

FREE CITIZEN

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PAPER OF THE PEOPLES DEMOCRACY

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D'GANNON MAN CONVICTED BY POLICE PERJURY

THE POGROM OF AUGUST 14TH WAS IN FULL SWING. ALL OVER THE NORTH ARMED FASCIST (R.U.C. AND B-MEN) WENT INTO ACTION. THEIR AIM WAS NOTHING LESS THAN THE PHYSICAL SMASHING OF ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. ALL OTHER TACTICS HAD FAILED. THE UNIONISTS WERE NOW GOING TO LET THE WORLD SEE THAT AS THE STATE WAS FOUNDED SO IT WAS TO BE MAINTAINED.

John Arthurs was one of the victims of this arbitrary police oppression in Dungannon. The people of Dungannon had decided to make their picket about the awful events taking place in Derry. But the word had gone out from Stormont - mobilise the B-Men and clear the streets. How often have our Unionist oppressors done just this?

Dungannon on this particular occasion was to suffer repeated volley after volley from the guns of the police. The barricades hastily erected by the people in an effort to protect their areas were overrun and all unfortunate enough to be caught behind them were put in danger of their lives.

John Arthurs was caught by the police and arrested behind the barricades. He was beaten about the head and shoulders with rifle butts and dragged behind the police lines. Here he was further batoned and kicked into insensibility by police and specials. His injuries were so severe that he had to spend three weeks in hospital.

Now the villainy began. John Arthurs was charged with causing malicious damage on the night of August 14th. A particularly sharp sighted policeman was produced. This man's particular trick was that he could see round corners. He was prepared to swear in court that he was capable of identifying John Arthurs in the midst of a large crowd gathered behind the barricades that night.

John Arthurs produced four witnesses who were able to corroborate his evidence of the terrible beating which he had received. Nothing daunted however the police lie that it was "loyalists" who beat Arthurs was accepted. The judge had therefore no hesitation in handing out a sentence of three years to 19 year old Arthurs.

perjury

The point that P.D. would like to make in this connection is the ready acceptance by the judiciary of the most obvious police perjury and the willingness of the State to initiate proceedings on the most flimsy of police evidence.

tynan squad

Contrast this with the case of John Gallagher in Armagh. Here the evidence of over 80 witnesses is available to prove that the B-Specials from Tynan murdered this man. Yet we hear nothing about legal proceedings in this case. In fact the Tynan Specials are even used by Unionist politicians to threaten "opposition" M.P.'s.

When Austin Currie raised the question of the Tynan murderers at Stormont recently Dr. N. Laird (U) said that Mr. Currie should be handed over to the Tynan squad because that way nothing would ever be heard of him again.

We can say no more but this -- demonstrations will be held in Dungannon, Armagh, and Belfast by the P.D. on Saturday demanding the release of John Arthurs and the initiation of proceedings against the Tynan murderers.

CORPORATION EXTORTION

Belfast Corporation are charging the homeless 12/6 a week rent for the "houses" given to them free by Shelter. They are also preparing to use these huts as an excuse for shelving proper re-housing. Like the huts at Divis Towers, the Shelter homes are expected to stand for at least a year.



I don't bother with chimneys anymore:
it's so much easier just to kick in the door!!

More Houses -not Charity.

Stop-gap solutions for the housing crisis are ten a penny these days. Some say "Declare a Housing Crisis" others say "centralise all housing activities, what we need is more efficiency", still others say "collect money for Shelter" and on the practical side some of these groups do achieve marginal results. The Shelter huts have arrived, the Bombay St. volunteers have laid the foundations of 10 houses

Like other groups the People's Democracy are putting forward specific demands to alleviate the worst of the housing problems at the moment. We will picket in front of the City Hall Christmas tree this Saturday afternoon to draw attention to these demands.

What do we ask for now? We demand that the government requisition all empty housing to house the homeless. We demand that the government purchase houses at present occupied by squatters and grant these squatters security of tenure. So long as the government fail to act on these demands we will actively encourage squatters. We will also fully support those forced to live in the squalor of huts and caravans in any rent strike or other protest activity.

BUT there remains the general housing problem. On Lower Falls a recent public enquiry revealed that only 70 out of 1,500 houses are fit for human habitation. The figures are quite as bad for Shankill.

Housing problems do not arise just as a result of riots. Even if those burnt out in August are rehoused there are hundreds of other families in desperate need. In Dublin there are 5,000 homeless families and at least 20,000 in desperate need of rehousing.

