

Socialist Worker

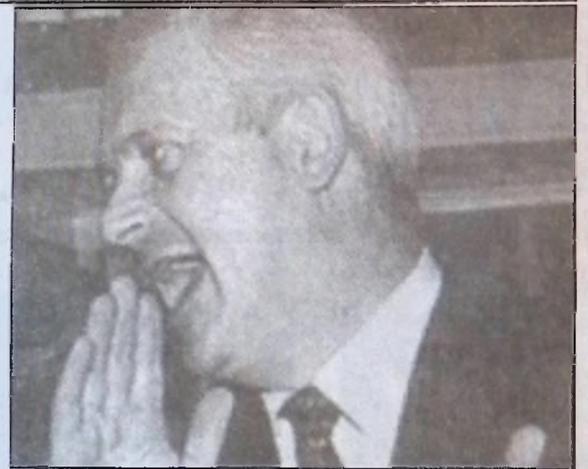
For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

Inside:

**The politics of
the Socialist
Workers Party
—CENTRE PAGES**

Ahern and Bruton...

PUPPETS OF BIG BUSINESS



Vote socialist ...and build the fightback

Gardai arrest SWP candidate

A Socialist Workers Party election candidate, Peadar O'Grady, was arrested for campaigning outside Rathmines Shopping Centre on May 17th.

He was making a campaign speech denouncing corrupt politicians.

Peadar, who's standing in Dublin South-East constituency, was taken to Rathmines Garda Station, held for six hours, and charged with a breach of the Public Order Act.

Assault

He was also charged with assaulting a garda. The assault is alleged to have taken place *inside* the Garda station.

The only witnesses are Gardai.

Peadar O'Grady vehemently denies the charge. Why would a 32 year old medical doctor attack a garda in a police station in full view of other Gardai?

The charges are being used to cover up the fact that the gardai intervened to curtail the freedom of speech of a socialist election candidate. They show that the law is far from

neutral when it comes to politicians.

On the same day the six o'clock news carried a re-

port about the Fianna Fail leader, Bertie Ahern, holding a street meeting in Ennis.

There was no question of preventing him speaking. In fact the RTE report seemed to praise him for showing that the art of

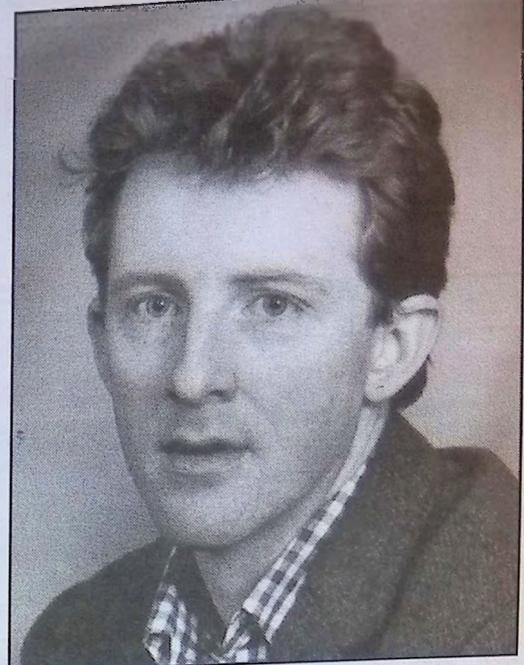
street politics was alive and well.

But when a left-wing opponent of the system gives a street meeting it's a different story. The Public Order Act has always been used in a political way.

In this case it has been used to suppress free speech in the election.

Mary Harney has the freedom to make offensive speeches about single parents and her PD colleague Liz O'Donnell can get away with whipping up racism against immigrants.

But if a socialist candidate 'offends' a corrupt politician like Charles Haughey, they can be arrested under the Public Order Act.



Peadar O'Grady: Held under Public Order Act

Statement on the use of the Public Order Act to prevent election meeting

We the undersigned, express our grave concern at the use of the Public Order Act to prevent Dr Peadar O'Grady holding a public street meeting as part of his campaign to win a seat in the General Election.

While we are not necessarily supporters of the Socialist Workers Party, we believe that every Party has a right to promote their views without fear of interference from the Gardai.

We call for all charges against Dr O'Grady to be dropped and urge the Gardai to maintain strict neutrality during the election campaign.

Hundreds of people have signed this petition. They include:

Brendan Archbold, MANDATE
Dr Ian Banks
Robin Blackburn (New Left Review)
Dr Juliet Bresson
Dr Dino Bresson
Peter Bunting, President NRB
Raymond Byrne, Barrister
Dr Tara Conlon
Joe Cleary

Carolann Duggan, SIPTU
Michael Farrell, Irish Council for Civil Liberties
Tadhg Foley
Luke Gibbons
Eddie Holt
John Horgan
Kevin Honan
Brian Higgins, MANDATE
Peadar Kirby
Patricia McKenna, MEP
Green Party
Eamonn McCann

Paul McNamara
Liam O Dowd
Dr Wendy Savage
Dr Fiona Stevens
Maurice Sheehan, MANDATE
Brian Trench
Deirdre Tobin, Solicitor
Jennifer Todd
Dr Philip Tyndall
Fiona Tyndall

All in a personal capacity

Explain

Charles Haughey has never been taken to a Garda station to explain why Ben Dunne gave him more than £1 million.

Michael Lowry has yet to face questions over his tax evasion.

The truth is that the rich and powerful get away with their crimes. Larry Goodman's companies were found guilty of fraud.

But instead of Goodman being arrested, it was the journalist who revealed the fraud, Susan O'Keefe,

who found herself in the dock.

The people of Dublin South East should protest

at the corruption and at Garda attacks on free speech by voting Number 1 for Peadar O'Grady in the General Election.

Esat offers politicians free mobile phones

Esat Digifone, the new mobile phone company, has offered all county councillors an exclusive free connection to their network and £40 worth of free calls.

Meanwhile, many of these councillors will have influence over planning applications for Esat masts around the country.

There has been more than a whiff of sleaze surrounding the new company since 'disgraced' Fine Gael minister Michael Lowry offered Esat the second mobile phone licence.

The company is headed by Fine Gael supporter Denis O'Brien.

Given Lowry's part in the Dunnes scandal, there should also be an enquiry into his backing for Esat.

Supreme Court backs Church discrimination

The Supreme Court judgement on the Employment Equality Bill shows that the state is still firmly wedded to the bishops.

The judges ruled that the part of the Bill allowing religious discrimination is constitutional.

This means that schools can sack teachers who do not fit in with the Catholic ethos, for example if the employee is cohabiting or divorced.

