



FROM 3 WELSH MINERS

We are members of a lodge whose prestige of militancy is second to none in the South Wales coalfield. Working in one of the pits of the Amalgamated Anthracite Company we have contracted during the course of employment the dreaded disease of Pneumoconiosis. But the pain of this deadly scourge is nothing compared to the pain we feel when we see how the collaboration policy of the S.W.M.F. leadership has shattered the faith of the miners in their organisation.

WAGES

At the end of 1943, the Executive demanded a National Minimum Wage of £6 for underground workers, and £5 10. 0 for surface workers. What we actually got was the Porter Award. £5 (less 1/6d. for domestic coal) for underground workers, and £4 10. 0 (less 1/6d.) for surface workers.

The publication of the Award was followed by a spontaneous rising of 100,000 South Wales miners, who went on strike without the support of and against their official leadership. Because of this stoppage—and only because of this—the piece-workers received a substantial rise in wages. But, as in the previous agreements (like the Greene Award) the owners did not pay a nickel. All the money came from the coal charges fund.

Mr. W. Paynter, an official of the SWMF has stated in a letter to the Western Mail that "two thirds of South Wales miners have only received 10d. a week increase since the Greene Award". We do not know just how true this is, but at any rate in the group of three pits which comprises our lodge, 400 to 500 of our 1,700 members have to exist on the minimum of £4. 10. 0 less deductions—a weekly wage of £4. 4. 0! Surely, with the coal-owners' profits soaring, these men at least deserve their original demand of £5. 10. 0—even if, for once, the coal-owners have to pay it from their own pockets!

Non-piece workers in particular have a very real grievance today. They say terrible and violent things about the "leadership", who have the nerve to talk about mining prosperity in relation to wages! Complete non-confidence in the leadership exists—especially among the surface workers—and it is not only in our area that this dissatisfaction prevails. So much for the wages question. Now let us look at the problem of production.

PRODUCTION

The bureaucratic leadership of the SWMF howls like Oliver Twist for—MORE COAL. But how does this square with our experiences actually working underground? With the change in the military situation the miners have been subjected to vigorous attacks from the coalowners. Provocation and intimidation is now freely practised. In the opinion of a lot of miners, the object of these tactics is to demonstrate the impossibility of the miners' demand for the Nationalisation of the Mining Industry. Every hitch in production is met by the management with the attitude of "I blame the workers". On the slightest pretext men are reported to the Regional Investigation Officer for impeding production. Our Pit Production Committee has sent resolutions to the Chief Fuel Officer asking that action be taken against this managerial attitude—but nothing whatever has been done. Here is a typical example.

In one pit in West Wales, the Guaranteed Weekly Wage was withheld for two weeks. Since the introduction of the guaranteed wage, it has been the task of the deputies to book every day the amount of time the colliers have been idle through no fault of their own. At the pit in question, they refused to do this because, they said, "the colliers were unwell to them in disputing their weekly guaranteed wage assessment!" The pit lost one whole shift—that is, 500 tons—because of this entirely avoidable dispute. But the workers know very well who is responsible. The dispute was eventually settled with a complete capitulation on the part of the management who admitted they had been in error. But no action was taken against them for their deliberate impeding of coal production. Yet miners are prosecuted every day for absenteeism etc., which is supposed to hold up production.

This incident shows that the present "dual" control in the mines is a farce. The coal-owners deliberately impede production in order to discredit the miners. No action is taken against them by the Ministry of Fuel and Power. As for the Pit Production Committees, the power of the workers representatives is absolutely nil.

To achieve a real harmony in the pits and prosperity for the miners, it is necessary to overthrow the present system of private ownership and establish a genuine Workers' Control of a Nationalised Mining Industry. Today we are strong enough to enforce this demand. We have no mass unemployment to drag us back. Let us reply to the howls of the miners' leaders for more production by demanding that they wage a struggle for these just demands:—

A weekly wage of £6 for underground workers—£5 10s. for surface-ment.

