

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

WHENEVER, as now, a confrontation is developing between the Government and trade union militants the cliché-writers who inhabit the editorial columns of the capitalist press immediately reach for the tired spectre of an impending General Election on the issue of "who governs Britain?" After the "respectable" leaders of the TUC General Council had visited Downing Street for tea and sympathy from the Prime Minister last week, Heath appeared at a Press conference where the gathered voyeurs waited with baited breath - and in vain - for a full frontal display of his ultimate weapon. Coily, he settled in the end for refusing to rule out the possibility of an early Election, but a nod is as good as a wink to a hack from Fleet Street.

Industrial unrest continues to build up against the Government's pay limits set out for Phase Two of their "anti-inflation" policy. At the moment action taken by workers is not illegal, but when Phase Two starts, on April 1st, legal sanctions against those who take industrial action to force employers to pay more than the £1-and-four-per-cent will be on the statute book.

The Government is making an inflexible stand against those opposing its pay norms. Even the way the pay limits are prescribed rules out any fudging of figures as governments have done in the past. Any breach or acceptance is plain for all to see and does allow both sides to claim a victory.

With the stage thus set, will the Government's inflexible attitude lead to a confrontation with organised labour? Both the TUC and Mr. Heath have said that they do not want a confrontation. Obviously this is true. But the very build-up of claims, coupled with legal sanctions, strict adherence to picketing laws, and the obvious failure of any restrictions on rising food prices, could lead to a situation where the Government would be threatened.

However, even Mr. Scanlon, leader of the engineering workers, has said that "those who were thinking of a general strike were living in cloud cuckoo land". Trade union and Labour Party leaders do not want a confrontation because it could lead to a revolutionary situation which they would have great difficulty in controlling. Mr. Joe Gormley, president of the National Union of Mineworkers,

spelt it out when he said: "If the trade union movement wants it they can cause a General Election in the next months. If that's what we want let's do it. If there is no feeling within the TUC that there should be a total confrontation with the Government then a lot of unions will have to live with the situation." He also said that "for one union to take on the Government this year would be damned suicide."

Last year his union did, and his union won. The gas men's industry is just as vital as the coalmines proved to be, and they could likewise defeat the Government. Other workers - in the hospitals, civil servants, teachers, railwaymen and even Ford workers - are not so well placed to bring overall production to a halt. Gas men however, unlike the miners, do not have a background of industrial struggle and haven't the close community links which gave the miners so much of the strength and determination to win. The miner's union itself this year is playing a waiting game over its own claim and there does not seem any likelihood of their taking action at the present.

Mr. Heath has appealed to the nation for support for his Government's policies, but they are totally unfair. With VAT and further food price increases the Government's policies will be seen more and more as an attack on the working class. Anti-strike legislation in April could lead to a situation where a confrontation could result. Workers can win such a confrontation because of the very position they hold in society. Although left-wing union leaders talk about workers' control they, with the rest of the union bureaucracy, would try to keep to economic issues.

As anarchists have always pointed out, the question of whether or not we have a General Election now as opposed to later is as irrelevant as whether Wilson's Tweedledum Government can replace Heath's Tweedledee. Workers who defy the Conservative Government can - and will have to - do likewise with a Labour Government or any other government. A change of rulers matters little to the ruled, but what does matter is our ability to resist their schemes and to achieve genuine progress through our own direct action.

While the politicians and union leaders wheel and deal for power it is up to all of us to use the ultimate weapon - our collective strength as workers - to destroy the kind of society which offers us nothing but a lifetime of boring, futile work as wage-slaves. When we stop working for others, when we seize control of the industry which rightly belongs to all of us, and when we are rid of all leaders and authority we can build a society of free men and women freely co-operating to satisfy the needs of all.

P.T.P.

ARROW MILL AFTERMATH

OUR COMRADE Brian Bamford of Rochdale has been imprisoned for fourteen days for his part in the sit-down at the Arrow Mill during industrial disputes last year; he had refused to pay fine imposed by a mill-owning magistrate.

By the time this paper appears he will have been released from Strangeways.

J.