The judgement should come as no surprise. The judges have always taken the side of the bishops and the wealthy in such cases.

Chief Justice Liam Hamilton presides over the Supreme Court.

He was the man who in the 1980s ruled that giving women abortion information was illegal.

Hamilton also presided over the farce

known as the Beef Tribunal, which resulted in Larry Goodman's costs being paid by the taxpayer.

Disgracefully it was a Labour Party Minister, Mervyn Taylor, who put the provision in the Employment Equality Bill allowing for religious discrimination.

The teachers unions, INTO and ASTI, adopted the crazy position of welcoming the collapse of Taylor's Bill.

The judgement means the entire Bill is now postponed and a new government may not re-introduce it.

Opposed

While supporting religious discrimination, the judges opposed some of the better parts of the bill:

■ The court ruled that employers could not be forced to provide facilities for disabled

people because it infringed property rights;

■ The judges ruled that employers could discriminate on grounds of age, disability, marital status and 'sexual propensity';

■ The court ruled out 'vicarious liability', where a company can be held liable for discrimination by one employee against another.

Take an example of a supervisor sexually harassing a woman in the workplace.

'Vicarious liability' would mean that the company would have to take action against the harasser.

But the Supreme Court judgement means the employers can wash their hands of the issue.

The Supreme Court judgement is not a victory for teachers or any other group facing discrimination.

Instead it is a victory for every bigot and every cheapskate employer.

Instead of celebrating, the unions should be protesting against the judgement.

Outrage as ruling sets back disabled

Disabled people are outraged at the Supreme Court decision to rule the parts of the Employment Equality Bill dealing with disabled workers as unconstitutional.

The court ruled that employers could not be forced to provide facilities for disabled people because it infringed property rights. It also ruled that employers could discriminate against people who were disabled.

Steven Daunt, of the Forum for People with Disabilities, described the groups reaction;

"We were in total shock when we heard the ruling and then very angry.

Basically property is seen as more important than people. This is how they dressed up the decision. They said it was an interference with property rights".

"This has thrown us back ten years.

"Disabled people can now be openly discriminated against. Any existing disability related legislation is now open for challenge, including the building regulation legislation of 1992, which hasn't even been acted upon yet."

Steven says the only legislative way forward now seems to be a constitutional referendum and this annoys him. "We are Irish citizens, why should we be discriminated against?"

But Steven says the ruling has also pulled people together.

"Before some people were going along merrily thinking everything would work out fine, but now we're determined to fight it.

inside the system

Worker's life worth £1,000

The lives of workers are cheap—for both employers and the courts.

Charge-hand rigger and father of two, Thomas Magee (36) of Newtownabbey, Belfast, fell 100 feet to his death when a crane jib collapsed during harbour maintenance work, a court was told recently.

Jailed for begging on street

A pregnant woman was sent to jail for a month when she was convicted by Judge William Hartnett at Waterford District Court recently.

Margaret Cawley was charged with committing the offence of "begging" at Greyfriars in Waterford city. Giving evidence, a Garda said he saw her begging but that "when she saw him, she ran away". However, 20 minutes later she was seen begging at the same place again. Margaret Cawley is 26, recently married and pregnant.

Magistrate David Robson said it was "tragic that something which could have been prevented had led to the workman's death".

But he then went on to credit the firm for its "clear record".

The company, Clarke Chapman Ltd, was fined £1,000.

THE RICH ARE DIFFERENT

AT THE recent launch of fashion designer John Rocha's new drinking glasses, commissioned by profit-hungry Waterford Crystal, the receptionist at Dublin's Clarence Hotel was apologetic.

To a caller on the phone she explained, in slightly embarrassed tones, that they wanted the bread sliced "for medical reasons".

This is also the hotel in which Bernie Cahill kept court in one of the exclusive penthouses, complete with jacuzzi, as he was putting together the cost-cutting plans for Aer Lingus.

And as the *Irish Times* put the Rocca launch: "On the back of a beige couch lay a copy of the Socialist Worker, its rude

crimson title clashing with sense and sensibility." A fashion statement if ever there was one!

Ireland: Playground for the rich and famous

WHILE some people are sent to jail for begging, the rich and famous are busy playing.

More than a thousand global property millionaires were in Ireland at the end of last month for the 48th annual congress of FIABCI, the international Real Estate Federation.

Their itinerary included sightseeing tours around Dublin; a lavish state reception

with John Bruton; a free golfing outing; an evening of dinners at The Shelbourne and the Killiney Fitzpatrick hotel and the Burlington.

Over one million pounds was spent staging the event.

You'd wonder if any of them read about the 13 year old boy with cerebral palsy, who on the same weekend had to spend days and nights on the streets because there was no accommodation available?

what we think

GENERAL ELECTION:

Vote Socialist but organise to fight

"The most boring election campaign in years" This is how some commentators have described the battle between the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat Alliance and the Rainbow Coalition.

The reality is that there is little that separates the main parties.

All of them promise £1.5 billion in tax cuts which makes you wonder why workers were told by their union leaders to accept wage restraint six months ago under Partnership 2,000 in return for a tiny reduction in PAYE.

All of them claim responsibility for the Celtic Tiger economy, when the reality is that the booms and slumps of capitalism are out of the control of individual politicians or governments.

Revealed

The election, however, has revealed the new agenda of the right in Ireland. Mary Harney has taken the lead; attacking single parents, threatening the long-term unemployed with conscription into low paid jobs and calling for tax cuts for the rich.

This is the type of politics that was pioneered by Newt Gingrich in America.

It is a shift from the old right propaganda which was linked to a defence of fundamentalist Catholic values.

Labour and Democratic Left claim they can offer workers protection from these politics.

But the reality is that they have adapted to them by betraying their own supporters.

It was de Rossa who began the attacks on the unemployed by running scare stories about welfare fraud, while Quinn has cut the taxes on the rich continually.

Even on the issue of single parents, Labour Party TDs such as Roisin Shortall began the attacks by claiming that single parents disrupt family values.

This general election is just a taste of what lies ahead. Here the example of France is very important.

Two years ago, Chirac came to power, using the same sort of ambiguous rhetoric as Bertie Ahern.

He combined the rhetoric of opposing 'social exclusion' with talk of being tough on crime and immigration.

But as soon as he was elected he faced a rising tide of working class militancy.

The level of working class struggle in France has risen to a scale that has not been seen since the huge events in May 1968.

Although they never backed these struggles properly, the Socialist Party swung left and so picked up votes.

