

## Conscientious Objectors in England

IN the *Labour Leader* of February 17, 1916, Clifford Allen gives a general summary of the position taken by different conscientious objectors in England.

He first states that there are roughly speaking three types of C. O.'s: Those objecting on definite Christian belief; those objecting because they hold that human life is absolutely sacred under all circumstances; those objecting on Socialist principles and international faith, which find expression in the Brotherhood of Man.

For the benefit of those who may face courts martial and tribunals, Clifford Allen summarizes different questions which used to be put before the C.O. when in court, and he gives different answers to those questions. The answers embrace all three kinds of C.O.'s and therefore should be analyzed for practical use. Questions and answers follow:

1.—Do we want the Germans to win?

No, we do not. But we are sure that the triumph of armed force alone, whichever side is victorious, will never bring a lasting peace. A durable peace is what we supremely desire, that the awful sacrifices of the war may not be in vain, and we are sure that it can only be secured by the emergence and development of the sense of national duty and the practice of justice and trust among the people. We believe that our highest duty to our country and to humanity is to contribute to this great change of heart.

2.—What would happen if everybody held our opinion?

We believe that if all persons in any nation held our opinions, the danger of attack would be removed. War results from fear. Where there is no menace, there will be a diminishing danger of armed aggression. It is fallacious to suppose that the Government of any civilized country would be allowed by its people to attack any unarmed nation, which could not menace other nations. Indeed, the whole basis of our belief is that, so long as the nations adopt the method of war, and the Governments continue to maintain the support of their people for this purpose, war will continue. It is necessary for some minority to remain firm in their conviction on this matter, until their example is followed and the use of armed force ceases between nations.

3.—What should we do in times of peace some ruffian assaulted our wives or mothers?

We believe it would still be our duty to hold loyalty to our conviction. We would stand between the attacker and his object, we would endeavor to disarm him, but we should not feel it right to take life, even to save life.

4.—Are we not hiding behind the protection of the fleet and army, which we will not assist?

We do not ask for that defense. Many Christians and Socialists have long attacked armaments. The essence of our belief is that we should take the risk involved. If and when all men come to hold our opinions, armies and navies will no longer be required, and, meanwhile a minority must take the lead in stirring public opinion on this matter.

5.—Do we not (especially if we hold Socialist opinions) admit the right of the State to compel its citizens to defend themselves and their fellows?

We do not dispute the right of the State to impose duties upon its members for the common good, but we cannot admit the right of any Government to impose a duty conflicting with a man's religious or moral opinions any more than to force him to adopt some uniform system of worshipping God. The State exists on behalf of the life of its members, it cannot rightly attempt to compel them to inflict death.

6.—Do we believe in capital punishment?

We answer no, although we draw a distinction between the use of arms in the work of slaughter in war, and the preservation of law and order, which does not call for the inflicting of death.

7.—Do we decline to kill under any circumstances, or is it merely the compulsion to which we object?

As expressed above, life to most of us is sacred. But even in those cases where

the dogma is not so fundamental, we assert that compulsion in such a matter as life and death cannot be admitted, although men endorse the State's right to impose duties upon its citizens for the common weal.

8.—Cannot we then undertake non-combatant service?

We cannot distinguish between fighting and assisting those who fight with duties, such as organizing supplies, carrying despatches, clerical military work, etc., for all these are designed to make the work of killing more efficient. By accepting such work, we free others for the fighting.

9.—Will we not undertake duties that help to save life, such as medical work or mine sweeping?

We cannot undertake such duties under a military oath, which necessitates obedience to all orders and makes us part of the military machine. Apart from the question of military oath, if we restore to health a wounded soldier, we are faced by the grave responsibility of making him fit to go out and inflict death again. If we mine-sweep, we are only allowed to remove enemy mines, not all mines. We are compelled to leave some mines, laid for the purpose of killing, whilst in all these duties we become part of the military machine.

10.—Are we not willing to undertake some work of national importance?

We have always desired to serve our fellow men, but many of us cannot allow the Government under a Military Service Act, to change our occupation, since there can be only one purpose in this, viz., to make the organization of the nation more efficient for the carrying on of war.

11.—But is not our present occupation useful in exactly the same respect?

That may be true, but that is the inevitable circumstance in which all citizens of a country carrying on war must find themselves. We will be best advised to be directly a party to a change of our national work, which would enable us knowingly agreeable to organization for war.

