

Remember Tonypandy!

Some weeks back a strike occurred in the Moabit quarter of Berlin, during which the workers were brutally assaulted by the police and soldiers. The London Liberal Press saw in that outbreak the dire effects of Tariff Reform and an anti-Liberal Government! But recent events in South Wales, where under Free Trade and Liberal rule, the striking miners have been treated with barbarity before which the Berlin horrors pale, have exploded this idea. Moreover, the chief owner concerned is a prominent member of the Liberal party, and so greatly is he esteemed by them that they propose to raise him to the Peerage now that he has retired from the House of Commons. Wales, too, is such a stronghold of Liberalism that the events there show up Liberalism in no uncertain light.

It will be remembered that for years past the South Wales miners have been trying to get an eight hours Bill passed. But—manifestation of the fraud of capitalist reform—ever since this "Great Charter of the Miners" has been law they have been striking against its effects. The employees of the Cambrian Combine in the Rhonda Valley, and of the Powell Duffryn Co. in the Abedare district, have been driven to desperation by the harassing conditions imposed by the great Liberal mine-owners. Tremendous profits have been made—the Cambrian Trust have made a million pounds profit in the last dozen years with a capital only half that sum—yet the companies have added device to device in order to increase their spoliation, until thousands of miners can make no more than 2s. per day. And now the owners refuse to allow the men to take home firewood—a privilege they have had for half a century.

Altogether 20,000 miners are out, and in order to induce others to join them they have held demonstrations and appointed pickets, and the pickets have been attacked by the police. But the climax came on the 8th Nov., at Tonypandy. Prior to this the mine-owners became alarmed for the safety of their property, and determined to cow the strikers into submission by sheer force of arms. In the words of the *Daily Chronicle* (Nov. 8) "the Company, as a precautionary measure, had wired for a detachment of cavalry to protect the pits".

Although "every available constable from the surrounding country had been summoned", the Home Secretary sent over 1,000 metropolitan police—many of them being mounted and armed with swords—besides which about 1,500 soldiers, including many cavalry, were despatched. The hypocrisy of Churchill was shown by the statement he issued on Nov. 8, declaring that he had sent police *instead* of soldiers, whereas he had already ordered the 18th Hussars, North Lancashire Regiment, and the North Lancashire Fusiliers to Wales (from Tidworth, Salisbury Plain), and they arrived at Pontypridd next morning.

Boiling water was directed upon the strikers and live wires were put around the vicinity of mines, but notwithstanding all their savagery the Companies could not break the strike.

The night of the 8th saw the most bloodthirsty attack upon the workers that has been recorded throughout the strike. Men and women were bludgeoned, kicked and maltreated so terribly that hundreds were maimed and wounded beyond description. Even little children did not escape, and many are disabled for life. Samuel Royce, a miner, was murdered by the police that night; he had joined the Territorials some time ago to defend "his" country. What a tragic commentary!

For evidence of police brutality let us quote the Liberal M. P. for Merthyr. Speaking in the House of Commons on Nov. 15th Mr E. Jones, "referring to the conduct of the police and soldiers at Aberdare, said the people were bludgeoned a quarter of a mile from the mines, absolutely innocent people being savagely attacked. It was openly stated in that district that the policemen in this case were under the influence of drink, and many incidents pointed to the fact that the police had altogether lost their heads". (*Daily Chronicle*, 16. 11. 10).

Although the soldiers have not been in action yet, they are being kept on the spot in case the police fail to satisfy the requirements of the colliery owners. In his official statement of Nov. 10th the Home Secretary said that he will not hesitate to use the military, and in the House of Commons (15th Nov.) he stated that "the Central Government has acted more directly than is usual or usually desirable", and further said "I take full responsibility for all that has been done".

In face of these admissions of the murderous nature of capitalist government, the workers should note the despicable conduct of those who claim to represent them in the House of Commons. That prominent member of the Labour Party, Mr. W. Abraham ("Mabon") in the House of Commons on Nov. 15th said that "he declined to take any part in condemning the Home Office or the Government for the part they took at the commencement of the sad affair". His attitude is that of all the other members of that wing of the Liberal party. For the sake of securing their seats and their salaries they are now engaged in supporting Liberals all over the country. In Dundee, for instance, the workers are being told to vote for the two "progressives", who are Mr. Alex Willie and—the assassin Churchill! Elsewhere—at Bow and Bromley and at Deptford for example—the Liberals are carrying out their share of the bargain by telling their supporters to vote for the "Labour" candidates.

Mr. Keir Hardie is anxious for the Government to appoint a Committee of enquiry. Of course—many of those on strike are his constituents. But how childish to ask the capitalists to appoint a committee to enquire into their own conduct! It will be remembered that on the occasion of the Featherstone massacre the Liberal Government gave way (!) to public demand and appointed a Committee of enquiry. Here are the miners' names: Lord Bowen, Sir A. K. Rollit, and Mr. Haldane. The result could only be the whitewashing of butcher Asquith. The traitorous Labour Party were dumb when the workers were slaughtered at Belfast in 1907 by order of the Liberal Minister Birrel. And Keir Hardie absented himself time after time in 1893 although Asquith challenged him to be present and accuse him inside the House.

Notice the impartiality of our capitalist masters. See what a sham the party divisions of Liberal and Tory are, when the issue is between the workers and the capitalists. When the Tory mine-owner, Lord Masham, appealed for soldiers to protect the Acton

Hall Colliery, the Liberal Asquith immediately drafted troops to the spot, with the result that Gibbs and Duggan were murdered. Now when the Liberal mine-owner D. A. Thomas applies for military aid he receives it. The Tory party are in the same boat. When Penrhyn sought military assistance to subdue the starving quarrymen ten years ago it was readily afforded him. And in 1887 they sent armed mounted police to Trafalgar Square to disperse the unemployed—and poor Linnell was done to death.

The working class have many things to remember concerning the history of both political parties. The fact stands out clear that both political fractions have used every agency at their command to keep the working class in subjection. The hypocritical Liberal cries out against the Tory: "Remember Michaelstown!" what time he overlooks those landmarks in the class struggle—Featherstone, Belfast, and now Tonypandy.

The lessons of Tonypandy should be remembered by the toilers and driven home whenever support is asked for for the capitalist candidates. Capitalism stands for murder, whether direct as at Tonypandy or indirect as at Whitehaven, West Stanley, or at the Maypole Colliery—murder, whether in the enforced starvation recorded daily in the papers, or in the suicide of those unable to bear the burden of misery any longer.

The race for profits by our masters is a race that means misery, starvation and premature death for its victims the workers. Therefore our policy must be one of unceasing hostility to capitalism, whether "reformed" or not. Unceasing hostility to all is upholders, whether they label themselves Liberal, Tory, Labourite or Social-Democrat.

We cannot ever ally ourselves with that class whose hands are stained with the blood of our fellow toilers. We can never forget that in the struggle between the workers and the capitalists there can be no truce, no quarter, no compromise! The South Wales horrors have once again demonstrated this fact with the tragic emphasis of blood. It is for us to point again the lesson that the armed forces of the State—nay, the whole machinery of the State—exists but to conserve the interests of the ruling class. The capture of this State machinery must then be the object of our endeavours. Vengeance and our emancipation are one and the same thing, and must both be sought on the political field. If the miners learnt this lesson the masters would have cause to Remember Tonypandy!

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