Struggles

But the demands of workers go far beyond the limited politics of the Socialist party.

Whether or not the Rainbow or the Fianna Fail/PD alliance come to power, both will intensify the attacks on workers in order to meet the criteria for entering a Single European currency.

They will clash with the growth in workers confidence that has come with the new boom in the economy.

This is why the ingredients are there for major struggles ahead.

REFUGEES:

They are welcome here

RIGHT WING politicians are trying to scapegoat refugees who are arriving in Ireland.

The Fianna Fail TD, Liam Lawlor, claims that refugees are taking council houses and are even depriving the homeless of spaces in hostels.

This is simply a lie. Refugees are not even entitled to get on the housing lists and are forced to rent over-priced private accommodation. The real reason why there is a shortage of accommodation is because the public housebuilding programme has been cut back.

Liam Lawlor was a director of one of Larry Goodman's companys. He

is attacking refugees today in order to divert attention from the crimes of the rich. This is the same type of strategy which is pursued by the right-wing in other countries.

Refugees who have fled persecution or economic hardship should be made welcome here. Scare stories about 6,000 refugees arriving here each year are based on a racist outlook.

Arrive

Each year thousands of Americans, South Africans and Australians arrive in Ireland — but the press has, quite rightly, never shown any concern.

Irish people themselves have emigrated all over the

world. In the past, they had to put up with the same racist abuse where signs were displayed in pubs saying 'No Irish welcome here'.

The levels of past emigration from Ireland mean that there can be no question of overcrowding. In the 1980s, 25,000 people left Ireland each year to go abroad as 'economic migrants'. If a few thousand people now decide to move to Ireland during an economic boom, then there is no problem with this.

The employers are allowed to move their money across the world's frontiers.

Workers who need jobs should have every right to cross frontiers.

Vote for the Socialist Workers Party

The Socialist Workers Party is standing four candidates in this election to offer a left-wing alternative to the sell-outs of the Labour Party.

The main parties are operating a gentleman's agreement to hide the issue of corruption. They do not want discussion on how they are funded by big business backers like Dunne and Goodman. Socialist Worker

candidates are calling for jail sentences for politicians who have taken bribes.

They are pledged to take only their existing wages as workers rather than the £34,000 plus expenses that comes to a TD.

They have raised openly the question of a minimum wage of £5 an hour and have won tremendous sympathy for this stance.

Campaign

But throughout the whole campaign, the SWP has made one essential argument: a socialist TD could only act as a voice for workers anger - the real way we bring change is by work-

ing class people organising and fighting themselves.

This means that the SWP election campaign is being fought in a different way to other parties.

Open socialist arguments are being raised on the doorsteps and in the party's leaflets.

Hundreds of copies of *Socialist Worker* are being sold.

All the time the aim is to lay the basis of a much stronger network in working class communities that will become the backbone of the struggles ahead.

That is why we urge our readers to Vote Socialist and organise for the battles ahead.

New bill will put the innocent behind bars

THE OUTGOING government recently rushed the new Bail Bill through the Dail and Seanad with practically no debate.

During the Bail referendum campaign last year, *Socialist Worker* argued for a No vote because the restrictions on bail would mean an attack on civil liberties.

The politicians accused socialists and civil liberties groups of scaremongering. But the new bill proves that we were absolutely right:

■ We were told that someone accused of a minor offence would not be denied bail. Yet the bill allows for bail to be denied in cases of petty larceny or obstructing a peace officer.

■ Drug addicts will be criminalised since

their addiction can be used as grounds to deny bail.

■ If someone is held in custody and then found innocent they will not be compensated. This means you could spend months in jail awaiting trial, possibly losing your job.

■ Where bail is granted, one third of the money - or a bank book - will have to be lodged in court. This will discriminate against the poor and homeless.

The politicians were clearly lying when they said they would consider the civil liberties issues before bringing in the new bail laws.

In order to appear tough on crime, they have brought in measures which will almost certainly result in innocent people being put behind bars.

£10,000

Appeal target

reached

THANKS TO all our readers and supporters who have helped us reach our target of £10,000 and in fact we have raised £10,400. This will enable us to fight the election campaign, and more than that. Since the battle for socialist ideas continues after the vote is counted any further contributions will be welcome. Please send cheques or postal orders made out to *Socialist Worker Appeal*, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.



£10,000

£9,000

£8,000

£7,000

£6,000

£5,000

£4,000

£3,000

£2,000

£1,000

Socialist Worker

international news

French elections: Left gains support

FRANCE'S RIGHT-WING government was left shaken by the first round of the country's general election on 25 May.

The ruling coalition saw its vote slump badly, and the opposition forces emerge with a clear lead.

As we went to press the final outcome of the election was not clear. A second round of voting took place on the first of June.

But it's clear the right's gamble in calling the election a year ahead of schedule has backfired badly.

Massive

The right-wing coalition called the vote despite its massive parliamentary majority.

The government, headed by prime minister Alain Juppé, has been buffeted by waves of revolt against its austerity measures.

The government hoped to win a reduced but clear majority in the election and so claim a mandate for more austerity measures they say are demanded by the Euro-currency conditions.

But in the first round of the election, they saw their vote fall to just 31.5 %.

The opposition Socialist Party (roughly equivalent of Ireland's Labour Party) and its Communist Party allies scored 36.5 %.

But only in a very few constituencies did any candidate score the 50 % of votes needed to win outright without going to a second round of votes.

The Nazi National Front party led by Jean-Marie Le Pen got a worrying 15.3 % of votes in the first round - the best it has ever scored in a national parliamentary election.

The likelihood now is of a weak government and political instability.

President Jacques Chirac, who said he would remain in



Anti-Government protest in France

office whatever the outcome, has seen his credibility badly dented by the poor performance of his right-wing coalition.

If, as expected, the Socialists and Communists form the next government they too will face enormous pressures.

Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin has made noises about renegotiating the Euro-currency conditions, causing panic among Europe's bankers.

Promised

He also promised radical measures, such as a 35 hour week without loss of pay, and to create 700,000 new jobs, in order to try and win votes on the back of the anti-government protests.

The mood for change will put pressure on Jospin to deliver on such promises.

But this will come into conflict with the Socialist Party's absolute commitment to managing the system.

The disastrous record of the 14 years of Socialist Party rule from 1981 suggests that a Jospin led government would bow further to the pressure from the bankers and bosses.

The new government, right or left wing, will find itself pushing deeply unpopular measures and more welfare cuts.

That is likely to stoke more

of the resistance that has now seen the right's election landslide of four years ago evaporate.

