

PEACE OR VICTORY IN VIETNAM?

SATURDAY JANUARY 20th sees the inauguration of President Nixon in Washington where it is anticipated he would like to proclaim that he has negotiated peace in Vietnam. On the same day in London there will be two marches to the American Embassy to protest against the war. President Nixon will be considerably less embarrassed by their efforts than they will be by his, should he (or his faithful hound Kissinger) pull it off in time.

However, the marked ambivalence, not to say schizophrenia, of the left is attested by the British Council for Peace in Vietnam who start in Trafalgar Square with Lord Soper, Digby Jaks, Judith Hart, Lawrence Daly and Ray Buckton to name but a few; whilst the Indo-China Solidarity Conference start from the Embankment with Ralph Milliband of LSE and Thomas Culver the US Air Force objector due to speak at some point in the proceedings.

The finer points of the differences between the two are not examinable in our reduced circumstances but the B.C.P.V. has a greater proportion of orthodox Communist and fellow-traveller support and is broadly in favour of 'Peace' whilst the I.S.C. goes in for that mystic word 'Solidarity' which like that blessed word 'Mesopotamia' is a great comfort.

It comes a bit much however to shout out 'Victory to the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia!' No matter how we admire Prince Sihanouk (now in exile in China waiting for the call) there are some things we can't swallow.

Our contemporary Red Mole working in the earth fast, as usual, denounces 'the pacifists, vegetarians, social-democrats and their camp-followers' and justifies its slogans of "Victory for NLF" or "All Power to the PRG" and gives its support to the Indo-China Solidarity Conference march, differing from I.C.S.C. in demurring from the insistence on signing a peace treaty. Red Mole's contributor says of such a signing: "It politically disarms militants active in the solidarity movement." Red Mole and I.M.G. are obviously for Victory for the NLF, as are many other groups.

* * *

THESE TWO WAR-AIMS are almost always incompatible. In two world wars there has been victory for the less authoritarian side but no peace. Under statism and capitalism peace is merely the continuation of war by other means. In wars there has been victory over beaten foes but they have prospered more than the victors and the 'defeated' have com-

mercially defeated their conquerors. Culturally, too, history provides plentiful examples of conquerors absorbing the culture of their conquered 'enemies'.

If we wished to be terribly embarrassing we could point out the imminent peace pact and unification of the peoples of North and South Korea. Enmities are soon forgotten even between communist countries and capitalist imperialist running dogs. Consider the softening of East and West Germany.

We are used to the Communist usage of 'Peace' fronts for something very different, and both Russia's and China's attitudes on these stages of the Vietnamese war are highly equivocal, especially in view of the widely publicized visits of President Nixon to both these powers. But the usage of the humanitarian impulses of people and their desire for peace in order to further some game of power-politics is one thing, the advocacy of prolonging the war in order to achieve 'victory' and so that militants shall not be politically disarmed is another. We remember the words of the romantic military catastrophe Che Guevara: "Let us create two, three, many more Vietnams". As for victory in modern war. This is almost

as great an illusion as peace. The peoples of Vietnam can achieve their own victories without Russian rockets and without the services of the anti-Trotskyite General Giap.

If there has been a social revolution in North Vietnam, and we have seen no signs of a revolution in the growth of freedom, it will assuredly destroy its children when peace comes and the factions (including the revolutionary Prince) struggle for power. The Vietnamese peasant will still have to work and be conscripted for the fighting. Russia and China will no doubt extract their payment (in cash, goods or ideological adherence) for their services.

President Thieu in an interview put it forward (and we place little credence in it except to say that "when rogues fall out, etc.") that Kissinger would be happy, or less unhappy, to see Vietnam as a Russian sphere of influence since she would provide a check (to America's benefit) to the rival 'Communist' power, China.

Peace and Victory are equally illusory whilst obtained by nation-states whether capitalist or communist, or parroted as the clap-trap of dupes.

Jack Robinson

THE HOUSING RACKET

LAST YEAR FEWER houses were built than in any year since 1963. The final total was only 320,000 compared with 350,000 for the previous year. Much of this drop is in the public sector.

