

minerals, pollute the oceans, rivers and atmosphere beyond the ability of living matter to survive, while the population and the size of cities expands till it is no longer possible to cope?

Marxists and *Labour Monthly* will need to pay more attention to this important aspect of the class struggle. Conservation is already slowly spreading inside the Labour Party, is fully accepted (on paper) by the Liberal Party and is also accepted by the Fabian Society and Socialist International and by the Building Workers' Union in Sydney.

S. JACOBY
Derby

General Strike

YOUR CRAMLINGTON article and pictures (*LM*, April 1976) were first class. What is important is that one of the people involved was able to give us the straight story.

Should any other readers have photographs, leaflets, strike bulletins or personal stories of the strike, we would be grateful if they would offer the material for use in a trade union-sponsored exhibition to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary. This is to be held in London at Covent Garden in July.

JOHN GORMAN, Exhibition Organiser
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BOOKS

Britain in the Nineteen Twenties

Noreen Branson

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 274 pp, £6.95

NOREEN BRANSON has succeeded in the difficult task of encompassing in 274 pages the story of the events, movements, technical advances and changing outlooks of 'the turbulent decade'. I heartily recommend it; the generation who lived through those days will find our memories organised into a coherent pattern. Others will welcome this recital of events they have heard about, for much of what was happening 50 years ago does have relevance to the present.

After the end of the 1914-18 war there was a feeling abroad that the old men who had led us into the ghastly experience of the war must go; the young would take over from those 'hard-faced men who had done well out of the war'. The Russian revolution and establishment of the first workers' socialist state fed these hopes.

These vague aspirations soon melted as we entered into a decade of slumps and head-on confrontations between capital and labour, with successive governments siding with the employers, and betrayal by many of those who could have furthered our hopes. Many chapters are rightly devoted to these protracted battles and to that highest point, the 1926 general strike.

During the twenties some sections of workers, especially in the newer, developing industries, did achieve advances in wages, but wages remained low in the older heavy industries. Perhaps the most noteworthy achievement was the reduction in working hours without loss of wages. Allowances to the unemployed and old people, despite some improvement, remained miserably inadequate and hedged about with demeaning restrictions. But above all, through their struggles the workers enhanced their stature—they were not 'hands' but upstanding men and women, capable of thinking and organising.

The scope of this survey is wide:

of great interest is the chapter 'Industrial Change', with the development of new industries and shift of manpower away from production into administration alongside insufficient modernisation of much of the means of production by capitalists who increasingly invested abroad. Other sections cover many aspects including attitudes to the Soviet Union, Ireland, the position of women, housing and education, formation of the Communist Party, new leisure activities (cars, cinema and radio), and growth of anti-war feeling.

The book gives a wealth of information and is by no means dry. There are lively accounts of such episodes as the revolt of the Poplar Guardians, and telling quotations from leading figures. One of these latter I found really startling: Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, asserted that the 1919 railway strike had been engineered by a small but active body of men who 'wrought tirelessly and insidiously to exploit the labour organisations of this country for subversive ends.'

HILDA VERNON

Long Road to Delano

Sam Kushner

International Publishers, 224 pp, available on order from Central Books

SAM KUSHNER brings out in this book most vividly the struggles of the farm workers of southern California as they emerge from serfdom and strive to build a strong, democratic, independent trade union. He digs deeply into the long, rich history of struggle by countless thousands of rural people, people with mixed nationalities, religions and cultures, fighting for some form of organisation and unity. The employers and land barons exploiting these differences show themselves determined to hold on to their cheap labour force.

Kushner analyses the early attempts at organising the workers and then outlines the new methods advocated by Cesar Chavez, the leader of the American United Farm Workers Union (UFWA), when he called for membership and organisation first and then action, as against the earlier experiments of action by a few with the object of inspiring others to join the movement.

The call, '*Huelga*', the Spanish word for strike, has echoed through the fields of southern California. The growers and establishment have reacted in a brutal way. The outlawing of parades held without permits, which had become their traditional method of publicising their demands, prevented the workers from marching in the cities and fields.

The UFWA were fighting opposition from all sides, not only from the growers, but from the so-called International Brotherhood of Teamsters Union, which was expelled in 1957 from the AFL-CIO after charges of corruption had been laid against its leadership.

The *Long Road to Delano* is not just a record of events, it is a call for assistance from all who can help the gallant UFWA with its approximate 40,000 members. The grape and lettuce boycott has won over important elements of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religious leadership. George Meany of the AFL-CIO said at the time that the Teamsters were clearly union busting. They are engaged in a campaign to wipe out the UFWA. For the largest union to seek to destroy this small, struggling union, representing some of the most exploited workers in the nation, is intolerable.

Whilst the UFWA is small, Cesar Chavez states: 'We are strong in spirit, we are wealthy in honesty and determination. We've made up our mind to accept whatever sacrifice