Nazi vote is a warning

FRANCE'S Nazi National Front got 15.3 % of votes in the first round of the general election.

That is a terrible warning of what can happen unless discontent is channelled towards a real fightback.

It is the Nazis' best ever result in national parliamentary elections, matching their scores in presidential elections. This amounts to some five million votes and shows the National Front now has a rooted and stable electoral base.

The Nazis went beyond the national average in a number of areas. They scored between 20% and 30% in a string of

constituencies, especially in the south of the country.

In a few constituencies they did even better than that, leading after the first round with up to 39%.

The Nazi vote is worrying, especially as it comes on top of their 1,000 local councillors and control of four town halls.

The run up to the election saw the biggest wave of anti-Nazi protest for years. During the campaign thousands turned out to demonstrate in every city where Le Pen or other leading Nazis spoke.

The election underlines the urgent need to continue that mobilisation, whoever forms the next government.

Iran

IRAN'S CLERICAL regime was stunned by the landslide victory of Mohammad Khatami in the recent presidential election.

Khatami won 70% of the vote, thrashing the regime's candidate, the conservative Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, by almost three to one.

Until two months ago commentators were talking of widespread apathy as voters complained that all candidates were loyal to the regime.

The result represents a massive vote of no confidence in the regime, rather than a personal endorsement of Khatami.

The scale of the landslide left the regime with little alternative but to recognise his victory.

Business

He won the support of the managerial types in parliament and of business groups outside who want an end to state intervention in the economy.

He also won the backing of liberal intellectuals who believe he will lift some of the repressive parts of the state.

However, the bulk of Khatami's vote came from the working class and the poor, who are sick of corruption, poverty

and chronic inflation.

Most Iranians are poorer now than they were before the 1979 revolution, yet business people and corrupt clerics have prospered.

As clerics around the Foundation for the Oppressed, which controls large parts of the Iranian economy, line their pockets and dispense patronage, the price of basic food has gone up sharply.

In January's budget debate one parliamentary deputy warned the regime that 70% of state workers were now living below the official poverty line.

However, the victory of Khatami is unlikely to bring much relief.

His economic programme favours the rich at the expense of the poor who put him in office.

This means that, once the euphoria of the election result has passed, Iranian workers are likely to find themselves in conflict with the regime. There have already been signs of increased resistance. In February oil workers in Tehran struck over pay and the right to organise independent unions.

Zaire A great day for Africa

THE FALL last week of the Zairean dictator Mobutu was a great day for Africa.

I have, however, been struck by the tone of surprise with which the media has described Mobutu's brutality and corruption.

The Financial Times, for example, conducted a detailed investigation of how Mobutu amassed a vast private fortune - estimated at its height in the mid-1980s at around \$4 billion - through systematic plunder of Zaire's resources.

Foreign aid and loans, the export earnings of the copper and cobalt industry, direct bribes - all went into a network of secret bank accounts and properties controlled by Mobutu and his creatures.

But none of this, the odd detail aside, is really any news.

Ever since Mobutu seized power in 1965 anyone remotely familiar with African politics knew that the United States Central Intelligence Agency and its French and Belgian counterparts were sustaining him, despite his flagrant corruption, because of Zaire's strategic importance and mineral wealth.

Abandon

The interesting question is why, after supporting him for a generation, the US in particular decided to abandon Mobutu now. The standard answer is that now the Cold War is over Washington no longer needs him.

But this won't really do. There are other Cold War leftovers - for example the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia - which show no immediate sign, alas, of being left to their richly deserved fate.

The real answer has to do with the disastrous economic plight, not just of what we will have to get used to calling the Congo again, but of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. A recent report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) paints a terrifying picture.

The region's share of world trade has shrunk from 3% in the mid-1950s to 1% in 1995. Since 1965 average income per head in Africa has fallen from 14% of the average industrial country levels to 7%.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for only 2.4% of global national income. Just two countries, South Africa and Nigeria, produce nearly 40% of its output.

Africa's marginal position in the world economy means that it attracts only 3% of the foreign direct investment going to developing countries. The bulk of this investment goes to a handful of oil exporting countries - Nigeria, Angola, Cameroon and Gabon.

Africa's experience has thus been one of economic regression. Growth of 5% last year came after 20 years when real incomes per head declined.

This appallingly depressing record is the legacy of coloni-

alism, which left the newly independent African states dependent on the fluctuating prices on world markets of a handful of primary products.

Conventional free market remedies offer no way out of this trap.

Commenting on the IMF report, Zimbabwean economist Tony Hawkins berates Africa for its failure - or inability - to participate in the globalisation process. But he notes that last year's spurt of growth was largely a consequence of higher prices for oil and other primary products.

He adds that because such a growth pattern deepens dependence on primary commodities it falls well short of what is needed to generate Asian-style manufacturing-led and export-led growth. The IMF and the World Bank have made matters worse with their demands that African governments engage in economic restructuring. Privatisation and cuts in public spending have increased unemployment and further squeezed living standards.

It is this common experience of economic emiseration under corrupt and brutal dictatorship which has sent political instability sweeping through large parts of Africa in the 1990s.

In east and central Africa a series of dominos have tumbled over the past decade. Milton Obote's tyranny in Uganda was the first to fall in 1986. Then came the Derg junta in Ethiopia in 1991.

Both were brought down by guerrilla movements which enjoyed remarkably little external backing.

The new regime of Yoweri Museveni in Uganda supported the Tutsi rebels in Rwanda, many of whose leaders had fought in the struggle against Obote. The rebel victory in Rwanda in 1994 tipped the regional balance of power.

Victors

The victors then banded together to bring down Mobutu, for 30 years the main obstacle to change in the region. Rwandan, Ugandan and Angolan troops fought alongside Laurent Kabila's rebel forces.

It remains to be seen how good a job Kabila and his allies do. The US has certainly moved quickly to align itself with the new regional power grouping centred on Museveni.

But this political earthquake is a consequence of the terrible economic suffering the people of sub-Saharan Africa have suffered for the past generation.

And it still has a long way to go - as regimes as far apart as those in Kenya and Zimbabwe are likely to discover to their cost.

—Alex Callinicos

Sierra Leone

AN ARMY coup has removed Sierra Leone's President Kabbah and shattered Western governments' claims to have brought stability to this West African country.

Sierra Leone's 4.5 million people have suffered terribly from more than five years of bitter civil war.

Yet the world's powers are interested only in regaining access to the country's mineral wealth, which includes diamonds and iron ore, and in making Sierra Leone pay off its large debt.

Founded

Sierra Leone was founded in the 19th century by former slaves who were encouraged by the British government to "return to Africa".

