

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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FEBRUARY, 1943

TWOPENCE.

Don't Go Down the Mine, Harry!

WORKERS ARE BECOMING a little tired of being given slogans when they ask for the loaves of improved conditions. For many months now the resentment of the miners, at bad working conditions and unjust treatment by the State, has been growing and demonstrating itself in strikes and in the universal working slow which lowered the per man output in almost every coalfield in the country.

The miners have many grievances, besides the usual ones concerning poor pay. Owing to the withdrawal of miners to the forces, the average age of miners has increased from 33 to 38, so that fewer and older men are expected to bear the burden of heavier work. In many pits the good seams are being left and the difficult ones worked, so as to get the high wartime price for the coal which is most costly in labour. The condition of the pits and pit machinery has deteriorated since the beginning of the war owing to the lack of men and materials for its maintenance. In addition there are many men in the mines with individual grievances because they have been dragged away from better jobs outside the mines which they had obtained in the days when the mine owners had no use for them.

The miners have been subjected to bullying of various kinds, but this has had little effect on the most independent section of the British workers. Now persuasion is being tried, and the miners have been confronted with new machinery for the settlement of disputes arising out of the running of the industry. The machinery is very much like any other negotiating machinery, *i.e.* a National Negotiating Committee with 11 members from each side, and a National Reference Tribunal of three independent members appointed by the Master of Rolls. The only important difference is that wage negotia-

tions will once again be on a national rather than on a district basis.

Surely it is time the workers learnt from experience that 'machinery' of this kind is always only a drag upon their activity and is, indeed, intended as such. This Will Lawther admitted when he said, "It is a serious attempt to prevent on either side any drastic upheaval either in peace or war." This kind of trickery should always be treated with the contempt it deserves. Only by their own direct action will the workers ever get the conditions they desire. From negotiating committees and 'independent' tribunals they can expect nothing beyond such mean sops as it is convenient for the capitalist to give them when his prosperity allows it.

As was to be expected, the Communists are full of syncophantic praise for the new machinery and hearty 'congratulations to the Mineworkers' Federation'. They choose the opportunity to demand that the federal organisation of the M.F.G.B. should be replaced by a highly centralised union, in which, no doubt, they hope to carry on their own activity to greater advantage.

Harry Pollitt also speaks his mind to the miners in a pompous little pep-talk pamphlet entitled 'Miner's Target'. Just as he is anxious for a second front on which he is unlikely to get the chance of dying, so Harry is anxious to speed up production on the coal face he himself will never work. He starts with a little bland flattery, and then goes on to pleading for just another 3 cwts. a shift, comrade! Next he demands co-operation with the State and the bosses in the Coal Control Scheme, and then waxes stern on absenteeism.

'How can any decent man voluntarily lose work at a time like this! To do so is a crime.'

'Avoidable absenteeism, lockouts, or strike stoppages do not damage vested interests.'

This sounds very much like the voice of Ramsay Macdonald.

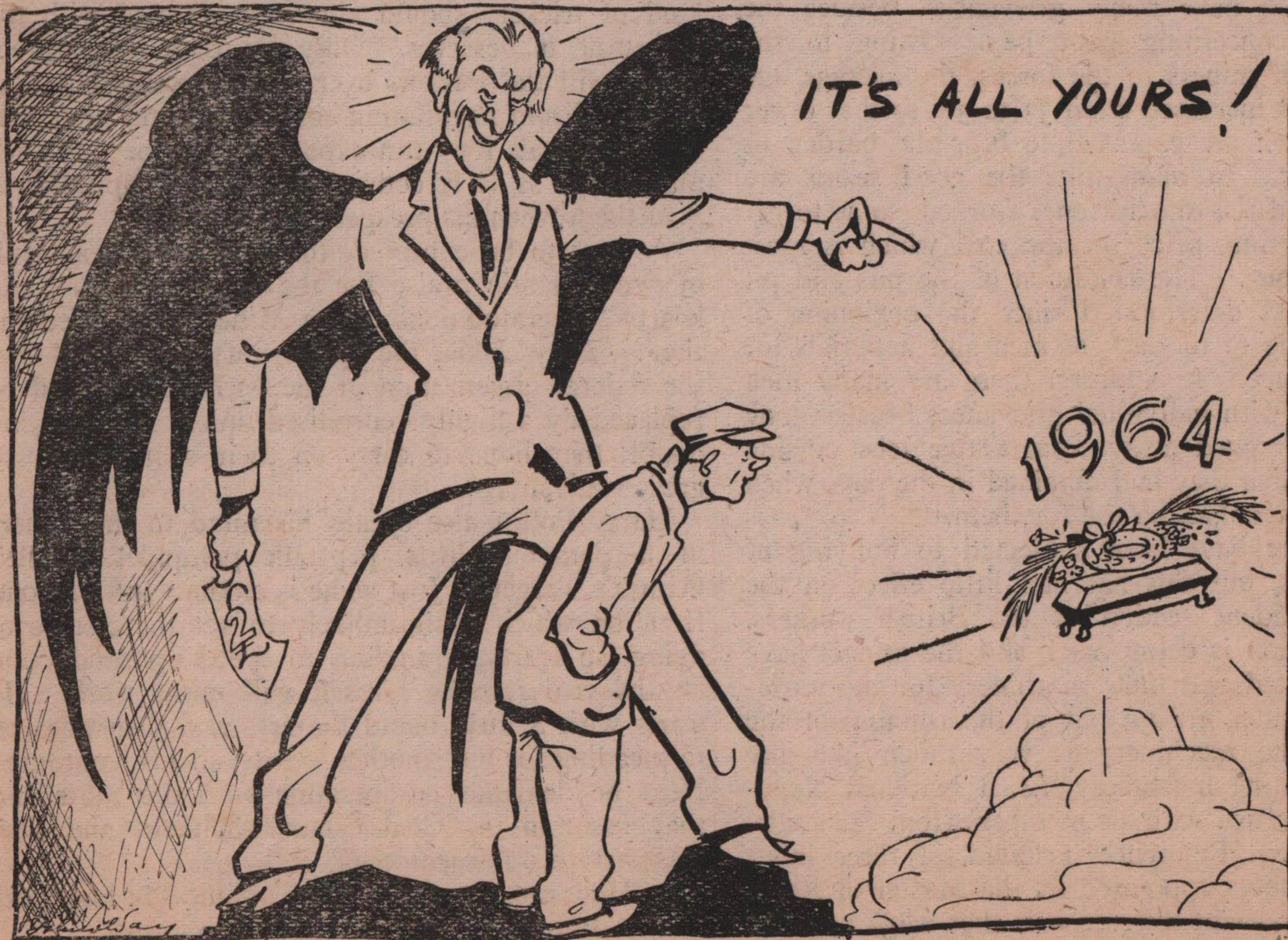
The pamphlet continues in this vein. The workers have to put up with inadequate equipment, to endure transference, and so forth. At every barricade Harry stands stalwartly beside the bosses. Appropriately, the concluding paragraphs contain a flattering reference to the 'excellent proposals of the Beveridge report'. That the 'revolutionary' Mr. Pollitt should come down to supporting such a manifest fraud is sufficient comment on him and his pamphlet.

The other section of the workers who are showing their desire to have some proof of the good world for which they are fighting are the locomotive drivers. It is impossible at this juncture to predict what will happen, for the union executive are obviously not enthusiastic about the strike and are merely following the belligerent attitude of their and-file members.

While, as in all cases, we support the day-to-day struggle for the immediate demands of the workers, there are several points in which the present railway situation calls for criticism. These points arise from

the difference in nature between the trade unionist and the syndicalist conceptions of action and organisation. For instance, one of the most unfortunate tactical errors of the locomotive drivers is the long delay in taking action, a delay which the government have no doubt already used to prepare for the dispute. This arises from the bureaucratic and reformist nature of the trade unions, where action is in reality vested in the permanent officials and dominated by the conception of the trade union as a part of the capitalist social order. To the trade unionist negotiation is desirable. To the syndicalist action is necessary, because in the last resort only the direct action of the workers can force the hand of the exploiters.

