

The 'Friends' of Scottish Workers

Since the working class was granted the vote there has never been a shortage of busy-bodies who—hand-on-heart, have declared their ardent sympathy and interest in workers' problems.

When elected, of course, the workers become the "constituency" and each M.P. "looks after his constituency" and looks ahead to the next election. W. Gallacher, A. Woodburn, D. Kirkwood and other Parliamentary luminaries are engaged at the moment—amid other equally laudable pursuits—in pressing the post-war claims of Prestwick Aerodrome. All three are campaigning for the "Forth Road Transport Bridge and have endorsed Hector McNeil, Labour M.P.'s efforts to modernize the Clyde so that the largest ships can be docked at Greenock and Glasgow"

Other Scottish M.P.'s—with an eye on their constituency—are eloquently expatiating on Scottish needs and problems. The "Daily Express," February 15th, gave considerable space to a report of a Parliamentary debate on a Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Bill. Thos. Johnston—the mover the bill said: "In the Tradeston division of Glasgow, for example, there are 127 houses or more than 700 persons to the acre." He said: "The measure won't bring a new Jerusalem to Scotland, but would assist local authorities to deal with problems." In short, a confession of impotence unusual in its frankness. In the same report there is a gem of a phrase coined by Campbell Stephen, I.L.P., M.P.:—"We in Scotland have had a raw deal. Our association with England has not given us an opportunity to deal with housing and industry." Characteristically, however, W. Gallacher, M.P., capped the lot with "Effete Sassenachs were incapable of dealing with the planning problems which confronted them in Scotland and in consequence the Sturdy Scot had been bound hand and foot and dragged behind them in this miserable bill." He then went on to talk about the class war, which, he said, had done a thousand times more damage than the War.

Have the Scottish workers any doubts that Gallacher, Woodburn, Campbell-Stephen and Co., are really interested in working class affairs? Could they have?

Those of them who have, however vaguely, identified Socialism with an international outlook will be bewildered at Gallacher's talk of "effete" Englishmen and "Sturdy" Scots, particularly in view of his later and inexplicable reference to a class war.

They will think of "effete" "Scots," who bide here in Scotland for the "Glorious 12th" and "sturdy" Englishmen who "carry hods" here all the year round.

Supporters of the "Socialist" I.L.P. should feel uneasy about Campbell Stephen's "Our association—hasn't given us an opportunity."—They will, or should wonder who "Our and us" means and conclude that if it was Scottish workers—that is was Capitalism rather than association with England that had been and still is the source of working class problems.

The England, Irish, Welsh and American capitalists with investments in Scottish aviation, building, shipping and transport will applaud the efforts of the Scottish Communist, Labour and I.L.P. M.P.'s.

Kirkwood has already earned the title of "M.P. for John Brown's" among Clydeside workers: now it will be Woodburn "M.P. for Scottish Airways," McNeil "M.P. for Clyde Trust" and Gallacher "M.P. for Arrols and Wimpey's."

What all this has to do with the interests of the working class in Scotland no one knows. Perhaps the M.P.'s could tell us?

It certainly does not require genius or a microscope to perceive that Scotland, like every other country, has a population which is divided into a majority who are non-owning workers and a

minority who are non-working owners. And that after centuries of joint development with England that all means of producing wealth are owned and controlled by large concerns whose shareholders are spread throughout Britain and the rest of the world.

Just as certainly it does not need extraordinary intelligence to know that workers in specifically "Scottish" concerns merely receive in wages enough to continue working—barely enough, as for workers everywhere.

The Scottish workers don't have to attend a University to know that the ruling class of Scotland since the days of the Highland "clearances" referred to by Marx in biting terms in "Capital" (Vol. 1), are any less brutal and avaricious than their English counterparts. Or do they?

Thos. Johnston's burning indictments of the Scottish ruling class make curious reading nowadays when he is Secretary of State for Scotland and seems to be on terms of easy familiarity with the present scions. The same remark applies to old copies of the "Forward" during his period of editorship.

There is a story told by John S. Clarke regarding Lenin's estimate of Gallacher in which he described Gallacher as a "_____ fool"; a story which Gallacher repudiated indignantly and inexplicably as "an insult to Lenin." Whether the story is true or otherwise is unimportant but at least reflects a view of Gallacher, increasingly common, among workers with memories and intelligence.

The ability of the Gallachers, Johnstons, Maxtons, Kirkwoods in getting away with their anti working class nonsense and buffoonery rests on the—as yet, political ignorance of the Scottish workers.

Their political and social interests—like their fellows everywhere—are opposed to those of their masters and does not lie in schemes which will enable their employers to wring yet more surplus value from their skill and energy.

The political power that enables the privileged class to retain their social privilege is vested in control of the machinery which has its centre in Westminster.

This fact enables the Scottish, English and Welsh working class to co-ordinate their task of intelligently wresting this supremely vital control of political machinery from the hands of their class enemies—the masters; a co-ordination which has a fit and ready instrument in the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

The duty of the Scottish workers—like the workers the world over—is to-day—not tomorrow—to attempt an understanding of the basic nature of their problems and having done so, to organise in the Socialist Party democratically to take over power to establish Socialism.

Capitalism in Scotland, in England, America, Germany, Russia, in every country in the world produces the same set of problems to workers—poverty, unemployment, insecurity, war, and so on.

These problems arise with sublime impartiality as to forms of government, climate and previous political history, they arise in democracies and dictatorships in the two hemispheres and in big and wee countries.

The Socialist analysis and solution is international in scope and outlook and the only way in which the Scottish workers can assist their fellows in India and Greece as elsewhere is to study, understand and organise for Socialism. As they do so, the boloney of the Labour, I.L.P. and Communist M.P.'s will become clearly apparent. "Our" problems are the problems arising from the capitalist nature of Society which is now world-wide and the solution for "us"—World Socialism in which wealth will be produced, controlled and enjoyed by all.

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