They grabbed the land from the local inhabitants. Sierra Leone remained a British colony until 1960.

Fighting between various parts of the ruling class triggered a fierce civil war that has already caused over 10,000 deaths.

As the country fell apart, Western countries and their African allies intervened to demand more free

market policies. A former World Bank executive was named minister of finance to push privatisation through.

An army coup in 1992 saw Captain Strasser seize power. He presided over the torture of his opponents and paid South African mercenaries to keep control.

Strasser was given arms by the west and also pressured into holding elections in order to make the country 'stable'.

Nigerian troops went in as the leaders of a 'peacekeeping force' to oversee voting in March 1996 which saw Ahmed Kabbah elected as president.

But none of the country's problems had been solved and the military remained the real power.

They have now reasserted their control.

Outside intervention and the pressures of the world market will bring no solutions.

Local Elections show mood for peace

The results in the North's local elections show people are tired of the intransigent attitudes of the Unionist Parties.

The big vote for Sinn Fein had little to do with ballot rigging as the Unionist Party and the SDLP claimed. It arose from a genuine anger about what happened at Drumcree. It was a vote demanding Sinn Fein's entry into the talks without any pre-conditions.

Decline

The decline in support for the DUP and UUP also showed that there are thousands of Protes-

tants who want nothing to do with Paisley's efforts to whip up sectarianism.

Even in Paisley's home town of Ballymena, the DUP and the Official Unionists lost seats.

Paisley's links with the Harryville protesters and Willy McCrea's support for the leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, Billy Wright, have shown many where the DUP's mes-



sage of hate leads.

Where Protestant workers were offered a chance to openly vote against bigotry, they took it.

An Independent Labour Councillor topped the poll in Newtownabbey for example.

In other areas, the Progressive Unionist Party won six seats, topping the poll in some working class areas.

Although the PUP is firmly within the unionist family, with Union Jacks emblazoned all over its literature, the

party clearly states that it is in favour of negotiated settlement.

But all the experience shows that unless this desire for peace is built on politically the danger of sectarian conflict will not be averted.

Blair's unionist manifesto

The new Labour government could play an important role in tackling sectarianism.

But while it has changed its style on Northern Ireland, there are signs that Blair is repeating the age old policies which could block the road to peace.

In a speech in Belfast, he insisted that he was in favour of keeping Ireland divided. "I value the Union", he said "even the youngest is unlikely to see Northern Ireland as anything other than part of the United Kingdom".

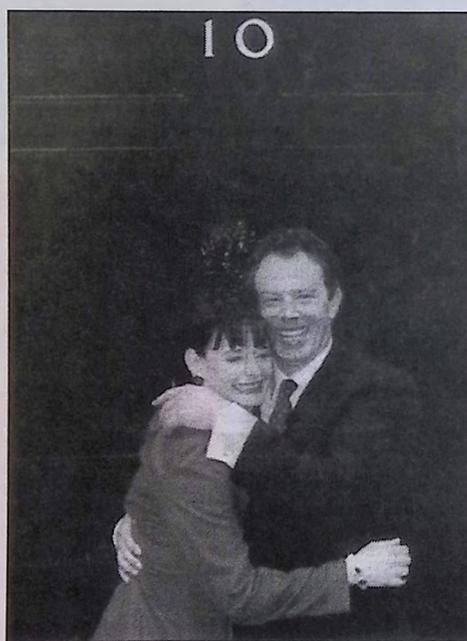
Policing

Blair also said he had the fullest confidence in the ability of the RUC and the security forces to get Northern Ireland through these "difficult times". This remark shows an absolute lack of understanding about policing in Northern Ireland.

The RUC are not village bobbies on the beat, and they themselves admit to having serious problems with the policing of Orange/Loyalist marches.

After the speech, Blair held a secret meeting with Margaret Thatcher to get advice on how to manage international affairs, including the Irish conflict.

This speech shows that Blair is not willing to undo the damage



Will Blair bring change?

which has been caused by previous British policy.

In the past, the British ruling elite used divide and rule tactics to build a notion of Protestant ascendancy.

The average Protestant worker got worse wages and housing than their counterparts on the British mainland but were encouraged to accept them because they seemed to be a cut above Catholics.

The institutions of the North, particularly the security forces, reflected this sectarian bias and led to a situation where there could be no accommodation of Catho-

lic aspirations.

Today there are two rival moods throughout Ireland. One is a feeling among many Protestants that they have more in common with Catholic workers than the 'fur coat' brigade.

Mirrors

It mirrors a mood in Southern Ireland where tens of thousands are turning their back on the Bishops.

At the same time, Paisley and Trimble are trying to whip up sectarianism around the Orange marches to crush this mood and re-unite the old Unionist monolith.

Blair's pro-union speech can only encourage Trimble and Paisley to dig in deeper in resisting any change.

No wonder Trimble commented afterwards that Blair's words "could have been part of the Unionist Party manifesto"

Blair has reversed the

previous British Labour Party policy which was to "encourage re-unification of Ireland by consent". He is making it clear that while he may try to get Sinn Fein into talks they cannot hope for any real change.

This is a recipe for continued sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland.

The socialist alternative

The struggle in Montupet shows that Catholic and Protestant workers can unite to fight for common class aims.

But a political unity needs to be forged from these struggles if they are not to be washed over by the tide of sectarianism in the future.

What is wanted in Ireland is a socialist movement that is committed to fighting the establishment in both parts of Ireland.

Workers

Protestant workers have far more in common with the thousands of Southern workers who have started to turn their back on Fianna Fail and the Bishops.

Catholic workers who reject sectarian bigotry will gain more from fighting alongside their Protestant brothers and sisters while arguing their case about sectarianism - only then will they turn away from Gerry Adams' advice to support the Fianna Fail leader, Bertie Ahern, and the right-wing Irish American lobby.

Only socialist politics can pull these fragile ties of class unity together by challenging the rich and powerful throughout this island.

behind the headlines

Can sectarianism be challenged?

There is a deep pessimism in the North about the continuing rise in sectarian violence.

Almost daily, Catholic families, and people in mixed marriages, are intimidated out of their homes.

Every weekend, someone - Catholic or Protestant - is beaten to within an inch of their life by a sectarian gang.

The murder by loyalist paramilitaries of Sean Brown brought the fear of a full scale return to the random sectarian killings of the pre-1994 cease-fire days.

Just before the local elections, there were four deaths from sectarianism in as many days. It feels like a downward spiral towards Drumcree 3 and a bloodbath.