Coventry

The chairman of the housing committee has demanded the resignation or sacking from his job of the information officer in Hillfields Information Centre, who found a house for an Irish immigrant family to squat in when the council's social services department withdrew, after five weeks, the support they had given in maintaining the family in guest house and hotel accommodation. The information centre is run by Hillfields Community Association but receives financial backing from the rates as part of the Community Development Project sponsored by the Home Office. The housing committee chairman intends to ask the council to withdraw its backing from this whole project if the information officer neither resigns nor is sacked.

IRISH STEW?

AFTER the mass strike and recent Protestant riots in Northern Ireland only a purblind Marxist could pretend that the 'troubles' were a class issue - the Catholic workers being oppressed by the Protestant Catholic Unionists. Conor Cruise O'Brien in The Observer (February 4th) castigates those who would classify the 'dispute' (to use O'Brien's understatement) as 'political', 'religious', or 'economic'. He claims that it is all three at once and has been since its origin in the seventeenth century. The Marxist would aver that by the Materialist Conception of History the material (economic) conditions produce the religious and political forms best suited to their perpetuation. However, this is not fully able to explain why sections of the working class are so easily induced to hate one another. If, as the pre-psychological Marxist doctrine believes, messianic revolutionary hopes can be pinned solely on the working-class as a whole, there must be little hope in a class so credulous and easily divided.

But in all this mess of Irish stew coming to the boil, simmering, or congealing on a cold fire we can discern the manifold contradictions in the melange. When the psychopathic Craig carried out his threat to call the Protestant workers out on strike (Catholic workers are fewer, and largely - by discrimination - unemployed) the ensuing riots were apparently serious enough to unify the more moderate Protestant leaderships into urgent conference with Mr. William Whitelaw.

From a casual reading of the accounts of the rioting there does not seem to be a quantitative difference between the events and any other of the unhappy fracas which have constituted Irish history for years. The key point is that these rioters were supposedly Loyalists whose fealty to the British Commonwealth is, we are

led to believe, one of the prime reasons for the present troubles. Secondly, the weapon used was the strike, which the ruling classes, and the would-be and have-been ruling classes like Paisley, Faulkner and Whitelaw, know, is the one weapon that can turn against them. If, now, the Protestant workers of Ireland realize that strength lies in their own hands, they can use the strike method for their own grievances, not at the whims of a power-crazy Craig. Is it this, then, that disturbed Mr. Whitelaw?

Significantly it was the Catholic ex-Servicemen's Association which joined with the Vanguard League in the strike call, so it was no surprise to learn that Craig had been in touch with the S.D.L.P. (Semi-Detached Labour Party) over a scheme for Dominion status for Northern Ireland. At the moment these meetings are not approved by the respective movements but no doubt the leadership will find ways round this. Obviously, if British and Protestant friends are useless, Craig has realized (as Hitler and Stalin did) the best thing to do is to make a pact with your enemies. The dissident Mr. Fogel from the U.D.A. (writing in the Sunday Times) said on February 4th that the Protestants approached the Catholic ex-Servicemen's Association to act as a link in negotiating with the I.R.A.

It is quite obvious that something is cooking in the Irish stewpot but, like the forthcoming White Paper, whether it will be palatable is another question.

Meanwhile, back in the 'Free State' Mr. Lynch has decided to confound his enemies (at home) by holding a 'snap' election. His opponents have decided on a frail coalition as the only way to fight him. He will probably fight the election on the emotionally charged issue of the I.R.A. and skilfully avoid the grim real-

ity of inflation. This steers his opponents into a supposedly pro-I.R.A. position, or into a feeble 'me-tooism'. This will, no doubt, lose them the election, as, in similar circumstances, it defeated Mr. Mc Govern in the U.S.A. Is it not probable that Mr. Lynch is playing a hunch that the I.R.A. menace will not last as a platform, after the British Government has issued its shower of White Papers, Green Papers, Referendum, etc. Not to mention whatever witches' brews Craig, Taylor, Faulkner, Hume, Paisley and Co. are cooking up.

Jack Robinson.

MORE ON SQUATTING

"The expropriation of dwellings is the cornerstone of the social revolution." (Kropotkin - The Conquest of Bread)

Brixton

Peace News 16.2.73 reported the successful prevention of eviction by the owners' agent and bailiffs employed by him - illegal but backed by the presence of 50 policemen - of two women squatting in an empty laundry. P.N. says that was the third attempt to evict these women. The report does not say how the bailiffs were persuaded to desist (they were inside and packing the women's belongings) except that a large, angry crowd assembled and demanded to know why the police were not intervening to prevent an illegal eviction.