BANKERS BENEFIT

Groups which merely put forward stop-gap solutions to problems on this scale are worse than useless. They help to meet the needs of the most horrific cases, they give the impression that something really is being done, they leave untouched the basic problems.

We can see to the root of the matter quite easily. Dublin Corporation earns £8,800,000 on its housing account in one year. £3,000,000 of that is spent on interest payments to bankers.

The Northern Ireland Housing Trust has an accumulated debt of £61,394,229, last year it paid out £3,419,821 in interest on that debt more than its entire income from rent which was £2,635,859.

Cripplingly high interest rates mean that housing authorities cannot build houses unless they run up ever increasing debts -- or unless they charge rents well beyond the means of working class families. Already in Belfast many families suffer hardship because they cannot afford to move into new housing -- they cannot afford to live there.

Interest rates are far too high for housing authorities building housing for working class people, yet private industry can afford to pay these interest rates for new office blocks. The Unionist leaders and their partners in crime the Taca men of Fianna Fail can afford to pay high interest rates for their homes. Why is this?

A worker exploits no-one, he earns a living wage, he uses his house to live in -- he earns no surplus profit from his fellow workers

A speculator or businessman uses tens, hundreds, even thousands of working class people to earn profits. With the toil of others they can afford to pay huge sums to bankers, and they still maintain a healthy margin of profit.

To suggest that housing for the people and buildings for exploiters should compete for the same resources, is as futile as to suggest that cats and mice should drink from the same saucer of milk.

What then is required? The government must provide capital for the Housing Authorities at minimal interest rates. This will mean that the Housing Authorities can build more. But there is only a limited supply of building resources, if more houses are to be built cuts will have to be made elsewhere. The government will have to drastically control private and luxury development or speculative development.

We cannot persuade a Unionist government or a Fianna Fail government to adopt this programme. We are attacking the bankers and speculators, the shock troops of the new Imperialism in Ireland. When we do this we are attacking the twin tory regimes, North and South, who are the most effective agents of this exploitation.

GIRO

Distributors outside Belfast should pay all money through the Post Office Giro. They should also state on the back of the Giro form how many copies are being paid for. Our Giro number is

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BERNADETTE

Belfast P.D. at its Wednesday meeting issued the following statement;- "We wish to express publicly our solidarity with Miss Bernadette Devlin, currently being tried in Derry. We regard this trial as a political trick, conjured up by a discredited Unionist government anxious to divert from themselves the real responsibility for the August violence.

We believe that Miss Devlin's stand in Bogside was courageous and morally correct. Unlike other politicians she was prepared both to defend the people of Bogside under attack from the forces of Law and order and at the same time declare herself against sectarianism and for the unity of the protestant and catholic working class."

MEMBERS OF BELFAST P.D

Next meeting will be held on Thursday 1st of January at 8p.m. at 30 Berry Street.

Yours in Disgust!

Dear Sir,

I hope that you and your paper as responsible voices in the community will join with me in protesting about the deplorable decline in the standard of police perjury. Only today I heard the 'evidence' of Sergeant 'Gunman' Flynn against Bernadette Devlin and was too disgusted for words. In the good old days of my father it may have been good enough to claim 'I heard her voice 140 yards away while a riot was going on', but surely not today! And what about 'I saw her hoist the tricolour'? Really! even the most amateur liar would have said the starry plough and presume-ably the police witness have had enough practice. No! it's just not good enough - why not send those men back to school where they can learn to perjure themselves properly - and after all this is important because how can the beloved Unionist Government cling unto power unless M.P.'s and police can tell lies effectively?

Let us hope that Sergeant Flynn and his comrades' New Years resolution will be to purchase that grand little book "How to perjure with feeling" by Sir A. Peacocke and inwardly digest it.

Yours faithfully,
Disgusted Derry.

FISHING SCANDAL ON LOUGH NEAGH

The eel fishing rights of Lough Neagh are owned by the Dutch controlled Toome Eel Fisheries (N.I.) Ltd. This particular company bought the rights from Lord Shaftesbury Marquis of Donegal for the mere sum of £150,000 about 10 years ago. This gives the company direct control over the fishing for eels in the entire Lough and it also means that the company has control over the livelihood of 250 fishermen.

The company makes a huge profit every year from the sale of eels and it seems to be interested in making even more money by driving the fishermen off the Lough altogether.