Successive governments have made promises to solve the housing problem. Election pledges by Labour of half a million homes a year were never fulfilled. As far back as 1944 Richard Coppock, then secretary of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives said that "the building industry could produce half a million houses a year if required". It was estimated then that it would require one million homes a year, over six or seven years, in order to provide enough housing for all those suffering from the effects of the bombing during the war and the slum conditions of the thirties.

Basically nothing has changed since then. We still get the same old promises. Property speculators are making huge profits from the redevelopment of land, much of which was previously used for working class housing. High rents of pri-

vate housing have also forced many of these families out of their homes and into high rise council flats, usually situated further from places of work.

The high interest rates at which councils have to repay money borrowed is also pushing up rents. Quite simply, big profits are being made out of a basic need and the misery which the housing shortage brings.

Both the Labour and Conservative parties favour private ownership of housing. Those who say that Labour has supported the public sector should remember that it was a Wilson government that legislated for the sale of council housing and brought in a provision for housing grants which has also led to the exodus of working class families from areas like Fulham, Battersea, Islington, etc. and allowed a new rich middle class to buy up and improve these properties from money paid in taxes by the working class. These same people then sell after a few years at a handsome profit.

The Tories' Housing and Finance Act will again bring more

misery and suffering to working class families. This year those renting private housing will also be affected by the mis-named "fair rents" scheme. The phased doubling of rents will, with continuing inflation of other necessities, drastically lower our standard of living. Those living on very low incomes will get rebates based on a "means test", but it has been proved so many times before that those entitled to such relief often do not get it. Even with expensive publicity campaigns setting out entitlements only a small proportion usually come forward when it means that their incomes have to be investigated by the authorities.

In Lambeth, for example, they have been operating a rent allowance scheme since last October, and although a publicity campaign was organized only 360 applications were made in the first two months when an estimated 20,000 are eligible. (Guardian 28/12/72). Other means-tested schemes have met with similar failure. Frank Field of the Child Poverty Action Group says:

The poor are trying to say

something very important in these figures. They are saying that help which comes through a means test is not acceptable and how many more failures are there going to be before that message gets through?

I doubt if the message will ever get through to the cold, inhuman institutions of the State. We have been conditioned to look to the State as to some giant benefactor when

Continued on p. 4...

! SUBSCRIBERS !

Almost 300 subscribers have not yet renewed for 1973. If all our subscribers renew we can contemplate a bigger FREEDOM than we are putting out this month. If you do not rally, we shall have to suspend publication rather than spend the subscriptions of those who did respond promptly.

Reviews

THE ENCHAINED MUSE

OVER THREE HUNDRED years ago the twice imprisoned Royalist poet Richard Lovelace penned the lie that "Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage". All things must be forgiven the artist and the poet for they are God's fools, but Lovelace's facile lines have justified the slamming of ten thousand prison doors. Prison or poverty has never produced a great work of art, and tell me not of Pilgrim's Progress, for the longer that one endures these artificial hells then the more sterile becomes the creative imagination. One day or one year of imprisonment or accidental poverty can act as a traumatic shock that will feed the imagination with a fresh insight into one's self and one's society, but throw away the key to the cell door or crush the crust of bread into the mud and the artist and the individual dies. In August of 1964 Charlie Wilson was handed down 30 years' imprisonment for his alleged part in the Great Train Robbery. He escaped and went to ground in the Canadian timber town of Rigaud, there to be rearrested by Detective Chief Supt. Butler and sent to Parkhurst Prison to complete his debt to society. Charlie Wilson owes me no debt but the audacity of stealing a £1,000,000 must be paid for, says society, with a man's life yet there is no moral, social or political argument that can sanction this awful act by the State. Charlie Wilson does his chores within the prison in that he cleans his cell, helps to prepare breakfast for the other prisoners in the SSB block, washes the dishes and prepares the dinners.

