



NO. 1

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WHERE
WE
STAND

MILL ROW ERUPTS AND WIDOW SQUATS

With placards advertising "a tourist attraction — house-trained rats, natural open sewers" and "running water on every wall" members of the 26 families in Mill Row began their campaign against Armagh Rural District Council, a campaign which has escalated from a rent-strike, through sit-ins and pickets at Council Meetings, to squatting in new Council houses. So far, in the month-long campaign there have been four arrests, police-batons have been drawn against P.D. demonstrators, and the campaign has been joined by tenants of some of Rural Armagh's other slums: Lislea, Ballyards and Rock Road.

CALLOUSNESS

Mill Row is a nineteenth-century slum carefully preserved for the twentieth-century by the criminal negligence of the Armagh Rural Council. They have never even tarred the street, so that the incautious stranger may find himself ankle-deep in filthy water which lies in the numerous pot holes. ("Have a potholing holiday in Mill Row", said another placard recently.) The houses were built for workers in the nearby mill at a time when linen-barons paid their workers 1s.3d. a week. The inhuman callousness of the mill-owners who ground these people's ancestors into the mire to wring from them every last ounce of their strength lives on today in the brainless, heartless neglect of the Armagh Rural Council, who expect 26 families — including 20 children and 14 old-age pensioners — to live in houses unfit for pigs. The callousness of the mill owner who employed children of nine years old for twelve hours a day is matched by the inhumanity of a Council which allows children to live in houses where the only sanitation is an open sewer emptying directly into the nearby river. When the river floods, as it does three or four times a year, unspeakable filth is washed back from the open sewer into the people's kitchens.

ARMAGH P.D.

When Armagh P.D. held a meeting in Mill Row at the beginning of May, the people of the Row decided that, since their houses were sub-standard and had been condemned for six years, they were no longer going to pay rent to their mill-owning landlord. It is an indication of Mr. Rafferty's capitalist's concern for his fellow man that he has continued to collect the rents on these wretched hovels for the past ten years. A fortnight after the rent-strike began, the residents of Mill Row staged a sit down in the Rural Council office.

JOHN TAYLOR M.P.

The Rural Council's housing record is criminal: at the 1961 census, 79% of the houses in the Armagh Rural district had no fixed bath, 74% had no w.c., 76% had no hot water tap, 60% had no cold water tap, and 903 houses out of the total 6,917 had neither bath, nor w.c., nor hot, nor cold water! Yet in the 10 years between 1958 and 1968 Armagh Rural District Council built only 276 houses. The Architect to the Rural District Council is Mr. John Taylor M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs. This junior minister, whose responsibility is fighting crime, publicly connives at the heinous crimes of neglect perpetrated monthly by the Armagh Rural Council.

RATS

The complete cynicism of the Rural Council was best shown up in part of a conversation, between Mr. Neill Vallely of P.D. and Mr. Jack Dawson, clerk to the Council. Mr. Vallely had protested at the large numbers of rats which infest Mill Row, and had recounted how a child had come screaming in from the back-yard, a week previously, with a dying rat clinging to her shoulder. "Of course, there are two sides to every story", Mr. Dawson riposted. "Consider the good these rats do. You were protesting just now about the open sewers. Think what they would be like if there were no rats. Nothing to stir up the effluence. They would be clogged in no time. The rats keep it moving. The sewers would be unbearable without the rats!" Indeed — but would life be unbearable without the open sewers? The feeling of protest quickly spread. The following week, a picket of the Rural District Council Meeting was arranged. There were people there from Lislea, Ballyards and Rock Road as well. The previous week, Mill Row people had been promised houses "by November" on a new site at Lagg Hill. They now discovered that the Council had not even bought the land. But the people's slogan now was: "Not Another Winter in Mill Row". Not surprisingly, the following Friday Mrs. Grimley, a widowed mother of five, moved into a new house on Cregagh Estate which had been lying empty for five months. (It was being "kept" by Councillor Mackey, of the Urban District Council, for one of his pals.)