The company catches the eels in "traps" i.e. a form of net fishing at various points along the River Bann and the expense involved in doing so is relatively small. Eels breed in the Sargossa Sea head into Lough Neagh when they are very small, stay there for about 10 years and when they are fully grown they head back out towards the Larogona sea via the River Bann. So all the company does is to put the "traps" across the Bann and therefore catch the eels. Hundreds of tons of eels are caught in this way every year and the company makes a very large profit indeed (in the region of $\frac{1}{2}$ million pounds).

The fishermen on the other hand have to fish on the Lough in boats and work something like 16 hours a day in order to make a decent living from catching eels.

The fishermen have to buy a license from the company in order to be allowed to fish on the lough, and even then, the company decides what kinds of fish they may catch and what methods the fishermen may use. Each fisherman is given a book of rules by the company. There are 24 rules in this document, 22 of them are impossible to keep and the other 2 refer to the meanings of legal and illegal according to the company.

The company forbids the fishermen to use any method of fishing other than line fishing. Now if a fisherman were to fish only with a line he would work 100 hours per week and earn about £7. Thus it is impossible to make a decent standard of living unless the fisherman uses a method of fishing that the company has declared illegal.

The company employ a gang of thugs to stamp out this "illegal" fishing. These bailiffs (or hired gunmen) patrol the Lough in very fast boats known as hydrofoils and have the most up to date equipment for tracking down and intimidating the fishermen. This equipment includes radar, short wave radios and unofficially rifles and revolvers.

thugs

If a bailiff happens to dislike a fisherman for any reason that he cares to think about he can take the fisherman's licence from him; its as simple as that, and then thugs have the full backing of the courts. In a

Source: CAIN (cain.ulster.ac.uk)

recent court case involving a fisherman whose boat the bailiffs had sunk, R.M. Fox said that illegal fishing must be stopped and that the bailiffs should employ any method at all to stamp it out. In the past season, 20 fishermen have had their licence taken from them thus depriving them of a job. Two fishermen have received jail sentences, another dozen have been prosecuted by the company; one man, Francis Devlin, was fined £130 on circumstantial evidence.

The company employs £200 a day Desmond Boal to prosecute the fishermen and the other half of this corrupt legal team, R.M. Fox, makes sure that the fishermen aren't given justice.

This is all part of the company's plan to drive the fishermen from the Lough altogether and thus have full control and profits from the richest fishing grounds in Western Europe.

The fishermen however are not prepared to be driven from what is rightfully theirs and they are fighting against the company. They recognize that this parasite should be driven from the land and the Lough returned to its rightful owners, the fishermen.

The land and resources of Ireland should belong to the people of Ireland and so the struggle must continue for the Workers Republic.

NEW UNIVERSITY MEETING

The Democratic Labour Club at the New University in Coleraine wish to affiliate to the P.D. and most of their members are also becoming individual members of the P.D. Already the NUU group sells about 100 Free Citizens every week and they are active, in conjunction with the Coleraine Labour Party in agitating about local social and economic issues.

At a meeting of the club on Tuesday night Michael Farrell condemned the proposed merger between the N.I.L.P. and the British Labour Party as a "shoddy little manoeuvre designed to con

Unionist voters into thinking that the Labour Party was more loyal than the Unionist Party

"While such a confidence trick would be disreputable at the best of times," Michael Farrell said, "it is little short of criminal at the moment."

Recent events in the North had had the effect of detaching thousands of Protestant workers and farmers from their traditional allegiance to the Unionist Party and bringing home to them for the first time the vast gulf between the interests of the Shankill Rd. slum dwellers and those of the squire of Castledawson.

the narrow familiar world of many loyalists had been rudely shattered and they were searching desperately for any straw to cling to. There had never been a better opportunity for Socialist propaganda

Perhaps it was hardly surprising. The N.I.L.P. had always had a tendency to bolt down a constitutional funk-hole in time of crisis. Today they were afraid lest they might have to become too identified in Civil Rights and they were prepared to sell their socialism to win back a couple of seats in Stormont.

such naked opportunism had plenty of precedents in the Northern Labour movement.

It began with William Walker whose portrait still hangs in the offices of the N.I.L.P. Walker clashed bitterly with James Connolly over the future of the Irish Socialist movement and defended religious discrimination under electoral pressure. He was followed by Harry Midgley and Harry Holmes, leaders of the Labour Party who ended up as Unionist M.P's.

The N.I.L.P. contained many genuine socialists however. They should fight this merger proposal tooth and nail, proposing the alternative of unity with other socialist groups in Ireland in the formation of a 32-county Socialist Republic pledged to fighting Orange and Green Tories North and South and building a workers and farmers Republic.

They would be assured of the support of the People's Democracy in their struggle.