It is then that Charlie Wilson returns to his cell to paint his paintings. It was Maud Launder, a visiting art teacher, who persuaded Charlie to continue to paint and there within his cell he paints a world he cannot see nor may ever see again. This is the tragedy of any man held in long captivity in that in the end his knowledge of the world is gained not at second hand but at third or fourth hand, and Charlie Wilson finds his subject matter not in a social framework that human dignity demands that he must hate, but from copying the reproduced pictures of postcards and magazine illustrations. At all times he paints by artificial light and his only view of green grass can be seen by standing on tiptoe to look out of his cell window, but it is claimed that he is not allowed to paint this view.

His painting as with all primitive work is bold in line

and bright and brash in the use of colour, but he has an understanding of perspective and a natural ability to give his copied figures a sense of space within their two dimensional world. It is possible, nay probable, that Charlie Wilson will develop his natural talent but only if he turns to his fellow prisoners as subject matter and his cell block as his background, yet who dare ask the imprisoned artist to record the human and material instruments of the State's shame.

UNSILENCED POET

So too with John Nightingale, for here is the voice of the poet refusing to be silent. John Nightingale's second book of poetry has now been published, and one is grateful to Jim Huggon and his Kropotkin's Lighthouse Publications and the Voice of North Devon for producing and circulating this duplicated volume of poems. John Nightingale is serving four years in the same prison as Charlie Wilson, and his offence was to throw a petrol bomb through the South African Armed Forces Officers' Club as a protest against militarism and apartheid. He has his time to do, and though the hours crawl he can count the days to his release and his poetry and his voice and his imagery still continue to speak with authority of the world outside Parkhurst Prison. In time the voice is older and on the surface more cynical, yet it echoes the age of Nashe and Marvell, of Wilmot and Sydney. I would be false to both of us if I pretended that it had the mannered beauty of that great age of English poetry and poesy, yet John Nightingale's verse has the mystical sadness of Raleigh and the harsh worldliness of Ben Jonson, as with Ben Jonson's Gut eats all day, and Lechers all the night and John Nightingale's The words fell as dirty rain formed mud inside our eardrums and hardened/As it reached warm brain.

Ill fares the world when we no longer quote Andrew Marvell's magic lines
 "Had we but world enough,
 and time,
 This coyness, lady,
 were no crime"
 into the Town dog's lovely but empty ear, or Marlowe's "Come live with me and be my love" into the dark void of the embattled doorway, but in the end when the sweet rhyme and the silver phrases dull with repetition it is then that the harsh voice and the agony of Ben Jonson and Sir Walter Raleigh speak the common tongue of man in conflict with his age and his society.

Ben Jonson, bricklayer, soldier, actor, imprisoned for subversion and one step in front of the public hangman, is there for us to see in Abraham Van Blyenberch's magnificent portrait of the man in the great exhibition of paintings of the Age of Charles I. Magnificent - for here is a portrait, as with Rubens' self portrait, that breaks away from the mannered craft of the Court painters of the age trapped in the formalized delineation of lined and laced dresses, to reveal with fluid and careless brushstrokes almost for the first time in English painting the artist as a man in his own right answerable not to a patron but to his own self criticism, and of their humanity they dominate this magnificent Tate exhibition of the paintings of the age of Charles I.

THE COMMON TONGUE

Yet for all the fine and forgotten company of gallants Ben Jonson comes to us on his own terms, for his poetry spoke the common tongue and we sweat with him and bleed with him and he rhymed it for us in his rough lines. So too with John Nightingale, yet he can match the sweet sorrow of Sir Walter Raleigh for they share time's common cell.

When Raleigh awaited death he wrote those lines that cried, "Give me my scallop-shell of quiet/My staff of faith to walk upon", and too often it has been mouthed by men unfitted to the word. One feels that Raleigh in contemplation of death was writing his own epitaph, yet when he wrote his short poem My body in the walls captivéd that begins
 "My body in the walls captivéd
 Feels not the wounds of
 spiteful envy"
 and finishes with two isolated lines that cry out-- "Despair bolts up my doors, and I alone
Speak to dead walls: but these
hear not my moan" it was the voice of the artist and the poet crying from the prisons of America and Russia and all the lands and cells between in this Year of Our Lord 1973, and Charlie Wilson and John Nightingale add their voices to the agony and the triumph of that great and glorious army of the damned.