Socialists have long argued that there is a bigoted minority behind the sectarian violence - The turnout of a few hundred for the 'Civil Rights for Protestants' marches and at the brief Dunloy stand-off showed this was the case.

After Dunloy, the bigots pushed for a full mobilisation of their supporters outside Harryville's Catholic Church. They mustered no more than 400 protesters from across Northern Ireland.

When Paisley called for tens of thousands to march for 'Protestant rights' in Portadown, only a few hundred turned up.

The local government elections confirmed the disgust felt by a large section of Protestant workers for the bigotry of Trimble and Paisley.

Yet there is a growing acceptance of the sectarian divide by politicians and community leaders on all sides.

The idea that there are two separate peoples in the North, with separate cultures and separate interests is now widely believed.

The notion that the only peaceful way forward is to keep them separate suits the politicians. It does nothing to challenge the system, which benefits from this version of apartheid.

Every survey of social attitudes shows that the vast majority of people do not want to be part of this apartheid system.

Again and again, people say they would prefer to live in a mixed area, to send their children to mixed schools, that they value their contact with people of the 'other' religion.

Strikers

The pride with which the Montupet strikers explain that they are a mixed workforce, which won't be divided by bosses or politicians, is an example of that impulse to working class unity which is seen all the time across the North.

But the view of the two separate communities has become so accepted that to argue against it, as socialists do, is seen either as utopian or as 'denying the cultural traditions of a community'.

Working class culture in the North, as elsewhere, is very similar, whatever your religion.

We live in the same kind of houses, wear the same kind of clothes, listen to the same music, watch the same films or soap operas.

Everywhere, the cultural divide is not between workers of different religions or race but between the haves and the have-nots, between those who spend £50 a head for a meal and those who spend £50 to feed a family for a week.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in Northern Ireland, where there are more BMWs per head of population and more people working for less than £2 an hour than in any other region of the UK.

The old 'divide and rule' methods that used to benefit the British Empire are now helping multinational employers and Protestant and Catholic businessmen alike.

The Montupet strike is a beacon of hope in all this gloom.

It shows that working class unity is possible and can be maintained even when the bosses try to stir up sectarianism.

And it confirms that only class politics offers an alternative to the apartheid which Northern Ireland is moving towards.

—GORETTI HORGAN

TRIBUTE: NOEL BROWNE

A fighter against political cowardice and clerical reaction



Noel Browne attacked by a Garda dog during an Anti-Vietnam war protest

Noel Browne, who died recently, was one of Ireland's best known socialists. He was immensely popular because he stood up to the Bishops to demand a free health service.

From an early age Noel Browne knew the most abject poverty. One of his earliest childhood memories was of being squeezed tight by a frightened woman who threw a big stone at the black rats which threatened him.

His experience of contracting tuberculosis awoke him to the hypocrisy and harshness of Irish society.

In his book, *Against the Tide*, he described the fate that awaited his family.

"Because there was no free tuberculosis service then, hospital care had to be paid for. Since there was no hope that the out of work patient could pay as his income had stopped with his work, he would be sent home to die. In the process he would infect one or more of his loved ones."

Noel Browne only escaped this terrible fate because he was able to go to England. He was eventually supported by rich benefactors who helped him to train as a doctor. But the experience of poverty and humiliation never left him.

After the hardships of the Second World War, a new party emerged in Ireland. Clann na Poblachta was led by the former Chief of Staff of the IRA, Sean McBride.

Radicalism

It appeared to evoke the early radicalism of Fianna Fail, combining an appeal to nationalism with a concern for the poor. Noel Browne joined the Clann and became a Minister of Health in the first Inter-Party government in 1948. But when he tried to introduce a free medical scheme for mothers and children, he discovered that the real power in Irish society did not rest with the cabinet but unelected groups who were able to dictate.

The Bishops and the consultants denounced his scheme.

The 1950s were the high point of a right-wing Catholicism which opposed social welfare schemes because they interfered with the responsibility of the individual family.

Charity was supposed to be the way in which cases of poverty were dealt with.

Browne later recalled a case in Newtownmountkennedy when parents were

denounced from the pulpit for 'communism' because they dared to request hot school meals for their children. The parish priest put the standard Catholic line when he said, "They can come to my back door and ask for it, if they need it."

The Irish Medical Organisation joined with the Bishops to oppose Noel Browne because they feared the National Health Service which had emerged in Britain after the war. They wanted to keep a two-tier medical system where consultants could get fees off rich patients and treat the poor with disrespect.

Noel Browne's tragedy was that he was left alone to fight the Bishops and the IMO. The republican leader of Clann na Poblachta, Sean McBride, denounced him, claiming 'You cannot afford to fight the Church'. One of Noel Browne's most vigorous opponents inside the Cabinet was the Labour Party leader William Norton. The Labour Party later attacked him for 'not appreciating the seriousness of the Bishops' ruling'.

Despite all the denunciation, Browne was re-elected after the collapse of the Inter-Party government in 1952 while the rest of Clann na Poblachta disappeared.

But the defeat and isolation took its toll. Browne joined Fianna Fail briefly, only to discover it was as right-wing as the rest. Faced with the misery of 1950s Ireland, he started to look to 'the socialist countries' as a light out of the darkness of reaction. All of this meant that he often did not see how the fight for socialism had to come from struggles of working people themselves.

Noel Browne's real legacy though was a principled fight against political cowardice and clerical reaction. One of his last episodes was to break away from the Labour Party after they entered a right-wing Coalition in the early eighties and to establish the short-lived Socialist Labour Party.

While he is saluted by the establishment today, there is still no comprehensive free medical service in Ireland. The quality of healthcare still depends on the size on your cheque book.

The Bishops have retreated on many issues, but they were still able to twist the arms of the Labour Minister Mervyn Taylor to insist on their 'right' to sack teachers who do not conform to their ethos.

The fight for much of what Noel Browne stood for still goes on.

—KIERAN ALLEN

The politics of Socialist Workers Party

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

THE Socialist Workers Party wants to see real change in society.

We believe that production should be democratically organised to meet human need and not to enrich a few millionaire profiteers.

We believe that parliament is a sham and that the real power in society is exercised behind the scenes in the boardrooms of big business.

We believe that the world divides into two great classes: The capitalists—the likes of Larry Goodman and Ben Dunne—and the rest of us, the working class.

These two main classes are constantly in conflict.

The capitalists make their profits off the backs of workers and are constantly trying to maintain and increase their profits by further exploiting workers.

Organise

And workers have to organise together to resist the constant pressures of the bosses.

