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THE HOUSING ACTION COMMITTEE

NO. 1

DUBLIN...15 JUNE 1969.

* EDITORIAL *

YOU are reading the first issue of "SQUATTER", Broadsheet of the Dublin Housing Action Committee.

WE are going to publish it regularly giving news and views on every aspect of Housing. We will report on the latest developments in Landlord racketeering, evictions, squatting etc., as well as publicising the numerous successful agitations we are waging on behalf of the homeless and rack-rented workers of Dublin.

It won't worry us if this Broadsheet isn't popular with Landlords. We would be happy if the Homeless read it, cherish it and are inspired by it.

We believe that only ourselves, the actual homeless, are capable of doing anything positive about Housing.

SQUATTING SOLUTION?

WE say that the Housing problem in Dublin wouldn't be half as bad if the thousands of families with a housing problem organised themselves and squatted in some of the empty, surplus property owned by foreign and native parasites. We admit that there cannot be a solution that is a final solution to the housing problem until the Capitalist system in the 26 counties is destroyed by force.

But there is more than adequate accommodation lying empty at this moment while thousands of families desperately need shelter. So we say to the Homeless and all working class families with a housing problem: Organise now and if possible SQUAT under the banner and protection of the Dublin Housing Action Committee.

WHERE TO SQUAT ?

THE D.H.A.C. would like to see people squatting in some of the empty, surplus property owned by the foreign Bums and parasites who have come in here to tear our city to shreds in order to build gaudy office blocks and expensive hotels. We say that the idle, surplus property of any big speculating Landlord should be squatted in. People come before Profits, and the worker's natural right to proper accommodation comes before the legal rights of Landlords.

SQUATTERS WANTED

Unfortunately, not enough homeless families are squatting as yet. Not enough of us are organised. Why is this? We suggest that it is because the majority of homeless do not understand the Politics of the System that exploits us.

We are told by one section of the Landlords and their disciples to suffer on because only those with money or credit deserve a proper home. Others, notably the sham socialist politicians, tell us to suffer on until they build 17,000 or 20,000 houses a year. Others tell us that we cannot gain anything by such militant action as squatting, because the Law is on the side of the Landlords and the whole State machine would be used to crush us back into the gutter.

ALL these arguments are used by Landlordism in order to keep the Homeless on their knees in the gutter. Fellow homeless, get up off your

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EDITORIAL (cont'd).

knees, join us and agitate for your right to a proper home.

In each issue of "SQUATTER" we will expose and explain the rotten 26 co. Profit system which has caused all the social misery we see around us. We make no apologies to anyone for trying to raise the political understanding of as many homeless people as possible.

SQUATTERS AND POLITICS.

THE most politically advanced members of the D.H.A.C. have taken the ultimate step in the present housing agitation: they have squatted in some of the idle, surplus property owned by speculating Landlord parasites. By doing this they have advanced the cause of their fellow homeless immensely. They have challenged Landlordism and with courage and determination they have asserted their right to shelter. And in all cases they have won better accommodation by taking this step.

ACTION.

Action speaks louder than words and one homeless family squatting in some Rachman's idle property is worth a belly-full of promises from the so-called Socialists of Fianna Fail or Labour.

DUBLIN CORPORATION	LOCAL AUTH.
APPROVED WAITING LIST	DWELLINGS BUILT IN DUBLIN.

YEAR	NO.	NO.
1960	4246	277
1962	4018	392
1963	4159	643
1964	4865	786
1965	3760	791
1966	5070	1141
1967	4752	1672
1968	5437	1944
1969	4538 (est.)	2,76 (est.)

The "Approved" waiting list is the one most frequently quoted by Corp. and Govt. officials. It is not a reliable indication of the number of families seeking or in need of Corp. housing.

For example the most recent figures issued by the Corporation showed that over 3,000 applicants were rejected. They were not recommended by the Chief Medical Officer for inclusion in the "Approved" waiting list. And how many thousands of families never bother to apply at all because they know that it is a waste of time anyway? Plus the hundreds of families who are automatically barred because they do not satisfy the residential qualification. Plus the hundreds of families who exist in caravans just outside the city boundary and who are told that they are not the responsibility of Dublin Corporation. Did we say 10,000 Homeless? The figure may well be 20,000.

* A SQUATTER WRITES.. *

* Dear Reader,

I am sure you are well aware of the housing problem that surrounds you. Perhaps you have a son or daughter who if not already married, will have to face the problem of finding or setting up their own home, as I have found since returning from England.

