

FREE CITIZEN

NUMBER 19 PRICE 3d

NEWSPAPER OF THE
PEOPLES DEMOCRACY

WEEKLY FRI. 13 FEB. 1970

CLARKE NOW OFFERS 14,600 HOUSES

JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

POWELL POLITICS



For centuries now Britain has exploited her colonies, drained them of their resources, ruined their native industries and, finally, forced their young working men to emigrate to the "mother country" where they will work long hours for and be exploited by her capitalists.

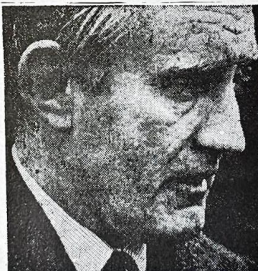
Enoch Powell chooses to ignore these facts. In order to make a name for himself in British politics, he has chosen to stir up racial hatred in England. It was presumably because of his reputation as a hate monger that he was invited to speak at meetings of Unionist backwoodsmen in Armagh and Enniskillen. And he met with great success.

The reason that Britain allows Irish people to enter without any formality is that Ireland is a great pool of cheap labour for England, and this is as true of the North as of the South. While Britain dominates the economies of the twin tory statelets, Irishmen emigrate and sell cheaply to English (and American) employers their only possession - their labour. Of course Powell wrapped the whole thing up in a lot of mumbo-jumbo about Races and Nations. He even had his audience so confused that they clapped when he suggested that Stormont be abolished.

Meanwhile outside Fermanagh P.D. laid a black and white wreath on the war memorial in memory of the victims - black and white - of British imperialism.

IN STORMONT LAST TUESDAY CHICHESTER-CLARK ANNOUNCED THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR THE NEXT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT. FIRST OF ALL HE ADMITTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT NOW ACCEPTED SOME OF THE PEOPLES DEMOCRACY DEMANDS. AS HE PUT IT "IF I AGREE WITH LITTLE ELSE THAN THE PROTESTORS OF THE PAST YEAR HAVE PROCLAIMED, I DO AGREE THAT THE TRULY FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN OUR SOCIETY ARE: ONE MAN ONE JOB AND ONE FAMILY ONE HOUSE".

Chichester-Clark then went on to make an even bigger admission. It used to be that he never tired of telling us how wonderful the Government's housing policy was - usually comparing it with the housing situation in the Free State, this time Clark admitted "By virtually every index N. Ireland is substantially the most underprivileged section of the United Kingdom in housing conditions" He might have added that the housing record of the Unionists is one of the worst in Europe.



Major J. D. Chichester-Clark

Does this mean that the Government has actually decided to DO something about the housing problem? Are we to expect some gigantic improvement, now that - after a year and a half of straggle - the Government actually admit that there is something wrong?

misleading

Not at all. The number of new houses promised by Clark is mere chicken feed. The Prime Minister said that he would increase the number of new houses built by one third in the next five years. This figure is misleading. At present about 12,000 houses a year are being built. One third again should mean 16,000 houses a year, or 80,000 houses in the next five years. By some strange arithmetic Chichester Clark only makes it 73,000.

And that is just not nearly enough. Look at the figures: 10.3% of houses in N. Ireland are overcrowded (comp-

ared with 3.8% in Great Britain) and 22.6% have no W.C. (compared to 8.7% in Great Britain). Now, the housing situation in Britain is not by any means good, but unless 85,000 houses are built in the next five years, the gap between here and what Chichester Clark calls 'the rest of the United Kingdom' will actually widen.

And the Prime Ministers plans take no account of the thousands of people who must go on living in sub-standard housing. In some areas of Belfast alone - Shankill, Falls, Cromac, Donagall Pass, Sandy Row, and Albertbridge Road - over 90% of the houses have no bath, no handbasin, and no hot water supply. Before the Peoples Democracy campaign for decent housing, a lot of people even felt that it was in some way the person's own fault if he lived in a bad house. Now people are everywhere angrily realising that the bad housing is the fault of the state.

"Fifty years of Unionist neglect" is a slogan that applies on the Shankill as well as on the Falls. It would have been quite easy for the Government to have provided pre-fabricated bathroom units which can be added to most houses without the slightest bother. Such an emergency measure would make life so much easier for thousands of working-class families while they wait for a new house.