*** ** **

Arthur Moyse

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"KIDS" TO REAPPEAR

The magazine KIDS (formerly "Children's Rights") which has not appeared since No. 7 Sept. 1972 plans to resume publication. The publishers have been promised some of the £5000 needed to get the magazine on its feet and hope

WHAT IS PROPERTY ?

Anarchists stand in the front line of the opposition to the capitalist institution of private property and although many anarchists would be happy to accept the apparently contradictory label "anarchist communist" the concept of free communism is rarely clearly defined. Personally, I do find "anarchist communist" contradictory when it is taken to mean that an anarchist society must necessarily and universally be a communist society. Fortunately, most comrades who would describe themselves thus are merely indicating their own personal preferences for a communist relationship with their fellows within a free society, rather than indicating their desire to impose this form of social organisation on anyone else.

Some anarchists have tried to find some alternative way of life here and now in the form of communal living. The sweeping assumption made by so many modern communards is that the family is inevitably authoritarian and exploitative and that the commune is inevitably liberating. The most passionate opponents of "the Family" are the Women's movements which see it as the source of all iniquity rather than as the consequence of the biological facts of childbirth and the human need for a stable, loving environment. They do not even seem to realize that in the unfulfilled search for the ideal commune is, in fact, the search for a non-authoritarian family relationship. All of which ignores the loving, libertarian families in which children have a secure base in which to grow up in freedom - and, in contrast, the tyranny of so many commune gurus. The right to assert one's individuality in terms of privacy, personal possessions and independent action are rejected by many communards as "bourgeois" or "anti-social" in a terrifying surrender to the common will. Far from limiting individual freedom and initiative a free society will positively encourage it so that we may all find our true, loving humanity without any laws, written or unwritten.

Free communism should not be seen as a religious doctrine, as an ideal end in itself, but merely as a means of satisfying the individual's needs for the necessities of life through co-operation, and to give substance to his or her innate sympathy towards other human beings. Wherever there is a widely accepted communist ideology there is the obvious risk of the subtle (or not so subtle!) authority of majority opinion and the feelings of guilt likely to be induced in the dissenting individual. It is significant that the long-lasting alternative communities have been held together on a common religious belief which implies a certain negation of individuality. This crucial problem must make the endless extension of individ-

ual freedom and initiative the goal of a free commune and its main defence against the deterioration into a new tyranny.

The property rights which anarchists should object to are those which are used to exploit the labour and needs of others. Apart from the classic exploitation of our labour under capitalism we also experience alienation in different ways as consumers. As more and more of us spend our days in totally unproductive and futile work - or in the production of useless products where we experience only some mindless task in a mass-production process - we are estranged from any practical skills and we are drawn into the vicious circle of increasing dependence on the system which slowly strangles the life out of us. The process is probably more effective than anything the advertising men can do to train us as obedient consumers and workers.

In a society where the centralized authority of the State has been overthrown or rendered impotent it is obvious that various forms of alternative social organisation will be attempted by various groups and individuals in different areas according to their inclinations and the absence of some new authority. The anarchist alternatives will range from communism, through various collectivist and co-operative relationships to the individual producer pursuing his craft. All these are justifiable if they do not rest on the exploitation of others, and they are compatible in a free society where a harmonious relationship between them can be found if no group seeks to impose its own vision on others.

One of the most depressing aspects of the anarchist movement in Britain in recent times is the common tendency to try and limit the definition of anarchism to within a narrow economic or organisational view. The struggle before us is to throw off all forms of authority - rather than to establish new forms of discipline and economic dogma - so that as free individuals we can build a new society which allows an infinite variety of relationships and initiatives in the pursuit of human happiness. In the crucible of experience those forms of social organisation which most faithfully serve the needs and aspirations of free men and women will demonstrate their superiority in a way in which no theoretical debate can ever do so.

Terry Phillips

Letter

JUDICIAL TORTURE

Dear Comrades,

In a world of great examples of man's inhumanity to man, the individual incident is neglected by both the consciences of men and the conscience of the press (if most of the press may be said to possess such a subtle nerve).

RHODESIAN BLUNDER ?