I was faced with the problem of being homeless. I had to live with my parents and my wife had to live with her parents. My parents live in a Corporation 3-roomed flat, consisting of 2 bedrooms and 1 livingroom. I have 2 brothers and 2 sisters. My wife's parents have the same sized flat in which there are 7 children, so it was just impossible to live together.

Now you may say to yourself that I could find some room or a flat. In the first place I could not afford £6 a week for an unfurnished flat or a furnished one, and I found it impossible to get an unfurnished room unless I had £50 key money which I hadn't got and which I wouldn't pay even if I had the money because too many Landlords are getting away with this sort of thing in this day and age.

But the question is your son or daughter may be prepared to pay illegal key money or a rack-rent. I think they would be very foolish if they did.

I myself have now become what is commonly known as a Squatter because myself and my family went into a perfectly sound cottage which was being knocked down to make a gateway to a foreign firm.

I believe that I have solved my own housing problem and that other homeless people will take similar action when they know they will have support from the D.H.A.C., Trade unionists and the majority of the people.

Jimmy McMahon.

MORE HOUSES BEING BUILT

Output of Local Authority dwellings for Dublin Corporation has ranged from the scandalously low figure of 277 in 1960 to the estimated 2,276 for 1969. The figures for the most recent 3 years look big because they have been inflated by the inclusion of the yearly completions at Ballymun, which contains over 3000 dwellings... Ballymun is now almost completed and no major Corporation scheme is about to start immediately... So it looks as if the thousands of families on the Corp. waiting list will have to suffer on for years to come...

If they don't organise themselves now and fight for their rights they will get nothing but empty promises from the gangster politicians in the Dail.

* THE FIAT STORY (part 1) *

ON Sunday, 11th. of April word came through the D.H.A.C. intelligence channels that there was a habitable cottage off Grand Canal St., which was due to be demolished by Fiat Ireland Ltd. to make a gateway into the rear of the Factory. The source indicated that the building was completely sound and that it was fitted with gas, electricity and running water. It was agreed at the D.H.A.C. meeting that this was a perfect example of foreign interests coming into the country and knocking down sound living accommodation without regard to the acute housing shortage in the city.

The next morning members of the Committee who were involved in a protest picket outside the Housing Dept. in Jervis St. were approached by a Mr. Tommy Maher who asked them to help him. Mr. Maher, who had just been turned away by a Corporation official, was homeless and had nowhere to go for shelter with his young wife and child.

A member of the Committee explained to Mr. Maher that the only solution they could offer was for Mr. Maher and his family to squat in vacant private property, where he would have the full support of the D.H.A.C. Mr. Maher agreed to this and shortly afterwards was moved into Fiat's vacant cottage. The Gardai arrived within minutes of the squatters moving in, thanks to the woman in the cottage across the road.

The Gardai, on hearing of the predicament in which the family had found themselves, expressed their sympathy and advised the family not to worry as Fiat would have to go through the process of law, and this would at least give the family a chance to breathe. The Gardai then left, wishing the family the best of luck and a sound night's sleep.

The next morning the Mahers were awakened by two men banging on the door. The men said they were from Fiat and told the family to leave the house, that it was going to be knocked down and that a bulldozer was already on its way. Mr. Maher attempted to explain the position to these men and showed them his Trade Union and D.H.A.C. membership cards.

These men then went away, and Mr. Maher then went to a house in Pembroke Rd. where D.H.A.C. families were squatting, to get support. There was only the Secretary available in Pembroke Rd., however, as it was 9 a.m. and the rest were at work. They both proceeded back to the cottage where Mrs. Maher told them that Italian employees of Fiat's had been throwing property belonging to the firm over the wall. This was of course to give the impression that the firm was using the cottage.

The D.H.A.C. secretary then decided to go into the factory and speak to the secretary of Fiats, a Mr. McDonagh by name (shades of green) and explain the family's plight to him. Mr. McDonagh condescended to see our secretary (maybe because he just walked into his office). The family's plight was explained to Mr. McDonagh and he was told that they were willing to pay a fair rent for the cottage and would be obliged if the company would make them legal tenants.

Mr. McDonagh said this was out of the question, that the family had no right to be there in the first place, as they were defying the rights of private property and in the second place the company required the cottage as a store. He was then asked what would he have done had he or any of his family been in the same position, and was it not true that the company intended in fact to demolish the cottage to make room for a gateway. Mr. McDonagh replied that what he would have done did not arise as he never had and never would be in the same position as the Mahers who were only working class. He also said that there was no truth in the allegation that the cottage was going to be demolished, and added that he didn't see any purpose in further discussion on the matter. The D.H.A.C. secretary, before leaving, asked Mr. McDonagh for a guarantee that no further action would be taken against the family that day and Mr. McDonagh gave his word, adding that there were proper ways to go about these things.

