

# FREE CITIZEN

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NEWSPAPER OF THE  
PEOPLES DEMOCRACY

WEEKLY FRI. 27 FEB. 1970

## CLEAR BELFAST'S CONCENTRATION CAMPS!

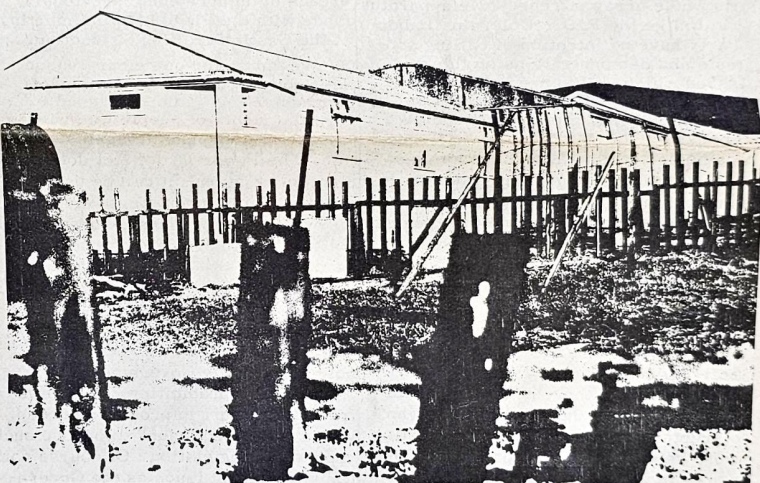
THERE ARE OVER ONE THOUSAND FAMILIES IN BELFAST WHO HAVE NO HOME. MOST OF THEM ARE LIVING IN HUTS OF "CHALETS" ON DERELICT SITES IN THE CITY. OTHERS HAVE NOT EVEN A CORPORATION-HUT TO LIVE IN, BUT HAVE MOVED IN WITH RELATIVES, THE CHILDREN OFTEN LIVING APART, FROM THE PARENTS.

800 of these families left their homes as a result of the pogroms in August, or have been burnt or intimidated from their houses since then. The scandal of the remaining 200-or-so families has been brought to light since August. They are the "prefab" dwellers, living at such sites as Sunny side, on the Ormeau Embankment or at Beechmount. These rotting asbestos shacks were built after the last war, and were supposed to be "temporary" houses then. They are still standing and being lived in 25 years later. The people burnt out since August fear that they could suffer the same fate and be kept in the damp and dirt of their "boxes" for the next 25 years. That is why they are demanding militant action now on re-housing, both for themselves and the prefab families, and we support their demands.

There are more than 400 families, all in West Belfast, living in the "emergency" homes supplied by the Corporation and the Housing Trust.

The Corporation has two sites, one at Beechmount, the other at Whiterock, both of which, predictably, are much worse than the sites and huts supplied by the Housing Trust.

Beechmount, off the falls Road, has to be seen to be believed. Over 150 families live on a dismal wasteland in a collection of "Boxes" which are paper-thin, and streaming with damp and cold. The Corporation had the cheek to demand 25/-d. rent, which under pressure they have now reduced to 5/-d. The reduction was a fraud, since they also took £1 off



the dole money, and over 80% of the men on the site are unemployed. It is criminal that the Corporation should demand rent of unemployed people who forced from their own homes, are now forced to live in these humiliating conditions. Many of the temporary homes were donated by the Shelter organisation, and donated free, so the cynical council is making an absolute profit. They have threatened to raise the rent again, but the local tenants association is determined to resist and we shall support them.

People at Beechmount have put forward a plan for re-housing. Sites are hard to come by in West Belfast, and they have proposed to the Corporation, that they should immediately start building on the site at Beechmount, moving people into the houses and out of the huts as they build. The Corporation are still pussyfooting about with the plan claiming they have to consult committees. There is no time for com-

mittees. The families in Beechmount need re-housing now. They know what they want, and the Corporation should be forced into building according to the people's plans immediately.

