



p.d. VOICE

WHERE WE STAND

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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.

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 Lagar 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.

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