GREEN TORIES

The ease and competence with which the people of Mill Row have conducted their own agitation has terrified Armagh's Green Tories. Relying on Catholic-sectarian sentiment in the past, the Green Tories openly connived at the anti-working-class practices of the Council. Now, seeing the working people take agitation into their own hands, the Green Tories have run helter-skelter for their natural resting-place, a "liberal" Unionist Party.

NO TRUCE

The struggle for decent houses is only beginning. More squats can be expected in the near future. The campaign which has been begun so courageously by the "forgotten 26" will be taken up by every slum-tenant in every rural-slum kept in existence by Armagh Rural District Council; and there will be no letting up until that nest of rats have been drowned in their own stinking sewers.

STOP PRESS

Since the writing of this article, Mrs. Grimley has been given a house in Armagh. There are now only 25 more families in Mill Row prepared to squat.



Tenants protest at City Hall

Noahs Few

"The concept of democracy has no Biblical warranty; time and again it was the chosen few who confounded the wicked majority. If Noah had capitulated to the majority vote he would have never boarded the ark" Protestant Telegraph, 3.5.69.

The same issue contained an article by Sir Knox Cunningham, Unionist M.P. for South Antrim at Westminster. So do most other issues.

Rancher Haughey

Wolfe Tone placed the future of his Republican ideals in the hands of 'that respectable class, the men of no property'. Fianna Fail ('the Republican Party'), are great admirers of Wolfe Tone. They hold their own commemoration at his grave every year. Fianna Fail also used to attack the Fine Gael party as the party of the landlords, ranchers and property-owners.

It was announced that recently Mr. Charles J. Haughey, Minister of Finance in the Republican Party Cabinet, had sold his house and land at Raheny, County Dublin for the sum of £204,500. This worked out at round £5,000 per acre. The buyer was a developing company run by Mr. Matthew Gallagher, a well-known member of TACA, the Fianna Fail businessman's club. Mr. Gallagher's company wants to build houses on the site. Planning permission has already been granted.

The Fountain

In answer to a question at Stormont by Mr. Joe Burns M.P., Brian Faulkner, Minister of Development, said that there was no development plan for the Fountain Street District of Derry. Mr. Burns described the answer as 'very interesting'. Its not only interesting but should be deplored. Elsewhere Mr. Faulkner is quoted as saying that the people up Fountain Street area are not in need of new houses. Mr. Faulkner should actually go indoors in the houses in Fountain Street. He will see conditions just as bad as Bogside and the people in the Fountain should be rehoused now along with the people of Bogside.

The People's Democracy is not a political party but a loose grouping of people involved in the Civil Rights campaign who have adopted a programme of demands to deal with the situation in N. Ireland.

Our demands are:
ONE MAN ONE VOTE: universal franchise at eighteen for all elections. The new local government boundaries to be drawn up by an impartial commission.
NO DISCRIMINATION: Laws against discrimination on grounds of race, religion or class. A commission with the power to investigate and remedy allegations of discrimination. A compulsory Points System, based on need, for all house allocations.

NO REPRESSIVE LAWS: Repeal of the special Powers Act and Public Order Act. Scrapping of the new Public Order Bill. Disbandment of the B Specials and disarming of the RUC.

ONE MAN ONE JOB: Government action to stop the flow of capital and profit out of Northern Ireland. Setting up of publicly owned industries — controlled by their workers — to secure full employment, especially West of the Bann. Massive public investment to stop the small farmer being squeezed out of existence.

ONE FAMILY ONE HOUSE: A crash housing programme. Requisition of all vacant housing for allocation on need. Cancellation of the debt of the Housing Trust and other public housing authorities. Low-interest capital to be made available and building resources to be diverted to house-building.

ONE AREA ONE SCHOOL

The present system of schooling segregates children by religion, ability in certain subjects, and sex, and so helps to prepare them for life in a society which discriminates on the same grounds. Schools, starting at Secondary level, should be grouped together in integrated, co-educational comprehensives under parents, teachers and scholars' control.

There must be rigorous safeguards against discrimination in the appointment of staff and against indoctrination of pupils.

P.M. Beats Big Drum

Speaking at the dedication of new uniforms for Bellaghy Pipe Band, the Prime Minister, Major Chichester-Clark said, 'I have been in the Orange Order for quite a number of years, and I am certainly not ashamed to be a member of it.'