Whiterock, dumped on a hill beside a graveyard, is the next biggest "temporary" housing site. There are 120 families living here in one-roomed huts. Dampness is everywhere, clothes and blankets get blue-moulded, the walls and floors soaking. Children cannot play outside because once you step out the door of a "chalet", you step into a bog with an open river running through it. The site like Beechmount is rat-infested, and one child is in hospital with a tuberculosis virus picked up in the swamp. The people complain bitterly about being neglected by their M.P.'s and other so-called representatives. They are arranging a meeting with Faulkner to try to extract a promise about re-housing. So far the Corporation has said nothing about re-housing them.



# LETTER FROM COLERAINE

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of Coleraine Labour Party we must reject the allegation of "dogmatism" and sheer opportunism" levelled against us by Free Citizen.

Unlike the People's Democracy, Coleraine Labour Party has refused to allow itself to be driven back into the Catholic ghettos (there isn't one for miles around anyway). Unlike the P.D., Coleraine Labour Party has refused to mislead people into seeing issues like the Public Order Act as evils that can be fought in isolation. This Act, and similar repressive legislation, can only be smashed once the working people see it as something directed against themselves; as something that will be used against workers on strike and against tenants agitation against rent increases. By involving working people in political campaigns on basic social and economic issues relevant to their every day life (wages, working conditions, unemployment, rents, etc.) we will inevitably bring them into conflict with the Tory-Unionist state and with its whole array of repressive apparatus.

Unlike the P.D., Coleraine Labour Party have no intention of calling protests and demonstrations on the kind of issues which will serve only to divide Protestant and Catholic workers on opposite sides of a police cordon. We agree that: "Now is the time to launch a campaign on social and economic issues among... angry Protestants, to point out the way they have been neglected by the Unionists and to expose the inability of Paisleyism to solve their problems". (Free Citizen, 13th February). This is precisely what Coleraine Labour Party have been doing; not without some measure of success.

According to Free Citizen, our Anti-Redundancy Rally was "smashed up" by "fascist thugs". Nothing could be further from the truth! Those who disrupted(not smashed up) our meeting were neither Fascists nor thugs. They were, in the main, working class youths; precisely that section of confused and angry Protestants to whom we are trying to appeal and to whom we are only now beginning to communicate. If Free Citizen has anything more than a jargonistic understanding of fascism, they will realise that the corporate state is a state organised solely in the interests of industry and finance. It should be obvious to even the most naive socialist that the Paisleyite workers, rather than serving the interests of industry and finance, are actively opposing the changes and reforms necessary to re-structure Northern Ireland in the interests of British big business.

The most notable feature of the Coleraine Labour Party Rally was that it brought unemployed and redundant Protestant workers into argumentative conflict with Paisleyite counter-demonstrators.

Rather than take this correspondence further, members of Coleraine

Labour Party would be delighted to welcome P.D. members to Coleraine to discuss the points raised in this article.

Yours fraternally,  
Alan V. Carr.  
Moira A. Evans.

## AND OUR REPLY

Three weeks ago the People's Democracy called for public protests against the Public Order (Amendment) Act. In no town was the protest held in the "Catholic Ghetto". In seven towns they were held in the main street, and in Belfast - the only place where this did not happen - it was the cowardice of the local CRA which caused the meeting to be held on the edge of the Catholic area - in direct breach of an agreement previously made with the PD to hold the meeting at the Castle St - King St junction.

We did so for one clear reason - the Public Order Act is a piece of repressive legislation designed to curb the rights of people who wish to protest or demonstrate against injustice. The Public Order Act does not mention religion - it can be used equally against protesters whether they go to church or not, so we can not say that to protest against it is "sectarian".

But even suppose it had singled out one religious group for special attention, would that have made protest against it sectarian? We think not. Suppose the Government had passed a law prohibiting, say, Jews from taking part in protest marches. Would it be "sectarian" to oppose such repressive legislation? Of course not! If a government (such as the Government of Nazi Germany) makes laws which attack or discriminate against any religious or racial group then it is the duty of all socialists to oppose such repressive legislation. There is nothing "sectarian" about opposing sectarian laws.

But the Public Order Act does not discriminate. It attacks all who engage in sit down protests etc.