The D.H.A.C. secretary then reported back to the Maher family, and taking Mr. McDonagh at his word, assured them that everything would be O.K. for the moment. He then departed to get a key for their gas stove.

In the meantime, Mr. Maher tried to get the fire going to heat the baby's bottle. He had just lighted the fire when there was a knock on the back window and someone shouted in, "GET OUT"..."THE HOUSE IS COMING DOWN". He ran to the back door and on looking out, saw three men jump from the back wall onto the roof. One of these men was an Italian who was sent over here to learn English and had no work permit. These men proceeded to tear the slates from the roof.

Some workers in the factory on seeing this shouted to the men to get off the roof. The Italian, on hearing this, just laughed and while throwing slates in all directions, shouted back at them, "I'm only having some fun". This completely maddened the workers and about 120 of them, practically the whole factory, left their jobs and marched round to the cottage. On seeing this, the Italian and the two Irish gombeen men with him, quickly departed, leaving behind them half the roof.
(cont'd overleaf)

 * THE FIAT STORY...continued. *
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* in ruins. The workers expressed their disgust at this carry-on and sent up word to McDonagh that they wouldn't start work again unless the Company gave a guarantee that no further illegal action would be taken against the Maher family. This was agreed to and at 5 o'clock that evening the family was served with a Court Injunction. McDonagh was right, there is a proper way to do things but of course he had to try the improper way first.

The Court Injunction was never applied. Through the machinations of Fiat, the Mahers were given accommodation elsewhere and a further two families moved in to the cottage. As we go to press they are still there.

In next week's "SQUATTER", our serial, the Fiat Story continues with a description of the undercover activities of bungling amateur detectives and hired thugs in the pay of the Fiat Company. Read all about ex_Garda Bill Kavanagh and his pal "Messy" Larkin of Gardiner St. in the next issue. Also the latest developments in the negotiations with the Fiat Bosses.

 * OFFICES FOR RENT *
 * FOR SALE (poem) *
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What's the use of living in peace
 and what's the price of dying,
 What's the use of living at all ?
 There's a life for sale - who's
 Buying ?
 (written by squatter J. O'B.)



 THE GENERAL ELECTION..

* We are preparing a questionnaire which we intend to send to at least the Labour Party candidates in the Dublin area. We hope to ask them about their attitude to the D.H.A.C. and also if they would be prepared to publically support squatters in unused private property if these squatters are jailed or attacked by the state. Also if they are willing to make a financial contribution to the D.H.A.C.

Already we have spoken to some of the Labour Party candidates and the reactions are worth recording.

Ex-Councillor J. Mooney said the D.H.A.C. was doing great work and he fully supported squatters in private property if they had a good case. He wouldn't support squatters in Corporation property as they might be depriving families of shelter who were in more need of same.

Self-styled socialist Dr. David Thornley was not as straightforward, which probably makes sense because he may end up as a future Minister of Justice with the responsibility of jailing the likes of us.

Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien promised us that he'd ring us back with his answers when he had worked them out but he never rang - which was probably as handy way as any of giving us the cold shoulder.

After the Election we hope to publish the answers the Labour Party candidates gave to our questions.

RECENT VICTORIES

DURING the month of May the D.H.A.C. were successful in several agitations.

On May 12th, members reinstated Mrs. Whelan, a widow, after she had been locked out of her room by the Landlord and a hired bully-boy. The D.H.A.C. support resulted in the following :

- *The eviction was stopped;
- *Her room was re-decorated by the Landlord (he wouldn't do this previously as he wanted her out;
- *An attempt to increase her rent from 35 shillings was successfully resisted;
- *The question of alleged rent arrears was cleared up.

The Keogh Case.

Also, on May 12th, the Committee gave support to fellow Committee member John Keogh when he chained himself to a pipe in the Housing Dept. in Jervis St. By noon the following day the Corporation had to back down and enter into discussions with the D.H.A.C. Result ? The Keoghs case is getting prompt and favourable consideration from the Corporation. Full details in the next issue.

- * STOP PRESS.. LATEST.. / *
- * TWO EMPTY HOUSES TAKEN OVER *
- * NUMBERS 17 & 19 WATERLOO RD. *
- * LATE LAST NIGHT... SOME ROOMS *
- * STILL VACANT... *
- * PANORAMIC VIEW..... *
- * JOIN THE DUBLIN HOUSING ACTION *
- * COMMITTEE NOW ! *

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Organisation: Dublin Housing Action Committee

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