Indeed I am proud to be a member of the Order and those criticising it know nothing about it.'

Major Chichester-Clark said his first task as Prime Minister was to maintain the Union with Britain and to keep the Union Jack flying over Northern Ireland. "When I leave this job, whether the period be long or short, I assure you that when I hand it back not one inch of Northern Ireland will have gone astray" he declared.

It's good to know that our new P.M. has got his priorities right and realises that the most important problem to-day, as always before, is the subversive plot by the IRA to undermine the Constitution. These clever rascals — financed by Moscow, Cuba, and the Vatican — have a 'new strategy' nowadays; they aim to liberate the North inch by inch, starting in County Fermanagh where the Border has moved perceptibly by up to 3 inches in the last 10 years. But the gallant Major is up to their tricks and will stand no nonsense.

It's also good to know that the P.M. is standing up for the Orange Order, unlike his treacherous predecessor. Of course Major Jim did say in an election address — which unaccountably didn't reach all the electors in South Derry — THAT HE WOULD PLEDGE HIMSELF TO UPHOLD THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ORDER. Not bad for a young chap who only joined in the late 50's

NEW FACES — OLD POLICIES

On the 1st May Major James Dawson Chichester-Clark, D.L., M.P., son, grandson, brother, and cousin on Unionist M.P.s and Squire of Castledawson succeeded the neighbouring Squire Captain Terence O'Neill as Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. There was the usual drivel in the newspaper editorials about what a fine fellow Terence had been and how he'd been sacrificed for his principles - not of course that that implied that Chichester-Clark, who'd resigned from the Cabinet a week or so before, had stabbed him in the back. The deluded few who were foolish enough to pay any attention to this rubbish got a considerable shock when they heard O'Neill's recorded interview before leaving for America. The gallant Captain had been forced out apparently because he couldn't get his supporters to believe that if you treated R.C.s decently and fed them well they'd behave like Protestants - i.e. eat with a knife and fork not breed like rabbits, vote for arrogant aristocrats like Terence O'Neill.

BRAINLESS BROOKE

Eton-educated Major Clark was elected P.M. by the narrow margin of 17 to 16; after which we had the usual announcement that the Unionist party was more united than ever before. Then came the appointment to the Government of Messrs. John Dobson, John Taylor, and Capt. 'over my dead body' Brooke, all noted hardliners who had been opposed by O'Neillites at the last election. Dobson got the job of Chief Whip, very important for influencing policy, and Taylor joined the Ministry of Home Affairs - hardly an appointment calculated to inspire confidence in the impartial administration of law and order. The brainless Brooke was put in charge of Tourism, where they felt he couldn't do much serious damage. The new administration was obviously designed to paper over the cracks in the deeply divided Unionist Party and most people wondered how Chichester-Clark would hold such a shaky collection together.

First action of the new Government was to announce an amnesty. First to benefit were... Messrs. Bunting and Paisley. Was it pure coincidence that the main plank in the Paisleyite campaign had been to get the boss out of jail?

Not of course that the Civil Rights movement particularly wanted him kept there.

OFF THE HOOK

The amnesty was welcomed by the Opposition M.P.s but they soon had cause to look a little deeper. The Amnesty extended in directions they hadn't expected. There would be no further charges over Burntollet, the Dungannon gunmen would get off, and there would be no prosecution of RUC members over the police riot in the Bogside. - In the case of the RUC, disciplinary action would be at the discretion of that well-known friend of Civil Rights, J. Anthony Peacocke, Inspector-General.

There was little doubt who did best out of the amnesty. But it wasn't only the extreme Unionists who were pleased. The Government would have been sorely embarrassed by prosecutions involving its splendidly impartial police force and Special Constabulary. The amnesty got the government off the hook as well.

CLEAN SLATE

With the slate wiped clean Clark announced his reforms. There'd be One Man One Vote in 1971 after the new gerrymander. There'd be machinery to deal with grievances about local government and they'd reveal the details.....sometime. Local Councils would be encouraged to adopt a Points System - unfortunately some of them need more than encouragement. Above all Mr. Brian Faulkner, new Minister of Development, whom even O'Neill couldn't trust assured everyone that the new local government boundaries would be absolutely fair. Of course however that was not to say that the old ones were unfair.