A five-day week, Repeal of regulation 1A(a). Nationalisation of the Mining Industry and its operation under workers' control.

End the collaboration with the colliery owners and British Imperialism.

C.P. ON MERSEYSIDE

Liverpool, 8. 24.8.44. "Socialist Appeal", Dear Comrade, The attitude of certain so-called "Communist" Party members towards militant workers on the Merseyside, deserves some degree of exposure.

The role of Stalinism in the sphere of the international class struggle and its abject pandering to the Anglo-American imperialists, is we hope, too well known to your readers, to be commented upon in this letter. But when one is confronted with the spectacle of ordinary rank and file Stalinists acting as agent provocateurs for the bosses, and ultimately the police, it is time something was done to damp their reactionary enthusiasm.

A short while ago, during a dinner hour meeting held by the Stalinists on the Liverpool Dock Road, I decided to have a go at one of the speakers during question time. My first question, which dealt with the Stalin-Hitler non-aggression pact was not answered to my satisfaction, nor apparently to that of a large section of the audience. On trying to further question the speaker on the subject of a "stooge" in the audience inquired of the speaker whether I was on his "list". The speaker knew me and the answer was in the affirmative.

This little "incident" was characteristic of the Stalinist treachery during the Spanish Civil War. Members of the Revolutionary Communist Party have a special duty to perform in exposing these "stool-pigeons" to the misled rank and file who in joining the "Communist" Party believe it to be a genuine communist organisation.

Congratulations on the "Socialist Appeal". It is an excellent job of work. May the circulation soar.

Yours fraternally, "A Liverpool Docker."

"DEMOCRATIC" DISCUSSION IN C.P. MEETINGS

Waterloo, Liverpool 22.

"Socialist Appeal"

Dear Comrade,

A little item which might interest the "Socialist Appeal" is that the Birkenhead C.P. is holding in Wallasey a series of meetings on the decisions of the Teheran Conference. The fact that no-one has any idea of what has actually been decided on at Teheran (apart from the unfortunate Poles in Warsaw) seems to be no bar to discussing the decisions.

Two comrades attended the first lecture of the series, and asked a few questions regarding the role of the Stalinists nationally and internationally.

When the time came for the next meeting one comrade walked, or was about to walk, in when he was stopped at the door by a local leading Stalinist who drew his attention to a large notice fastened to the door which read: "The C.P. Reserve the right to refuse admission."

The Stalinist doorkeeper volunteered the information that no Trotskyists would be allowed to attend the discussion.

So the air of secrecy surrounding the discussions at Teheran is being joyfully adhered to by the C.P. in Wallasey!

Paternal greeting, B.C.

Glass House Conditions

We print below a copy of the letter circulated to Members of Parliament by the wife of a British soldier, Dvr. John Williams, who is serving a totally unjustified sentence of six months' detention. The conditions described here—fully substantiated by other victims—blast wide open the pretence that conditions are basically improved after the enquiry into the death of Rifleman Clayton, which shocked the nation over a year ago.

From the Labour movement must come a determined struggle on behalf of the workers in uniform. Many M.P.'s claim to be the "friends of the serving man and his family." It will be a real test of their sincerity to see which M.P.'s are, in fact, prepared to raise this issue and fight to remove these barbaric institutions.

19, Quinton Parade, Cheylesmore, Coventry. 7th August, 1944.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you in order to bring to your notice some idea of the actual conditions under which British soldiers detained in detention camps are forced to exist. I hope that after reading this letter you will be moved to give this matter as great a degree of publicity as you can and that you will exert whatever influence you possess in an endeavour to ameliorate the unhappy lot of the prisoners.