Again, as syndicalists we oppose the craft union form to which the A.S.L.E. & F. adheres. In the present situation the position of the locomotive men is palpably weaker because they are only 10% of the men in their industry, striking without the support of the remaining 90% of the workers. Only when all the workers on the railways are united in one syndicalist and federalist organisation, only when they can present a single and integrated front to the State and the capitalist will they be able to act efficiently, either in the daily struggle or in the revolutionary struggle for a free society.



Beveridge
Pie-in-
the-Sky

THE NORTH AFRICAN INTRIGUE

THE NEWSPAPER MAROONS and B.B.C. pyrotechnics go off once again for a famous victory, this time at Tripoli, where the forces of Freedom and Democracy are destroying the last remnants of Italian imperialism.

The reports are so full of military adulation that we are told little of what is being put in the place of the unexpectedly short-lived second Roman Empire. We are not told what replaces the bureaucratic tyranny of fascist rule, or what benefits the poverty-stricken people of this desert country are likely to obtain from a change of masters. In fact, we hear so little of the native Arabs that we can at times almost assume that North Africa is just a plain billiard table of sand where two armies chase each other for months on end without meeting a single presumptuous aborigine. However, in spite of all this lack of publicity, we can be sure that our gallant brasshats are giving the natives a fair taste of what it means to live under a free flag. If they are really lucky, they are probably enjoying the freedom of the Rhodesian miners and the Indian workers, the free-

dom to be starved by the boss or to be shot by the State.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the shortening littoral of the North African front there are further interesting political events in the fight for freedom. Some weeks ago we greeted with no regret the hasty exit of Darlan from the stage of international intrigue. Many of the Left-wing and Centre politicians, both in this country and America, calculated that with Darlan out of the way the reactionary nature of the American-upheld regime in North Africa would be mitigated.

The appointment of Marcel Peyrouton to the Governorship of Algeria will no doubt shake their facile optimism. Peyrouton is a French politician of the most extreme reaction and shiftiness. Before the war he was a bitter opponent of any kind of working class movement in France, and advocated a close rapprochement between France and the fascist government of Italy. When Petain set up his government Peyrouton became Minister of the Interior, in which post he had control of the police and was extremely active in the persecution of any kind of opponent in unoccupied France. He sent very many revolutionaries of all shades to concentration camps in which the most inhuman conditions prevailed.

The fact that he left the administration on the accession of Laval can thus be explained by motives of political rivalry rather than by any intrinsic superiority of Peyrouton over Laval. Politicians are all much of a kidney, and are always dominated in their actions far more by the necessities of keeping power than by any personal or ideological qualities.

This hurried appointment of such an extreme reactionary shows that, in spite of the hopes of some of the Leftists, the policy of the Americo-French military and political bloc in North Africa has not changed since the death of Darlan. It shows, moreover, that the appointment of Darlan himself was no mere accident, but part of a carefully elaborated plan for establishing a reactionary political and military base for the attack on Europe in the name of Freedom. It also demonstrates clearly enough the kind of regime which the Allies would impose on France if they succeeded in ejecting the Germans, a regime of tyranny, obscurantism and persecution in which Laval's attempt to crush out all revolutionary activity would be maintained to the utmost degree of brutality. However, we do not imagine the people of France, once they have arms in their hands, will take very easily to the return of such a Government.

ANARCHIST INDUSTRIAL POLICY

**TRADE UNIONISM OR
SYNDICALISM** 24 pp. 3d.

By

TOM BROWN

War Commentary readers are already familiar with Tom Brown's clear, straightforward articles. This pamphlet deals with the present union organisation, and contrasts with it the syndicalist methods of workers' organisation.

ANARCHIST LAND POLICY NEW LIFE TO THE LAND

By

GEORGE WOODCOCK

32 pp. 6d.

This is not just another pamphlet. Its information and arguments are of importance to all concerned with agriculture. This is a sincere job of work, approached scientifically; it will repay a careful study and then it should not be put too far away.

Douglas Rogers in the "Tribunal"

THE LIBERATION OF N. AFRICA

Documents from Algiers

The following extracts are taken from two letters from North Africa which were published in the "La Marseillaise" of 24th January. For obvious reasons of safety, the names of the signatories were not published. While we have no proof of the authenticity of these letters, it is unlikely that the paper in question would go to the risk of publishing them if they were patently false. Also they confirm the various rumours and less exhaustive newspaper reports which have appeared recently. It should not be forgotten that the publication of such documents condemns the de Gaullists themselves for their continued collaboration with the American and English governments and Giraud, who are parties to this state of affairs.

Mogador, through which pass all the vital communications of the Allies, is directed by Colonel Merlin and protected by a staff selected by the Germano-Italian commission. Merlin is one of Laval's men.

Civil Defence services are entirely under the control of General Francois, a notorious Vichyite, who has armed all his men and allows some of them to shoot at anti-Fascists at night.

A diplomatic bag carries to Vichy, via Spain, the reports of the French officials (this was still so two weeks ago).

Syndicalists who attempted to reconstitute their organisations were hunted down and their leaders are still rotting in concentration camps.

A dozen young people who fought on the 7-8 November, were arrested and threatened with Court Martial, for sticking bills expressing loyalty to de Gaulle. The Allied authorities refused to interfere in French internal policy in order to obtain their release. They also refused to intervene to stop the internment, pronounced after the 8th November, of the democrats and pro-Allies guilty of desiring the arrival of de Gaulle or of declaring their sentiments in public.

"Native" Jews are mobilised separately, in a worker's camp at Cheragam, and are employed in road making. Colonel de la Varene, a notorious anti-semitic, commands them.

Jewish children are still turned away from the secular schools, and young students no longer have access to the University; the administrators appointed by the economic aryanisation service remain in place in order to manage Jewish wealth.

All the political internees, whether French, native or foreign, remain in the camps.

The same evening as the B.B.C. gave out your (de

Gaulle) declaration of fidelity to republican principles, 17 Republicans were arrested in Algiers.

On the 29th December, and on the instigation of Governor-General Chatel, General Bergeret and General Juin, with the authorisation of Mr. Murphy, the *garde mobile* commenced a great police operation, of which London radio has given you a false report. The official communiqué states that the arrested persons were proceeded against on three heads of accusation:

1. Complicity in the assassination of Admiral Darlan;
2. The organisation of an attempt on General Giraud;
3. The organisation of an attempt on Mr. Murphy.

Now, who were arrested? What agents of the Axis? They arrested our own friends, leaders of the Gaullist movement or instigators of the *putsch* which allowed the Allies to take possession of Algiers . . . What can one believe or think? Many of our friends are discouraged. Public opinion is puzzled. The natives are restless. Falsehood triumphs, threatening to involve us in civil war and precipitate the defeat of the allies. We see the good suffer for the bad, the regime of yesterday continue and strengthen itself, the internees immured in prisons where more of them die each week. While the London radio announces the liberation of the detainees from the Algerian camps, these men see their position worsened and are still menaced by the machine guns. Can this last without danger to the Allies?

What have we attained after two months of contact with our English and American friends? Our disillusion is great. If for two years we were persecuted by the Vichyites and collaborationists, that was to be expected. We knew the risks we ran and when one of us was arrested and condemned, it was a fighter the less, but the gap was filled immediately, and our work continued. We should never have believed that after the arrival of the Allies the situation would not be changed. Yet not only have none of our friends been freed from the prisons of North Africa, but others have been arrested.

OPEN LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

Every Sunday evening at 7 p.m.

KINGSTON TRADES AND LABOUR CLUB

Grange Road (Back of G.P.O.)

FEB. 7th. SYNDICALISM THE ROAD TO
WORKERS' CONTROL. . .

Ken Hawkes.

FEB. 14th. LAND AND INDUSTRY.
George Woodcock.

PEYROUTON'S RECORD

It was Peyrouton who imprisoned the former ministers, Paul Reynaud, Daladier and Blum, in the castle of Bellevoisin. He was responsible for the first anti-semitic laws. Some 15,000 Frenchmen and foreigners were arrested at his instructions and interned without trial.