Colchester

Colchester council has (see FREEDOM 10/2/73) handed over to be managed by the Christian Action group two of the houses being squatted in, and a third to the students' union of N.E. Essex Technical College. Possibly two more houses will be handed over, one to each body.

BLACK PURITANS

BRITAIN, THE BLACK MAN AND THE FUTURE. By Vince Hines. Zulu Publications, 139 Ledbury Road, London W.11, 20p

EDWARD HEATH addressed the United Nations General Assembly early in 1971, saying, "In the future, nations will be faced with civil wars." Enoch Powell, in characteristically melodramatic style, wrote, "As I look ahead I am filled with foreboding. Like the Romans I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood... only resolute and urgent action will avert it now." It is difficult to escape the feeling that these men rather welcome the prospect, and are looking forward to a fight. Alas they are not the only ones. They have their equivalents on the other side of the barricade. I think the author of this pamphlet is one of them. It is perhaps not surprising that he should refer to Mr Powell as "one of Britain's most intelligent politicians".

The first half of this pamphlet is devoted to a study of the situation of the black community in Britain, and deals with the racial discrimination to which they are subjected. There is no mention of the discrimination against Indians, Pakistanis, Romanians and working class Irish, who suffer in a very similar way. Although the advice the author gives to the black community is good as far as it goes, in

this first half, the presentation is one-sided. He is right when he tells people to defend themselves in the courts if they possibly can, hit back for all they are worth and try and dominate the courtroom, as the Mangrove Nine did.

But his point of view is entirely nationalist. In the second half of the pamphlet it all comes out. He condemns the intermarriage of black and white, for the usual excuse, the children of such marriages have no definite racial/national loyalties, and it becomes hideously plain that he really does not differ all that much from Heath or Powell, or Kipling, or indeed Hitler. Like all these nationalists he wants a united army behind him.

His ideal is the Dashiki movement. Its aim "is to build a community of sober men and women. A community in which narcotics play no part. An organisation like Dashiki must introduce a cultural foundation for stability for the black community." A sober and Godly people in short. That astonishing Anglo-Welshman, Oliver Cromwell, would have said no different if he could return today. And yet Mr Hines claims that black people cannot identify themselves with Anglo-Saxon culture!

I have no great use for narcotics myself but I think it is up to the

individual to choose, and take the responsibility for himself for the consequences of his choice. I also believe that a man, who really is a man, or a woman, who really is a woman, is not all that much concerned with whether he or she is black or white or brown or yellow. He is aware of his own uniqueness. Mr Hines says the white people are brainwashing the black into hating their own blackness. Maybe. However he is also in the brainwashing business. He too wants to turn the black English into the same sort of people the white English already are, nationalistic, chauvinistic and disciplined.

If there is ever to be a revolution, a real one, not just a change of masters, people will have to begin thinking of themselves as individuals, not parts of a race, a social class or a historical process. I have no doubt that, as the economic situation worsens, and the black people (as well as the other groups mentioned above) are more and more victimised, the blacks will tend to seek a spurious security in nationalist and quasi-military organisations, and Mr Powell and Mr Hines can stage their Armageddon, and doubtless the Thames will run with blood.

John Brent

EAST COAST US ANARCHISM: COMMUNIST AND INDIVIDUALIST

ONE DAY AS I was walking through the hallowed halls of my university a young man appeared. He inquired about my 'black flag' button that was adorned to my jacket.

This man claimed to be an anarchist and I admitted the same. In the United States it seems to be fashionable to call oneself an anarchist, especially among 'do your own thing' college youth. We talked briefly and my friend mentioned the names of Murray Rothbard, Karl Hess and other anarcho-individualists. I responded by mentioning anarcho-communists such as Murray Bookchin and Sam Dolgoff. We realized the polarity of our views and after exchanging phone numbers we parted. After our talk I was informed that my friend was in fact a terrorist who is into anarcho-capitalism.

This tale illuminates some of the dilemmas facing serious anarchists on the east coast of Nixonland. Serious anarchists are few and far apart. I am certain of small pockets of anarcho-communists on the campuses of Hofstra, U. of Mass., and West Virginia university. Off of Dupont Circle in Washington, DC there are comrades that manage the Co-Op Bookshop. They have told me of other affinity groups in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. In New York City there is the Libertarian Book Club lectures that generate thought, solidarity, warmth and inspiration.

