

If You Distrust the Politicians of All Parties, If You Want to Run Your Own Life for a Change Then--

VOTE FOR YOURSELF

By Refusing to Vote Tory, Labour, Liberal or Anything Else

in five days' time more than a million fully-grown adults in the British Isles will, by marking a cross on a piece of paper with a cross, indicate that they are prepared to have their country ruled over by a Conservative or Labour administration. (The sceptical may vote Liberal, Communist or I.L.P. since there is a chance from the start of these things coming to power!)

ing. "We have had enough of politicians trying to run our lives for us. From now on we run our own lives" the general attitude is "All the politicians are rogues. But somebody has got to run the country, in which case it's our duty to vote for the lesser of the two evils. So I'm voting Labour (or Tory)." There is even a point of view, again based on despair and hopelessness, which suggests that the Labour Government has been in power for six years and it is time they had a rest and the Conservatives given a chance to try their hand!



"MUTTON WILL BE PLENTIFUL" - Ministry of Food.

The Real Rulers of Britain

IT is part of the Anarchist criticism of the system of democratic election of rulers, that the real rulers of the country are never elected anyway. They just don't come up for election.

the Back Room, are the heads of the main State departments. As such, they are the effective rulers of Britain.

meeting. Sir Norman tells them. "At the moment the Foreign Office is the most important Government department of all, and here the chief man behind the scenes is Sir William Strang. Foreign Secretaries change, but he remains . . . When he gets his way, international conferences are held behind closed doors and nothing is said about what is going on until they are over."

In no constituency will the name of Sir Edward Bridges appear on a ballot paper; no voter will be able to mark with a cross his approval or otherwise of Sir William Strang, Sir Norman Brook, or Sir Frank Newsam.

Sir Edward Bridges is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury and head of the Civil Service; Sir Norman Brook is Secretary to the Cabinet; Sir William Strang is Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and Sir Frank Newsam is Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs.

Is it not clear that all this makes an absolute farce of politics, and hypocritical impudence of elections? What are we electing; what are we deciding?

These four men do not have the magic letters "M.P." after their names; they do not figure in Parliamentary debate, nor are they answerable to the people of Britain. And yet, "the Cabinet has little option but to go the way this quartet suggests", as we have just been told in an article in the London Star (11/10/51) by its Political Correspondent, John Carvel.

What are we to think when, a fortnight before a General Election which, as Mr. Churchill tells us, is a decisive one for the history of our country, we read: "Cabinets come and go, but these men remain, always behind the scenes, advising and guiding the activities of Ministers, and their ideas are nearly always accepted?"

The only real effect of the voting next week is that the electorate will choose whose names shall appear in the headlines for the next electoral period; whose signatures will appear on ministerial announcements; whose bottoms shall rest on ministerial chairs; which pompous asses will be told what they can and cannot do by the heads of the Civil Service.

Obviously, neither Mr. Carvel nor the editor of the Star can see the implications of this article, entitled "Men Who Rule Behind the Scenes," which is, when one thinks of it, an astonishing title for an article on government in a democracy!

Is that calculated to make us believe that it matters very much about the label a politician gives himself, when he nearly always accepts the ideas of a permanent civil servant? Note that word "Permanent". No suggestion there of having been elected for a specific period, to be judged by the people at the end and thrown out if found unsatisfactory. These men are permanent; they are the State, and we are told "the secret of their power is that they never reveal it."

All are aloof from politics and all have scores of assistants who constitute the real backbone of State administration in Britain. . . Without these men—and others—no administration, however talented, could last a week without chaos.

Surely the basic supposition in a democracy is that there is no "Government behind the Scenes"—that all decisions are made in the clear light of Parliamentary procedure, with the representatives of the people jealously watching over the interests of those who sent them there?

Sir Edward Bridges, for example, "is the man who, every year, collects the material on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer bases his Budget. If he doesn't agree with a proposal of the Chancellor . . . he never says so. He produces facts and figures to show why, for financial or economic reasons, the proposal should not be adopted."

It all depends what you mean by chaos . . . but if any read this who intend to vote—let them not be deluded that they are voting for social justice, for freedom, for greater equality, for peace in our time or even for houses. There are "financial and economic reasons" against these things, and the men who decide them, the "Men Who Rule Behind the Scenes" are permanent, and do not, in our democracy, present themselves for election.

But who are these four men? How is it that they can assert such influence when Government Of The People, By The People, For The People is the cornerstone of the British way of life?

[Something springs to mind. At conference after conference, for years, the Labour Party has approved the principle of Equal Pay for Women. The Labour Government has approved it in principle. Can it be that Sir Edward Bridges has shown why "for financial and economic reasons" it cannot be established in practice?]

Politicians come, and politicians go, but the State goes on. Not, we hope, for ever.

Well, as Anarchists have acutely pointed out before, there is a difference between Government and State, and although it can be argued that at election time we elect the Government, nothing is ever discussed—or even mentioned in polite society—about how the State got where it is to-day. And these four men, these Knights of

Sir Norman Brook attends all Cabinet meetings. "Sometimes the talk is so long and involved that next morning nobody is quite clear what was decided at the

UNION OF ANARCHIST GROUPS

Our leaflet "Advice to those about to Vote" is now available. Price 1/- per 100, plus postage.

Anarchist Anti-Election Meetings

THE London Anarchist Group will be holding a series of outdoor meetings, with loud-speaker van, at various pitches throughout London.

- Times and places: HAMMERSMITH FRI., Oct. 19th, at 7.30 p.m. DOWN PLACE, off King Street. STEPNEY SAT., 20th., at 7.30 WINTERTON ST., opp. Palladium Cinema, Commercial Rd. BRIXTON MON., 22nd., at 7.30 RUSHCROFT RD. (or nearby), off Brixton Road. CAMDEN TOWN TUES., 23rd., at 7.30 DELANCY ST., off Camden High St. EDMONTON GREEN WED., 24th., at 7.30 Nr. Edmonton Town Hall. Other platforms may be arranged. Above dates are definite. Anarchist support welcomed.

"Parliament has neither the knowledge nor the will to perform the task which labour thinks to be the only one of importance. . . The problems and concerns of the House of Commons are quite different from those which are the daily thoughts of 90 per cent. of the people of the country."—Ramsay MacDonald's pamphlet, prior to his "arrival" at Westminster.

"Politicians are a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of them, are at least one long step removed from honest men. I say this with greater freedom, being a politician myself."—Abraham Lincoln 1809-65, President U.S.A., (Speeches).