* * *

In November 1940 he went to Paris and stated to the French press: "A policy of collaboration with Germany is necessary. It is the only way of assuring the recovery of our country." He congratulated himself on having been able, thanks to the co-operation of the occupying authorities, to suppress "communist" activities, and he concluded: "All propaganda against the New Order will be broken with the same energy." He was on good terms with the German press, for whose benefit he boasted of being "the first Frenchman to introduce national-socialist methods into North Africa", and of having created in France a political police similar to the Gestapo. Peyrouton even said in this interview "My enemies accuse me of being a Hitlerite; I am proud of it."

* * *

In the Argentine, Peyrouton lavished assurances of fidelity to Petain. Against de Gaulle and his companions he spoke indignantly. "They thought only of flight, flaunting across the Channel a heroism which disguised badly their concern to get out of the way".

(La Marseillaise, 24/1/43.)

LECTURES

EVERY FRIDAY EVENING

7.0 p.m.

- FEB. 5th *The French Terrorists*
JOHN HEWETSON
- FEB. 12th. *Recital of Negro Folk Music*
MAX JONES AND ALBERT MCCARTHY
- FEB. 19th. *The Future of Britain*
F. A. RIDLEY
- FEB. 26th *The Beveridge Report.*
TOM BROWN
- FEB. 26th *The Colonial Blacks are on the Move*
CHRIS JONES
- MARCH 5th. *Poetry reading.*
- MARCH 19th. *Bakunin*
GEORGE WOODCOCK

**QUESTIONS DISCUSSION
FREEDOM PRESS ROOMS**

27, BELSIZE ROAD, LONDON, N.W.6.
(Swiss Cottage tube: 31 'bus route)

Direct Action

...The following excerpt from Michael Bakunin's Works, Volume IV. makes timely reading.

"The State . . . will always be an institution of domination and of exploitation. . . . a permanent source of slavery and misery." How then, shall the State be destroyed? "First, by the organization and the federation of strike funds and the international solidarity of strikes; secondly, by the organization and international federation of trade unions; and, lastly, by the spontaneous and direct development of philosophical and sociological ideas in the International. (*International Workingmen's Association, founded 1864.*)

"Let us now consider these three ways in their special action, differing one from another, but, as I have just said, inseparable, and let us commence with the organization of strike funds and strikes.

"Strike funds have for their sole object to provide the necessary money in order to make possible the costly organization and maintenance of strikes. And the strike is the beginning of the social war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, while still within the limits of legality. Strikes are a valuable weapon in this two-fold connection; first, because they electrify the masses, give fresh impetus to their moral energy, and awaken in their hearts the profound antagonism which exists between their interests and those of the bourgeoisie, by showing them ever clearer the abyss which from this time irrevocably separates them from that class; and, second, because they contribute in large measure to provoke and to institute among the workers of all trades, of all localities, and of all countries the consciousness and the fact itself of solidarity; a double action the one negative and the other positive, which tends to constitute directly the new world of the proletariat by opposing it, almost absolutely, to the bourgeois world:"

"Once this solidarity is seriously accepted and firmly established, it brings forth all the rest—all the principles—the most sublime and the most subversive of the International, the most destructive of religion, of juridical right, and of the State, of authority divine as well as human—in a word, the most revolutionary from the socialist point of view, being nothing but the natural and necessary development of this economic solidarity. And the immense practical advantage of the trade sections over the central sections consists precisely in this—that these developments and these principles are demonstrated to the workers, not by theoretical reasoning, but by the living and tragic experience of a struggle which each day becomes larger, more profound, and more terrible. In such a way that the worker who is the least instructed, the least prepared, the most gentle, always dragged further by the very consequences of this conflict, ends by recognizing himself to be a revolutionist, an anarchist, and an atheist, without often knowing himself how he has become such".

NOW and KROPOTKIN SELECTIONS.

.....We apologise to readers who have ordered copies of these two publications and have not yet received them. Publication has been delayed owing to difficulty experienced by our printers to find binders able to undertake our work.

The Kropotkin Selections, cloth edition (8/6) should be ready by the beginning of February and the paper edition 2/6) by the end of February

Kropotkin's Mutual Aid

'The WAR of EACH AGAINST ALL'

IN THE LAST article we saw that the capitalist ideologists eagerly embraced the conception of Darwinism as an unbridled competition of each against all, which they held to weed out all individuals save those "best fitted to survive". Thomas Henry Huxley expressed this view in the following terms:

" . . . from the point of view of the moralist, the animal world is on about the same level as a gladiator's show. The creatures are fairly well treated, and set to fight; whereby the strongest, the swiftest, and the cunningest live to fight again another day. The spectator has no need to turn his thumb down, as no quarter is given . . ."

And further on in the same paper he declares that what obtains among animals, is also true of primitive men:

" . . . the weakest and stupidest went to the wall, while the toughest and shrewdest, those who were best fitted to cope with their circumstances, but not the best in another way, survived. Life was a continuous free fight, and beyond the limited and temporary relations of the family, the Hobbesian war of each against all was the normal state of existence."

It was to show that this conception was very far from corresponding with the facts of nature, in what we know of both animal and human life, that Kropotkin wrote the papers in the *Nineteenth Century*, which he later collected together into the book *Mutual Aid*. The Huxleyan views which the capitalists took to themselves were obviously at variance with the teachings and beliefs of Anarchism; yet Kropotkin did not write *Mutual Aid* simply in order to vindicate anarchist ideas in a merely controversial way. He never allowed his anarchism to lead him into making a partial selection from the facts for the sake of making out a "case". In his introduction to *Mutual Aid*, he describes the observations he made during his explorations of Siberia with Poliakoff:

"We were both under the fresh impression of the *Origin of Species*, but we vainly looked for the keen competition between animals of the same species which the reading of Darwin's work had led us to expect, even after taking into account the remarks of the third chapter (p. 54)."

Kropotkin pointed out that it is by no means always the longest teeth and the sharpest claws that ensure survival of a species among animals. On the contrary, the most successful are those in which the individuals, so far from competing with each other, eliminate this competition altogether, and instead combine among themselves for the purpose of secur-

ing food, of defence against their enemies, or for safeguarding the young during the breeding season. He showed that many species even of predatory animals, such as certain eagles, combined for the purpose of hunting for food. Other animals, on the other hand, whose members are individually poorly equipped for attack or defence, defeat their more powerful enemies by combining together in groups. This tendency to form groups for social purposes he called Mutual Aid, and he demonstrated that the operation of this principle was a much more potent influence in securing survival than mutual struggle. Kropotkin's book is really a development and amplification of the view put forward by the Russian biologist Kessler, whom he quotes in his first section:

"I obviously do not deny the struggle for existence, but I maintain that the progressive development of the animal kingdom, and especially of mankind, is favoured much more by mutual support than by mutual struggle . . . All organic beings have two essential needs: that of nutrition, and that of propagating the species. The former brings them to a struggle and to mutual extermination, while the needs of maintaining the species bring them to approach one another and to support one another. But I am inclined to think that in the evolution of the organic world—in the progressive modification of organic beings—mutual support among individuals plays a much more important part than their mutual struggle."

A recent writer has pointed out the same principle in regard to the actual history of human society:

"The early members of the human family . . . the fossil hominids that are often termed palaeoanthropic, were not our direct evolutionary ancestors; in the pedigree of *Homo Sapiens* they represent the side branches of the main stem. And yet their bodies were better equipped than ours for certain physical functions such as fighting. The canine teeth of Eoanthropus, or Piltown Man, for instance, were formidable weapons."

(V. Gordon Childe, *Man makes himself*.)

How then did *Homo Sapiens* survive whilst the cave bear and the sabre-toothed tiger disappeared? These solitary animals had only themselves to rely on; but human beings lived in society and practiced mutual support. They used mutual defence, and learned to implement their individual physical equipment by means of tools. As Gordon Childe says, "In a sense the possibility of making artificial substitutes for bodily defences is a consequence of their absence."

It is clear that the idea that mutual aid is a powerful factor in securing evolutionary survival

must imply that men have always lived in societies, have always been social creatures. Kropotkin devoted a considerable amount of his book to showing that living in societies is widespread among animals and is by no means a purely human acquirement. The work of Lewis Morgan (best known nowadays through Engels' work based on it—*The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State.*), and of many others, including that of Elie Reclus, who, like Kropotkin, came to his anarchist convictions as a result of his scientific researches in anthropology, had shown already that social groupings in *tribes* can universally be traced as preceding societies in which *families* are the predominant grouping.