The New York area is surrounded by individualists or anarcho-capitalists whose place in libertarian thought is highly suspect. They can be found at the Laissez-Faire bookshop on Friday evenings. A comrade of mine headed a panel discussion on Kropotkin's *Ethics* which turned into an open brawl. These cretins spoke of Howard Hughes with admiration. Fortunately, the Libertarian Alliance does not in any way discredit the bookshop. This shop provides a necessary service to all libertarians in the New York City area. The numbers of these cretins seem to be many and vocal throughout the community of anarchists in this country. Individualism has long been a historical tradition in the US that tends to propagate that great syphilitic germ - capitalism.

PEOPLE'S NEWS SERVICE

READERS OF FREEDOM may be interested in the new agency set up to be a vehicle for left/libertarian/underground activities. The collective running the agency are independent of any political organisation but "insist on the political nature of their work". The original name of the agency was to be "People's Press Agency", however a comradely solicitor's letter threatening legal action by the People's Press Printing Society, which publishes the *Morning Star*, forced a change in name to People's News Service.

The P.N.S. sets out to combat reactionary pressures against working journalists but wants non-journalists to take part in their work. News items are especially welcome - about 200 words - concerning areas of social struggle. The bulletin is available at a reduced rate for individuals, left-wing groups and political papers at £1 for 10 issues. The commercial rate is £2 for 10 issues (halved for bulk subs of five or more copies). The address is 149 Clapham Road, London, S.W.9 (tel. 01-735-2088). Publication is weekly.

No. 1 issue contains a lot of information on London activities with full reports on the Briant work-in, the rent strike in East London, the Squatters in South London, the Women's Abortion & Contraception Campaign, the Campaign against Caetano's visit to Britain and the forthcoming newspaper *Zambesi International* (the aim being to "rally exiles, workers and students from Southern Africa"). Activities outside London may well get better coverage in future issues.

As a source of alternative news P.N.S. seems to serve a useful purpose and manages to do it well.

J.W.

This short article, hopefully, gives a partial overview of anarchism on the east coast of the US. This country does not solely belong to the New Banner ideology. There are some dedicated anarchists here, and all of us are not individualists!!

David Waters

ROYAL THIEF REPENTS

THE DUKE of Norfolk, England's Premier Earl and the man who organises Royal Spectaculars when he is not racing horses, has returned some stolen property to the people of Sussex.

The property in question - half an acre of land - has been handed over to the Arundel Council for house building.

Of course, the Press hasn't quite described it in these terms - as they see it the Noble Duke has "given" it to the council rather than returned it to the people.

It's hard to imagine why the Duke has taken this action. Though he is a Roman Catholic and the saving of his soul may be worrying him now he is on his last legs.

In the Middle Ages nobles often hoped to see themselves all right with their God by giving money to charity or founding a hospital or school.

The story of how his family acquired their wealth and property would not sound out of place in a history of the Kray Brothers or the South London Richardson Gang.

In the 15th Century the Duke's ancestor was Constable of the Tower of London and among the prisoners in his charge were the two "Little Princes" that we all learnt about in the history books.

Richard "Crookback" (the 3rd) saw them as an obstacle in his pursuit of the throne and so he either killed them himself - nobles often did their own dirty work then - or had them throttled for him.

It was a tradition that all property of prisoners who died in the Tower became the property of the Constable so everything fell into the hands of the Norfolk "Godfather".

The ownership of all the estates in Britain can be traced back to robbery and thuggery of this kind - the only thing being that small-time operators get nicked while the biggest crooks are ennobled.

Harry Harmer



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LATEST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF MSS., LETTERS, MEETING NOTICES IS THE MONDAY IN EACH WEEK OF PUBLICATION. WE GO TO PRESS ON MONDAY

Footnote (from prev. col.)

Many historians now believe that Richard III was not responsible for whatever happened to the princes in the Tower, but the basis of the power of our "old families" was invariably some kind of robbery. - P. T. & J. B.