THERE IS A growing impression that Mr. Ian Smith, the Rhodesian leader, has blundered badly in his reaction to incursions by African guerrillas, based in Zambia, into Rhodesia. The Rhodesian government started by announcing that all exports from Zambia would not be allowed through Rhodesian territory to the coast, due to Zambia's harbouring African guerrillas responsible for actions in Rhodesia resulting in the death of two South African police. It wasn't long before the Smith administration announced that copper exports from Zambia would be excluded from the Rhodesian ban, at which Smith's right wing opponents objected that big business was making its undue pressure felt and apologists explained the value of copper revenue to Smith from letting copper through.

All this was given historic interest only by the Zambian announcement that copper would not be sent via Rhodesia anyway. According to the Times correspondent in Lusaka: "There is a likelihood that Zambia will be able to export all its copper, including the 330,000 tons that used to go out through Rhodesia, over alternative routes." (Times 12.1.72)

The City is not so sure about this and concern is obviously felt due to Chile, the other large exporter of copper, being in the throes of social experimentation. The Times City man mentions that exports via Tanzania are seen as the most likely alternative to Rhodesia's outlet to Beira, but feels "there are strong doubts whether Zambia has the trucking capacity", adding that "once at Dar es Salaam, there is the further problem of whether the port can cope with such additional tonnage".

The Guardian man in Lusaka is more optimistic (or pessimistic if you feel so inclined) about the Tan-Zam route. The Chinese are currently assisting in the construction of the rail link of Zambia with Dar-es-Salaam. Whilst completion is due only in 1975, work is ahead of schedule and 500 miles of the railway have been completed; also "the fleet of 500 heavy freighter-lorries - used to carry copper to the coast from Zambia - has not been used to full capacity in re-

cent months, and in addition to this private contractors are to be given work". Which leaves the problem of the roads, and their condition, as perhaps the major unknown along with the docks at Dar.

Another outlet for Zambia is the route through Angola and Zaire using the Benguela railway on which it might be unwise to rely too heavily, since the Portuguese, Rhodesians and South Africans are in a similar political fix.

Whether Zambia and Rhodesia escalate the conflict will probably be known before these words appear in print, however should the Rhodesians use their access to the Kariba dam site to turn off power to the copper belt I can see big business giving Smith the knockout in a week - let's hope he falls into that trap too!

Zambian imports are likely to have a harder time than their exports and appeals to Britain for help have their amusing side. Zambia is a member of the Commonwealth, legal but black. Rhodesia is rebelling (bloody nuisance), out of the Commonwealth, and white. On the investment side Zambia is fairly small peanuts yet copper is nothing to sneeze at, whilst Rhodesia is now part of the South African empire and therefore vital to the international capitalist (nudge, nudge, wink, wink) conspiracy!

How the diplomatic doublethink on race must be buzzing in the mind of the good man who settles Britain's policy on issues like this! To my humble mind Smith is getting just a bit too much of a pain for Britain and the Rhodesian settlers are on a downward passport to the laager of South Africa. Remind ourselves that the actions of the guerrillas have been slight indeed, to date, and we notice how vulnerable these Rhodesians are and how potential is the power of Zimbabwe. I'd be amazed if contacts with Nkomo are not receiving the brush up, but whether control is where the Establishment thinks it is, is another matter.

We return to our musing at the start of this article. Has Smith blundered badly? And, if so, how long will he last?

J.W.

On 18 December 1972, Frederick Sewell, police killer serving thirty years gaol in England, was condemned to thirteen months solitary confinement by visiting magistrates at Gartree prison: for his part in an escape attempt.

No-one with any knowledge of prison could see the sentence of solitary confinement for such a length of time as other than judicial torture.

Sewell is not an admirable man: but only by recognizing him as a fellow human being capable of improvement can we justify our own humanity.

We diminish our own humanity by treating Sewell with less than human dignity: only by recognizing that he too is capable of worth may we justify our own worth.

Whenever one thinks of political prisoners one must now include Sewell as a man who suffers the revengeful hypocrisy of a society which created him; and having abolished capital punishment in the name of humanity now seeks to destroy the human frame which is kept alive - by divorcing it from human society.