The net result..... promises.

THE BOOT

With the slate wiped clean too, Chichester-Clark felt free to publicly offer some assurances to Paisley. The assurances didn't amount to much, except a sort of veto on meetings with the Southern Taoiseach, but they looked

good in the "Newsletter" headlines. They were enough for Paisley to announce that he was right behind Chichester-Clark And just to complete the impression the Prime Minister engaged in a stirring defence of the Orange Order at the dedication of new uniforms for Bellaghy Pipe Band.

The big question had been, how would Clark hold the Unionist Party together? Here was the answer: let Paisley out, let off the B-men and the RUC riot squad, threaten a tough line in the future and give assurances to the extremists. That would keep the hard liners happy and the extremists quiet. The very selection of a Squire rather than a commoner would keep most of the O'Neillites happy. The sham amnesty and the promise of reforms sometime in the future would suffice for the rest.

The only problem was the Civil Rights movement. If they kept up the pressure that would ruin the whole strategy. Clark would have to act - either put the boot in or reform. The boot would mean more trouble from the paymasters in London, real reform would split the party once again.

SPLIT THE CRA

The answer was; to split the Civil Rights movement instead. The promise of reforms would help; there had always been elements in the C.R. movement anxious to call the whole thing off at the first possible moment. Then came the dire warning of what happen if the trouble continued. The foreign industrialists and the tourists would stay away. Precisely the stuff to frighten the people in the C.R. movement who had a bit of property and a stake in the country. Meanwhile Faulkner and Clark himself would wax loud in their praise of the 'responsible' Civil Rights leaders but warn them of the extremists who were taking over their movement. Ironically, one of the Unionist M.P.s loudest in the praise of the 'moderate' C.R. movement was Mr. A. Babington who last November had urged all 'Loyalists' to stop the 'Fenians' taking over Armagh.

Some people fell for it. Some Green Tory voices, notably Eddie McAteer, urged an end to all activity to give the Government a chance.

One thing is clear however. The Unionist party is deeply divided. The Unionist Government is in a dilemma. They have no intention of granting reforms if they can help it, but they daren't put the boot in again because they have disgraced themselves too often in front of world opinion. They are gambling desperately on the support of the faint-hearted, self-interested, and flattery-dazzled in the Civil Rights movement to get them off the hook.

The Civil Rights movement mustn't let them off the hook. The People's Democracy certainly won't. The six-week ultimatum will be up at the end of June. We must prepare for a massive resumption of activity then - meanwhile keeping up the picketing and squatting. But we must also use the interim period to ensure that the resumed activity will be for demands, and by methods, which will unite the working people rather than divide them. Such a demand would be that the landlords and employers of the Unionist party cough up some of their ill-gotten gains to build houses and create jobs for ALL the long-suffering people of this unfortunate state.

Lurgan — Good Friday



The events at Lurgan during the Easter P.D. march have been represented by the press as the trouble making long haired students being restrained by our peace loving police. What actually happened was that the people of Lurgan did not accept a police order keeping them off

certain streets in their town and confining them to the catholic ghetto. They protested by having a sit-down at a junction which was NOT IN THE PROHIBITED AREA. The police with their usual enthusiasm removed the protesters in the gentle manner illustrated in the pictures.

Why P.D.Voice?

The People's Democracy has never accepted that the problem in Northern Ireland consists *SIMPLY* of a bigoted Unionist government which discriminates against Catholics. We have always been aware that a considerable number of Protestants as well suffer from unemployment, bad housing, and emigration, and that the whole working population of the North suffers from lower wages and living standards than their counterparts across the water.

It follows that an end to gerrymandering and religious discrimination will not, of themselves, solve all the problems here. And it is also true that, so long as the Civil Rights movement concentrates solely on these issues, the Unionist party will be able to play on the fears of Protestant workers by telling them that an end to discrimination, in an area of high unemployment, means putting Protestants out of work.