In spite, however, as we remarked in the last article, of these results, which are extensively confirmed by many observers, such views by no means hold the field to-day. In order to accept capitalist society it is necessary to regard nature as Huxley did, with the "Hobbesian law of each against all" as the "normal state of existence". Thus H. G. Wells, in his popular *Short History of the World*, states "True" (Cro-Magnon) men

"ousted the Neanderthal man by competing successfully for the same food; they probably made war upon their grisly predecessors and killed them off" (p 31).

He implies in this short passage three propositions for which there is no evidence at all. (1) It is implied that true men ousted Neanderthal men by successful competition in the same food supply. The assumption therefore is that the food supply was limited and could not support the existing population. Here is Malthus' idea once more. (2) That true men made war on Neanderthal men. (3) That Neanderthal men were "grisly", *i.e.* presumably, savage and addicted to horrible practices. There is no evidence at all for these loose assumptions. In all of them lies implicit the idea of internal struggle, for which observation gives no proof.

Wells later declares:

"Probably the earliest human societies, in the opening stages of the true human story, were small family groups. Just as the flocks and herds of the earlier mammals arose out of families which had remained together and multiplied, so did the earliest tribes. But before this could happen a certain restraint upon the primitive egotisms of the individual had to be established."

It will be seen that here lies the justification for governmentalism and authority. Kropotkin's work, as we shall discuss in the final article in this series, demolishes the basis on which this ideology rests. Wells then goes on to speak of the fear and jealousy and respect inspired by the "old man" who ruled over the family according to these extensive assumptions.

As Morgan, among many others had already shown at the time when Kropotkin wrote, the monogamous family group grew up only gradually out of group marriage in which sexual affairs were wholly communistic and promiscuous—that in fact the family as Wells envisages it developed not before, but after the tribe. Kropotkin makes this point very clearly.

Freud, in his work, *Totem and Taboo*, similarly ignores the evidence and assumes that the family ruled over by a tyrannical and implacable "old man" is the primordial organization of society. Such views are completely at variance with the facts, but make an excellent base on which to erect an ideology in agreement with capitalist ideas and practice.

Since Kropotkin wrote *Mutual Aid*, many primitive tribes in all parts of the world have been closely studied by a large number of different observers. In spite of the widely differing geographical distribution of these studies, despite the wide variety of race and the large number of observers, certain characteristics of primitive society are found to be remarkably uniform in these various accounts. Everywhere are found sociability, mutual trust, and absence of violence and strife within the group. Thus the African pygmies never steal or kill, no such act having occurred within the memory of their oldest member (Van den Bergh). The Veddahs of Ceylon are "as peaceable as it is possible to be. They are proverbially truthful and honest" (Bailey). The Semang of Malaya have no form of government. "Freedom, but not licence, is the principle of the Semang group, and the characteristic of each individual". They eat in common and share all their food; drunkenness and theft are absolutely unknown (Schebesta). The Negritos of the Phillipine Islands are wholly pacific, any member of any other tribe being welcomed in each others' homes. To the question of a missionary (Vanoverbergh) as to whether they would allow Negritos from further off to hunt in their forests, the answer was, "Yes, we cannot forbid them. If they like to come here and hunt in our forests, they are allowed to do so—why not?". Similarly Eskimos cannot understand the profession of soldiering, and have no words for murder or theft. As a final example in this short selection (for which I am indebted to my friend M.F. and, indeed, for much other help), two observers say of the Punan people of Borneo, who have no social classes and no private property, everything being communal, that the Punan himself

"is a likeable person, rich in good qualities and innocent of vices. He never slays or attacks men of other

(continued on p. 12)

WE SUSPECTED IT!

"Mr. J. R. Postlethwaite, London Regional Food Officer, at the opening of a British Restaurant at West Ewell, declared:—

"We have abolished eggs—we are not going to bring feeding stuffs here to keep poultry alive.""

Observer 24/1/43

MINERS ENJOY THE WAR

"Two miners, Griffiths and Arthur Banner, brothers aged 26 and 32, accused at Porth, Glamorgan, yesterday of absenting themselves from the mines without reasonable excuse, pleaded their mother was ill and could not send them off to work.

The stipendiary magistrate, Mr. Stanley Evans, told them. "The nation is almost gasping for breath and is dependent upon the production of coal to secure victory.

"The War may be prolonged and men unnecessarily killed because people like you fiddle.

"You are pleasing yourselves and almost enjoying the war."

He fined them both £15, with two guineas costs."

Daily Express 22/1/43

"In 1939, 171 out of every 1,000 miners employed were killed or injured.

In 1941, the figure rose to 220 per thousand."

Reynolds News 23/1/43

AMERICAN DOG'S DIET.

"If you don't want to share your coming two-and-a-half pound meat ration with the dog, Fido's diet will suffer unless the protein, iron and vitamin content of meat is replaced. Since glandular meats are not included in the ration, both you and your dog are free to eat heart, liver, kidney, spleen and brains without restriction. Lightly cooked, these foods are even better for the dog than the muscle meats usually fed to him."

Bread and Butter, New York 13/11/42

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Organ of the Italian anarchist movement in America (weekly). 2d. (postage 1d.)

JUST JAW WHILE WE RUN THE SHOW

"I am anxious that our new industrial organisations through joint production committees should be made a success.

It is not intended that it should in any way supersede the management, whose duty it is to manage the whole production machine. It is the beginning of democracy in the factories with the elected representatives of the workers to discuss and suggest just as Parliament discusses and suggests while the Government has to decide and act."

Sir Stafford Cripps at a North-West Factory—

Through

WASTE.

"Allegations that "acres" of savoy cabbages are rotting in Somerset and being fed to cattle were made at Somerset Farmers' Union executive committee.

Mr. F. C. Callow, secretary of the Cheddar Horticultural Branch, described the waste as "scandalous". He said that people in his area complained of having to eat "cow" cabbage and tinned beans at British Restaurants."

Observer 24/1/43

ARMY OF BUREAUCRATS GROWING

"Britain's 45,000,000 citizens are now controlled by an army of more than 1,000,000 "officials."

These officials do everything from registering births, marriages or deaths, to feeding, teaching, taxing, imprisoning, giving gas-masks and coupons, and looking after people in numerous other ways. They are the human machine that runs the country.

In 1930 there were fewer than 300,000 civil servants To-day there are 700,000. In addition there are about 200,000 local government officers, spread over 1,530 different authorities and scores of thousands of school teachers, police and others." *Evening Standard* 23/1/43

"KNOW THIS EMPIRE" —MORRISON

"Physically, the British Empire covers one-quarter of the area of the world, divided almost equally between the northern and southern hemispheres. Its peoples number 445,000,000, of whom fewer than 70,000,000 are white." *Evening Standard* 19/1/43

ARTIFICE

Caption to a picture in the American magazine *Life*.

"The oath of allegiance is read by officer to the recruits. The flag waves in a breeze artificially whipped up by an electric fan."

BEVERIDGE AGAIN!

When tackled about equal compensation for war injuries for women, Beveridge replied.

"If the Flat Rate for women were put up to the same point as the Flat Rate for men, it would be near women's earnings and wages, and he thought on the whole was undesirable."

Further on, he agreed, "that compensation to housewife should be very little above his minimum subsistence basis."
Daily Mirror 19/1/43

So Sir William Beveridge doesn't appear to be so concerned with the welfare of the people, as the papers try to show.

the Press

REWARD FOR VALOUR!

"A soldier with 100 per cent. disability, married and with three children, is entitled at present rates, to £3 4s 7d. a week. This sum, except for the odd 7d., is the same amount that Sir William Beveridge has suggested for an unemployed man with a wife and three children as a mere subsistence standard."

WOOLWORTH'S INGENUITY.