All exploitation and oppression in today's world is rooted in the capitalist system.

This is true of the oppression of nations no less than the oppression of women, ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians.

But the world today offers great opportunities for humankind to free itself from hunger, poverty, disease, op-

pression and exploitation.

Every year for the past half a century food production has increased faster than the world's population growth, so there should be less starvation.

System

But the profit system ensures hunger and malnourishment increases and famines, rather than being a thing of the past, become endemic.

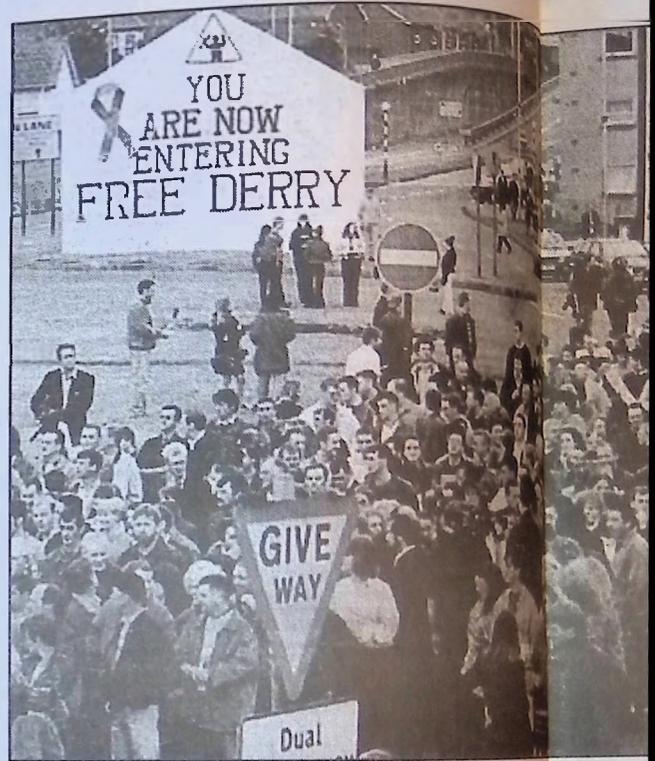
The technologies and industries that exist today, if put to rational use, could provide everyone on this planet with a life free from scarcity.

As it is industry threatens our lives instead of enriching them.

Only revolutionary change—where working class people take control of the factories and industries—can unlock these possibilities.

That is what socialism is about.

The alternative is a world increasingly racked by crisis, famine and war.



There is no level

WE ARE told we live in a democracy where the Dail is supreme. Everyone over 18 has a vote and, it is said, any elected government can use the state machinery to implement its policies.

So why can't the system be constitutionally reformed?

Any genuinely reforming party would face a number of huge hurdles to getting its voice heard.

It would need to overcome the hostility of the establishment press, raise the finances to compete with parties funded by big business

and face down the scare-mongers fed to the media by powerful vested interests.

Irish media baron Tony O'Reilly, for example, was named by the US magazine *Business Week* as the fifth highest corporate earner in the USA.

Share Options

He is chairman of the £10 billion Heinz food group earning £40 million a year on salary and share options.

O'Reilly is Heinz's largest individual shareholder with stock valued at £179 million.

At home independent Ford Wedgwood of other groups the globe.

It's not an Independent group of trade union defend proposals funding.

It opposes huge political secretly business interests.

O'Reilly monopoly of per industry.

Why the state is not neutral

A MEDIA controlled by powerful capitalist interests and huge business funding for pro-capitalist parties are not the only obstacles to reforming the system.

Even if a left-wing party managed to overcome all this and was elected to government it would still find itself locked out from the most important levers of power.

It would still not control of either the state machine or the economy.

The vast bulk of the state machine is unelected and outside any sort of democratic control. Senior army officers; heads of the gardai; judges; civil service mandarins; the bosses of the semi-state companies—none of these are elected.

Nine times out of ten they come from the top families, were educated in the poshest private schools.

They are secretly appointed and wield huge power on behalf of their class.

The judges and the gardai use the law to defend the property of the rich.

Arrested

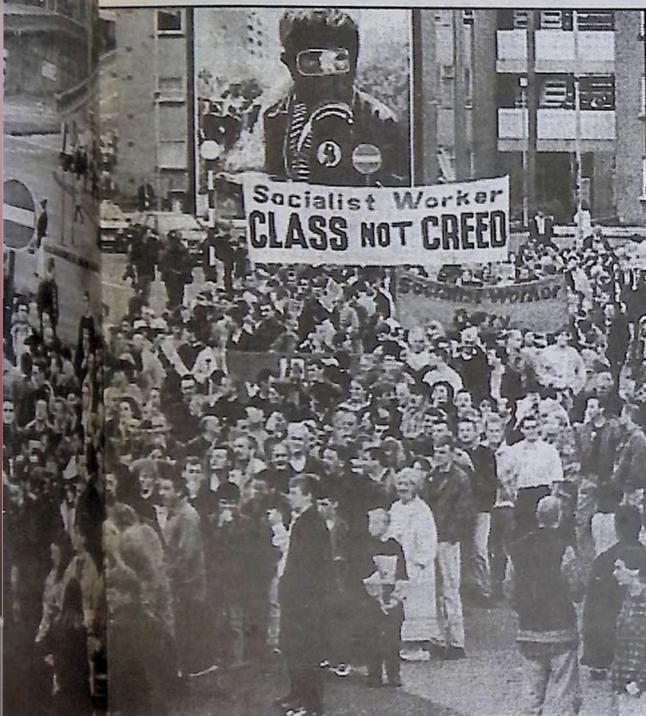
Profiteering building contractors who break the safety rules and cause the death of building workers are never arrested and can at worst expect a fine of around £500. Striking pickets can expect routine harassment from the gardai.

It was a secret group of senior civil servants who protected the child molesting priest Fr. Brendan

Smyth from extra... the Dail... to examine the... files... who wa... shilling Smyth.

If a reforming... ed to overc... ed and enacted... went so far the... could expect a "s... in 1983 the co... G... min... (w... hole... £800... out of go... and... was fe... As Karl Marx... not a net... all section... in an... class—"a... holding...

... of the Workers



The working class can change the world

FOR ALL the power of the ruling class and its state, there is one class in society with the potential power to beat them.

The vast majority of people must sell their labour to capitalists to survive.

Whether engaged in manual or 'white-collar' work this class creates all the wealth in society.

Without workers' labour, in the factories and offices, nothing moves; the electricity supply stops, the production lines shudder to a halt and the computer screens go blank.