We feel that the root cause of the problem goes a good deal deeper. 50 years of Unionist rule has meant in practice 50 years of ascendancy by a small clique of landowners and industrialists over a working and farming population accepting wages and housing conditions which would not be tolerated across the water.

People's Democracy believes that the basic Civil Rights are the rights to a job and a house. The Civil Rights movement will be missing the point - and running headfirst into a sectarian battle - if it does not face up to this and appeal for the support of Protestant workers and farmers against Toryism.

"P.D.Voice" is dedicated to revealing the extent of the misery and oppression in Northern Ireland and seeking out its causes. It is also dedicated to finding the solutions - it's not enough to demand more houses and jobs if you don't know how they can be provided.

We hope to stimulate discussion throughout the Civil Rights movement - and outside it. We intend to do this by publishing the facts (all information will be gratefully received); and by suggesting the solutions. "P.D.Voice" will be an open paper: we hope to publish everything that space and the laws of libel allow.

BURNTOLLET!

The story of the Long March and its violent end. Startling details of the ambush planning, the role of the B Specials in the ambush and the complicity of the RUC authorities.

To be published in July, price 10/-.

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LITTLE HITLERS

For some people the Civil Rights movement is all very well as long as it doesn't come too close to home.

"Cllr. T. Markey said that, in Newry at least, the Civil Rights were now becoming a civic nuisance. He was referring to the group of placard-bearing youths and girls who had assembled at the entrance of the Town Hall prior to Thursday night's meeting of the Housing Committee....."

Mr. Markey went on to deplore what he called the tactics of extremists in the Civil Rights organisation in Newry as a publicity seeking gimmick in using apparently homeless families' plight to jump the housing queue

"Am I to understand that these Civil Rights people are demanding a house within seven days from the Council - or else?"

I for one would never be a party to any organisation dictating to this Council."

Mr. Markey was referring to a letter from the Newry C.R.A. requesting a house for a family who had had to spend the night in the street. The family are now squatting in a ministry of Development house in Newry. Newry Urban District is controlled by a clique of Green Tories, calling themselves Independents or Newry Labour.

"Two men, Anthony Diver, and Thomas Reid, who squatted in a house in Meetinghouse Street were summoned at Strabane Court yesterday for unlawfully entering and taking possession of the house.

Mr. R.F. Porter, for the Urban Council, said the house was vested in the Council and defendants wrongfully took possession, something that could not be tolerated.

Both defendants told the Court that, because they had no homes, their wives had to live apart from them. The particular house was vacant and they decided to move in.

The R.M., Mr. W. Millar, refused to grant costs against each of £5.5.0d. - adding that the Council would have to bear the cost."

Strabane Urban District Council is controlled by members of the National Democratic Party.

"At its last monthly meeting Ballycastle Urban District Council considered the draft Points System for allocating houses drawn up by the Ministry of Development and decided against the adoption of a Points System."

Ballycastle Urban District Council is controlled by green Tories, calling themselves Independents or Nationalists.

Not all the little Hitlers in the local government world are members of the Unionist Party. Here are examples of three non-Unionist Councils neglecting the homeless. All over the North local "Opposition" Councillors are party to so-called "Gentleman's Agreements" whereby Councillors personally allocate all houses built in their areas. These allocations are not subject to any points system and are often used as a source of patronage and to buy votes. Local Civil Rights bodies should watch closely the conduct of Green Tory or "Opposition" controlled Councils and of local "Opposition" Councillors. Many of these people are only too eager to jump on the Civil Rights bandwagon so long as it doesn't get too close to home.

NO POINTS SYSTEM HERE.

The following local authorities have refused to adopt a Points System for the allocation of Houses as recommended by the Ministry.

Ballycastle Urban District Council - N.D.P.
Cookstown Urban District Council - Unionist.
Dungannon Urban District Council - Unionist.
Dungannon Rural District Council - Unionist.
East Down Rural District Council - Unionist.

This is despite the fact that the government have announced that "modifications" to the Points System to suit local circumstances may be made. Anyway, the whole thing's a farce without a central Appeals board to prevent local fiddling.

Note: The above list is necessarily incomplete. We would welcome information on other local authorities which refuse to adopt a Points System.