12.—But surely we help the war indirectly by paying taxes and in purchasing goods.

True, but there is a clear difference between being involuntarily through the circumstances of our daily life, and definitely undertaking some work to assist the war. We are willing to pay taxes for general maintenance of the life of the State, and since all taxes are collected together and can be collected notwithstanding refusal to pay, it is useless to refuse such payment.

13.—Ought we not to leave the country if we hold these views?

On the contrary. Even if we were allowed to do so, we do not desire it. We have always desired to assist the life of our nation, when this does not involve destroying the life of other people. We look forward to the time when we can render service in rebuilding what is best in our national life after the exhaustion of this war. Indeed we hold that our stand at this time is a work of national importance. We decline to leave our country (even if we could), which we desire to serve in time of peace, because our conscience will not allow us to serve it by the method of war.

So far Clifford Allen and the arguments mainly used in England in the heroic fight against conscription. The arguments have not only great historic value, but may be of assistance to Conscientious Objectors in the United States as well. They will appeal not only to those who refuse on Socialist principles, but to a great many others as well.

There are, however, many other objections to be made besides those mentioned and especially our international revolutionary Socialist principles can be brought forward more forcibly.

We invite our readers to give such additional arguments on the above mentioned questions, or on similar potential questions. The answers should be short and to the point. Remember that a tribunal in dealing with C.O.'s generally does not allow more than a few minutes for an answer.

## The International Movement

THE Serbian Social Democrat Ilija Militch appeals to the workers all over the world to protest against the annihilation of the Serbian race. Eighty per cent of the Serbian army and 35 per cent of the rest of the population have already sacrificed their lives for profit's sake. Those who are left in starving condition not only suffer from deportations by German authorities, including women and children, but the fathers and sons who are still fit to fight, are kept with the armies of the Allies, mostly in the first trenches of the firing line, and the Swiss Relief Committee reports that the foodstuffs prepared for the starving Serbs could not be shipped, because the Allies would not give the necessary permission.

If such conditions are going to continue much longer, our Imperialists will miss in the next war the chance of hiding their lust for profits behind their alleged love for small nations, which will have been wiped off the map, in the name of dollar "democracy."

In a secret convention of the Hungarian Socialist Party, it was decided to agitate for such reforms as have been accomplished by the Russian Revolution. Peace was demanded without annexations, and international arbitration was demanded for future disputes. Sympathy was expressed for those who are prosecuted for their struggle for Socialism and peace.

Food and street riots are reported from Lisbon, Portugal. Bakeries and warehouses were plundered and destroyed and several hundreds of people arrested. The prices of all foodstuffs and of coal are sky-high and an actual condition of starvation exists.

The republican Government used the methods of all Governments in sending troops. It is reported that in the capital alone ten were killed and fifty wounded. The riots spread throughout the country, but a strict censorship prevents further news leaking out.

It is contended by our Russian revolutionary comrades. An appeal has recently been issued to save the life of the Austrian Socialist, Dr. Adler, who shot the ultra-conservative Minister-President Sturgh. A few weeks ago a demonstration was held for the life of Mooney, at the instigation of a Russian comrade just arrived from the United States.

But what are we doing to support our valiant comrades in return? So far the only manifestation has been an appeal to continue to fight in the interest of Allied and American Imperialism.

The Russian social-patriots are organizing their forces under the slogan "Unity," which to them means unity of all "democratic" forces, and war to a finish. The possibility of a proletarian revolution in the near future is emphatically denied. Here is a possibility for Charles Edward Russell and the American gold he represents.

THE German Government contemplates a new trial for high treason in connection with the munition strikes. Ledebour, Vogtherr, Buchner and Wittmann of the Independent Socialists are reported to be involved. Also Hoffmann, member of the Prussian Diet, to whom a passport to the Socialist Congress in Stockholm has been refused.

THE strike of women workers in Paris recently spread rapidly, and is meeting with considerable success. The milliners, furriers, lace makers, embroiderers, waterprooferers, and feather workers are now on strike, and male and female employees of several department stores approached the managements and asked for Saturday half-holidays and extra pay on account of the high cost of living.

Similar demands by bankers' and brokers' clerks were accepted by a number of houses, but are being resisted in other cases. The butchers', waiters', and grocers' unions are considering joining the strike. Representatives of the employers and workers of the fur trade reached an agreement.