F. W. Woolworth and Co., report for 1942 a further reduction of profits by 11 per cent. after a drop of nearly 20 per cent. in 1941. The final dividend is maintained at 30 per cent. but the cash bonus, which a year ago was reduced from 15 per cent. to 5 per cent., is now omitted altogether. The total distribution for 1942 on the £7,500,000 of ordinary capital is thus 50 per cent. against 55 per cent. the year before and 65 per cent. two years earlier.

Considering the constant shrinkage of civilian supplies, it argues much ingenuity that the firm has managed to maintain its trade relatively well."

Manchester Guardian 26/1/43

WHAT HAS LORD VANSITTART TO SAY?

"In the North the Germans are building a railway to Finland using German soldiers for the work. These soldiers, mostly deserters, are imprisoned in three labour camps at Nordreise in North-West Norway, and are reported to be treated, if possible, worse than Russian prisoners. Mortality among them is exceptionally high.

Feeling among German soldiers runs high because of conditions in the penal camps, and their dissatisfaction is expressed in sabotage. The Germans had to admit that a large fire recently started at Herdla aerodrome, when workshops and large quantities of valuable material were destroyed, and the blowing up of the German radio-location station at Jaergen were the work of German soldiers.
Sunday Times 10/1/43

"DEMOCRACY" IN SOUTH AFRICA

"A hint that South African natives may be allowed to form their own trade unions was given by General Smuts in a reply to a deputation representing the Christian Council.

"If one could form native trade unions along sound lines I think that would be one of the best steps forward I would favour it and accept it with both hands." he said.

Representation in Parliament, however, he added, would be a very difficult matter."

News Chronicle, 19/1/43

JAPANESE "ATROCITY"

"Prisoners in Japan work an eight hours day in factories and at the docks."
News Chronicle, 7/1/43

An "atrocious" Japanese and British private employers have not perpetrated.

FISHY BUSINESS

"People in many Kent seaside towns, where the fish shops are often empty, have a grievance. They complain that although fish are plentiful in the nearby sea there are restrictions on catching them. Already one authority the Whitstable Urban Council, is protesting because fishing permits are refused to all except commercial fishermen. Many of these are now in the Services, and the Council is urging that recognised people should be given permission to fish.

Even if people are not allowed to go out in boats, it is pointed out that quite good catches can be obtained by lines from the shore."
Evening Standard 21/1/43

Sunday Times 10/1/43

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Pages of Revolutionary History

THE PARIS COMMUNE

Part I The Prelude

ON THE 4th OF September, 1870, the Council of Ministers announced to the people of Paris in a curt proclamation that the Emperor Napoleon III had been taken prisoner three days before by the German army at Sedan. The tortuous intrigues of the last years of the Empire reached in this event their inevitable conclusion. For years Louis Napoleon had been trying feverishly to reconcile the contradictions within his tottering and corrupt state. He had tried at home to erect a balance of forces by playing off the workers against the bourgeoisie.

He granted in a limited way the right to form trade unions which had been denied by the Jacobins in the Revolution. He even, in 1864, granted the right to strike, and, although at the same time he gave material assistance to the employers against the workers, the latter years of his reign were marked by a number of trade disputes which ended favourably for the workers. Towards the end he embarked on a sham liberal constitution with a parliament which included such revolutionaries as the republican writer Henri Rochefort.

But these expedients availed him little. The corruption within his own administration spread apace, and among the people a ferment of discontent was working steadily towards revolution. The conspiratorial movement led by Auguste Blanqui, the disciple of Babeuf, was becoming very influential both in the working class districts of Belleville and Menilmontant and also among the young *déclassé* intellectuals who swarmed in the Quartier Latin.

THE INTERNATIONAL

More important, the genuine working class revolutionary currents, were gathering strength among the artisans of Paris. The International, which had been crippled by the persecution of 1868, had achieved a rapid revival, and its Parisian membership was now in the neighbourhood of 70,000. Its leading ideology was still Proudhon's anarchism, which had dominated the working class for a quarter of a century. By 1870, however, the more revolutionary ideas of Bakunin were beginning to influence some of its militant members. (Marx, as Engels admitted, had, at that time, very little influence among the Parisian workers). In addition to the International, a further working class body (the Federation of Syndicated Workers' Chambers) was founded in January, 1870. This was an association of the restricted trade unions allowed under the Imperial law. It was important not because of its size or influence at the time of its foundation, but because it represented the beginning of the industrial course, which later in the century French working class action was to follow in the Syndicalist movement.

Besides these more or less organised movements, the later years of the 1860's saw a great revival of the revolutionary clubs which were a traditional part of Parisian political life. Here demagogues and honest revolutionaries expounded their various and often extravagant social views to the Parisian workers. The majority

of the clubs were dominated by individual figures, and as a whole they tended to hark back to the Jacobinism of 1848. They had their counterparts among the intelligentsia in various little papers run by individual revolutionaries such as Felix Pyat and Henri Rochefort. Almost all these "revolutionary" papers had the same neo-Jacobin attitude, and in them, as in the proceedings of the left-wing clubs there was to be found little of constructive social value. Except in a primitive form among the Proudhonists the idea of the social revolution had yet hardly any significance for the Parisians. Political revolution, the revolution of conspiracies, barricades, and *coup-d'états* was still, as in 1848, the dominant idea among working-class as well as bourgeois militants. It was only the actual experience of the Commune that made the social revolution a living need for the workers of France.

By

George Woodcock

THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

By 1870 the Empire became so patently insecure that Napoleon had to look round for better expedients than his clumsy policy of playing off the workers against the bourgeoisie. He played the traditional last card of the uneasy tyrant and began to prepare for an imperialist war. This choice was further influenced by the rise of Prussia to a dominant position in Germany after the defeat of Austria at Sadowa in 1866, and it was against Prussia that he struck in July 1870. His aim was that perennial desire of French chauvinists, the extension of French frontiers beyond the left bank of the Rhine.

He encountered no reluctant opponent, for Bismarck saw in war with France the opportunity for Prussia finally to establish the unity of Germany and of the Hohenzollerns, and at the same time gain a dominant position as the leading military power on the continent. Ever since 1866 von Moltke had been preparing militarily for a major European conflict. Bismarck was so eager for war that he precipitated an outbreak of hostilities by the famous faked telegram of Ems.

The corruption of the second empire had been so complete that when its army was put to the test of war with a well-equipped and organised enemy, it broke down almost immediately. One after another the imperial generals were defeated and their armies surrounded. Finally, in the early days of September the Emperor himself was captured and the possibility of the Empire saving France from military defeat became patently illusory.

On September 4th the people of Paris came out on to the streets to demand the end of the Empire and the declaration of the Republic. They had no idea of what to do to make their act effective, and without any struggle allowed the politicians to set up a provisional government which consisted almost entirely of reactionaries, at best conservative republicans, at worst monsters like Trochu,

the new governor of Paris. Gambetta represented the liberal elements and Henri Rochefort, in the nebulous post of "President of the Barricades Committee" was the only revolutionary included in this government which owed its existence to the spontaneous revolutionary act of the people.

For the time being however, the Parisians were hoodwinked by the new government. The political revolutionaries demonstrated their bankruptcy by supporting this sinister collection of shyster lawyers and police bullies. Even Blanqui, released from prison with the other politicals, issued a manifesto demanding "no more parties: no more divisions", but instead co-operation with the government representing "republican thought and national defence." With the imminent threat of a Prussian advance on Paris the politicians were able to work up a patriotic fever to ensure the support of the people.

THE SIEGE OF PARIS

On September 20th Paris was surrounded by the Prussian armies and the siege of Paris begun. It lasted some five months of exceptionally bad winter weather, during which the people of Paris underwent the utmost rigours of starvation, fuel shortage and epidemics. Tens of thousands of people died from cold, hunger and disease, and among the survivors the experience of the siege left a residue of bitterness which was later to explode in the days of the Commune.

There were a number of regular troops engaged in the defence of Paris and also some sailors who operated the great naval guns which had been brought up from the coast. But the majority of the defenders of the city were its own people, the male citizens who had been armed and enrolled in the National Guard under an imperial proclamation in August. Under the Empire the Guard was organised on military lines, with officers chosen by the authorities and a Commander in Chief under the orders of the Minister of the Interior.