TEACH-IN ON LAW & VIOLENCE

AFTER a rather slow start, the Stoke Newington Defence Group's Teach-In (17th February, at the North London Polytechnic) developed into a lively discussion about the law and how to fight it, and future social trends and how to assist them. The meeting lasted all day and was divided into two sessions by an hour's lunch break.

The first session was devoted to the law. The general opinion was that, since the whole institution is based on class justice, and a barrister is as much a part of the legal system as a judge, the best solution is to defend yourself and to try to get a jury of working class, hippy or black people (according to one's personal situation) by exercising one's right to challenge jurors.

Also do not be afraid of using the trial to make political points. Don't be misled if you get a cool-headed judge; instead of a crude bully. The one is just as much an enemy as the other. Never plead guilty.

A new generation of juries seems to be appearing who are sceptical of judges and the police. Take advantage of this to bring in social comment. Show how court, law and social system is organised to crush people.

The opinion was expressed that the libertarian left lacked organisation, which could be disastrous at the present time when laws are becoming more and more political, and Britain may soon become a second Ulster. The government is already moving against the "flying pickets", while Brigadier Kitson proposes that archaic laws should be dug up for use against potential "troublemakers".

Letter

THE AFB IN ABEYANCE?

Dear Comrades,

I see you have removed the AFB notice from Freedom which, I think, is as it should be. The idea of an organisation that embraces all anarchists but is tolerant and able enough to allow all the various tendencies seems to meet with considerable opposition in some quarters and with apathy and indifference in others. I have had only two written indications of support for an anarchist federation of Britain and its information bulletin since the AFBIB? which suggested a continuation of AFB and AFBIB. I have also been sent very little information, certainly not enough to warrant another Bulletin being sent out.

I never asked nor was asked to take on the job of Secretary to the AFB; I was not appointed nor elected to the post. I do not think I have done it very well but as no-one else has ever offered to take on this unwanted, but what I think still is an important job, I was presumably the only one prepared to do it.

I still receive an increasing number of enquiries about Anarchism and about the AFB, but I find it often extremely difficult to reply; I am no letter writer as this letter only too clearly shows. I shall continue to send to these enquirers (if I receive any more) the address of groups I know of, and organisations such as ASA and ORA. However I do think it is a tragic comment on the movement (or non-movement) that there is so much duplication (or is it offset lithocopy now?) of effort and so little real unity and tolerance in a movement that professes the ultimate in freedom in society.

If anyone or any group wishes to continue some sort of co-ordination or call a conference of all anarchists

After lunch the meeting split up into two groups, one continued to discuss the law and the other went on to investigate the political situation in general.

One speaker criticised the Defence Group for defending the politics of the Angry Brigade when the Stoke Newington defendants were in fact pleading innocent. He said that some people even came to believe that the Defence Committee was responsible for the Aldershot bombing. Even the leaflet advertising the Teach-In had a picture on it of two hands clutching a rifle. "Well," said someone else, "this was to get away from the usual situation in Britain where people tend to be enthusiastic supporters of revolutionary violence in other countries."

Someone said that the Paris rising of 1968 failed because no preparation had been made for struggle with the armed forces of the state. Councils refusing to implement "fair rents" have been fined. How do we organise resistance? Armed might is the last resort, he said.

At this point an (unintentionally) amusing leaflet was circulated. It was an official publication, introducing a new social institution, The Community Cop. The first of these new policemen, who are supposed to be friends, philosophers and guides to the residents of Nottinghill Gate and other poor quarters of London, is a certain Jim Yates.

A speaker pointed out that nowadays more and more things are becoming illegal. The squatting law will soon be changed, and anti-inflation legislation is already being used against the workers. From this he concluded that we are being

forced towards what he called "armed struggle", but which was more conveniently called "war" in the old days.

In spite of what I have written above the tone of the meeting was far from violent. There was, apart from the leaflet advertising the Teach-In, little sign of violent romanticism. "Armed struggle" when advocated was put forward almost apologetically.

Someone pointed out that the state is a condition of the mind as much as anything. Planting trees in parks in regular rows, instead of letting them grow anywhere, as in nature, is an example of the state at work. Because people have been conditioned by their education to accept authority, although in poor districts people like fighting the police, no one has any idea of a constructive policy whereby a working class counter-offensive may be organised.

