

# Corrupters of Thomas Must Go, Too\*

By WILLIAM GALLACHER

**T**HE evidence submitted to the Tribunal, and the report presented to the Tribunal on the basis of that evidence, call for plain speaking.

Two Members of this House are being placed in the dock before the House and before the country.

The only thing that the House has to do is to accept without any hesitation the findings of the Tribunal, and, on the basis of those findings, to make the strongest possible condemnation of the members affected—Members who have shown, according to the evidence, an outstanding case of moral and political decay.

But it is not enough to condemn these men, important as that is.

Everyone can only hope that this example of moral collapse will be a warning to those who have been traveling, or are attempting to travel, the road which has been traveled by the ex-Colonial Secretary, in whom I am specially interested.

It would be folly to condemn the ex-Colonial Secretary as though this particular act on which the Tribunal has founded a decision has been some sudden aberration, dissociated from his past or from his colleagues.

What has the genesis of this present government to do with this moral and political collapse that is evident on the part of the ex-Colonial Secretary? Has the formation of the National Government nothing to do with it?

Here is one who, we are told, was an honored Member of the House. Men and women suffering in poverty spent their shillings and sixpences and pennies to make him a leader of his union, and you corrupt him and take him over there. *Has that nothing to do with what has been going on?*

Not just now should he have been prosecuted, but when he openly, callously and deliberately betrayed those who had spent their money and pinned their life's hopes on him.

The Prime Minister tells us about the blare of publicity in the press. Is he the only one that suffered from a blare of publicity in the press?

There was the honorable Member for Dumbarton Burghs (Mr. Kirkwood), there was myself, and there were others. Did anyone ever get up and protest against the blare of publicity, the lies and slanders that were made against us?

What are you dealing with? You are dealing with corruption.

Every Member who comes here immediately has temptation put into his path, and the very men to whom you are most considerate are the men who are subject to corruption.

But, while there may be one or two in the ranks of our movement who can always be corrupted, because the weakness is there, the main body of this party will never be corrupted, try as you may.

\* Speech in the British House of Commons.

HON. MEMBERS: Which party?

MR. GALLACHER: This party here. It may be information to Honorable Members opposite to know that I am a member of this party, and pay my dues regularly to this party—the Labor Party.

But the Lord President of the Council and the man who wept for himself in this House were the men who were responsible for getting me denied my rights within the movement.

When you are attacking the Communists, remember that in 1924 the Communist Party of this country performed a miracle such as the world has never known before.

We succeeded, according to an intelligent jury, in libeling the right Honorable Member for Derby (Mr. J. H. Thomas) by calling him a traitor. At that time, unfortunately, he was receiving support from many members on this side of the House in every attack he made on us.

The Honorable Member for Dumbarton Burghs will tell you that it was possible for him and others to be corrupted when the war was on. The opportunities were put in front of us, but we refused to be corrupted.

Then the press came out with a blare of publicity to say that we were corrupt anyway, that we were engaged in what right honorable gentlemen on the other side call subversive activities.

But we were always open; we were very simple. When the police came to ask us, "Did you do this, that or the other?" we replied, "Yes."

We were so honest. We did not know that we had been too honest until we found ourselves in jail.

What was behind our subversive activities? Look back in the files of the press, and you will find references to German gold.

Is there an honest man anywhere? No, not according to your standard.

When the Germans were defeated, and had no more gold, there were still subversive activities, and it became Moscow gold.

The Moscow gold has gone the way of the German gold, and I still carry on my subversive activities, but the kind-hearted Chancellor of this country provides the gold.

If the German gold and the Moscow gold had been less of legend and more of substance, I should probably have been on the way to dealing on the Stock Exchange myself.

I want to return to the question of the association of the ex-Colonial Secretary with the government, and to the fact that the Government was started on a basis of the betrayal of the working class movement of this country, and, where you have a government built up on a basis of betrayal, every encouragement is given for the development of corruption.

Therefore, while I condemn in the strongest possible manner the ex-Colonial Secretary, and while I am prepared to take the most severe action against him, because of his whole career, which has only culminated now; *I declare it to be a shame on the part of the House that it can condemn the ex-Colonial Secretary and leave his colleagues alone.*

His colleagues are associated with him, and have known of his conduct all along—all of them.

