence" and each was therefore ordered to pay damages to Powell Duffryn for "breach of contract." The actual amount of the damages is to be announced in court at a later date.

In announcing this decision the Abercynon Stipendiary, Mr. Joshua Davies, K.C., stated that the conviction was based on two factors—"the evidence of the prosecution" and "the admissions of the men themselves." From this statement—and it was printed without comment in the press which reported the case!—one would naturally conclude that the accused had actually admitted the charge of "canny". Whereas, in fact, the admissions consisted of flat denials of the charge—each convicted miner staunchly maintaining that any fall in output was due entirely to the disgraceful conditions under which they were compelled to labour! The real position is, therefore, that the learned Stipendiary arrived at his decision on the basis of one solitary factor—"the evidence of the prosecution". What majestic impartiality!

According to Barklam—Powell Duffryn's lawyer servant—the prosecution for "canny" had been instigated because production at the Penrhylceiber Colliery had steadily declined from 1,000 tons a day in November 1942, to 500 tons a day in August 1944. The Company maintained that a "reasonable" output per man per shift was 7 tons. As the accused had only averaged 2½ to 3 tons this was sufficient proof, in the opinion of the management, that a "conspiracy to go-slow" existed in the colliery. In proof of their claim that 7 tons was a "reasonable output" Barklam produced in court only one piece of evidence which was in the slightest degree substantiated—namely, the so-called "tests" conducted by two of the Company's firemen. These two gentlemen, it was claimed, had produced, in one shift working in the places of the accused miners, 15 tons of coal between them.

Now even if this test was quite honest and genuine, the output of the firemen cannot be taken as "reasonable" for the very simple reason that they worked only one shift. They could not possibly have maintained this output, day in and day out, over a period of years, as apparently the accused are now expected to do. However, far from the "test" being genuine, it was in fact, a downright fraud—a piece of contemptible and deliberate trickery!

Even if we couldn't prove this statement—and we certainly can!—the fact that the test was conducted in complete secrecy would at once make it immediately suspect! No miner, no Union official, no-one in fact, except the management, two master-hauliers, and the two firemen concerned, knew that any such test was being taken. Why this conspiratorial secrecy if the test was perfectly honest and genuine?

The convicted colliers claimed, as we have stated, that the reason for the comparatively low output was the disgraceful conditions of the roads in this particular pit. Each man from his own experience—and some of them had 10-15 years at the coal face!—ably demonstrated this in court. They showed how smaller trams than those normally used in this pit had to be introduced on these particular roads because of the very low and dangerous roof; how the abnormal "squeeze" resulted in tremend-

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NARAIN ON TRIAL FOR TREASON

Defending Counsel Arrested in Court

BY M. NAIDU

JAI PRAKASH NARAIN, THE SECRETARY OF THE INDIAN CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY IS TO BE TRIED FOR TREASON, AND ATTEMPTING TO OVERTHROW BY VIOLENCE "THE GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY LAW."

THE LAW BY WHICH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS ESTABLISHED WAS THE GANGSTER LAW OF CONQUEST.

Narain was arrested along with the other Indian National leaders on the 7th August 1942, following the Congress Resolution on the 8th demanding an end to British rule in India. These provocative arrests were immediately replied to by strikes and demonstrations all over the country.

The British Government thereupon instituted a monstrous regime of repression. The following measures were adopted:

1. Strikes and demonstrations were broken up by the use of tear gas and whipping.
2. Orders were issued to shoot on demonstrators.
3. Aerial bombing was resorted to, and by military occupation, villages were completely destroyed, as in the case of Chinner.
4. Collective fines were imposed on villages.
5. Hostages were shot as in the case of the Kaypur peasant leaders.

Jai Prakash Narain escaped from prison, and led the movement driven underground by the brutal repressive measures. After a few weeks a letter from him was circulated, drawing the lessons of the struggle. (This is not the place to analyse the theoretical and tactical mistakes made by the Congress Socialist Party). He was recaptured in 1943. It is believed that his recapture was due to a betrayal by the Indian Stalinists.

When he was brought before the Lahore High Court to be remanded in custody, Pardi-Wallah, a barrister from Bombay travelled to Lahore to defend him. The barrister was arrested in the Court and deported to an unknown destination.

Narain himself had been remanded in custody, and after over a year of

imprisonment without trial, he is now being brought up for trial.

On the 2nd November, 1943, a question was asked in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, and the Government replied that the whereabouts of Narain will not be revealed.

On the 9th November 1943, Pundit B. R. Surma moved an adjournment motion in the Punjab Legislative Assembly to discuss the alleged inhuman treatment of Narain in Lahore Fort by the Punjab C.I.D. The Government did not deny the allegations, but the motion was disallowed. On the same day several similar motions were moved regarding other political prisoners and all of them were disallowed.

On the 13th November 1943, G. V. Deshmak, a Nationalist Member of the Central Legislative Assembly moved an adjournment motion to discuss the arrest of Narain's lawyer in Lahore and his deportation to an unknown destination. The motion was again disallowed.

On the same day Deshmak moved another adjournment motion to discuss alleged inhuman treatment of Narain while under custody. The specific charges were that he was made to sit on an ice box; that he was given a chair with no back and thus made to keep awake day and night; and that such meagre food was allowed that he was verging on starvation. Once again the motion was disallowed but the allegations were not denied.

Narain's case is symptomatic of thousands of others who are in the prisons in India. Their "crime" was that they demanded independence for India. In enforcing that demand, against the armed resistance of the British imperialists, if the masses of India resorted to violence—that violence is justifiable. The criminals, in the eyes of the workers, are the imperialists who strangle India by violence and repression.

An immediate demand should be raised in all working class organisations, trade unions and trades councils, for an independent inquiry into the inhuman treatment of political prisoners in India.

A demand must be raised to demand an inquiry into the treatment of Jai Prakash Narain and his barrister!