We believe in the right to protest therefore we must fight oppressive legislation. There is no need to become involved in complicated "economic" protests to get the workers "to see it as something directed against themselves and inevitably bring them into conflict with the Tory Unionist State". The people who came out on the street against the Public Order Act did see that it was repressive legislation directed against themselves, and by that very act they were in conflict with the "repressive apparatus" of the state.

Those people who came out to "counter demonstrate" can have

meant only one thing they supported the repressive legislation. Now we accept completely the fact that such people are deluded and misguided, but it is absurd of our Coleraine friends to suggest that there was any valid religious reason to support the Public Order Act. It is nonsense of them to say that protests against repressive legislation will "serve only to divide Protestant and Catholic workers".

It is a slur against the liberal intellectual tradition of Protestantism to suggest that those who demonstrated in favour of the Public Order Act did so because they were Protestants. That is nonsense. Those who counter-demonstrated did so because they supported the repressive legislation.

We argue that such people who support legislation (which our Coleraine friends admit is anti-worker) are fascists. It is no use saying that they were "in the main, working-class youths". So were the Hitler Youth. Belonging to the working class does not exempt you from fascism. And in any case it is wrong to suggest that Paisley's support comes in the main from the working class.

Our surveys suggest that Paisleys principal supporters are middle and small businessmen, and "prosperous" middle-sized farmers.

Our friends from Coleraine correctly state that Fascism only attains power if it has the support of big industry and finance. But are fascists not fascists until they seize power? Was Hitler not a fascist before the early 1930's when Krupp's offered him their support? Was Oswald Mosley not a fascist even though British business never needed to call on him?

It is true that British capital has no further need of fascist sectarian bigots like Paisley, and that they would prefer if Ireland peacefully accepted a "federal" solution. But these are business and agricultural interests in the N. Ireland Unionist Party who (rightly) feel the threat from British Monopolies. They would be prepared to offer backing to a fascist movement, and it is they (the Craigs and the Wests) who form the most immediate threat to the civil rights movement.

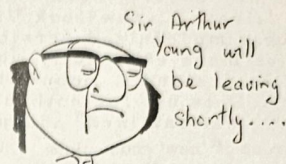
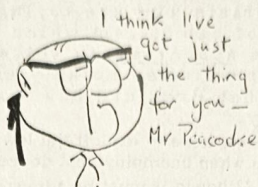
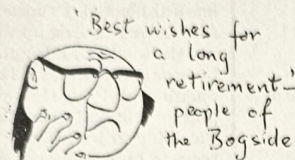
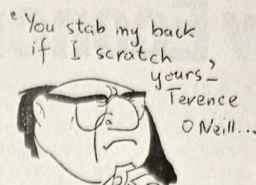
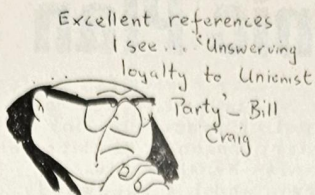
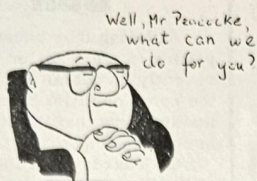
Finally, one point which your letter does not answer: your demonstration was about unemployment. Just why did "young workers" come along and break it up so that you did not get a chance to speak?

For reasons of space, a section of the Coleraine letter dealing with the defence of PD meetings has been omitted. The topic will be dealt with in a later issue.

CONFERENCE  
P.D. Conference this week-end in Coalisland.  
Sunday 1st March 2-7p.m.



## FRIDAY AFTERNOON ON THE DOLE



## NO QUEUE FOR TONY

Mr. Anthony Peacocke, the former Inspector General of the R. U. C., has revealed that he is now drawing dole. Peacocke has a pension of £3,000 from the R. U. C. - but is nonetheless managing to walk off with a cool £12 when he signs on the dotted line every Friday in his native Lisburn. But Friday, you say, isn't dole day in Lisburn. Quite true - but for Anthony it is. Lest he should have to rub shoulders with the common unemployed and queue up for his money just like anyone else, a special arrangement has been reached. Peacocke goes to the 'boro' all on his own on Fridays. The Unionists look after their former willing hacks rather well.