But Clark is more interested in impressing people with statistics than with coming to grips with the real problem. For the same reason, Clark makes no mention of social amenities which are badly needed throughout N. Ireland. Few towns have their own swimming pool; in many areas of Belfast it is not even easy for children to get to a safe open play space or a park.

Peoples Democracy will shortly be holding a series of open-air meetings to draw attention to the continued neglect of the housing problem.

We will be demanding:

A crash house-building programme
Immediate "emergency repairs" to all sub-standard housing while the occupant waits for a new dwelling.
Parks and playgrounds for all areas

UNIONIST HACK REVEALS MORE

LAST WEEK, FREE CITIZEN GAVE ITS READERS AN INSIGHT INTO THE TWISTED AND CORRUPT MIND OF UNIONISM. WE WERE ABLE TO DO THIS THROUGH THE MOUTHINGS OF TREVOR HANNA, A FORMER JOURNALIST WHO HAS HIRED HIMSELF OUT AS PRESS OFFICER TO THE UNIONIST PARTY — A JOB WHICH REQUIRES AN ABILITY TO DISTORT WORDS AND PHRASES, TO ABANDON TRUTH AND LOGIC, AND TO TELL UNIONIST LIES WITH A STRAIGHT FACE. HANNA IS BETTER EQUIPPED THAN MOST TO BE UNIONIST PRESS OFFICER.

In some of his less guarded moments, as we revealed in our last issue, Hanna denied the existence of a split in the Unionist Party, then blamed the split on the working-class of the Shankill Road (describing them all as extremists). He then compounded this example of Unionist middle-class contempt for the workers from whom they draw most of their support by admitting that Ireland would be a Socialist state if the Unionist Party abandoned its policy of dividing the workers on a sectarian basis.

Even a Unionist mouthpiece should have realised he was putting his foot in it every time he opened his mouth. But the bold (or foolish) Hanna blundered on. His next faux-pas was to expose Unionist hypocrisy over the Public Order (Amendment) Act. This new law is the one which Hanna and the Unionist politicians claim is merely bringing us into line with the law in Britain. The P. D. has always stated that it is a repressive law designed to prevent the type of peaceful non-violent protest so successfully utilised by the whole C. R. movement. Now for the first time it is possible to reveal that the Unionists themselves recognise it as being repressive — which is why they have introduced it.

offensive act

Hanna was asked when the Special Powers Act was going to be repealed. His reply was significant. He admitted that most elements of the Special Powers Act (imprisonment without trial, banning of newspapers, prohibiting of an inquest on someone who dies in police custody) were offensive to opinion outside N. Ireland. He claimed O'Neill was about to repeal the Special Powers Act on a number of occasions when some incident occurred to make it inadvisable at that time. (He omitted to state that since 1964 these incidents, ranging from murder to the blowing up of the Belfast water supply, have been caused by extreme Unionists and the U. V. F.) "Whatever happens now," said Hanna "it is only a matter of time before that act disappears, and instead we will have the Public Order Act which is absolutely essential for dealing with extremists. We can then do without the Special Powers Act and still be equally well protected. In other words Hanna is saying quite simply that the Special Powers Act and the Public Order Act are one and

the same thing, something P. D. has been proclaiming for a long time. The new mask the Unionists have put on is one of moderation. As such they have exchanged the batons of the Bully Craig for the not-too-skillfully disguised legal repression of Robert "Love me, I'm a Liberal" Porter

mask of evil

On this occasion the mask has slipped thanks to the stupidity of Trevor Hanna. But regardless of how many masks the Unionists put on, or how many "word-twisters" they hire, one thing is clear: the true face of Unionism is unchanging — it is arrogant, vicious, corrupt, sectarian and violent, and it will never concede anything without a struggle. The struggle continues.

BANDWAGON

It is an open secret that the Republican Labour Party is neither Republican, Labour, nor a party, and it came as no surprise, to hear Gerry Fitt and Paddy Kennedy both denounce last Saturday's protest against the Public Order Act. However opportunism knows no shame. When the P. D. meeting got under way in Enniskillen, one speaker was amazed to see, leering through the window of a pub opposite, none other than Paddy Kennedy, Republican Labour M. P. Had he come to Enniskillen to watch the P. D. get their just deserts from the gallant R. U. C. ?

