

English Edition

Unpublished Manuscripts - Please reprint.

# - INTERNATIONAL - PRESS CORRESPONDENCE

Vol. 4 No. 27

1st May 1924

Editorial Offices: Langegasse 26/12, Vienna VIII. — Central Despatching Department: Berggasse 31, Vienna IX.  
— Postal Address, to which all remittances should be sent by registered mail: Postamt 64, Schliessfach 29, Vienna VIII.  
— Telegraphic Address: Inprecorr, Vienna.

## CONTENTS

J. T. Murphy: The Struggle of the Labour Government for the Stabilisation of Capitalism.

### Politics

Open Letter of the C. P. of India to the Annual Conference of the I. L. P.

### The Labour Movement

George Hardy: International Solidarity and International Demands.

### In the International

The Situation in the United States. Theses adopted by the C. E. C. of the Workers Party of America.

Resolutions of the Conference of the Balkan Communist Federation. II. The Bulgarian Question. III. The Peasant and Agrarian Question in Greece. IV. The Question of the

National Minorities in Greece. V. The General Situation in Roumania. VI. The National Question in Roumania. The Expulsion of Angelica Balabanoff.

### The Youth Movement

To the Young Workers in Town and Country.

### The Women's Movement

V. Kasparova: The Women's Movement in India and in the Far East.

### Red Relief

Ehrenfried Wagner: March 18th — a Step forward for Red Relief.

### Appeals

E. C. C. I. To the Workers of the Whole World.

## The Struggle of the Labour Government for the Stabilisation of Capitalism.

By J. T. Murphy (London).

### The Eviction Muddle.

The Labour Government has cut an exceedingly sorry figure in the promotion of its Bill to prevent evictions. Not content with its half hearted fight on the first introduction wherein its leaders contradicted each other, hesitatingly denounced the landlords, admitted that they should be reimbursed for any loss due to non payment of rent by unemployed workers, and still proposing that they should face the loss, and finally, being defeated by a combination of Liberals and Tories, they tried again with MacDonald as leader in place of Wheatley. Both Wheatley and Clynes had stated that the charge should be a national one for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be responsible. This was to operate through the local organizations such as the Board of Guardians and the Local Councils. But it was well known that the Local authorities, especially the Boards of Guardians in Scotland, would have nothing to do with it. Some Boards of Guardians in England already made an allowance to the unemployed for the payment of rent.

When the Government made its second attempt with MacDonald as leader it was in no better position than on the first occasion and there was no substantial difference in the proposals. Again Liberals and Tories combined because it was not shown how the landlords were going to be recompensed for any loss and again we were witness to Chamberlain and Asquith using the arguments of the Labour Party for this matter to be a national charge. Again the Government was defeated because of it

failing to specify the source from which the compensation to the landlords would be made. Their language was not an attack upon landlordism but an argument for a national charge while their proposal was a direct attack upon the landlords. It was this contradiction which made the repeated muddles. Naturally the Liberals and Tories rallied on the grounds of their class interests and MacDonald proved to be no more successful than Wheatley in making a covert attack upon the landlords. Had they been bold enough to make it a clear class issue they would have been defeated, but they would have been defeated with the issue clear and without having to cut an ignominious figure before their own followers.

Things have turned out worse than was expected. A short while ago it appeared that the most likely thing they would do would be to remove or modify the offending clause of their own Bill and carry it through, aiming simply at stopping evictions and letting the attack on the landlord question come at a later date. But worse has befallen them. They have now, in order to stop evictions to adopt a Bill emanating from a member of the Liberal Party and seek to amend it as it passes through the committees. That anything drastic will come from this procedure is out of the question. Mr. Austin Chamberlain dragged from MacDonald „that the public funds for the purpose of the Bill which was defeated were to be local funds” which is in flat contradiction to both Wheatley and Clynes who emphasised that it must be “a national charge”. To get amendments along these lines will then be the object of the government in amending the Liberal Bill, and both Liberals

and Tories can be relied upon to see that the landlords are not let down. Evictions will be stopped in order to prevent riots in various towns. That will give peace for the time being. But the landlords will be made more secure than previously. That will be the price.