On the breakdown of the Empire, however, the Guards had seized the opportunity to set up an organisation of their own which would counter authoritarian tendencies among the appointed officers. Vigilance Committees were elected in each district, and these were amalgamated in a Central Committee of the Twenty Arrondissements. This committee immediately set about discussing matters of politics, and formulating programmes which, while they contained a few pseudo-revolutionary proposals such as the supersession of the police by alternative bodies elected by the National Guard, were mainly concerned with measures for the more efficient prosecution of the war against the Prussians. Patriotism was still the dominant idea of even the working class Parisian, and his immediate desire was the defeat of the Prussians. To this end the people of Paris endured the horrors of the siege into which the blunders of their rulers had led them, a siege, moreover, which none of those rulers hoped would end successfully.

If the salvation of Paris from the Prussians was still the chief aim of the Parisians, there were at the same time many who did not wish to save it for their present rulers. The Blanquists and the orators of the revolutionary clubs talked of setting up the Commune. In revolutionary terms, this was an antiquarian revival, as they envisaged the mythical Jacobin commune of 1793. What they intended in practise was a *coup-d'etat* to establish "a dictatorship of the proletariat". (Blanqui and not Marx was the first to use this term to camouflage the conspiratorial or party dictatorship).

THE BLANQUIST RISINGS

Twice in the early days of October the Blanquists, led by Flourens, demonstrated at the Hotel de Ville. Their adventures were regarded by the people with suspicion, and came to nothing. On the 31st of October, however, the news of two defeats and of the negotiations of Thiers with Bismarck for the surrender of Paris brought the workers on the streets, and they swarmed into the Hotel de Ville, to demonstrate against these betrayals of their trust (the indignation was still mainly patriotic). The Provisional Government was locked up in one of the rooms, while the Jacobin demagogues let off hot air and proceeded to declare the Commune. All this shouting gave the Government time to gather the Garde Mobile and some bourgeois battalions of the National Guard. The affair ended in a compromise in which the government agreed to early municipal elections and no victimisation. The government, needless to say, did not keep its promises; instead, it imprisoned as many noted revolutionaries as it dared lay hands on and appointed to command of the National Guard Clement Thomas, one of the butchers of 1848. Instead of the municipal elections it staged a plebiscite and obtained half a million votes against a bare sixty thousand noes. Rochefort, its one left wing member, resigned.

The Blanquists set about preparing a new *coup-d'etat*, this time on an ambitious scale, and on January 22nd a further attempt was made on the Hotel de Ville. The government however heard of the plot and managed to rout the insurrectionary National Guards before Flourens was able to arrive with his working class supporters in Belleville. The government followed their success by closing down the revolutionary newspapers and the political clubs.

CAPITULATION

On the 27th of January Paris capitulated after five months of the siege which no military means at the disposal of its defenders could have caused to end in success. Only enough food was left in the city for four more days even on the meagre siege rations. The protests of the political hot-heads were thus as little based on reality as the early boasts of the government leaders themselves. After the catastrophic defeats of the previous year and the practical destruction of the effective French armies, there was at no time any possibility of saving Paris by military means. As Bakunin realised, the Prussian imperialists could only be beaten by a revolutionary war. "France as a State is lost," he declared, "She can no longer be saved by legal and administrative means. It is for the natural France, the France of the people to step on to the stage of history, to save her liberty and that of all Europe by an immense uprising, spontaneous, entirely of the people, and outside official organisation and all governmental centralisation. And France, sweeping from her soil the armies of the King of Prussia will, in the same blow, have freed all the peoples of Europe and accomplished the social liberation of the working class."

The armistice terms included three provisions which were to have a considerable effect on the course of the troubled months to come. Firstly, there was to be an election of the National Assembly to settle the peace terms. Secondly, while the regular troops in and around Paris were to be disarmed, the National Guard were expressly allowed to keep to their arms for the "preservation of order". Thirdly, the Northern and Eastern forts of Paris were to be surrendered to the Prussians. The last provision had a considerable effect on the outcome of the struggle between the Assembly and the people of Paris which followed the end of the war.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The elections of the National Assembly took place within a fortnight of the armistice. They resulted in an enormous majority for the reaction. Even in Paris few revolutionary candidates were elected, and they were the old heroes of 1848 like Delescluze, Pyat, Victor Hugo. None of the Blanquists secured a seat. On the other hand, the provinces, with the exception of a few industrial cities, like Lyons, Marseilles, went almost completely Royalist. Of the candidates returned, two-thirds were divided equally between the Orleanist and Legitimist factions of Royalists. The remaining third was a mixture of Bonapartists, Conservative republicans and the twenty or so left-wing Parisian deputies who were the only people who could even remotely be styled revolutionaries.

In this ferociously reactionary assembly no single group had the ascendancy, and in consequence of this fact the role of leadership fell to Thiers, an aged and bitterly reactionary historian, the one man who had been wily enough to keep in with every opposition faction during the days of the Empire and who could be trusted by the rurals not to foist on them any revolutionary policy.

UNREST IN PARIS

The end of the siege released the pent-up feelings of the Parisians, and the new assembly soon became the object of their hatred. A genuine revolutionary feeling began to arise among the workers and many of the petty bourgeoisie. Alongside their resentment at the armistice, the Parisians, relieved of their preoccupations with fighting, began to realise once again their political and economic grievances. Hardly any of the artisan population were in work; on the other hand every man in the National Guard received just over a shilling a day as a retaining fee. There was thus a great population of unemployed, with enough food to keep them from the despair of starvation, and with guns in their hands which they began to think of using to some purpose. Disorder spread in the city. The authorities tried to suppress all expression of opinion, with little success. The conspira-

torial groups began to loot the arsenals and armourers' shops in order to increase their arms. Large numbers of the bourgeoisie, becoming apprehensive, began to leave the city, with the result that the population became more solidly working-class and more unified in its resentment of the government. In the really working-class districts, like Belleville and Montmartre, the authority of the police and the official command of the National Guard was replaced by that of the revolutionary vigilance committee.

The National Guard themselves decided that the authority of the official command was still too great, and in February founded a new organisation of a more revolutionary character, called the central committee of the federated battalion of the National Guards. This body, with its elected battalion commanders rapidly gained in influence and soon challenged the power of the official command, to such an extent, that in the working-class districts only the orders of the central committee were recognised.

The reaction of the new government to the conditions in Paris was one of increasing ferocity. Thiers, realising that revolution in Paris was now almost inevitable, decided on a course of provocation in the hope that he might precipitate a rising at a time when it would be convenient for him to grapple with it.

On March 3rd, the Prussians ended their token occupation of the wealthy districts. On the same day the central committee demanded complete control of the National Guard, and the government replied by appointing as their new commander, a brutal Bonapartist, D'Aurelle de Paladines. On the 5th, 30,000 new troops were sent into Paris. On the 11th, Blanqui and Flourens were condemned to death in their absence, and the same evening the whole left-wing press was suppressed. Another week of increasing tension followed, punctuated by minor clashes of various kinds. Then, on March 18th, Thiers staged his great act of provocation, which precipitated the rising of the people of Paris and ushered in the bloody weeks of the commune.

This is the first of a series of four articles, of which the remaining three will deal with the history and lessons of the commune itself.

(continued from p. 7).

tribes wantonly. But he will defend himself and his family pluckily if he is attacked and has no choice of flight. Fighting between Punan whether of the same or different communities is very rare. . . .

"Public opinion and tradition seem to be the sole and sufficient sanctions of conduct among these Arcadian bands of wanderers . . . Harmony and mutual help are the rule within the family circle, as well as throughout the larger community . . . each shares with all members of the group whatever food, whether vegetable or animal he may procure by skill or good fortune."

Modern observations therefore, far from confirming the conception of the Hobbesian war of each against all, on the contrary add further evidence to that put forward by Kropotkin with so much charm and skill in his great book. In the concluding section of this series we shall discuss the bearing of the mutual aid controversy on the theoretical basis of anarchist sociology on the one hand, and authoritarian ideas advanced by both capitalists, fascists, and socialists on the other.