The P. D. platform were not long in doubt. A message was sent over that Paddy Kennedy and Colm Gillespie (of Fermanagh C. R. A. who had yet again condemned P. D. "irresponsibility") would both like to speak.

As Austin Currie said before he spoke in Dungannon (he had earlier in the week condemned this protest) "If you can't beat 'em join 'em".

pig in a hole

SMALL FARMERS UP IN ARMS

Rathfriland in Co. Down is not renowned for its radical outlook. Its M. P. at Stormount is Mr. John Dobson M. P. — an ambitious right winger from Craig's rebel Portadown parliament. Its M. P. at Westminster is the ubiquitous Capt. Orr leader of the Unionist stooges at Westminster and Imperial Grand Master of the Loyal Orange Lodge.

But the imperial rhetoric of Capt. Orr & Co. is poor protection to the small farmers who have to scrape a living from the windswept hills around Rathfriland. On Thursday night last six hundred of them jammed into the Young Farmers Hall in common protest at their soaring bills and falling prices. Their mood is serious and concerned.

They put their case well and it makes sorry reading. In 1955 the farmer was getting £18.16.0d. per ton for his potatoes. To-day he is getting £13.8.0d. The same potatoes are sold over again to the housewife for £28.8.0d.

In 1959 milk fetching the farmers 3/3 per gallon, to-day fetches him 2/10. In between the cost of meal for the cows has gone up by 25% and the housewife buying the milk pays 1/- instead of 8d. per bottle. The farmer is no longer prepared to put up with from 80 to 100 hours a week.

There was loud support for one farmer who said that had it not been for the restrictions, farmers here would have been out demonstrating in full support of their English Comrades.

The reason why farmers are putting their case forward so strongly now is because this is the month when their unions negotiate with the government in London to determine the prices they will get for their products in the coming year. The results will be announced in another week or so in the Price Review. Farmers this year say they want £140 million. To cover rising costs alone, since last year will require at least £60 million. According to the Financial Times they will get £70 million but no one mentioned that.

John Dobson M. P. said that he fully supported them but regretted "it was largely a matter for Westminster". But Pig Dobson's cheap squealing was received coolly. Earlier the farmers had jeered when they were told he had put the casting vote at Stormount on the Valuation Amendment Bill which will mean that industrial rates can be levied on their farm building. As for Mr. O'Reilly M. P. and Mr. Keogh M. P. They were invited but didn't even turn up. So much for the Nationalist Party's interest in N. Ireland's most underprivileged class, half of whom subsist on less than £8 per week.

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

C.R.A. AT CROSSROADS

... and where we stand

The Civil Rights Association holds its Annual General Meeting this week-end. Already the rat-race for the new Executive has begun. On the far right McCluskey and the Fianna Fail hacks from Dungannon have been attacking the old Executive for months and buying up stocks of membership cards. Their lunatic fringe like McAnaney write anonymous letters signed "Moderate" to the Irish News. On the nearer right the Communist Party and their allies - including some "Republicans" - are out to strengthen their representation. Where does the Peoples Democracy stand? We are not interested in seats on the NICRA Executive. We are interested in where the CRA goes from here. On the one hand we reject the combination of dogmatism and sheer opportunism of branches of the NILP like Derry and Coleraine, which attack CR demands as sectarian. On the other we reject the attitude of the moderates and the Communists who want to keep all social and economic issues out of the CR campaign.

N.I.L.P.

The NILP have been frightened by the Paisleyite opposition to the CR campaign. They are tripping over themselves in their anxiety to dissociate themselves from the CR movement and get back to safe issues like unemployment. The Coleraine branch got a rude shock when the Paisleyites broke-up their meeting on unemployment last Saturday. Perhaps now they are beginning to grasp that religious bigotry is a weapon in the hands of the ruling class in Northern Ireland and will be used against anyone who challenges their power. There is no way in which you can mount a serious challenge to the Unionists without encountering Orange opposition. The only way to deal with it is to stand up to it and convince Protestant workers that Orangeism is anti-working class. The right-wing and the Fianna Fail supporters don't want economic demands introduced into the CR movement because their paymaster, Blaney, and his cronies in TACA - the Fianna Fail rich men's club - are afraid too many comparisons might be made with the

Connolly Banned

Last Wednesday evening, Students of St Joseph's College of Education organised a "Cultural Evening" open to members of the public. There was to be traditional Irish music, poetry, and a talk during the interlude on the life and ideas of James Connolly. There was a promising audience, and all went well until the interlude. As the talk on Connolly was about to begin the Vice Principal of the college Fr McAnaney interrupted and called the

unemployment, emigration, bad houses and sheer exploitation in the 26 Counties.