My husband, Driver J. Williams, Service No. 14529500, applied for compassionate leave at the time of the birth of my second child. He was granted leave for 7 days, but as this was inadequate, we appealed for an extension of a further three weeks as I expected to be in hospital for two weeks at least and there was nobody to take care of the first child. This request was refused and on the 4th June the police called to arrest my husband. Since he had the two year old child on his hands and nobody to whom he could entrust her, he left the house and so avoided arrest. When at length the time came for me to leave the hospital he visited me to make arrangements for my return home and was arrested.

After a court-martial lasting three days, during which my husband conducted his own defence, he was finally sentenced to four months' detention, a sentence which I learned later was to be served in Darland detention camp, Gillingham, Kent. This, you will doubtless recall, was the camp at which the unfortunate Private Clayton died in rather questionable circumstances. I have since received a letter from my husband describing the conditions in which the prisoners are forced to exist and which merit the widest exposure. Permit me to quote from this letter:—

"... Since Clayton's death these people have soft peddled a lot as far as open brutality is concerned. Though the place is still run by a gang who bully and drive the men like slaves. While as I say open brutality is no longer practised, nevertheless they practice tricks which have the same aim, which is to humiliate, crush and degrade the men. For instance, the dinners never vary. They consist of potatoes (not washed or peeled), lumped with cooked rice and inedible cabbage—all slapped on a plate, and a bowl of so-called 'soup'. This dinner never varies; there is never a

sweet, unless the rice which is lumped with the potatoes is supposed to be the 'sweet'. In the morning they dish out a plate of unsweetened porridge, a lump of bread and butter and some undrinkable 'cocoa' which has neither milk or sugar in it. Then at dinner time the dinner I have described, and at tea time a lump of bread, 4 ozs. and butter with unsweetened tea. This diet—hopeless, monotonous still, has been devised by these scoundrels in order to smash the men's morale. You can imagine hungry men all the time drilling and rushing about, having to live on this heartbreaking swill. As I say, it never alters day in and day out. Another instance of the devilish tricks they perpetrate upon the men is that one razor blade has to last one man twelve days, this with cold water for shaving. If the men break the blades trying to sharpen them they lose two days remission which means they come out two days later than they would have done.

Once again, on a Sunday the men do not do the normal drill etc. They are brought out for exercise and this is turned into torture by the guards. In the morning the men spend two hours continuous marching, never stopping, up and down the huge square. In the afternoon they are marching continuously round this huge place for another two hours. In effect the "exercise" is turned into a gruelling punishment. Further we have one wash day and bath day every week. On this day we get one piece of ersatz soap 2 1/2 x 2 x 1/4 in. thick. With this you are to wash one shirt, one pair of pants, one pair of socks, denim trousers and a towel. Incidentally to wash these articles two men share one bucketful of hot water—no more. That is, ten articles are washed in a bucketful of water. Then having washed your clothes with this piece of soap, you have to bath in a bowlful of water and this is supposed to last you all the week and yet they will not allow the men to have proper washing soap sent in from outside...

When reading these extracts from my husband's letter I would urge you to remember that these prisoners are guilty of no heinous crime or grave offences. Surely, sir, that such conditions exist and are tolerated is a matter calling for urgent redress. It is with this object that I have written you and would be glad if you were able to give this matter your earnest consideration. I would be glad to supply you with any further particulars should you require them.

Yours sincerely, (signed) Sheila Williams.



John Williams.

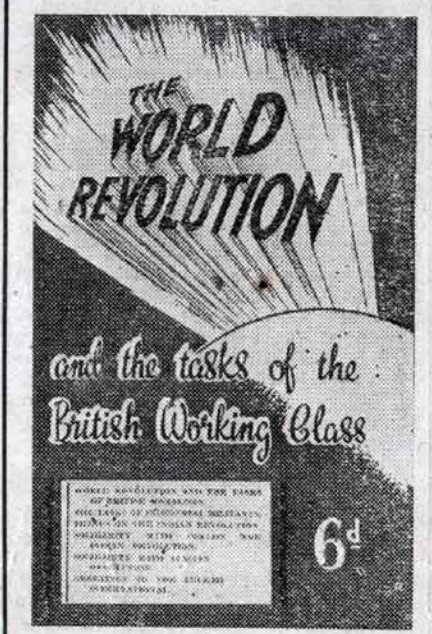
A.E.U. VIGILANCE COMMITTEE FORMED

Concern is being felt among South London A.E.U. branches over recent developments inside the union.

