

HOMELESS HUNTED

Military Authorities act as Illegal Eviction Agents

THE POLICE HAVE NO RIGHT TO EVICT SQUATTERS. TO EVICT PEOPLE "LEGALLY" THE LANDLORD MUST FIRST GET AN EVICTION ORDER FROM THE COURTS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOW DISCOVERED THAT MILITARY POLICE ARE ACTING AS ILLEGAL EVICTION AGENTS IN THE LOWER FALLS AREA.

They have harassed Mrs Burns, squatting in No. 11 Panton Street on two occasions. They visited her on Wednesday November 19th. and told her "we've come up to ask you to move on." When she questioned them they said "Are you going to be stubborn about it?"

Mrs Brennan, landlord for the house had earlier called on the police at Hastings Street barracks and asked them to remove squatters from her property. She had no right to do this. If she wishes to evict squatters she has to get a court eviction order -- she had not done this. However she could rely on the police and the military authorities to collaborate with the landlord class.

During the first visit by the police to Panton Street, they told Mrs. Burns that "a court eviction order will come within seven days." This was a lie -- the landlord has not applied for a court eviction order.

This Wednesday the R.U.C. and military police returned --- they had no eviction order but greatly alarmed Mrs Burns by asking her a series of searching questions about her husband. Mrs. Burns was so anxious that she went up to the Springfield barracks to check whether her husband was in trouble. The officer on duty rang through to Hastings Street and said "there is nothing to worry about, you are the one who is going to be put out of Panton St. aren't you?" So all the harassment was just part of the process of trying to persuade her to leave Panton St. So also it became clear that the authorities had decided that Mrs Burns was going to be put out of Panton Street whether a court order was obtained or not. We believe that the illegal activities of the R.U.C. and the military authorities as the henchmen of landlords must not be tolerated.

Other incidents reveal the role of the military against squatters. On Friday night during the torrential rain, the roof of a house occupied by squatters began to collapse, the

rain poured in on children lying in bed. The military were approached for plastic sheeting. They replied "squatting is illegal."

This is where the community relations conscious propaganda of the military authorities falls down. They will offer bingo and dances, bread and circuses, but when it comes to supporting the rights of homeless families to houses, they are only too delighted to back the landlords.

have never set foot in Ireland never mind Armagh. While they are given £¼m. to compensate them for a slight reduction in their plunder, there is no talk of compensation for the workers who have had to accept cuts in earnings of £2 to £5 a week.

Just how much profit does Bairnsweat make in a year anyway? The shareholders have been compensated. What about the workers? Courtauld's shareholders will never miss £¼m. - let it be shared among the women who work for less than £10 a week.

WORKERS GET NOTHING OUT OF BAIRNSWEAR

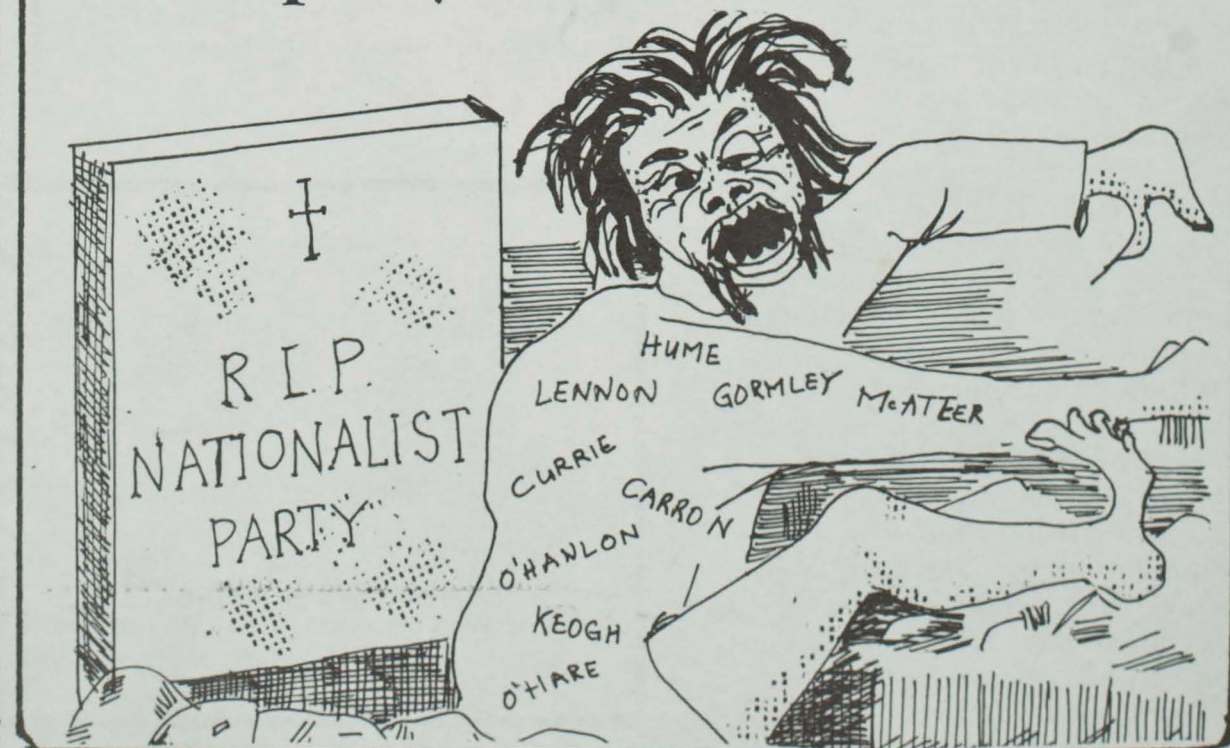
The management of Bairnsweat, the Armagh factory damaged by fire during the August riots, were granted a quarter of a million pounds to cover the reduction in their profits while part of the factory is being rebuilt. Meanwhile, the 280 workers still employed in Bairnsweat have had a drop in earnings of between £2 and £5 a week. In "normal" times women earn about £520 a year, or £10 a week (before stamp and tax).