CIVIL AUTHORITIES (SPECIAL POWERS) ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND), 1922. (12 & 13 Geo. 5., Ch. 5).

Few Governments can claim to have available to them so many arbitrary powers as Stormont.

The Special Powers Act, The Public Order Act and The Emergency Powers Act combined with an ineffective Opposition at Stormont have meant that, throughout the history of this State, repression of political opposition, sometimes subtle, sometimes brutal, has occurred. It has only been in the last year that the Civil Rights Movement, the first mass-opposition to the tyranny of the Unionists has challenged and brought to the attention of the world the existence and use of these powers.

SPECIAL POWERS

First in time is the Civil Authority (Special Powers) Act 1922. This universally condemned law was first introduced at Stormont for a year only. In 1933 it was made permanent on the statute book. Under this Act the Minister of Home Affairs can 'take all such steps and issue all such orders as may be necessary for preserving the peace and maintaining order.' Under the Act the Minister is answerable to none but himself. In other words the Minister and his police can do what they like. Here are some examples of existing powers:-

The Police can stop and search individuals or vehicles (Reg. 5 and 6). Anyone suspected of an offence has to prove himself innocent.

Anyone questioned by Police or Military commits an offence if he refuses to answer - (Reg. 7).

Anyone can be detained and interrogated without warrant or trial; a person as in South Africa can be put under indefinite house arrest, without proof of any offence - (Reg. 12).

A person's property may be destroyed (Reg. 36), and

An inquest on dead bodies in any part of Northern Ireland prohibited.

REPUBLICAN CLUBS

At this moment the Act is used to ban organisations including Republican Clubs (Reg. 24b) without any reference to their aims or objects and publications such as the United Irishman, without possibility of challenge in the courts.

There can be no justification for these powers except to repress political opposition and maintain the myth that Ulster is under siege, most useful to the Unionists as it diverts attention away from their failure to solve the economic and social problems in the State they created. The Special Powers Act has not helped either to prevent recent acts of sabotage or bring to justice those responsible. The existence of these powers prevents Harold Wilson's Government from fulfilling their obligations under the European Convention of Human Rights to ensure full protection for the rights of all citizens in the United Kingdom.

EMERGENCY POWERS

The Civil Rights Association and the People's Democracy have consistently demanded the abolition of this drastic Act and will continue to do so.

As if the Special Powers Act was not enough, the Stormont Government gave itself even more drastic powers when in 1926 it passed the Emergency Powers Act. This Act was passed in a panic during the General Strike. The powers under this Act are available in an emergency and cannot be used unless an emergency is declared by the Governor. The Opposition M.P's. have rightly asked, if these powers exist already, for an emergency in Northern Ireland; why have the Special Powers Act as well?

The Public Order Act, 1951 is a further repressive measure and currently at Stormont new amendments to it further restricting peaceful protest are being introduced.

OCTOBER 5th

Like the Special Powers Act, the Public Order Act is a vehicle for bringing together Unionist political assumptions and the armed might of the Police force. For years there was no redress against the blatantly partisan banning and re-routing of marches, decisions based not on questions of public order but with the intention of minimising the impact of demonstrations and repressing protest against injustice. It was only after October 5 when, at the cost of physical assault by the R.U.C., the Civil Rights Movement challenged Unionist orthodoxy represented by William Craig, then Minister for Home Affairs, that all non-Unionist demonstrators must march only in the ghettos, that the floodgates broke. The P.D. march to Derry in January further highlighted the crudity of Unionist thinking, the serious partisan behaviour of the Police and proved that no such thing as the right to freedom of procession exists in Northern Ireland.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL

The Public Order (Amendment) Bill at present before Stormont is designed to reduce even further access to the streets to demonstrate. It will be an offence to sit down on the road, to squat in or occupy a public building; and Police can remove you by force. In order to march on the streets you have to give 96 hours notice to the Police. Formerly it was 48 hours. In England no notice need be given. This Bill has been fought both inside and outside Stormont in an attempt to have it withdrawn. The Civil Rights Movement intends, if it passes into law, to campaign against both it and the Public Order Act, 1951.