Nothing very definite emerged from the afternoon session, but there was a general feeling that it had been worthwhile to meet and discuss these questions. In spite of inadequate advertising - Time Out failed for some reason to put in the announcement they said they were going to - there were plenty of people there. Probably about the right number for a discussion of this kind, about a hundred. Most of them were young, and the general point of view seemed to be "libertarian", really anarchist to all intents and purposes, but it is the same as with the freethinkers who prefer to call themselves rationalists, agnostics, humanists, etc., rather than use the word "atheist".

John Brent

the present £78 p.a. to £190 p.a.

The figures mentioned above are not the rates that we expect you to be paying in April 1973. These new evaluations will also be accompanied by reductions in the rate in the £ levied by local authorities. Even if the council does reduce the rate in the £ it still won't be enough to prevent large rate increases in April. The local authorities are not obliged to publish these figures until March. To give the tenants an idea of what sort of rate increases can be expected - Liverpool council expects the rates to go up by 30% per week and Bootle are talking about a 50p per week rate rise. Obviously we cannot give the tenants the complete breakdown of all the facts due to the lack of space in our leaflets, so the Action Group has invited the council's financial wizard Councillor Wylie to come to our meeting to do this. (This should be quite an interesting meeting.) Kirkby Council has been delivering letters to every house on the estate informing them of the provisionally assessed 'fair rent' for their particular dwelling. (See Freedom 10th February.) This assessment has been drawn up by Kirkby Council for the rent assessment board. It is this board which has the final word in any assessment. These new assessments will be approximately the same rent that we should be paying now plus the last increase. It comes as no surprise to the Action Group that this assessment is about equal to what rent we are paying now. This is due to two reasons. (1) The council is hellbent on smashing this rent strike so they are trying to kid the tenants on rent strike that we will be getting no more rent increases on Tower Hill. (2) There is an election in May for the new metropolitan council wards. The council knows full well that the rent scrutiny board are almost certain to increase the Council's assessment to what they consider to be a 'fair rent'. In fact Kirkby

FORD WORKERS' CONFERENCE

ABOUT 300 FORD convenors and shop stewards attended the meeting on their wage claim at Coventry last Sunday. Delegates from Chryslers, British Leyland also attended, as well as workers from Rolls Royce, the coal industry, hospitals, the print and teachers. Union officials had been invited but none of them turned up.

The platform was made up of two lay members on the Transport & General Workers Union executive, one convenor from Chryslers and three from Fords, Dagenham. Before the conference got under way a delegate challenged the presence of the B.B.C. It was stated that they were not our friends and were asked to leave. The Chairman then asked all members of the press to leave and one who hung back was removed gently.

The conference was in two parts. The first session was on the domestic issue at Fords and Jock McRea, a convenor at Dagenham, reported back to the conference on the wage negotiations and the details of the company's offer. He underlined the company's refusal to deal with the claim on its merits and their insistence on keeping their offer within the phase two wage limits. He ended by calling for endorsement from the individual plants for strike action from March 1 unless a reasonable offer is made. This was passed unanimously.

The second part was a general debate with every section of workers joining in. Needless to say the miners' delegate got a tremendous reception. The meeting felt that the Government was out to defeat the trade unions and their strength and ability to organise resistance to the employers. A report was given from Briant's on their work-in. Hospital workers urged the Ford workers to "have a go" and act as a vanguard against the Government's repressive legislation. Jock Gibson, a convenor at Chryslers and a lay member of the T & G executive, said that they intended to be more forceful with their own management and add their strength to the struggle. Others spoke against any co-operation with the Government's Pay Board.

There was a call for a national stoppage on May 1.

A Correspondent

RESISTING
THE
REDEVELOPERS!

BRAG

BATTERSEA REDEVELOPMENT ACTION GROUP, which has been campaigning since August against property speculators moving in on the riverfront, is holding a public meeting on WEDNESDAY 28th FEBRUARY at the St. Mary Le Park Church, Battersea, at 8.00 p.m.

The group has been pressing Wandsworth council to turn down the present applications to build luxury homes and offices and to compulsorily purchase the land to provide jobs, amenities and homes for local people, of whom 6000 are on the housing waiting list.

The main speaker at the meeting will be the chairman of the planning committee, with a lecturer in planning from South Bank Polytechnic, and there will be plenty of time for discussion of alternative plans.

M.H.