## MARCH!

Derry Unemployed Action Committee, with the backing of Derry Trades Union Council, are holding a protest march about unemployment on Saturday March 7th. We call on all branches of P.D. to support this march which will highlight one of the basic symptoms of British imperialism in Ireland - Unemployment.

## Concentration Camps in Belfast contd.

After running too and fro from department to department they have managed to get a concession for electricity used. People have been mounting up astronomical bills, because they have to keep heaters on all the time in the fight against damp and coldness. This concession must apply to the electricity people have used already, as well as for the future, and people at Whiterock and Beechmount should refuse to pay any electricity bills unless they are reduced to what they would have paid in their own homes, before they were burnt out. A meeting of residents was held on Sunday last, and a militant campaign was proposed to force the Corporation to re-house the people. Another meeting will be held on Thursday.

There are four other smaller sites where the victims of the pogroms are living in these wretched conditions.

At Glen Road and South Link there are about 110 families living on two sites. The residents have the same problems of dampness and cold. They also have been promised cheaper heating. The Glen Road site like all the others is without a telephone, and a hut from which a family had to flee was recently burnt to the ground before the fire brigade could be contacted. Some of the families have been promised houses by the Housing Trust, though whether they get them or not depends apparently on the whims of a Miss Reid, who is an officer of the Trust in the area. People at South Link are unorganised, having no tenants committee. A committee should be formed which would unite with committees at Glen Road and Slievegullian to demand immediate re-housing. The Slievegullian site is the smallest with about 12 families, mostly refugees returned from Gormanstown. They came back with false promises of new homes, and now find themselves in even worse barracks than the Army camp in the South. Some of these families were buying their own homes before August and had paid as much as £200 down on what is now rubble on the lower Falls.

Another site, where the residents are hopeful that they will get cleared out soon, is at Divis Towers. There are about 25 families who have been living in the courtyard of the flats, in builders-huts, since August. Here the "chalets" are the dampest of all.

People who tried to brighten up the bare boards of their new-style "homes" have watched wall paper and paint peel of the walls. The housing trust have promised all the families new homes within six months and most hope to get re-housed in the new Glen Road Estate.

An Emergency Housing Conference is to be held in Belfast on Saturday. This will bring a number of organisations together to produce proposals for action. The Peoples Democracy believes that the 400 families living in temporary houses, and the other victims of the violence and the burnings, should be given absolute priority. The conditions described here must be highlighted, and a campaign must be mounted to have all these families re-housed immediately. The sites themselves should have a united tenants committee, which could campaign for immediate improvements and a stop to the scandal of taking rent from people forced to live in these shacks. At the same time the P.D. believes that the real housing problems of Belfast, and of N. Ireland as a whole, can never be solved without emergency measures. We demand the declaration of a housing emergency, the cancellation of all housing debts, and interests on debts, due to Banks. An immediate end to all luxury flat development and building of office-blocks, until the working people of Falls and Shankill, and elsewhere, are re-housed in houses under their own control, with proper amenities and comforts.

## MEETINGS

BELFAST P.D. MEETING  
EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT 8pm

34, BERRY STREET  
(off Royal Avenue)

ARMAGH P.D. MEETING  
EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT  
Pipers' Club (Ogle St.)

NEWRY P.D. MEETING  
EVERY THURSDAY 8.30pm

Bank Terrace.  
NEWRY.



# Professor Gibson's New Economic Plan

By 1972 Sir Arthur Young hopes to have a civilian police force of 5,000 which will enable N. Ireland to become politically 'normal'. But a new police force will not be enough because even the reactionary Unionist Government knows that some progress must also be shown in the field of economics. So, while Craig and his backwoods men talk of U.D.I., there is also growing a group of trendy, 'liberal', new-look Unionists who are trying to introduce a modernised version of capitalism which will exploit us more efficiently while appearing to solve some of N. Ireland's economic problems, notably unemployment. It is not for nothing that Bradford has started to talk of "nationalised" industry.

This group of 'new' economists realises that, although N. Ireland has some of the most modern industry in the U.K., the end result of this development has been the general underdevelopment of the province. (One has only to look at the modern plant and equipment at Maydown in Derry and compare it to the high unemployment in that city, to see how capitalism wealth and public squalor can exist side by side). N. Ireland's industrial structure has remained largely unchanged. It is still dominated by the steadily-declining industries of shipbuilding and textiles, and by agriculture.