### Insurance Developments.

It used to be a cry of Lloyd George that the state insurance scheme would give us 9d for 4d. For a time it was very popular and then it was overburdened by the big slump in employment and it was found that it could not stand on its own feet and had to be subsidised. Then came a reorganisation and an increase in contributions. Now there is a big push taking place to insure the workers for everything, for illness, unemployment, old age, accident, death of relatives, etc. etc. as a means of preventing agitation around the grievances of the unemployed. Stability is the aim. Compromise the method. Everybody of course has to pay. The State, the employers, the workers. What could be more fair. The workers do pay and that's that. The employers pay and see to it that their payments enter into the costs of production and effect the price of goods. So they do not complain. The State levies taxes which of course never reach the workers. They are not transferable, so nobody has a right to complain. With all complaints removed we can sum up the schemes as follows: — A larger proportion of the earnings of the workers is to be organised by the threefold combination of the State, the Employers and the Workers, to see to it that the workers provide for the periods of unemployment, sickness and all other stages of their existence when they are not able to continue making profit for the boss.

As the Labour Government is anxious to secure stability and peace, it has no desire to be behindhand in turning these schemes to account. So seizing the opportunity provided by the grievances of the unemployed workers who have run out of benefit through long periods of unemployment, Mr. Tom Shaw has introduced an Amendment to the Insurance Bill providing for a lengthening of the periods of benefit, increasing the unemployed pay from 15/- to 18/- per week for men, and from 12/- to 15/- per week for women. Boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16 are also to be insured and receive unemployed benefits of 5/- and 4/- per week respectively. They know from long experience that if the workers can be provided with a regular income, however small, and the periods of unemployment are not made to contrast too severely with the period of work, that the sharp edge is removed and they are not so likely to revolt. The Liberal Party is taking this up with enthusiasm and its slogan is now "Insurance for Everything". So we can expect further instalments from the Labour Government of Liberal leadership. This is at least one further contribution to stability for which the capitalists will be duly grateful.

### Agricultural Peace.

The long foreshadowed proposals of the Minister for Agriculture will be introduced shortly. Help is being rendered to the farmers by means of the Trades Facilities Act, and efforts are being made to encourage co-operative effort. But the farm labourers who have been thoroughly beaten and dejected during the last two years are now to receive attention. In the proposals that are being put forward the sinister policy of dividing the workers in such a way that any national movement can be prevented is once again brought right into the front of the picture.

The organised action of the Agricultural workers is about as idiotic as can be. Every county acts separately, has different wage rates and conditions of labour in almost every district. It will be remembered how strenuous were the activities of M. Mac Donald last year to prevent the Norfolk farm labourers drawing in the workers of other counties for common action and how ultimately they were handsomely defeated because of the success of this policy. During that time a number of county agreements were expiring and it would have been easy to have made common action had the leaders not opposed it. Now this division has to be made permanent to secure stability. The National Wages Board for Agriculture is to be re-established, and County agreements are to be made. Any disagreement in a county has to be referred to the National Wages Board for settlement and the National Board can decide. That seems to me as near an approach as one can get to compulsory arbitration without swallowing the whole of it. It appears that even no national minimum wage is to be stated in the Bill. The Minister of Agriculture announced the

other day that in at least two counties the labourers were not getting more than £1 per week. Some of them are not getting more than 25/-. So with this low level and the introduction of legislation to prevent national action it is difficult to see what more the farmers could have got if a Tory Government had been in office. Indeed the Tories had disposed of the National Wages Board and were likely to provoke a national movement by so doing. It required the Labour Government to show how to secure 'peace' within capitalism by dividing the workers against each other.