What should be done is to introduce a new Public Order Law which makes the decisions of Police and Minister subject to review in the courts. A separate law should deal with offensive weapons and para-military organisations.

The P.D. supports the campaign against repressive laws in the Republic of Ireland. There the Offences Against the States Act mirrors the Special Powers Act in the North, the proposed Criminal Justice Bill mirrors the Public Order Bill and the E.S.B. anti-strike legislation in the South has its companion in the Emergency Powers Act, 1926 in the North.

MARCH! Civil Rights

The march that will show the Government that we mean business

**saturday
june 28**

STRABANE

Spot the Cop



BURNTOLLET

Of the twenty six men wearing armbands in this picture seven are members of the Special Constabulary. If you can recognise them mark each with an X and post the photo to Inspector General Peacock, RUC Headquarters, Knock Road Belfast. He will send your prize by 'Special' messenger.

Batons across the Border

Many of our readers will be prevented — by courtesy of the Unionist government and their Special Powers Act — from reading the United Irishman. The United Irishman has, incidentally, improved a great deal of late and become a well-produced radical Socialist journal.

Anyway in the May issue they report that the Guards in the South are busily establishing riot squads in the major cities and they are receiving intensive training in 'riot control'. Among other things they watch films of 'riots' and approved police methods in Paris, Chicago and Derry on October 5th. Not content with watching this thuggery on the screen, Southern Special Branch men are reported coming to the North to watch the RUC in action and members of the RUC Riot Squad are helping to instruct the Guards.

We hope this new venture in cross-Border co-operation will not be spoiled by some over-enthusiastic RUC man carried away and shouting his usual cry: 'Take that, you Fenian bastards.'

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NILP SWINGS LEFT

At the Northern Ireland Labour Party annual conference delegates not only gave official backing to party members who had campaigned in the Civil Rights movement, but they also expressed the hope that one day there would be a mass movement in Northern Ireland that would unite Catholic and Protestant on a socialist programme.

Delegate after delegate asserted that socialists in the labour movement could not stand aside in the present struggle for elementary justice, for the unionist party had repeatedly rejected demands made through Parliament, and they clearly would not give in to reasonable demands unless they were pushed by people in the streets. Every speaker was conscious of the problem of winning the Protestant worker to the support of the Civil Rights programme, but only two delegates were convinced that these workers would be completely alienated from the Labour Party by its support for the Civil Rights movement.

As the only opposition party which can claim support from the Protestant working class, the backing of the Labour Party is an important gain for the Civil Rights movement in its struggle to get across a non-sectarian programme. Labour spokesmen must be brought on to Civil Rights platforms and if they proclaim not only 'civil rights' but also 'socialism' this will broaden the platform on which the movement ought to be standing. In addition, if they use the platform to proclaim 'civil rights' for Trade Unionists, there should be no complaints, for the delegates at the same conference pledged themselves to fight the Wilson government's White Paper, *In Place of Strife*.

HELP!

The P.D. badly needs money: to pay debts, to print leaflets, to pay possible future fines etc. Contributions should be sent to 8 Strandview Street, Belfast 9. Cheques should be made out to 'The People's Democracy'.

Articles for P.D. Voice are very welcome, also information which we will write up as articles. Sellers are also needed. If you can sell some copies in your area, contact John D. Murphy, Botanic House Printers, 48 Botanic Avenue, Belfast, 7.

What DID Happen in Hooker St?

Hooker Street is one of a number of streets in the Ardoyne area of the Crumlin Road. It is a mainly catholic working class district, not far away is the mainly protestant working class area of Woodvale.

What exactly happened in Hooker Street on and after 16th May is a matter of some controversy. The facts are at present being investigated by the Ardoyne Citizens Action Committee and the Belfast Civil Rights Association under the direction of Fergus Woods. However, a few comments now are not out of place. According to the Commissioner of Police, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Unionist press it all started when the police answered a 999 call to a brawl in a pub and they were attacked by a group of locals. The same thing happened again the next night and again on the night of 23rd. May.

