

Where Were You Comrade...?

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SOME years ago a story was circulating that when Nikita Krushchev was addressing the Presidium of the Soviet during which he denounced the horrors and iniquities of the late Joseph Stalin, a delegate sent up an unsigned note which simply asked "And what were you doing all this time Comrade K?" The alleged answer from the rostrum is stated to have been "Like you Comrade, I remained anonymous!" This story has not been confirmed, and is no doubt apocryphal, but it does have a relevance to much U-turning and tortuous mind-changing currently in vogue on subjects like, for example, inflation, investment programmes, subsidies, and so forth *ad nauseam*. It is difficult these days to know who are for a free market economy and who are not.

Latter-day converts to the monetary explanation of inflation find themselves being denounced with greater vigour by their erstwhile colleagues, than by their political opponents, who, when not blaming the unions for our current hyper-inflation are found castigating the Arab oil producers, Russian and Chinese communists busily buying up U.S. grain surpluses, and any other handy scapegoat. This motley collection of "villains" are said to be the cause of our present inflation, and perish the thought that Messrs. Heath, Barber, Wilson, Healey *et al* could have in any way pursued policies guaranteed to bring about the current explosion in wages and prices by swamping its citizens in a mountain of almost worthless bank notes and scrap metal coins. Mr. Heath vigorously defends a miserable record of a mismanaged mixed economy by denouncing the free market as an "impossible dream", presumably preferring the nightmare of his Stages 1, 2 & 3 Prices and Incomes Policy.

The contemporary political dialogue has become a Tower of Babel where the very language is debased, so that words are given

any meaning the speaker or writer chooses to give them. A veritable *Alice in Wonderland* world of unbelievable wishful thinking has arisen wherein academics, politicians and businessmen are at one with Humpty Dumpty in asserting that, "When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less." While the poor bemused onlooker, along with Alice, may protest that, "The question is whether you can make words mean so many different things." To which our many Humpty Dumptys with all the arrogance for which they have a special

talent, are likely to reply, "The question is, which is to be master - that's all".

The *bourbons* amongst us continue to flourish, forgetting nothing, learning nothing. As an old French proverb reminds us, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, and way back in 1919 Rudyard Kipling wrote what could well be a most fitting requiem for the sad state our nation has arrived at with his *The Gods of the Copy-book Headings*.

Nations or communities which deny the existence of natural law or eternal truths will find their