The Agricultural Workers Union does not improve much on the situation by its demands. It is not raising objections to district settlements but is strengthening the hands of the agricultural minister by demanding that the central Wages Board shall be the final authority. At the same time it is demanding that a national Minimum Wage shall be stated in the Bill and is asking that the "old Methods of investigation, legal enforcement and prosecution where necessary" be re-introduced. These demands are on a par with the regulations of sweated industries where the unions are either non-existent or very weak. It is not on these lines that the land workers will ever be roused to action throughout the country. But direct action of the workers is the last thing which either the leaders of the Agricultural Workers, the Labour Government or the Labour Party desire, as witness the new campaign for.

### Industrial Peace.

The leading organ of the I. L. P. follows sharply in the wake of the capitalist press in its denunciation of strikes. Since the Tram and Bus Strike of a couple of weeks ago the press has let lose a stiff anti-Communist campaign. From the "Times" down to the cheapest rag on the market we have come in for considerable advertisement, as the "sinister" figures behind the strikes that are raging. We were the bold bad villains responsible for "insulting the Empire" at Wembley. We are the bad bad scoundrels responsible for the Southampton shipyard workers refusing to go back to work in spite of all the forces of the press and reformist trades unionism being turned on to get them back to work. The Trade Union leaders have simply gone crazy in their strike breaking methods. Threats, mass meetings, ballots, sectional meetings, dangers of the National Lock-out. Not one of these has proved of any avail up to date. Instead of taking the fact of the strike as a clear indication of the feeling of the men, (and not one of them dare stand for the conditions which obtain) and giving the lead for united national action, they have simply permitted themselves to be the veritable hand rags of the Employers. The employers threaten the lock-out at the very moment they have all got a demand before them for an all round increase of ten shilling to £1 per week in wages. Challenged in this way their only retort is to crawl down to Southampton, representatives of some fifty unions, and howl for the men to go back to work as the "strike is prejudicing the negotiations". When the men refuse, then the union leaders join in the campaign of accusing the Communists of responsibility for the present situation with a view to discrediting the union leaders.

Then comes in the "New Leader" the organ of the Party of the Government to moralise on the tram strike and tell us that we are all going to the devil. The succession of strikes by trades is disturbing to this leader. It wants to substitute this method by some well organised systematically arranged plan whereby the whole lot can be dealt with at once by negotiation and these wasteful strikes eliminated. This is the alternative to the scheme for compulsory arbitration now before the House of Lords. It does not want to depart from traditional methods of procedure but to co-ordinate them etc. If not the prospects are terrible, it says. It goes on: "Consider the position. The London traffic men, like the locomotive men, number a few thousand only. But they occupy an immensely powerful strategic position. They can in a sense compel the co-operation of a large number of other workers.... It is a general action involving the forces of many industries. But it does not obtain a general result.... Yet when the textile workers strike they will not be able to compel immediate attention of the public or the instant co-operation of other workers.... And even if they should, the repeated application of general forces to partial issues would result in exhaustion. If the railways struck, first on behalf of the textiles, then of the engineers and so on, the country would be dead of starvation long before we got to the end of the list. And (as a mere incident) the Labour Government would have been swept from power, and one prepared, if needs be ruthlessly, to blackleg,

substituted by public that had forgotten most else in the urgent clamour for food."

If that doesn't make your hair stand up with fright you must be an old campaigner. Listen again "It (the tram strike) has achieved the objective of seventeen thousand men, but weakened the political power and influence, and diminished the political prospects of four or five million."

That from the "New Leader" and not the "Daily Mail". The reformists of all countries are true to type. They were counter-revolutionists in Russia, instruments of the vilest reaction throughout Europe, and in Britain they are following in the footsteps of their colleagues and functioning as the true lackeys of the bourgeoisie. Every strike begins with these people being in sympathy with the wrongs and grievances of the workers. Every strike finds them compromising and striving to break the spirit of the workers. And every strike is also witness to the fact that only the Communist Party is left as the consistent ally and fighter with the workers in their struggles. That is the beginning of the price which the Labour Party and its government is having to pay for its efforts to stabilise capitalism in Britain.