Council claimed two years ago that the average economic rent for dwellings on Tower Hill would be in the region of £9.50 per week. The Action Group has got well-documented evidence that the rents on Tower Hill could be as high as £6 per week, this does not include the rates and as we have already indicated they are due to go up in April. We might still be getting a further increase in rent in October as well. The figures the council are putting out are deliberately misleading in an attempt to crack the strike.

A Correspondent

FACING THE PAST WITH OPTIMISM



BUSINESS is facing a period of adjustment, if recession should threaten serious consequences for business (as is not indicated at present) there is little doubt that the Reserve System would take steps to ease the money market and so check the movement.¹

There does not seem to be as yet much real evidence that the decline in stock prices is likely to forecast a serious recession in general business. Despite the slowing down in iron and steel production, in automobile output, and in building, the conditions which result in serious business depressions are not present. It seems probable that stocks have been passing not so much from the strong to the weak as from the smart to the dumb.²

Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau. In a few months the stock market will be a great deal higher than it is today.³

Believing that fundamental conditions of the country are sound and that there is nothing in the business situation to warrant the destruction of values that has taken place on the exchanges during the past week, my son and I have for some days been purchasing sound common stocks.⁴

There will be a revival of activity in the spring. There is nothing in the situation to be disturbed about. There are grounds for assuming that this is about a normal year.⁵

The spring...marks the end of a period of grave concern... American business is steadily coming back to a normal level of prosperity.⁶

We have now passed the worst and with continued unity of effort we shall rapidly recover.⁷

Schemes must be devised, policies must be devised if it is humanly possible to take that section (i.e. those unemployed who are unlikely shortly to be reabsorbed into industry) and to regard them not as wastrels, not as hopeless people, but as people for whom occupation, although it may not be in the regular factory or in organised large-scale industrial groups, nevertheless will be quite as effective for themselves mentally, morally, spiritually and physically than, perhaps, if they were included in this enormous mechanism of humanity which is hot always producing the best result, and which, to a very large extent, fails in producing the good results that so many of us expect to see from a higher civilization based upon national wealth. That is a problem that has got to be faced.⁸

No worker today who thinks about the causes of his distress can do anything but condemn those who make promises to him even as an amelioration of his lot that have been tried and have not only failed but have made conditions worse... We may have still to cut our coats according to the cloth, but the coats will be much bigger than any reflecting man could have imagined to be possible eighteen months ago. If the Budget which is to be presented in a few weeks will show that we are by no means out of the wood, it will also prove that the Government has established national credit as the rock upon which the expansion of national industry can be built.⁹

If the greater facility of mechanical invention means a greater volume of production with a substantially less number of employed, we will have to face a very serious problem of permanent unemployment.¹⁰

Let me come to the question of public works... This attempt to find some inconsistency between statements made at different times by different members of the Government is really beating the air... there is really no inconsistency whatever.¹¹

Those who disagree with our view

declare that the effect of our proposals would be to raise prices, with evil effects to wage earners and to the export interests of the country. In point of fact the cost of living index has continued to fall. It now stands at 44 per cent above the level of July 1914, as compared with 47 per cent at the beginning of last February.¹²

Black as it may appear, believe me, there is no country in the world better off judged by any point of view than this old country is today.¹³

Unemployment in the sense of distress is widely disappearing... We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poor-house is vanishing from among us. We have not yet reached the goal, but given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, and we shall soon with the help of God be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation. There is no guarantee against poverty equal to a job for every man. That is the primary purpose of the economic policies we advocate.¹⁴

Those of us who urge the workers to turn their minds to increased production do so primarily in the interests of the workers themselves. Greater yield of commodities is essential in order that an abundance of products would pull down prices and place upon the market all the things which are necessary for housing, cheaper food, and clothing of which the workers are in urgent need.¹⁵

[On unemployment] there was no subject to which the Government had given more prolonged and anxious thought. They believed, however, that in the derating proposals they had evolved a scheme which would go far to stimulate trade and enable industry to absorb at any rate a large part of the people now unemployed...¹⁶

There are now unmistakable signs of returning prosperity. Four years of wise and prudent administration are at last bringing their reward, and we are definitely climbing out of the trough of industrial depression.¹⁷

The fundamental business of the country, that is production and distribution of commodities, is on a sound and prosperous level.¹⁸