APPLICATION FORM

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

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

*I enclose a donation of £ : : for P.D.

*I do not wish to make a donation. *(Delete as necessary.)

Give this to your local P.D. group, or send to:

105 Plevna Street, Belfast 12.

P.D. IN NEWRY

Despite bad weather and bad advertising about 150 people attended a P.D. Meeting in Newry on Saturday last. Michael Farrell and Kevin Boyle of the P.D. Committee and Alan Carr of the New University P.D. and Labour Club outlined the development in P.D. policy over the last 12 months and put the case for a Socialist Republic.

A lively discussion followed lasting till mid-night. Members of the Newry Young Nationalists advocated a scheme for anti-Unionist unity and tried to defend the Nationalist party to a very sceptical audience. The P.D. speakers, Republicans and members of the audience condemned the Nationalists for ineffectiveness, inverted sectarianism and refusal to face up to economic problems North or South.

The P.D. Speakers also dealt with the question of Opposition unity stressing that the P.D. opposed any unity that was anti-Protestant or simply anti-partationist. While prepared to co-operate with anyone on limited demands like Civil Rights the P.D. as a socialist group could not make alliances with Green Tories who wanted to swap Unionist rule for Fianna Fail rule. The P.D. was prepared however to ally itself with those who genuinely stood for a 32-county Socialist Republic whether they were in Republican clubs, the NILP the Irish Labour Party or no party at all.

There were also questions about imperialism and foreign investment and the speakers stressed that control of the economy North and South was rapidly passing out of Irish hands and every year large profits were drained off by foreign companies. The money spent in attracting foreign investment could be better spent in creating publicly-owned companies controlled by the workers.

There were many inquiries about P.D. membership and the Newry P.D. group decided to hold another meeting later in the week at which people could join and discuss the future work of the Newry branch of the P.D.

pamphlet

Copies of the PD pamphlet, The Struggle in the North by Michael Farrell may be bought from the author 8 Strandview St, Belfast. Cost 2/6 which covers postage.

WE WISH ALL OUR READERS
A MILITANT CHRISTMAS AND
A REVOLUTIONARY NEW YEAR.

A M E R I C A

POLICE MURDER BLACK MILITANTS

For rich white Americans, the United States is the greatest country in the world. For poor black people it is a land of discrimination, torture and death. In every sense of the word they are second-class citizens, with no chance of breaking free from the economic, social and political chains which bind them as securely as the iron chains of slavery bound their forefathers.

The Black Panther Party has, in the last few years, been the most militant opposition group to white fascism in the U.S. The Black Panther Party does not stand for Black Power, but calls for "Power to the People", all people suffering oppression, be they black or white. They stand for a socialist system of government in the U.S. and state categorically "If you want peace, you've got to fight for it."

Because of their stand for civil rights and against repression, for socialism and against exploitation, the authorities have been determined to destroy their organisation. In an earlier issue of Free Citizen we reported the case of Bobby Seale on trial for conspiracy in Chicago, being denied the lawyer of his choice, being refused permission to defend himself, being gagged and chained to a metal chair, and then being sentenced to four years for contempt of

court. Thus it is clear that for a black man the police state is a reality.

In the last twelve months, in their efforts to obtain self-rule for black communities, more than thirty Panthers have been killed by the police "while resisting arrest!" The latest casualties came last week when Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, of the Illinois chapter of Panthers, were shot dead by Chicago police. Hampton was asleep in bed at the time according to an autopsy report.

"A modern-day lynching" is how the black people see these latest killings, and when they compare the friendly and benevolent attitude of the police and government authorities to gun-toting white fascist organisations, and the systematic harassment, imprisonment and murder of black self-defence groups, there is justification for the belief that a war of genocide is being waged against black people in the United States.

It is clear that the U.S. authorities fear the risen people and are trying to beat them into the ground. What is even clearer is that their tactics have the opposite effect, and help to increase support for the Panthers, who are more determined than ever to resist the Nazi-like tactics of the American police and take, with force if need be, what is rightfully theirs.

information

shop and advice help centre

Belfast P.D. bookshop and advice centre are now at 105 Plevna St.

Open 11.30 a.m. to
6.30 p.m.

subs.

We will post you a year's Free Citizen for £2. The subscription rate for six months is £1.

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Gifts for the P.D. should be sent to the treasurer, 88 Ladybrook Park, Belfast 11, or be paid into the P.D. account, Belfast Banking Co. Shaftesbury Square, Belfast.

We are always in need of secretarial help. If you can type well please contact us.

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