The £¼ million granted by the court to the employers does not represent their total profits. It merely means that while part of the factory could not be used, their profits fell by £¼ million. Production at the factory was stopped for only about a fortnight, and soon over 80% of the work force were back at work, so £¼m. must be only a small fraction of the TOTAL profits of Bairnsweat in Armagh.

Bairnsweat is making literally millions of pounds in profits. These millions of pounds are not being paid to the Armagh workers - women receive less than £10 a week. The profits are not even spent in Armagh at all. They go to the shareholders of Bairnsweat's 'parent' company, Courtaulds, most of whom

INSIDE ---- Full page article on the death throes of the Nationalist Party.

"let those who seek to dance on our
grave dance lightly, lest they waken
the corpse..." eddie mcateer.



American Militants

Eilis McDermott was invited recently to attend the conference of the National Association for Irish Justice, which was held in the United States. While there, she took part in the mammoth march which was part of the Anti-Vietnam War Moratorium. Eilis also met members of the militant Black Panther Party, and here describes her visit to their headquarters in Boston. "It's an historic moment," said the young student enthusiastically as he drove me to meet the Black Panther Party in the heart of the Boston ghetto. "And by the way, call them 'black' - never 'negro' or 'coloured'," he warned.

My enthusiasm waned as I glanced at the guns and wall-racks of bullets decorating their office. One Panther stood up and spoke! "O.K. we gotta split this scene, the pigs are gonna bust us (they are subject to frequent and furious attacks by the police in the area).

In a student commune in the ghetto complex, I started explaining Northern Ireland to them. They were incredulous at the provisions of the Special Powers Act and were reluctant to believe the events of the Belfast-Derry march until I showed them "Burntolllet". The social and economic aspects of the Ulster problem interested them most and encouraged them to tell me about their own organisation, their problems and solutions.

The Black Panther Party was formed in 1966, its main objective being to defend the people in the black ghettos from police attack. (the panther is an animal who fights only in self defence). They grew stronger after the death of Martin Luther King in 1967 and began to implement 'community programmes'. This involves, as they put it, working "from the people to the people." They spend about ten hours a day working in the ghetto and, to quote them again "if you ask the people what they want, what they need, they'll tell you." Most of their time is spent in working the "Free Breakfast Programme," through which they feed all the children before marshalling them to school. In Boston at that time, the government intend building a road right through the black community. The Panthers intend to build a medical unit right across the site as soon as it is cleared.

The Panthers have formed alliances with various groups on the white American left and the line they preach is totally non-racist. I was particularly impressed by their analysis of American capitalism - aim - bigotry, an analysis which they incessantly preach to the black worker. "A man does a job for which he should get 3 dollars an hour. If he is white, he'll get two dollars, if he's black he'll get 1 dollar 90 cents. The loyalty of the white man is bought for 10 cents and he doesn't even know he's being exploited."

"Work on the wavelength of the people" they urged "if you're going

to work at all. You will see posters all over Boston and Washington saying 'Black Socialism leads to Black Capitalism.' The only way we can prove socialism works is by example. Eventually, we will try to branch out into white working districts (they have already done this successfully in Chicago) and really blow the minds of those bigoted capitalists."