## The American Menace in Russia

By S. J. RUTGERS

THE United States recently paid a bribe of a scanty hundred million, and is prepared to pay a few billion dollars more to any Government in Russia that is willing and able to fight and to offer the lives of additional millions of its workers and peasants for the cause of the Allies, for the interests of American and Allied Imperialism.

The American Capitalist believes in the all-mightiness of the dollar. In a statement of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, one of the new creations of the National City Bank of New York, representing the Rockefeller group, we read "that American interests in Petrograd are the most important factor in connection with the development of Russia's international policy."

American money kings are trying to put their golden heel on the neck of the Russian workers.

This is essential in the mission of Elihu Root, and he certainly is the right man for the job, if we only clearly understand what job is to be accomplished. It is of secondary importance to the rulers in Wall Street whether the new Government in Russia means another Czar or a Milyukof or some combination of social-patriots. Any combination will do, provided only the international revolutionary workers do not have their way.

The *New York Times*, for instance, openly states that although the government of the Czar was bad, its armies were at least able to fight.

It seems the historic task of the new autocracy in the United States to crush the revolution in Russia, to substitute for the old feudal autocracy the more efficient plutocracy of modern Imperialism, preferably in some sham form of so-called "democracy." Milyukof evidently was powerless against the mass-organization of the workers, but a Milyukof or any other representative of Russian Imperialism, backed up by American money, is able to crush the proletarian revolution to blood and corruption. Such is the noble mission of Elihu Root and Charles Edward Russell, who no doubt are competent and well selected servants.

The slogan of the capitalists in preparing their crime is "no separate peace," and the echo of the social-patriotic traitors is "no separate peace," ignoring the fact that both the allied capitalists and the revolutionary Left Wing Socialists in Russia don't want a separate peace. But if both use the same formula, it does not have the same meaning at all. There is the abyss of class-division between the no-separate peace of the Allies for the sake of crushing a rival and establishing world power for the exploitation of the world proletariat, and the no-separate peace of our Russian Left Wing comrades, who want a "general" peace based upon the revolutionary action of the workers in all countries against their Imperialistic exploiters. It is criminal or criminal stupidity not to discriminate clearly between those two fundamentally opposite conceptions.

Meyer London, Walling and his crowd, Ingberman and the scores of French and English social-patriots, who lashed Russia with cables urging "no separate peace," were moved by their desire to protect the Allied interests. Their action therefore is treason to the class-struggle in spirit and intended results. Those who want to respond to the call of the Russian revolutionists have only one answer: to prepare for revolution in their own country, not in some distant future, but during this war as a part of the international uprising of the world proletariat.

Our Russian comrades in their noble decision not to accept a separate peace from the hands of the German Imperialists, as long as there is a reasonable chance for an immediate general peace, realize that a proletarian revolution can only be accomplished as a world movement, and they rightly appeal to the world proletariat. In the meantime, they continue to fight their own capitalist class, to secure whatever results their partial efforts may permit them to conquer.

They at least have secured the release of their political martyrs and some other substantial gains of which we do not yet know the importance. They, however, did not yet secure the program promised to them after their successful overthrow of the government of the Czar. For promises of capitalists do not amount to the value of the paper on which they are written, if there is no power to enforce them, and our Russian comrades have more than efficient experience not to be fooled. It therefore is their positive duty to secure economic and political results now that their power is undeniable and to secure them before the American Capitalists will succeed in backing up the reactionary forces with their money, their industry and their organization. But even if the Russian workers succeed now in their demands, the results will be endangered if there is no response from the workers all over the world. The most important effect of the Russian Revolution should be the inspiration for the rest of the workers to follow the example, and if the rest does not act, they will be responsible at the same time for the failure of the heroic efforts of our Russian brothers.

If we fail to respond, if our only manifestation is an appeal to Russia to continue to fight for the interests of Allied Imperialism, if we have the brutality to ask our Russian comrades to continue to be slaughtered in order to coin more dollars and sovereigns for our masters, if we cannot prevent our Governments by keeping them busy in our own countries to send commissions and engineers and money to crush the Russian Revolution, then our Russian workers certainly will have no reason whatever to continue this capitalist war. It is not their concern whether German or Allied Imperialism is more or less successful, it is not their concern that Russian Imperialism should have a chance for more world power.

