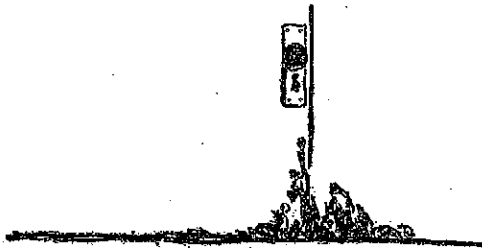


The Landlords Heil Hitler

A FEW WEEKS AGO the news agencies wired a story out of Chicago about "real estate racketeering." According to this story, the unemployed have been paying a large portion of their relief income as rents and cutting down on their food. The administrators of the food stamp plan (\$1,000,000 a month for about 200,000 persons, or about \$5 a month for each) hope to stop this diversion of food money for rent, for the food stamps apparently cannot be redeemed in cash.

Maybe. But evictions follow non-payment of rent, and people must have a place to sleep as well as something to eat. The only solution the political experts can think of is a "thorough investigation of real estate shysters." Yet the law of rent un-



doubtedly works in lawless Chicago as well as in other parts of the world, and the suspicion remains that somehow the hand-outs from Washington will reach the landlords' pockets. They always do.

Now comes a story from London telling of the aid and comfort given to British landlords by their arch-enemy Hitler. It is the story of the "refugee rent racket" in which London's homeless in their flight to rural areas are being gouged by the landlords. Country hotels are putting four and five persons into a room suited for two, and doubling the rates. At Oxford, for instance, to which thousands of Londoners have migrated, the chief constable reported that one landlord was asking \$24 a week for two rooms. Owners of empty houses are attempting to force sales of their properties by refusing to rent.

Malcolm Macdonald, Minister of Health, follows the pattern of political thinking that prevails in Chicago and threatens the profiteering landlords with fines. But nothing he can do or say will prevent the law of rent from operating.

Any neophyte in economics might think of freeing the vast vacant areas of land and permitting the homeless in Chicago or in England to put up huts or other temporary quarters as a solution of the

"rent" problem. But there are no neophytes in London or in Washington; there are only experts.

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Addendum: As we go to press, a significant item from the Liverpool Daily Post (England) comes to hand. The Liverpool municipal cemeteries, covering 668 acres, represent a cost of about \$900,000. With an acre of burial plots costing about \$1,350, some landowners have evidently been doing a good trade in death. They are cashing in on the war.