It doesn't take much thinking to realise that people like these have more to offer to our movement in terms of advice and support than have many of the sentimental, traditionalist Irish-American populations of America's big cities. They work towards their ideal instead of dreaming about it and if ever power comes their way it will not be for them but for the people.

E. McDERMOTT

P.D CONFERENCE

Last week end the new Standing Orders were adopted by P.D. From now on, PD will have an individual card-carrying membership. Monthly conferences will discuss policy and activity. Administration will be looked after by the Steering Committee which will consist of one delegate from each of the local groups and nine members elected by the General Meeting. General Meetings are to be held every six months, or when requested by 25 members. Four existing local branches were recognised: Armagh, Belfast, Fermanagh, and Lurgan. It is expected that several others will be in existence before the next conference.

BUM OF THE WEEK

In the midst of all the misery, all the homelessness there is bound to be some cheering little story of good fortune, some outstanding saga of greed and hypocrisy, to make us all think what a wonderful world we live in.

A wonderful world indeed it is for Mr. T.B.F. Thompson who is, says the Newsletter, in the process of buying Northways, Cyril Lord's old house, for a sum of more than £50,000.

Mr. Thompson will get "a private jetty painted pink" "a helicopter-pad" "a flood-lit tennis-court" an under water lit swimming pool, a few greenhouses, and the "super special pink flat where celebrities from all walks of life have been guests." Yes even Captain Terence O'Neill drank there as he signed away thousands of the taxpayers money to keep Lord's lavish fantasy life going.

Well fear not Mr. Thompson isn't like Cyril Lord at all, the Newsletter assures us "in spite of these glamorous accoutrements Mr. Thompson is far from being a sybarite (whatever that is - ED) He is a devoted churchman and a person of very high ideals".

The article continues "he already owns a number of homes in Northern Ireland and he says that in spite of our current well publicised troubles he has unshakeable optimism in his native land."

Well isn't that cheering the Newsletter has found someone who has unshakeable optimism in our native land (and apparently an unshakeable grip on a large amount of property) No Mr. Thompson for the moment I think we would prefer your houses to your "high ideals".

In the other half Jack

Now that Stormont have much to their regret had to ban the Springboks match because of the pressure of protest, when will Mr. Lynch and Fianna Fail follow suit. Mr. Lynch has made a lot of little diplomatic gestures. Not included so far is a cancellation of the Fianna Fail trade; drive in South Africa. So we can hardly anticipate that poor Jack wants to go the whole hog and cancel the Springbok tour.

APPLICATION FORM

I would like to enroll as a member of Peoples Democracy.

NAME

ADDRESS

I enclose a donation of for P.D. (Suggested amount 4/-).

Give this to your local group, or send direct to:

P.D., 84 Albert St, Belfast. 12.

INQUEST FARCE

R.U.C Refuse to Give Evidence

SENIOR R.U.C. OFFICERS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY INTEND TO TURN THE INQUESTS ON THE AUGUST RIOT VICTIMS INTO A FARCE. NOW BASIL KELLY, THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL, HAS MADE IT EQUALLY CLEAR THAT HE, LIKE DESMOND BOAL M.P. IN THE GALLAGHER CASE, SUPPORTS THEM IN THIS.

At the inquest on Sammy McLarnon, murdered in his own house in Herbert Street, the solicitor for the Ministry of Home Affairs, Mr. Robert Carswell said that "the Attorney-General had directed that the solicitors should not be provided with the names of officers in charge of police during rioting."

Mr. Carswell and the Attorney-General argue, with ill concealed contempt for the whole inquest procedure, that they will provide just sufficient evidence for "the inquest to carry out its statutory duty." The inquests will go through the legal forms and no more.

Why cannot the Attorney-General allow his officers to go before an inquest? Where does the Inspector-General Sir Arthur Young stand in all this? He talks of a new reformed R.U.C. ---- Why then is he afraid to let his colleagues appear. The truth is that senior R.U.C. officers played a major part in leading the death and destruction of August. This is what the government wishes to conceal for as long as possible.

Look at the exchanges in the inquest on 9 year old Patrick Rooney. Detective Constable Alexander Allerton under cross-examination said "I do not know if machine guns were mounted on the Whippet cars" in the Falls Rd. and "I do not know if statements have been taken from the men on duty in the cars that night." Sergeant Cunningham said "Each man involved in these riots is making a report of how many rounds he fired. This is not at hand."