The Unionist government, over the past few years, has been trying to attract British and other foreign businesses with high levels of technical development by offering them enormous capital grants, tax-free 'holidays' etc. These industries have gladly taken the grants, and as often as not have flown off again with their tax reliefs. They have utterly failed to solve the two problems in the N. Ireland economy: unemployment and industrial renewal to replace shipbuilding and textiles.

Our pressure group includes N.J. Gibson, Professor of Economics at the New University of Ulster. He argues that the Government's policy in the past has resulted not in big companies putting down long-term roots, but in less 'reputable' ones - like B.S.R. - flying by night with their tax reliefs.

Professor Gibson makes two suggestions:

1. a system of export subsidies and import taxes which would place emphasis on rewarding the long-term productive ability of new industry.
2. creating a wage differential: keeping wages in the province frozen in relation to those in the U.K., to make it possible to attract industry while reducing grants to it.

The professor hopes that his plan would encourage firms which export to come here. By "freezing" wages he would hope that firms would continue

to come here to exploit the low wages even when unemployment decreased.

Although it must be admitted that these 'solutions' would have the effect of marginally decreasing unemployment their main effect would be to squeeze even tighter the already miserably-paid working-class. Actual wages would remain constant while on top of 'natural' price increases there would be massive rises on the 90% of consumer items which Northern Ireland imports.

The Gibson faction is fighting to get its proposals contained in the next instalment of the Economic Development Plan, which is due in April. The main opposition to it is likely to come not so much from the champions of the old policy (which is now generally admitted to be a disaster) but from those in the Unionists Party who traditionally resist all change the 'backwoods' small businessmen threatened by liquidation.

The Unionists fought 'Home Rule' because they were opposed to a national economy protected by tariffs. Because of this, N. Ireland became an 'internal colony' of the U.K. Now, ironically, they are trying to erect tariffs to protect themselves from continued underdevelopment brought about by their association with U.K.

These proposals are pathetic. But they must be fought just as seriously as any others emanating from the small circle of 'experts' surrounding the 'liberal' members of the Unionist Party. For more than the outright fascists in the party, they manage to conceal their plans to continue to exploit us behind a smoke-screen of economic and political 'reforms'.

## poster workshop

Silk Screen Teach-in  
Date Changed to 8th March  
At 3.30p.m. Same venue,  
John D's  
Mainly Organisational.

## Application Form

I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN PEOPLES DEMOCRACY

Name

Address

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

Give this to your local P.D. group or  
send to 105 Plevna Street, Belfast BT12 4FL

## Pigs Chase Bull

Although they haven't been getting in much baton practise recently on actual demonstrators, the notorious Riot Squad have been making sure that their trusty limbs are not getting rusty.

On Tuesday last fourteen men of the Special Patrol Group (or Riot Squad as they are better known) chased a runaway heifer for several miles up the Castle-reagh Road. Earlier the army had been informed that this quaint Spanish-style sport was taking place - but had gracefully declined the offer to join in the fun. The boys in blue were not so reluctant, however, and a fine afternoon's fun was enjoyed by all.

Interviewed after the 'correo de toros', a flushed and grinning member of the group, Sergeant Maurice Quinn remarked with satisfaction, "It was a very vicious animal, and I should know".

## meeting

There will be a meeting in Coal-island on Sunday 1st March at 7.30.p.m. in support of the People's Democracy campaign to have the fishing rights of Lough Neagh expropriated and handed over to the Lough Neagh fishermen.

## FACTS

### GIFTS

Gifts to the P.D. should be sent to the Treasurer:  
88 Ladybrook Park,  
Belfast 11.

or paid into the P.D. account, Belfast Banking Co. Shaftesbury Square Belfast.

### HELP

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

### GIRO

Pay for your FREE CITIZEN by Post Office Giro  
Our No. is 68 101 2005.

### CORRESPONDENCE

FREE CITIZEN  
105 Plevna Street,  
Belfast 12.

## pamphlet

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