He talked of his vices, "if they are vices", but whatever he was addicted to in the way of gambling or anything else, they were all con-

scious of it and encouraged him in it, because they knew that the more he played about and frequented race-courses, and the more he got into society, the more he was in their hands.

If you could get the Honorable Member for Dumbarton Burghs and other Honorable Members here to come into your net—a tea party here, a tea party there—you would corrupt them if they came in contact with you, and you know it.

You corrupted the ex-Colonial Secretary. He was once an engine driver—an honest occupation, an occupation to be proud of.

He left that because his colleagues had confidence in him, and he was made a leader of a great trade union, a man in whom his colleagues had confidence.

What went wrong with him to corrupt him?

He did not suddenly develop corruption in himself, but he got into contact, as a result of being a trade union leader, with captains of industry, and politicians representing captains of industry.

They took him to the bar and they patted him on the back.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: And dressed him up.

MR. GALLACHER: The expert in corruption may well smile. He knows his own handiwork, and, when his handiwork is cast out, he is ready to go on with the job with somebody else.

Members on this side of the House have had a great lesson; let us hope that it will affect every one of us.

The working class movement ought to be protected against the corruptive influences of capitalism.

What does getting on in life mean? It means: "Get property, get money, get into society."

There are some of us here whom all the gold that was ever minted would not induce to leave our class, because we are proud of our class.

It is the only constructive class in the country. Take away the Royal Family, the aristocracy, the Stock Exchange, and all the great financiers and ship them off to Timbuctoo, and society would go on, industry would go on. There would be no corruption.

But, by the waving of some magic wand, get rid of the working class and where are you?

The ex-Colonial Secretary has gone and we must see that the government of which he was part goes.

I do not want to deal with individual Members of the Government, but the Lord President of the Council (Ramsay MacDonald) should be associated with the ex-Colonial Secretary, and should be with him now.

The ex-Colonial Secretary was always known as the "Artful Dodger" in the labor movement.

But the Lord President of the Council was a Fagin, who knew how to dangle before the eyes of his victims the delights of illicit activities.

"Get a career", this was always on his tongue. Never any suggestion of coming into the Labor Party to get an opportunity of fighting the workers' enemies—but "careers".

We do not want careers. We want a great united movement which will put those responsible for corruption out of business, and we will put them out of business.

I want to make a few remarks about the Attorney-General.

I have never studied law in the schools or technical colleges, but I study it quite a lot from practical experience in the dock.

I have never heard, in any case with which I have been associated, such remarks as were made by the Attorney-General yesterday, I never heard such palpable absurdities.

There has been talk about the necessity of being soft-hearted when a man is down.

I am a bit of an Irishman and there is a story of an Irishman who knocked a man down, and, when he was told to let him get up, he said, "No, I will not. I had too much trouble in getting him down."

That is how I feel about the ex-Colonial Secretary. I am not soft-hearted, but the Attorney-General seems to think that we on this side are soft-headed when he comes forward with such arguments as he presented yesterday.

*Lawyers are chuckling at the best legal joke for years. They are laughing at the Attorney-General.*

How can he tell us that it would not be fair to have a prosecution because all the material has been before the Tribunal and everyone knows all about it? What sort of story is that?

We are not told that it was not desirable to prosecute Dr. Ruxton. Was there a man or woman on the jury who had not been reading all about it day after day?

Can the honorable and learned gentlemen be serious in putting forward such a proposition, that there is no evidence to go to a court, and that the Tribunal has accepted all kinds of stories which would not be admissible in a court?

The Tribunal was composed of a judge and two barristers, men of experience in all that is acceptable in the law courts.

Do they not tell us in the report that they very carefully swept aside all that was not permissible and sifted out the evidence that was permissible, and on that basis came to their decision?

The Attorney-General's statement yesterday is an insult to the judge and the two barristers who weighed the evidence and decided that there had been an unauthorized disclosure.

The Attorney-General says that a man is innocent until he is proved guilty. Are we to understand that a man has to be proved guilty before he can be arrested and put in prison?

I have been arrested on many occasions, and the Honorable Member for Dumbarton Burghs and I have been in prison in cells next to one another.

We were held there week after week, although we had never been proved guilty. When we were tried, I was found guilty, and my honorable friend was found innocent.