There will be no interruption of our present prosperity.¹⁹

A depression like 1920-1921 is clearly out of the question. We face a recession which will terminate in the spring.²⁰

The worst is over without a doubt, and it has been a discipline and in some ways a constructive experience. People have learned once again that only work produces wealth.²¹

Just grin, keep on working. Stop worrying about the future and go ahead as best we can. We always have a way of living through the hard times.²²

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This anthology of familiar optimism is culled from Only Yesterday, F.L. ALLEN; A Strong Hand at the Helm, VINDICATOR (1933); Cast Off All Fooling and Pillars of Cloud (1936), JOHN SCANLON; and Oh Yeah, edited EDWARD ANGLY (1932).

Readers will or will not need reminding that the American stock-market crash, the world slump (with consequent unemployment) leading, incidentally, to the rise of Hitler, followed or ran parallel with these windy utterances.

Compiled by J.R.

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Squatting... STEPNEY from p. 1

An eviction took place on 13 February from one of the squatters' houses referred to in our issue of 17.2.73. The four occupants moved to another house.

On the same day county court bailiffs failed, even with the presence of police, to effect

THURSDAYS at Freedom Press from 2 p.m. Help fold and despatch FREEDOM

Proposed Groups:

ANARCHO-COMMUNISTS interested in starting up a new anarchist movement in the U S A write Willard Petrie, Box 221 Pierpont, S.W. Res. College, U. of Mass., AMHERST, Mass., or David Waters, Tower E., Box 1005, HEMPSTEAD, N.Y. 11551

BARNESLEY, new Dwarf Group. Charlie, Mich and Dei, 12 Regent Street South, BARNESLEY, Yorks.

EXETER Dwarf group forming. Contact John Forward, 22 Peltrim Avenue, Exeter.

HARLECH (ASA): G & B Briggs c/o Coleg Harlech, Merioneth.

LEWISHAM anarchists can make contact via Vera Krishek, Tel. 852 8879

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

"Schools Anarchy Propagation Action Group" for non-collectivist school anarchy. Contact

SAPAG c/o 1 Springbank, Salesbury, Blackpool, BB1 9EU

MICHAEL TOBIN DEFENCE COMMITTEE 265 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent

Harmony Village: A Plan for a Libertarian Village Commune, pamphlet just published 10p from 14a Hansard Mews, W14 8BJ

Libertarian Struggle (ORA) No.1 Feb., industrial news, interviews, polemic vs. Stoke Newington 8. 5p + 2p post, sub. £1 12 issues. 29 Cardigan Rd. Leeds (also available Freedom Bkshop)

S.Wales and Bristol Area Information Bulletin No. 1 discussion on anarchist & libertarian ideas with emphasis on regional affairs and contacts. Nominal sub 30p six issues or bulk write to Jock & Eve Spence, 22 Cwmndonkin Terrace, Swansea.

How We Knocked 'Em in the Old Kent Road, a dramatized version of the Briant Colour Print Workers' saga. Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays at 7.45 p.m. until March 24th. Tickets 40p. Associate Membership 50p. Bar. Unity Theatre, 1 Goldington

Meetings:

Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance 3 p.m. every Sunday at 3 Grange House, Highbury Grange, N.5. Black & Red Outlook always available; by post 5p + 2p post.

CARDIFF: Conference to discuss formation of Severnside Libertarian Federation shortly. Contact Alex Bird, 28 Heol Don, Whitchurch, Cardiff.

GLASGOW: ORA Easter Conference 21-23 April. Details from Moira Young, 91 Burghhead Drive, Lint-house, Glasgow G51 4QJ

NOTTINGHAM: All local comrades urgently invited to attend meeting at John Hinsley's, 131, Foxhall Road (off Gregory Blvd.) Forest Fields, N'ham 8 o'clock Tuesday March 6. Trent Poly Gp.

New York: Libertarian Book Club Lectures, fortnightly on Thursdays 7 p.m. at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Ave., corner 29 Street. Admission free. Mar 22 Sylvia Barnes: Women's Liberation Movement Examined.

an eviction (which the judge had "regretted being obliged to order") from 20 Myrdle St. of a number of squatters. Supporters successfully blocked access. Our comrade John Retz was charged with threatening behaviour, and is on bail to appear again in court on March 14th.

M.H.

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