Many members were worried by the action of the Executive Council in debaring Bro. Armstrong from holding office after he had taken a militant stand during the Belfast Shipyards dispute. Following this, another prominent member who has taken up a militant attitude, Bro. Hallett, has been removed from office as South London District Secretary, after having been advised by Executive Council to take up office, on the grounds that there were "irregularities" in the ballot for this office.

These South London branches have formed a "Vigilance Committee" and at a Special Meeting attended by delegates from Deptford, Battersea, Wandsworth, Plumstead, Wimbledon, and Dulwich, discussed the position of Bro. Hallett.

It was pointed out that the "irregularity" in the ballot was that one member (a supporter incidentally of Bro. Hallett's opponent) had voted for another branch member by proxy, and that this only came to light after Bro. Hallett had been declared elected to office. In view of this the suspicion of positive "frame-up" had to be considered. In order that any such suggestion should be overcome, and so that an official should not be elected on a minority vote, a new ballot should be conducted.



Under Rule 2 it is stated that "if an official is removed by death or otherwise" a new ballot must take place.

The committee drew up a resolution to be moved at the branches as follows:—

"This branch, having heard of the action of the Executive Council in cancelling the vote of Deptford 2 Branch are of the opinion that this action which removed Bro. Hallett from the position of District Secretary, was unwarranted. It is said that members cast votes by proxy on behalf of Bro. Hill and the action of the E.C. has put this Bro. into office. This branch therefore calls upon E.C. to allow Deptford 2 to take the vote again in a constitutional manner in accordance with rule 2, clause 2 last paragraph: 'That any official removed by death or otherwise, another election shall take place'. This would mean a new ballot being taken and would be fair to the membership and the candidates."

The Vigilance Committee is continuing its work, in spite of difficulties created by the Flying Bombs, and is taking steps to have rectified the contradiction in rule 2.

BREAK THE COALITION! Labour to Power

on the following Programme

AN END TO THE COALITION WITH THE BOSSES. LABOUR AND TRADE UNION LEADERS MUST BREAK WITH THE CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT AND WAGE A CAMPAIGN FOR POWER ON THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMME:—

- Industrial and Economic Policy. 1. Nationalisation of the land, mines, banks, transport and all big industry without compensation, as the prerequisite for a planned economy and the only means of ensuring full employment with adequate standards of living for the workers, and the operation of the means of production under control of workers committees. 2. Confiscation of all war profits, all company books to be open for trade union inspection, control of production through workers' committees to end the chaos and mismanagement. 3. Distribution of food, clothes and other consumer commodities under the control of committees of workers elected from the Co-ops, distributive trades, factories, housewives' committees, and small shopkeepers, and allocation of housing under the control of tenants' committees. 4. A rising scale of wages to meet the increased cost of living with a guaranteed minimum; the rate for the job; and industrial rates for all members of the armed forces.

Democratic Demands

- 5. Repeal of the Essential Works Order, the Emergency Powers Act and all other anti-working class and strike-breaking legislation. 6. Full electoral and democratic rights for all persons from the age of 18 years. Full democratic and political rights for the men and women in uniform. 7. Immediate freedom and unconditional independence for India, Ireland and all the colonies of Britain; immediate withdrawal of British armed forces from these countries; full economic and military assistance to the Indian and colonial peoples to maintain their independence against all imperialist attack.