J. H.

NOW

Articles by

Number One will contain articles by Herbert Read on *The Cult of Leadership*, D. S. Savage on *Aldous Huxley, a Moralistic Progression*, Julian Symons on *Stephen Spender*, George Woodcock on *Restoration Culture*, an extract from H. E. Kaminski's *Life of Bakunin*; a short story by Alagu Subramaniam; and poems by Julian Symons, George Woodcock, Alan Rook, Emmanuel Litvinoff, J. L. Godwin, John Bayliss and others. Also *The Dance of Death*, four drawings by John Olday.

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A Freedom Press Publication

NOW

reviewed by

F. Lohr

I would like to introduce this new publication as propaganda, anarchist propaganda. But I hesitate over this word because we are all so sick of propaganda. Whatever merit the word had formerly, this war has surely destroyed it. It now grates upon the hearing of honest men, and to describe a book, a magazine, a periodical as propaganda, is to run the risk of defeating one's purpose. Instead of arousing interest, one is likely to provoke hostility. And yet there is still no other word which adequately conveys the meaning that 'propaganda' should. If we interpret it as signifying the dissemination of the truth, we gain a concept of ideational intention which is cleaner than any substitute, such as—education, teaching advocacy etc.,—can provide. I use the word then, in perhaps a rather purist sense and recommend this publication as propaganda, very good propaganda in the cause of Anarchism.

It is natural that the editorial should concern itself with the central fact of our times, the War; and it is right that this concern should be critical, and if this criticism were harsh, even venomous, towards the interested politicians and vested interests operating the war, such is the immorality and greed shewn by recent history to be motivating such operation, we could hardly be surprised. But a strange and most refreshing fact emerges from the reading of this editorial. It is both devastatingly critical and coldly analytical, and yet it is free from that sort of adolescent peevishness which unfortunately spoils so much polemical writing to-day. In other words this editorial really is objective. Carefully and dispassionately dissecting the body of modern intellectualism, it reveals the emotional fever spots which poison the thought of political intelligentzia. With masterly mental surgery it presents its readers with a post-mortem exposé of the contradictions and pipe-dreams which interweave

throughout the whole fabric of the left-wing movement. It is necessarily concise; at times snappy. Nowhere however, is it superficial. And withal, it is a fine literary composition. Perhaps, this is why it appeals to me as refreshing. There really isn't any reason why political partizanship should not be expressed in good writing. I've never been able to appreciate the advantages to be gained by the cheap gibes and sneers, the ponderous sarcasm and the mulish wit, which permeate the general run of critical political analyses to-day.

*

HERBERT READ contributes an article which alone makes the magazine a success. His 'Cult of Leadership', may provoke cynicism from those who see in the tragic efforts of mankind to realise freedom and harmony in social living, nothing but the reflections of economic antagonisms. But for those who are able to penetrate a little deeper into the meaning of history, this psychological study will clarify a great deal that is perplexing in the present world scene. For modern Fascism is very much more than 'the last ditch of capitalism'. The ideological war which cloaks the imperialist rivalries of the present conflict, has a very real subjective interpretation. The war is not merely a crisis in capitalism. It is also a crisis in civilisation and manifests once again the impotence and failure of culture to withstand the pressures of the collective subconscious. Modern capitalism represents the extreme perversion of the individual principle in history. This perversion has destroyed the place of the individual in society. Divorced the individual from a sense of unity with the organic whole, the community. The individual is isolated from all spiritual contact with his fellows. He exists in a sort of meaningless mental desert, no longer a man, part of a

social organism, necessary to it, and participating in its destiny, but now a unit of labour, a bit of surplus unwanted scrap. The conscience is terrified by such spiritual loneliness, and so follows the repudiation of the individual principle, the highest and noblest idea man has conceived—the uniqueness and sanctity of human personality. Thus Fascism, with its masterly understanding of human psychology, makes its appeal, directs this appeal to the sub-conscious of the community-less individual, calls upon him to abandon Reason, intellect and culture, and surrender himself to the irrational, primordial herd-instinct. From a wilderness of extreme-individualism, the totalitarian appeal offers to rescue man. In this modern age once again is posed the problem of the fissured consciousness of man. Once again the dreadful yet fascinating dialectic between the individual principle and the collective principle comes to the forefront of social ethics. Which is it to be—a collective civilisation, or an individual culture? Can it be both at the same time, or must this working of history oscillate between the two poles, through hatred,—bloody sacrifice, and tempestuous ideological antagonism? Herbert Read endeavours to present the solution to this drama through the working of the principle of factual organic equality. A genuinely natural equity, possible only when the principle of hierarchy in social order is once and for all abandoned. And following on from the recognition of this necessity, come some interesting reflections upon the likely social organisation arising from factual equality, with which I most heartily agree. An equalitarian society would necessarily imply a simple way of living. So long as man pursues this mad and destructive will-o-the-wisp of a leisure state made possible through the ever mechanisation of human activity, it seems to me we shall never be free from the curse of the messianic-mission, the idea of an historical 'Kingdom of God on Earth', to be established by some dreadful elect race, nation, or class. It seems to me, as I think it occurs to Read, as it was most clear to Eric Gill, that a free and equitable society would naturally be an association of individuals whose efforts are directed towards the satisfaction of their needs, and not to the titillation of their appetites and the multiplication of their desires. Whilst, to

quote Read, 'This feverish lust for luxuries' is dominant among men, all efforts to create a just and equitable society will be doomed to romantic failure. As the alternative to this 'cult of leadership' Read posits the necessity for individual responsibility. It seems to me that in this word 'responsibility' lies the crux of the whole problem. If Freedom is freedom from responsibility, as it seems to be interpreted to mean to-day, then man is condemned to spiritual death. If responsibility will be willingly, eagerly, accepted as the price of freedom, then whatever the immediate future holds, the individual principle will find an harmonious place in social evolution, and creative activity will continue to throw up the culture which makes social civilisation worth-while.

*

KAMINSKI'S extract on *Bakunin and the International* is inspirational. No finer comparison of the two men, Bakunin and Marx, their spirit and ideas, have I ever read. For too long they have been considered by revolutionists as complementary figures. No two men were greater opposites. In the consideration of these two men lies the whole question of which is the truer estimation of human nature; the socialist or the anarchist. Which way of social organisation more clearly meets the needs of man; the socialist or the anarchist? Which philosophic *weltanschauung* is nearer to natural truth and thus more able to satisfy the physical and emotional life of man; socialism or anarchism? Surely no article ever answered these questions so definitely and positively as this one by Kaminski.

"For Marx, theory came before action. For Bakunin action preceded theory. Thus Marx was inductive, Bakunin was deductive. Marx was guided by thought, Bakunin by inspiration. Marx aimed at order, Bakunin at harmony. Marx dreamed of ruling. Bakunin of destroying. Marx execrated all that was chaotic; Bakunin worshipped in chaos, creative thought. The genius of Marx lay in his narrowness; The greatness of Bakunin came from what the Russians called 'a large nature'."

Here is another passage which is revealing of the quite different currents which animate socialism and anarchism. "Marx was a centralist and desired unity, Bakunin

was a federalist and desired only variety. Marx was authoritarian, Bakunin was anti-authoritarian . . . According to Marx the method of production determined the course of history, whereas according to Bakunin, the evolution of the people was by obscure and intuitive movements. Marx was concerned above all, with economics. But to Bakunin man was all important." Good for Bakunin. I have no wish to discredit in any way the greatness of Marx, nor his genius, nor his erudition, nor his scholarship. But the heart of the historic is Man, and the glory of Man is his spirit, not his intellect. And Bakunin was above all—a Man, and his spirit so great, so immeasurably remote in its greatness, that even the colossal intellect of Marx completely failed to approximate its understanding. Bakunin towers over Marx and the whole social-democratic political movement, as a mountain towers over a hill. Those people who in spite of all written to the contrary, still believe that anarchism and socialism are but two branches extending from the trunk of social-

democracy, will find in this extract from Kaminski, the final and complete repudiation of this idea. Not merely is the difference one of State or Stateless organisation. Not by a long way. The two outlooks are fundamentally hostile, always apart, never reconciled. In this comparative portrayal of Marx and Bakunin, Kaminski has unerringly traced the drama fought out between Freedom and authority—spontaneity and compulsion, the *human spirit* versus intellectual pride.