The Communist party don't want economic demands because their strategy is to make N. Ireland a liberal democratic state and then begin to agitate about social and economic issues when sectarianism has died away. The problem is that sectarianism won't die away and that N. Ireland is practically incapable of reforming itself. The Unionists have used bigotry, sectarianism and even pogroms to divide the workers and farmers so they could exploit them better. Now Britain wants them to reform. But the remnants of the Unionists Ascendancy and the host of minor officials, who have become rich through patronage, won't give up without a struggle. Hence the growth of Paisleyism and the U.D.I. faction of the Unionist Party.

Wilson couldn't care less about N. Ireland and if the opposition to reform is strong enough he will drop it. Even if the reforms do go through there will be a large and disgruntled group of Protestants hankering after U.D.I. Not the best atmosphere in which to launch a new non-sectarian socialist campaign.

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

There is an alternative. Many Protestant workers and small farmers feel betrayed by the Unionist party. They are also more aware of their low wages and the slums they live in, and are highly discontent. At the moment they turn towards Paisleyite fascism for want of anything better. But Paisley has nothing to offer them. His movement is led by wealthy farmers and shop-keepers and Paisley is hostile to trade unions and strikes. Now is the time to launch a campaign on social and economic issues among these 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. Every success won would weaken the Paisleyite and Unionist opposition to CR reforms and provide a basis for the socialist campaign after civil rights are won.

proceedings to a halt, saying that he would not allow "Politics in the college."

The ban on politics is a suppression of free speech and independent thought in the college. The authorities claim that the law forbids the holding of political meetings on college premises. We do not believe that this is so. And if it were, the college authorities in enforcing the ban are helping the Govt. to enforce a repressive and discriminatory law. Don't do the Government's dirty work for them.

Without slackening our militancy in the field for civil rights the PD intends to campaign on unemployment, bad housing etc., all the time pointing out that the only long-term solution is a Workers' Republic. We hope most of those who have supported us in the CR movement, especially the republicans, will be with us in this. We don't believe that the CRA can or should spearhead this agitation - it is not a socialist organisation. But we do intend to try to push the CRA to the left. PD members will propose a number of resolutions at the NICRA AGM designed to associate NICRA with the struggle of workers, farmers, fishermen and the unemployed. Finally, we have often been accused of trying to take over the CRA. This is nonsense. The two PD members on the Executive worked hard and loyally for NICRA. Most of the NICRA branches were founded by the PD and PD members have supported all the actions of the CRA as well as continuing the struggle on the many occasions when NICRA faltered. For this we got little thanks and no rewards. When the CRA full-time organiser was appointed, recently, one candidate was rejected on the grounds that he was a PD member. Much money has been collected in America by the National Association for Irish Justice and Miss Bernadette Devlin at least on the strength of actions by the PD, yet we have not received a cent of this. There will be no grounds for accusation against us in the future. While we will remain individual members of NICRA and support its actions, no member of the PD will be standing for the NICRA Executive. We will be interested to see how our critics fare without us.

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.

FISHERMEN ORGANISE TO FIGHT INJUSTICE

The newly formed Arboe Fishermen's P.D. held their first demonstration in Toome last Monday and it turned out a great success. The Arboe P.D. was joined by members of Belfast and Armagh P.Ds. This picket was in protest at the treatment meted out to the fishermen by the bailiffs, at the injustice of a system that allows the wealth of the Irish people to be bled out of the country by foreign capitalists and the picket was also in solidarity with three fishermen who were being prosecuted by Toome Eel Fisheries (N.I.) Ltd., the company which controls the eel fishing rights of Lough Neagh.

The demonstrators who numbered about 50 in all, 30 of these fishermen, picketed outside the courthouse until the company's legal assassin Desmond Boal became afraid that the fishermen's protest outside may have persuaded the magistrate that it might be a good idea to give justice to the fishermen i.e. to find them innocent. Boal called an adjournment of the cases and he asked the magistrate to have the cases heard at another court, say Antrim or Ballymena. The magistrate, who appeared to be trembling as he listened to the sound of the protesting fishermen in the street below agreed to adjourn the cases for a month but he refused to change the venue.