Surely it is of relevance for an inquest to know the orders given by Senior police officers that night. Surely the inquest must be a farce if the forces of so-called law and order can conceal the time, place, and amount of shooting they did. Such an extraordinary conspiracy of silence means one thing -- Guilt.

It is of no comfort to know that by January, February, or March the Scarman Commission may drag out some of these details, by then it may be too late. At least in the meantime all R.U.C. officers involved in the conspiracy of silence over the inquests should be suspended.

MINORITY WHIM

Grovefield branch of the Ormeau Unionist Association are to invite "a representative of South Africa" to a future meeting as a protest against the ban on the Springboks match. Amongst the reactionaries present when the decision was taken was Mr. Rafton Pounder, Unionist M.P. for South Belfast. The branch objected to the ban because the government "did it to appease the whims of a minority". Perhaps these Unionists should remember that the reason the Springboks are all white is to appease the whims of a minority.

SLUM OF THE WEEK

Mrs Glennan lost everything when she was burnt out during the troubles riots. Now she is squatting in 5 Norfolk Street. She has no cooking facilities, the electricity only works downstairs, the floors of the kitchen, the toilet and the back-yard are perpetually flooded. The water piping is broken in several places and the only way she can get any water is by turning on a main stopcock on the kitchen floor. The lavatory doesn't work, she is short of bedclothes --- a long list of problems for a healthy person one might say, but earlier this summer Mrs Glennan had pneumonia, she has respiratory trouble, and in fact has refused a chalet on doctors advice. In short if Mrs Glennan is left by the various authorities where she is for the winter her position is grim indeed.

Here we come to the crux of the matter. Mrs Glennan is a squatter. The first consequence of this is that her National Assistance was cut by 11/5 (the rent of her previous house). The second consequence is that she can get no money from the authorities to repair the house in which she is at present. On the other hand because she has a house to live in (some house) she is not homeless. So bureaucracy sets out to quietly strangle her. They have even given her a special 11/- allowance for a special diet, they ignore the fact that she has nowhere to cook the food.

There are other squatters in desperate need in very similar circumstances. We highlight Mrs Glennan's case to show the way in which the homeless who squatted have been abandoned.

ARDOYNE INJUSTICE

Ardoyne people are now being summonsed and convicted for cases of alleged intimidation during the August riots. Already there is evidence that in at least one case there has been a major miscarriage of justice.

Mrs Sharpe, now of 21 Hooker Street was accused on Monday of intimidating the former resident Miss Black.

The Sharpes who lost their home in Ballymena Street claim that Miss Black's brother Mr. Black agreed to let them have the house, and handed them the key, because they the Blacks had already decided to move out. Although Mr. Black gave evidence that he had given Mrs Sharpe the key, the crown still insisted that Mrs Sharpe had intimidated. The magistrate agreed.

Turn now to the Belfast Newsletter of August 4th. Here by strange coincidence Mrs Sharpe told how she lost her home in Ballymena Street and Miss Black told how she came to move from Hooker St. Miss Black said then "on Sunday some Protestants came and advised me to leave my home for they said I would be burned out if I did not go". The Newsletter report continued --- "Miss Black said that she had been on the best of terms with her R.C. neighbours and said that the people who were causing all the trouble were strangers to the area."

There are three points here. Firstly Protestants advised Miss Black to leave. Secondly Miss Black was on the best of terms with her neighbours. Thirdly outsiders caused the trouble and Mrs Sharpe was brought up in the area.

What then has occurred since August 4th. to bring about a crown prosecution? Could it be that pressure is being put on those who left Hooker Street to give evidence against those now squatting there? If so we can only hope that some of the decent families who had to leave will speak out and ensure that justice is done.

And a final comment. Why do the police press trivial charges against protestants and catholics, thus keeping up tension, while the real culprits, the men who burned houses and shot innocent civilians go free?

ARE YOU A SQUATTER?
HAVE YOU A SERIOUS HOUSING PROBLEM?

Then see us and fight for your rights.

OUR H.Q. 84 ALBERT STREET,
BELFAST 12.

OUT THIS WEEK --- Michael Farrel's pamphlet analysing the crisis in the North. This will be the first of a series of P.D pamphlets. Send 2/- Postal Order for your copy.

NATIONALISTS--

For too long they have betrayed the Irish Working-Class

The Nationalist Party has been in existence for the last 50 years or so. It has been dead from the neck up for most of that time. It was finally decapitated at the General Election last February but like a hen which its had its neck wrung it still occasionally jumps up and squawks. It did some of this squawking last weekend at its conference. The squawks were all the louder because now its toes are falling off -- Tom Gormley M.P. has deserted and the dynamic Austin Currie is trying to make up his mind whether he would do better in Mid-Ulster as a Nationalist or as an Independent.