*

There remains no space to comment upon the remaining articles in "NOW". Suffice to say that whilst the articles of Read and Kaminski provide the focus points of interest, the rest of the magazine bids fair to maintain the high standard set by these. No one who is not so disillusioned and apathetic with the contemporary scene as to still buy 'propaganda', should miss this little booklet. It is published by Freedom Press, and its price is *One shilling and sixpence*.

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Book Review

RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY at WORK

The Russian Peasant and other Studies by—
John Maynard.

Those who are interested in an impartial study of conditions in the world can read these volumes with profit. Maynard's experience in the Soviet Union must have been unique; the book has been written with patience and lucidity and even the smallest details have not been dismissed as unimportant. The outstanding Chapter XXI, which deals with the constitution of 1936 is without doubt the most illuminating.

There is no pretence, he says, that "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" is yet within grasp, and therefore for a coercive state to prevent the scramble is regarded as necessary. The State exists, and has not "withered away" as some Marxists anticipated.

The U.S.S.R. is a socialist state; not a communal society, yet some things have become possible: the "right" to work and the "right" to leisure among them. Maynard informs us that the Communist Party organisations are "specified" among those having the "right" to nominate candidates for elections. He does not make clear however, who were responsible for compiling the constitution. As previously, the Communist Party is outside the constitution of November 1936. It has a separate constitution, yet is the most important element in the government of the U.S.S.R. Maynard suggests that it comes near an *Axiocracy*—a government of the most worthy citizens.

The situation appears to resemble the position of the Jesuits and their power over the Roman Catholic Church proper—a state within a state.

Such contradictions, Maynard points out, are not unique, and he cites the U.S.A., and the United Kingdom as examples of contradicting theory and practice—the uneven distribution of wealth and social influence against the theory of democracy.

Whereas in the Democracies "private property" is the basis of the institutions, in the U.S.S.R., the Communist Party is the guardian and guide. Just where the difference comes in as far as the workers are concerned is left to our imagination. Personally I fail to appreciate the "benefits" derived from being ruled by the Communist Party instead of by the "private property" bosses. By calling a jackal a sheep you don't make it any less ferocious, as was borne out by the purges and liquidations. Maynard states that no-one will be "permitted" to change or attempt to change, Chapter 1 of the Constitution. Thus the born and the unborn have their fate decided for them.

Articles 125 and 126 allow freedom of speech, press and demonstration "in accordance with the interests of the working people" and in order to strengthen the socialist system. Anarchists and Trotskyists however, have no rights, nor is any press allowed that does not speak *ex cathedra*. Thousands found to their cost that to oppose the Party meant excommunication and death.

Maynard informs us that it was the Seventh All-Union of Soviets of 1935 which took up the question of the new constitution, that it was only the *Seventh*, after more than eighteen years of revolutionary government. This conference appointed a drafting commission with instructions to democratise the electoral system and to

deal with the method of voting. Stalin became the chairman; giving his report he said that the victory of socialism was now a fact, and the workers were no longer workers, but were the "owners" of the instruments of production. As Chairman he moved the rejection of a number of amendments sent in by the Soviet workers. One was that the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviets should be elected by the whole population; the argument of Stalin was that the Praesidium should be elected by the Supreme Soviet.

Maynard says that no-one questioned any of these recommendations. There was no discussion, after a number of speeches had been made, varying from those of "highly placed functionaries" to those of milkmaids, famous for milking records and factory workers who had won renown by excellence in work.

Commissars were appointed to register voters and candidates, and "trusted" persons appointed to conduct propaganda for candidates, count the votes and declare the results. Every attempt was made to get every voter on the register; in the Tartar republic this was carried so far that arrangements were made at hospitals to examine all lunatics (except the violent). In one area all the names beginning with "N" were omitted while in another all the infants in arms were entered on the voting register.

When the votes were counted it appeared that of 93,639,458, voters, 90,319,346 actually voted—96 per cent. In the vote for candidates of the Council of the Union 636,808 ballot papers were invalid, and 632,074 had candidates' names crossed out. In the vote for candidates for the Council of Nationalities 1,487,582 papers were invalid, while 562,402 had candidates' names crossed out. Maynard adds that there were perhaps a million among those who voted who did not desire the return of the candidates, or objected with sufficient determination to be willing to spoil the papers. Of the 1,143 deputies elected, 855 were Communists (outside the Constitution) and 278 non-party. 184 women were among the elected. 51 policemen (Commissariat of Internal Affairs) were elected, together with 354 workers and peasants, 120 Red Army men and 78 who might be classified as the intelligentsia.

Maynard adds "the word Party applied to the Communist Party is indeed a complete misnomer. The Communist Party is an Order of men and women vowed to the realisation and defence of the "fundamentals" of the Soviet State. It comes near to being a priesthood of a religion of this world. The Communist Party in the U.S.S.R. has little in common with political parties, but has many resemblances to a church claiming universal dominion. In the political sense the U.S.S.R. tolerates no parties at all."

Article 141 of the Constitution restricts the right of nomination to public organisations and societies of working people; Communist Party organisations, trade-unions, co-operatives, organisations of youth and cultural societies, all Communist controlled bodies. Individuals and groups of individuals not organised in one of these forms have no right of nomination.

It is certain that the Russian workers have yet to attain freedom; this is not provided for in the Constitution
JIM BARKER.

INDIAN NEWS

JUSTICE IN INDIA

"Sixty-eight ordinances last year and six more in January represent the extent of the encroachment on the powers of the Central Legislature by the Governor-General, in spite of Mr. Amery's categorical assurance in Parliament that the ordinance-making powers would be used to give indefinite life only to measures affecting disciplinary acts.

The "Madras Hindu" has protested against the promulgation of three ordinances imposing the extreme penalty without necessary protection for the innocent.

The paper quotes the Indian judge of the Nagpur High Court, who in allowing a number of habeas corpus petitions relating to detained persons recently pointed out the anomaly of permitting spies and traitors all reasonable facilities for placing their cases before the courts but denying equal rights to suspected persons.

Other objectionable features of the ordinance, according to the paper, are trials in camera, the Government's right to transfer a case from one special judge to another without making it obligatory on the part of the second to resubmit witnesses, and the absence of appeal from sentence passed by the special judge in an ordinary court but only a review by a judge of High Court status."

Manchester Guardian 26/1/43

QUISLINGS "VITAL TO INDIA"

"The ruling princes are indispensable elements in the life of India, said Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary for India, in London yesterday.

"They are not merely as is sometimes suggested, museum pieces reproducing the splendour and chivalry and the casualness of the Middle Ages, but are responsible rulers of territories, some of which equal in population and in extent major European nations."

Sunday Dispatch 8/1/43

War Commentary

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INDIAN SITUATION "NORMAL"

"News of food riots at Nasik, the holy Hindu town sometimes called the western Benares, 100 miles from Bombay, is symptomatic of the growing difficulty of the food situation in India.

Men and women broke open grain and cloth shops and removed their contents, including cash. Stones were thrown at police. Calm is now restored and a curfew has been imposed." *News Chronicle 20/1/43*

Comrades Gaoled

Two of our North London comrades, Jack Wade and F. W. Wixey, have been gaoled for opposing the imperialist war and refusing to be conscripted into the armed forces.

Comrade Wade appeared at Tottenham Police Court on January 21st and was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for refusing medical examination under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act. He has been active in the Anarchist movement for the past four years, joining at the time of the Spanish war. Up till about two years ago, he was associated with the group at Welwyn Garden City together with Dan Mullen, whose death took place last summer. In 1941 he came to London where he has been working as a market gardener. He is one of our keenest literature sellers and has also been active in organising meetings and has contributed several articles to WAR COMMENTARY.

F. W. Wixey who is a member of the "Friends of Freedom Press" was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for refusing medical examination and a month to run concurrently for not notifying change of address.

We send our greetings of solidarity to these comrades, both of whom are in Wormwood Scrubbs Prison, in their opposition to the State and the imperialist war in which it is engaged.

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127, George Street, Glasgow at 8 p.m.