I am sure the visiting magistrates enjoyed their Christmas dinner during the season of compassion and good-will: but what they did was the action of the pharisee and nothing that any believer in justice could be proud of: to condemn a hated man to a hateful punishment is not justice, it is a sharing of his guilt.

Yours fraternally,
Graeme Connigale
Coventry

This Week in Ireland

TWO NON-POLITICAL school teachers in Dungiven, Mr. Brolly and Mr. O'Kane, were arrested and are now in Long Kesh alias The Maze. All schools were closed for two days in protest. Ivan Cooper, the M.P. for the district, flew over to London with some of the teachers from the district and saw Mr. Rees who said he would speak to Mr. Whitelaw. Children and teachers of the district marched in protest to the RUC station. It is possible every teacher in Derry will come out on strike to back up Dungiven. Meetings galore are going on and new societies being formed. Following the arrests there were riots or "disturbances" in the Creggan district, and another man taken into military custody.

Mr. Whitelaw has raised joy in every Unionist heart and terror in every republican one by saying the RUC will not be changed in any way or reconstructed. This means an armed force of very sectarian men who have already committed cold-blooded murder in Derry (Samuel Devenney beaten to such an extent his weak heart gave out and he died a little later in hospital). The men who did this deed were drunk and Lord Hunt said he met "A wall of silence" when he tried to find out who was on duty that night. The murderers are still serving and may well have been promoted. The Catholic population have said they will never again submit to such police in their district.

On Sunday 28th there is to be a big "commemoration" meeting for Bloody Sunday at Free Derry corner. I am very unsure as to the wisdom of this. Nothing will bring the dead back to life and to risk another confrontation seems to me to be dangerous and it will infuriate all Unionists, and these are not the times to infuriate anyone if it can be avoided. I have not yet quite made up my mind whether to go or not. My feelings are so mixed about the matter.

...SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Lynch is making a proper fool of himself in America, unable to answer questions and indulging in his usual waffle. I must say Frank McManus who is following Lynch around is also making a fool of himself.

The speculators continue to destroy Dublin, bulldozing down all before them for these awful egg-box offices. My turn comes in April when this house goes up for auction. I HOPE I have every tenant organized to refuse to budge without a court order, and as for myself it will take five stalwart gardai to evict me.

RTE has been entirely taken over by the government. They are axing all the most popular programmes, including the one to which I have contributed

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every three weeks for a number of years. This means a big financial loss for me. The excuse is they need the time for "Education" - i.e. Fianna Fail propaganda and EEC propaganda.

Father Daniel Berrigan has been over here. I was not able to get to the big public meeting in Liberty Hall but I sneaked into the huge one in Trinity in the evening. I was exceedingly impressed by the man. His bitter rejection of all violence. His statement that the monster machinery or technological knowledge was now ruling the world and his great fear that Nixon is almost certain to use nuclear weapons. The amount of bombing over Christmas was equal to many Hiroshimas and done by Nixon in fury as he had expected Viet Nam as a Christmas present. Daniel Berrigan spoke in a low key all the time which was most impressive. It was partly because he was not well but also I think he is a man of great humility and would always be low-keyed. Many questions followed, including some silly ones and some shouts of "Bloody Communist". The last question was, "Did not Father Berrigan think in the final analysis the whole trouble was that 71% of the world's wealth was owned by 5% of the people and that capitalism was the real root of all wars?" There was so much applause for this that Dan Berrigan could only bow his head in assent. Afterwards I was practically mobbed by students. Owing to broadcasting such a lot my voice is recognized and I cannot retire into the anonymity I would like!

The papers hardly printed a word about Fr. Berrigan's visit, especially as he protested about the way Ireland and the other European countries' governments had remained so silent about the years of abomination. BUT the Viet Nam people will NOT be beaten whatever America and her allies do.

H.

A S A GET-TOGETHER

THE ANARCHIST SYNDICALIST ALLIANCE met in Brighton on 16th and 17th December 1972. The conference was attended by 60 A S A members, with observers from Solidarity, ORA and the International Feminist Collective, and fraternal greetings from the Black Cross came by telegram.