What sort of story is this that a man is innocent until he is found guilty? That is what we are generally told, but, when an act is committed and some one is suspected of it, he is accused, and then the onus is on the authorities of preparing the case against him, and the jury has the responsibility of deciding on it.

I demand that these men be tried. It is the duty of the House to

accept the report of the inquiry and condemn these men and compel them to resign.

At the same time they have a right to appeal. If they feel that there is any possibility of injustice, they cannot be condemned for life.

*With all the corruption that is going on, with all the insidious and insistent corruption that one feels, one gets very suspicious that there are reasons why the government wants no prosecution.*

It may be that, if there is a prosecution, other things will come out.

The Honorable Member for Balham and Tooting (Sir A. Butt) is right. He demands a prosecution, and I back up the demand.

He wants it in the hope that he will be cleared; I want it in the hope that both of them will go to jail as a warning and an example to the people of the country and to Members of this House.

But a prosecution is demanded. The people of the country have demanded a prosecution.

I ask the Attorney-General to give up this foolish playing about with phrases which have no meaning, and to take the responsibility of making a prosecution against these men on the basis of the Official Secrets Act.

I demand a prosecution in the name of the people of this country.

Men and women in buses and trams, wherever you meet them, want to know why others are prosecuted and these are not.

They want to know, down in the south, where there have been acts of sabotage, why a number of shop stewards, against whom there is nothing, are dismissed from their jobs because of their labor sympathies.

They want to know why men have been thrown into prison on the most circumstantial evidence.

Are you afraid of something coming out? Make a prosecution or, if you do not, open your prison doors.

If you are not prepared to make a prosecution of these two, there is not a man who should be in prison.

Men have been hanged on evidence more circumstantial than you have in this case. Deny it if you can.

Make a prosecution, and, when you make it, understand that you are making a prosecution which will expose and end the role of the National Government, which was founded on corruption and the betrayal of the working class. [*Interruption.*] Laugh at your handiwork. The ex-Colonial Secretary was not laughing when he walked out today.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: You were the only one to laugh.

MR. GALLACHER: Yes, I had the right to laugh. For years and years he carried on every kind of duplicity, and when any charge was brought against him he could always get out of it by saying, "It is the Communists. I have not done anything wrong; it is these dirty Communists who are spreading these stories."

It was not the Communists who spread the stories about the Budget leakage, and he cannot use the Communists today to get out of that.

What a happy man he would have been if he could have got up there, and, instead of talking himself to tears, an old practice, had said, "Oh, it is these dirty Communists who spread the story."

He could not do that today, and now he is finished. I want to say that if there is a prosecution——

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: Swine.

MR. G. GRIFFITHS: On a point of order. Has an Honorable Member the right to call an Honorable Member who is speaking a swine?

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Withdraw.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Captain Bourne): It is certainly not Parliamentary.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Withdraw.

MR. J. GRIFFITHS: May I ask that the Honorable Member who made use of that unparliamentary expression should be named?

COLONEL MASON: I apologize to you, Sir, for using that unparliamentary word.

MR. J. GRIFFITHS: The honorable and gallant Gentleman has apologized to you, Sir. May I ask you to ask the honorable and gallant Gentleman to apologize to the House?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The honorable and gallant Gentleman must withdraw the expression formally.

COLONEL MASON: In deference to your ruling, Sir, I withdraw the expression forthwith.

MR. GALLACHER: I know that I have a very provocative manner, and therefore I did not myself feel like taking any exception to the remark.

*So long as such remarks are directed towards me, it can be taken for granted that I am free from corruption.*

I want to demand a prosecution, but while I demand it, I must make it clear that a prosecution would so expose this National Government, which is founded upon corruption and has carried on a career of corruption as evidenced by subsidies and what not.

AN HONORABLE MEMBER: What about murders in Russia?

MR. GALLACHER: I am dealing with this particular matter, but if there is any occasion to make a discussion on Russia, please arrange with your Front Bench, and I shall be only too happy to discuss it.

If there is a prosecution, this government, which has been based upon corruption and which threatens the country with wholesale corruption and destruction, will come to a speedy and well-deserved end.

I am glad that the ex-Colonial Secretary has gone from the scene, and I shall be happier still, a thousand times happier, when his colleagues have been forced to follow him to obscurity.