In actual fact the police were not called at all. On 16th May a call went out from Kilpatrick's bar for an ambulance for a customer who had fallen down the stairs. The ambulance came all right, accompanied by a squad of police who entered the bar with their batons drawn. They acted very aggressively towards the customers and cleared them out although it was not yet closing time. Shortly afterwards the trouble started, the police over reacted and the thing escalated. The police made several baton-charges and made several arrests on an indiscriminate basis. Among those pounced upon were two priests: they were quickly let go. Of those arrested only those who had records appeared in court the next day - and received savage sentences. What happened the next Friday is put in perspective by the following statement. I took it down from an 18 year old young man on the 27th May.

SPECIAL BRANCH

"At about 9.55 on Friday 23rd. May I was in Hooker Street. I saw two groups of Police about 50 in all at the junction of Hooker Street and Crumlin Road. Two policemen left their group went to the door of Kilpatrick's pub, banged on it and shouted that it was coming up to closing time. They then re-joined their group. About 20 customers came out. They stood in a group for a short while. Talking in loud voices, for the police to hear they said things like "There's the black bastards over there". The group then broke up, 9 of them went down Hooker Street away from the Crumlin Road, the rest went up Chatham Street. I joined those in Hooker Street. Just then a mini car driven by Cecil Patterson and containing another Special Branch man, came down the Crumlin Road, stopped, and beeped the horn twice.

BATON CHARGE

The Police immediately went to the opposite side of the road to their jeeps and donned their riot equipment. As they came back to Hooker Street, two police vehicles both containing riot squad members rounded the corner and drove

past them. As the first vehicle drew level with the people from the pub, by now half way up the street, it stopped suddenly and the second vehicle crashed into it. The police in the front vehicle couldn't get out, nor did those in the second one. Just then the police at the bottom of the street started to charge up, screaming and banging their shields with their batons. Two more jeeps came in from the top of the street to barricade it. However I managed to slip past before they could do so. I ran round the corner into Butler Street and hid in a house for a while. I then went back into Hooker Street only to find it deserted. I discovered later that all nine people had been arrested, but only the four with records appeared in court, the others were let go."

DEFENCE FORCE

Tension was very high on Saturday, further aroused by inflammatory newspaper stories. The area looked set for a full-scale riot. That evening a meeting of local people was held, assisted by the Belfast CRA; a Citizens' Committee was elected and a defence force formed. The police kept out of the area and the defence force patrolled it, stopping a robbery and escorting drunks home. The area was quiet. Since then there has been no trouble in Hooker Street.

The lessons are simple. Large sections of the population distrust the police and their distrust turns to hate at the sight of the riot squad in battle gear. Their very appearance is likely to provoke a riot in some areas. Anyone who's witnessed the riot squad in action — screaming "Fenian bastards", and beating everyone in sight — will know that their actions are quite certain to provoke a riot.

The Citizens' Action Committee has managed to restore peace to Hooker St. but, unless they want to see a lot more Hooker Streets, the government had better look at the real causes. They'd better try to restore confidence in the police by publishing the Bogside report and sacking the thugs involved, and they'd better disband the riot squad.

CANT

Speaking to the Bow Group in London recently Captain Terence O'Neill, former Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, said 'frankly I regard with some cynicism the new-found interest in Northern Ireland of certain smart periodicals.

For the recent social explosions in Ulster, much vaunted issues like 'one man one vote' were merely the fuse. It was unemployment and poor housing which really represented the barrel of gunpowder; and where was the conscience of the British press about that, over the years?

Where was the Captain's own conscience? He was Prime Minister for six and a half years. What did he do about it? What did he do about families living in condemned houses without water or electricity about five miles from his own doorstep? The answer is simple..... NOTHING!

THE NORTHERN INFORMER

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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

BELFAST CORPORATION is the largest of Northern Ireland's local authorities: one would expect it to be the showpiece of local democracy in the Province.

On Thursday 29th May Alderman Joseph Cairns was 'elected' Lord Mayor of Belfast. By tradition ceremonial lamp posts are erected outside the new Lord Mayor's house and it is re-decorated at Corporation expense. One week before the election but after the City Hall Unionist caucus had met — the lamp posts were in position and the workmen busily decorating Alderman Cairns' house.



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