A year ago the Nationalist Party had 9 M.P.'s at Stormont; though you could be forgiven if you had not noticed. Today they have 4½ -- the ½ being Austin Currie. Few could list their names, fewer still the last civil rights march which they went on. Their leader was soundly defeated at the last general election and they have had to invent the post of president to keep him happy. McAteer himself admitted that their party was a corpse and their only hope was in hurrying up the resurrection of the dead.

SECTARIAN

The Nationalist Party is the remnant of John Redmond's Home Rule Party which lingered on in the North after it had been swept away everewhere else. In the North it was strongly based on the green orangemen of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the link remains, with Gerry Lennon, Vice-President of the A.O.H. being leader of the Nationalists in the Senate. Founder and first leader of the party was "wee Joe Devlin", Secretary of the A.O.H., recruiting sergeant for the British Army in the 1914-18 war, and believer in Home Rule within the Empire.

Heirs to this disreputable tradition, it is ironical to hear Michael Keogh M.P. state at the Nationalist Conference that the leaders of the 1916 Rising didn't die for a socialist republic. A lot Keogh would know about it! His Party produced a pamphlet condemning the Easter rising and opposed the very men who had fought in the G.P.O. in the 1918 election. It is no wonder Keogh doesn't know that Connolly lived and died for a Socialist Republic and that even the most confused Volunteer in 1916 was fighting against British Imperialism, -- which is more than can be said for Keogh and his kind.

MIDDLE-CLASS

The Nationalists never really were a party, Redmond and Co. had represented the southern middle classes who had wanted to take over from the British as the exploiters of the Irish people. In the North Devlin's cronies were a collection of catholic lawyers, publicans and newspaper proprietors. They never really

thought of taking over from the Unionist exploiters and contented themselves with lining their own pockets and serving the interests of those middle class catholics who were doing alright out of the Unionist State. They never formed a party organisation and for the last 20 years have never contested a seat that did not have a catholic majority. Their candidates were selected by conventions of "the priests, and catholic people" of the area and they never had a non-catholic candidate

The Nationalists didn't do all this because they were bigoted or stupid -- though they were and are. They have always been afraid to build a real political party with rank and file membership since this would force them to face the problems of the working class and small farmers instead of just protesting at the lack of appointments for catholic lawyers. A real political movement too might have led to the recognition of the necessity for an alliance of Catholic and Protestant workers against the unionist exploiters and their catholic allies.

INEFFECTIVE

They have been totally ineffective as an opposition in Stormont. They never really fought the Unionists. Joe Devlin became quite friendly with Craigavon and his successor as leader, T.J. Campbell, M.P., was so harmless that they made him a High Court Judge. More recently Eddie McAteer became O'Neill's public relations man for the new liberal Unionism. In 48 years of parliamentary activity the greatest achievement of the Nationalists was to get a bill for the Protection of Wild Birds onto the statute book. The Civil Rights movement did more in one year than they did in their whole 48.

But the Nationalists have been worse than timid and ineffective. Their total acceptance of the Unionist fostered division of the people on religious lines has helped to harden sectarian divisions, while their right-wing clericalism -- they were strongly pro-Franco in the thirties -- has helped to prevent the development of any Socialist movement, beginning among the most oppressed section in the North, the Catholic workers, and spreading to their Protestant fellow-workers.

LIME-GREEN TORIES

A couple of years ago the Nationalists attempted to reorganise their party in such a way as to retain the personal power of the M.P's and middle class control. They realised that otherwise their would be an explosion of discontent. They were too late. Today history is passing them by. The militancy and vigour of the Civil Rights Movement has thrown this collection of weak-kneed old women onto the scrap-heap. But while the Nationalists may be dead the gombeen mentality that created them lives on.

Hume, Currie, and Cooper are re-creating the concept of a group of M.P's -- not a party -- which accepts the sectarian division and claims to represent the entire catholic population while in reality only representing the middle class. Their group would emphasise only discrimination and a United Ireland without a thought for the unemployment, slums and emigration which will remain on both sides of the border even if discrimination is done away with, and if the border is abolished for a 32-County Fianna Fail Republic.

THE ANSWER

Those who believe that the root cause of poverty and misery in Ireland is Imperialist exploitation must make sure that not only are Hibernians and emerald green toryism smashed but also that the new lime-green variety is strangled at birth. The only solution is the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic, anything else will fail.



bits

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