It is in the superior class-interest of the Russian, as well as of all other workers to do what is in their power to bring a general revolutionary movement in all of the countries. But if this proves to be utterly hopeless, if there is no response from the workers and if they cannot command a general peace it would be absurd to expect our Russian revolutionary comrades to continue to be slaughtered in the service of Imperialism. If they will have to give up their hope for a general peace through proletarian revolutions, the soldier comrades will most likely return home to complete important economic changes, leaving it to the Allied social-patriots, including the American pro-war Socialists and workers, to do their own fighting, if so they please. Some of the more intelligent American workers realize that in case the Russians withdraw from the battlefield, they will have to supply the millions to be slaughtered. Instead, however, of appealing to the Russian comrades to keep on fighting, they should unite to compel their capitalist masters to stop fighting altogether, which no doubt lies in the power of a combined effort of the American and Russian revolutionary proletariat.

No separate peace, as long as there is a fair chance for a general peace based on proletarian revolutionary movements, but not a man and not a cent for a war of Imperialism.

And the Russian workers will not even have much time to wait for revolutionary developments in other countries. Once the first bribe from Wall Street is accepted, Russia will rapidly come into the economic grasp of American Capital, and before long the Russian workers will feel the Iron Heel of American Plutocracy, and this will mean a harder fight than the overthrow of the Czar. Will the American workers awake to the situation before it is too late, and listen to the call of their Russian comrades?

The Young People's Socialist League of Chicago decided to resist conscription, as well as registration; so did a meeting of Socialists of conscriptive age in Pittsburgh.

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## The Arrest of Nesin and Graubard

TWO active members of the Social Propaganda League in Brooklyn were recently arrested in connection with the agitation to repeal the conscription Act. The two comrades are Meyer D. Graubard and George Nesin. Bail has been fixed at \$10,000 each, and the trial will be held in about two weeks. Nesin and Graubard were to hold a street meeting at Havemeyer and South Third, Brooklyn. Nesin opened the meeting, preparatory to introducing Graubard; but while in the midst of his introductory remarks, Nesin was placed under arrest. Graubard thereupon mounted the platform and protested, citing Nesin's arrest as an example of our "democracy." Graubard was then also placed under arrest.

The official complaint alleges:

"That about 8:30 P. M. on the aforesaid date at place aforesaid said defendant George Nesin did ascend to platform at the aforesaid place and addressed a crowd of persons present at the aforesaid place by saying: 'That we are here for purpose of opposing conscription, an act passed by the Congress of the U. S. They tell us Germany is an enemy country of ours which is not and they want you young men to take up arms against that country that the Congress or no other body of men had any authority to force such coercion on to the people of the U. S. and did continue to speak to the aforesaid people for a period of about ten minutes.'

"That the said Meyer D. Graubard did then ascend to the platform and did then and there point to George Nesin who had been placed under arrest by deponent and said to the people present to witness the coercion methods of the police department in suppressing their rights to speak and said further that no matter how many of them were arrested they were still too per cent strong to show to the people that the congress of the U. S. had no authority to enforce or coerce them to take up arms against Germany or any other country.

"Deponent further states that the aforesaid defendant by such acts and words did unlawfully and knowingly and wrongfully seriously disturb and endanger the public peace of the persons in the neighborhood there residing."

The sort of trials they have in Brooklyn is illustrated by the following from the official record of the "trial" of Henry Jager:

The court—You are ready, are you? Mr. Raymond (Jager's counsel)—I am not ready.

The court—Then we will go on now. I will deny your application for an adjournment.

Mr. Raymond—I make application for an adjournment.

The court—I deny the application.

Mr. Raymond—I have not had an opportunity to subpoena my witnesses.

The court—Proceed with the case. Mr. Raymond—if your honor only will give me until tomorrow.

The court—I have denied your application, counsellor, and the case will proceed. You may have your exception, that's all.

Mr. Raymond—Will your honor give me one-half hour to see if there are any witnesses in this court room that I may proceed?

The court—I have stated once, we will proceed with this case now. I will hear no further motion in the matter. You have had full opportunity. That's all.

Mr. Raymond—Will your honor give me two minutes?

The court—No, sir; not one minute; no, sir. You may decide now whether you want to call a witness or if you don't. Are there any other witnesses to be called?

We must defend our comrades. Others will follow. Money is needed. Send your contribution now to the Defense Fund, c. o. *The New Internationalist*, 3246 Kingsbridge Avenue, New York City. Workers, stand up!

THE Central Committee of the Local King's County Council has decided to meet and to continue the open-air meetings at the same place, corner, under the auspices of the headquarters.