'ray of hope'

When the men came out of the court house it was decided to hold a meeting on the premises of the Company and so the demonstrators had a mobile picket up the main street in Toome to the Company's factory. The meeting at the factory lasted for about half an hour. Speakers called for Lough Neagh to be returned to its rightful owners, the fishermen, and that the corrupt system that encourages the exploitation of the poor by the rich must be ended.

Paddy McIvor of Arboe P.D. said that more action was needed "call it militant if you want", and fishermen Niel Coney as he looked at the Peoples Democracy banner said "we now see a ray of hope".

The demonstrators then went on another mobile picket back to Toome courthouse where they picketed for another half hour. The Arboe P.D. agreed to have another public meeting on the company's premises on Tuesday 17th Feb. at 8p.m. This meeting will be to register another protest on behalf of the Lough Neagh fishermen who have now embarked on a struggle that can only end when justice has been obtained.

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.

houses empty — so students squat

Members of the re-formed branch of Peoples Democracy at Queen's University Belfast last Thursday held a "squat-in" in a vacant house owned by the University in Elmwood Avenue, Belfast. This was part of the P.D. protest against the Public Order Bill (occupying buildings) but it was also to draw attention to the fact that the University owns lots of empty housing property in Belfast. The University buys houses in the hope that, one day, it will be able to knock them down and build further University buildings. In the meantime, while hundreds of Belfast families live in caravans and shacks the houses belonging to Queen's lie empty.

A case in point is 96, University Street, which has lain empty for almost 2 years. This is indeed a structurally sound house and is capable of housing quite a number of homeless and burnt-out people. When first approached the University claimed that the house was being put on the market. However at the beginning of this academic year several students threatened that they were going to squat in the house unless accommodation for them could be found.

The student housing committee claimed that the necessary adjustments would be made and the house would be habitable by Christmas, Nothing, of course, has been done.

In a report on all property owned by Queen's earlier last year houses, 28 - 36 Elmwood Avenue were listed as being "on transfer" to the R.C. Chaplaincy, that is they were being

kept empty until the chaplaincy could afford to build on the site.

These are 5 structurally sound houses which could be turned into very suitable accommodation - even if only a temporary nature for many homeless families. It was one of these houses that the P.D. occupied in order to try and highlight the Universities total mis-management and prevarication on this issue. Another example of Queen's dictatorial attitude was in the case of the Drew Street squatters. The University property list says "the uses to which these houses are to be put is under consideration". i.e. They are lying empty until somebody can think of something to do with them. People who were burned out of their homes in August decided what use to put to these houses. They moved in and fixed them up as best they could. The University however refused to recognize their tenancies and when approached on the matter Queen's answered that the houses were under development. It has since been learned that the university does not plan to develop the site before 1974.

These are just some of the examples of Q.U.Bs. attitude towards the homeless in Belfast. It is over issues such as these that the Queen's P.D. branch can be mobilized.

The P.D. branch in Queen's is producing a full report highlighting all the vacant property possessed by the University, and intend to do much work before the summer vacation.

FASCISM IN COLERAINE

Coleraine branch of the N. Ireland Labour Party issues a statement last week-end criticising the P.D. for protesting against the Public Order Act. They said such a protest would be "sectarian" (by which they meant that it would produce a counter demonstration). Instead Coleraine Labour Party would hold a "non-sectarian protest" against unemployment. No sooner had they started their meeting, however, than Paisleyite thugs descended upon them and smashed up their meeting.

moral

The moral of the story is simple. Paisley is a fascist who will try to break up any movement of the left which threatens the capitalist state in N. Ireland. He, rightly, sees that a protest about unemployment is as big a threat to the Unionist regime as a protest about repressive legislation. The fact that Paisley's fascism masquerades as religion should fool nobody. So did Franco's.

P.D. BRANCH IN PORTGLENONE

After a meeting in Portglenone last week-end it was decided to set up a branch of P.D. in the area. The first action by the Portglenone branch was when they participated in the picket by Lough Neagh fishermen at Toome.

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

Old St. Colmans Hall
(The Bucket) NEWRY.