Military Policy

- 8. Clear out the reactionary, pro-fascist, and anti-labour officer caste in the armed forces and Home Guard; election of officers by the ranks. 9. Establishment of military schools by the Trade Unions at the expense of the state for the training of workers' officers; arming of the workers under the control of workers' committees elected in the factories, unions and in the streets for the defence of the democratic rights of the workers from reactionary attacks by the enemies of the working class at home and abroad.

International Policy

- 10. Against race hatred and discrimination of all forms (Vansittartism, Anti-Semitism, and the Colour Bar); for the fraternisation and co-operation of workers and soldiers of all countries. 11. Unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against all imperialist powers; despatch of arms, food and essential materials to the Soviet Union under the control of the Trade Unions and factory committees. 12. A Socialist appeal to the workers of Germany, Europe, Japan, and the rest of the world, on the basis of this programme in Britain, to join the socialist struggle against Nazism, Fascism and all forms of capitalist oppression and for a Socialist United States of Europe and a Federation of Asiatic Soviet Socialist Republics.

"Socialist Appeal" Fighting Fund

The working class press has always had great difficulty in keeping going financially. We have not got the big advertising revenue of the Capitalist press or the "Million sales" to offset the heavy costs of production.

The "Socialist Appeal" relies on the solidarity of the workers who, in steadily increasing numbers, begin to realise that our paper reflects their interests.

In the present difficult times we ask our readers to co-operate with the Party in order to maintain our Press. You can help in many ways, for instance:—

- 1. Pass the "S.A." around and get fresh readers. 2. Pay for your copy promptly and see that others do the same. 3. If you are a subscriber or agent—clear your account periodically. (We cannot afford a big staff of book-keepers to keep sending reminders). 4. Make a sacrifice—give, collect and send in donations to our "Fighting Fund". We need an extra £50 per month to keep things steady.

The "Socialist Appeal" has no other purpose than to serve the interests of the working class in their struggle for emancipation.

KEEP THE PRESS GOING! ASK FOR COLLECTING CARDS! Business Manager.

VICTORY MEETINGS National Tour of Released Comrades

SOUTH WALES. Anti-Labour Laws Victims' Defence Committee.

Public Meeting, Miners' Hall, Merthyr. Release of Haston, Tearse and Lee and its significance to the working class.

Demand the repeal of the Trade Disputes Act and Regulation 1A(a). Speakers: Rhys Davies, M.P. Jock Haston, General Secretary, Revolutionary Communist Party. Sunday, October 1st, 1944 at 7 p.m.

EDINBURGH. Revolutionary Communist Party, Edinburgh Branch.

Public Meeting. The release of the Trotskyists and the victory for the working class. Melbourne Hall, Edinburgh. October 15th, 1944, at 7 p.m. Speakers: Jock Haston Roy Tearse

LIVERPOOL. Anti-Labour Laws Victims' Defence Committee.

The release of Haston, Tearse and Lee and its significance to the working class. Speakers: Rhys Davies, M.P. S. Silverman, M.P. Jock Haston, R.C.P. Bill Davy, Tyne Apprentice leader. Engineer's Hall, Liverpool. September 24th, 1944 at 7 p.m.

GLASGOW. Anti-Labour Laws' Victims Defence Committee.

Meeting at St. Andrews Halls, Sunday, 17th September at 7 p.m. Speakers: Roy Tearse, Heaton Lee, Jock Haston. The Release of the Three and Its Meaning

ABERDEEN. Anti-Labour Laws Victims' Defence Committee.

Meeting will be held on Thursday, September 21st 1944. Watch for the time and place in the next issue. Speakers: Jock Haston and Roy Tearse.

NOTTINGHAM. Anti-Labour Laws Victims' Defence Committee.

Public Meeting, Sunday, 8th October. Speakers: Jock Haston, Roy Tearse. The Release of the Three and its meaning for the workers. Meetings will also be held in London, Coventry, Birmingham, etc.

WORKERS! RALLY TO THE MEETING IN YOUR DISTRICT