The full conference discussed libertarian co-operation and ideas for expanding the industrial network were circulated in a discussion document. It was agreed that co-operation must extend beyond the interchange of ideas and literature, so A S A should seek to build an industrial and community network.

Thereupon the conference formed itself into working groups in the fields of: women's liberation; industrial struggle; education; publications; community action; and international contacts (two comrades from Alliance Syndicaliste et Anarcho-Syndicaliste Revolutionnaire were present).

The industrial group felt the need for more time and will arrange a weekend meeting in Manchester in February.

The education meeting proposed, not a libertarian teachers' association but a network of anybody involved in or interested in education.

The publications group decided to increase production of pamphlets, both reprints and new ones arising out of local group situations.

The women's group was attended by more men than women!

The conference ended, after a convivial weekend, encouraged by the active solidarity which emerged from it and the new contacts made, and confident that real co-ordinated action is possible from the diverse group who share ASA's aims.

HOUSING

...Continued from p. 1

we should be looking to ourselves. It is no good calling on the government and the State to do things for us when both are there to protect the interests of those who make profits from the misery of the housing shortage, high rents and speculative developments.

The resistance to the "fair rents" act had a setback last week when the only borough council left, in London, holding out against the government gave in and decided to implement the Act. From March, Camden council tenants will have to pay up to 85p more a week. They did this rather than lose government housing subsidies of £8million.

At Merthyr Tydfil the government has appointed a commissioner to operate the increases. However there is considerable opposition from tenants who are refusing to pay rent or are withholding the increases. Some councils have said they will not seek eviction orders on those in arrears, but others may not be so fortunate.*

Contact

HASTINGS area: Kevin McFaul, Tel. Hastings 7905

NOTTINGHAM: Trent Polytechnic new anarchist group forming. Contact Shirley Moreno & John Hinsley through Fine Art Dept. Dryden Street, Nottingham.

Meetings:

SUNDAY JANUARY 21 3 p m at Toynbee Hall, Commercial St., E.1 (Aldgate East tube) ANARCHISM ON TV, meeting to discuss possible programme. All anarchists invited. Details from Terry Phillips at 05366-66781 evenings.

Harlech Libertarian Group Thurs. Feb 8 at 8 p.m. The 'Courtyard Hut', Coleg Harlech Keith Nathan: ORA and Libertarian Action

New York: Libertarian Book Club Lectures, fortnightly on Thursdays at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Ave, corner 29 Street. Admission free. Next dates Feb 22 & March 8.

APOLOGIES to STOKE DWARFS whose address got left out. Please repeat.

Appeals

Michael Tobin Defence Committee, 265 Dale St. Chatham, Kent

HYDE PARK 3 - now on trial (usual trick - kept in prison over 6 months awaiting trial, now more serious charge of treason dropped). Donations to Mrs. Callinan, 59 Brondesbury Villas, London NW6 or enquire Mrs. Carty, tel. 677 1526

Marked for Life: the well-known anarchist booklet against exams in universities & colleges, featured in 'Children's Rights', 'Times Higher Ed.', 'D. Telegraph' (sic) etc. 18p from M.F.L., 36a Fairfield Gardens London N. 8

"Calling all nudist libertarians, initially in Central London only. Strike a blow for progress and freedom, and withal peace, by working joyfully together...towards the abolition of the shameful nudity taboo..." All replies, if patently genuine, shall be gladly answered. Desmond Hunter c/o Box 101 Freedom Press

Little has been heard from the trade unions about the "fair rents" act. Where possible, tenants' associations have organized resistance and have had the assistance of local trade union organizations. But the leadership of the trade unions have done nothing actively to aid this opposition. From past experience the lessons are plain that resistance has to be backed by industrial action when evictions are threatened. After all, the same people who are faced with higher rents are also trade unionists. Co-operation between tenants' associations and the local trade union organizations, trade councils, branches and shop steward committees, organizing active opposition is vital. Leaving people isolated as tenants only weakens their resolve to fight the increases, but by uniting on a community and industrial level they could force the government to beat a hasty retreat.

P.T.

*See also reports of resistance in Kirkby, near Liverpool, FREEDOM 13/1/73 and previous.