The capitalists may own the banks, the offices, and factories, but without workers their assets are empty buildings.

The working class is growing and is stronger. In Ireland today there are three times the number of trade unionists than there were in 1945.

There are more workers in South Korea today than there were in the entire world when Marx wrote "workers of all lands unite!"

At many times in the past, at moments of great upheavals, workers have formed workers councils—committees of delegates from each workplace.

These often start as simple strike committees (as happened in the 1905 Russian Revolution) but can quickly grow to take on government functions.

In Russia in 1917 it was these workers councils (or *Soviets*) that grew and strengthened in the course of the revolution in 1917.

By October they assumed power and began instituting socialist measures.

At first only a few firms were nationalised, the rest were put under the supervision and control of the workers.

But as the old owners sabotaged production more and more firms were nationalised by the workers.

The great landed estates were broken up by the peasants and divided.

Minimum wages and maximum working hours of work were decreed; divorce was legalised; all of the nations of the old Russian Empire were free to leave and become independent.

These measures were enacted by the workers themselves.

The workers councils were composed of delegates on the same pay as their workmates.

They could be un-elected and replaced instantly if they ceased to enjoy the support of those who elected them.

In this way the workers collectively and democratically took control of the factories, industries and neighbourhoods.

This was the dawn of a real workers' democracy. However the intervention of 14 foreign imperialist armies as well as international isolation exhausted the revolution and it later succumbed to Stalinism.

Why we need a Socialist Workers Party

DESPITE THE present temporary boom in the Irish economy, working class people have seen few of the benefits. Instead there is large scale anger at growing inequality.

Further down the road it is clear Ireland's bosses want to attract many of the conditions masses of people take for granted in social welfare, jobs and conditions.

Boom or no boom, low pay and casualised or temporary jobs are what many workers are forced to accept.

These attacks are mounted in the name of profitability and competitiveness.

To organise to fight these we need arguments and politics that reject the basic ideas of capitalism—that market competition and profitability are sacrosanct.

We need a network throughout the workplaces, in the unions as well as in the colleges and estates, of militants who are armed with the arguments that workers can and ought to defend their conditions and stand up to the bosses.

That network can only succeed if it is built around a socialist workers party with a newspaper which carries these socialist arguments.

Further down the road we can expect big upheavals and class battles. Out of these it is possible that Ireland will see revolutionary developments with workers' councils emerging.

In these conditions the trade union leaders and reformist politicians of Labour and Democratic Left will try to damp down militancy. They will use all their influence to keep these struggles within the limits of the system.

With the impact of big struggles many previously politically passive workers will become more radical. But these workers will be influenced by reformist ideas and parties.

To overcome those ideas, a revolutionary party will have to argue that workers can themselves rule society and abolish the exploitation and oppression of capitalism.

Under the impact of great events huge numbers of workers can be convinced to put these ideas into action.

But this will only happen if the party has earned the trust of the fighting minority over the previous months and years.

That is why we say join the Socialist Workers Party today and prepare for the big struggles tomorrow.

... level playing field

At home he controls independent Newspapers, Waterford Wedgwood and a string of other newspapers across the globe.

It's not surprising that the independent newspaper group campaigns against trade unionists fighting to defend pay or conditions. It opposes any reform of the funding of political parties.

It opposes the disclosure of huge political contributions secretly given by big-business interests.

O'Reilly has a near-monopoly of the Irish newspaper industry with interests in the *Daily Star*, the *Sunday Tribune* (which removed campaigning editor Vincent Browne shortly after O'Reilly bought into the title) and the *Sunday World*, as well as the *Independent* titles.

Despite public controversy at this state of affairs none of the Dail parties have gone ahead with proposals to limit his stranglehold on the Irish print media.

O'Reilly has consistently refused to identify which of the political parties have received contributions from him.

plotted class in conditions of oppression."

In 1973 the modest reforms of Allende's Popular Unity government in Chile were too much for the country's wealthy investors.

Sabotage

Amid economic sabotage by the boss class, the army under General Pinochet staged a coup and slaughtered 30,000 trade unionists.

As Marx noted at the time of the Paris Commune of 1871, "The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes."

It must clear away the existing state machine and replace it with a workers state.

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What do socialists say?

Are social revolutions inevitable?

I TOOK part in a debate on the French Revolution of 1789 with a lecturer in French history recently.

In the debate Dr Munro Price repeated an old accusation against Marxism.

He suggested that Marxists see such revolutions as inevitable.

The argument runs that Marxists see history as a succession of "stages" and the blind working out of economic and social forces.

First there was slavery, then feudalism, then capitalism and just as surely one day will come socialism.

So what real people do, political upheavals, events and social struggles, are merely inevitable consequences of a deeper logic.

The charge is false. As Marx wrote, "History does nothing. It does not possess immense riches, it does not fight battles, it is human beings, real living human beings who do all this."

We are told today, for example, that "unemployment has risen" or "the pound has fallen."

Gamble

Marxists point out that such events are not inevitable but the effect of what real people have done.

It is the actions of real bosses that put people on the dole. It is the actions of rich speculators who gamble currency that cause the pound's movements.

Marxists argue the same about historical events.

So the English Revolution of the 17th century was not "history" at work.

Oliver Cromwell and many others had to fight and win bloody battles to defeat the king and his armies.

In the case of the French Revolution of 1789 it was not "history" or "social forces" which stormed the Bastille on 14 July or which cut the king's head off, but real living human beings.

None of these events or their outcome was inevitable.

The Bastille might not have been stormed on 14 July 1789 had not a young man called Camille Desmoulins leapt

years ago.

But even if the revolt had won it would have been impossible to build socialism at that time. The level of production in society, the development of agriculture, tools and so on, was incapable of producing enough for everyone to have plenty.

Today a worker and a boss may both dream of living a pleasant life of plenty.

When the alarm clock goes off, the worker has no choice but to wake up and trudge to work for the boss or else face poverty on the dole. The boss can make his dreams a reality.

The same boss may even think it would be nice to give his workers more security, better pay and conditions.

But faced with competition from his rival bosses he will nonetheless cut the workers' pay, attack conditions or sack workers rather than see his profits suffer.

In any society founded on the exploitation of the majority by the minority such realities produce tension, conflict and struggle.

Improve

The workers will seek to improve their lives or resist the bosses' attacks just as surely as the bosses will make those attacks.

That is what Marx meant when he wrote that all history is "a history of class struggle".

Such struggles are not simply confined to the shop floor, but are reflected in the wider life of society, politics, the law, culture and so on.

The level of such struggles will rise and fall, but will at times erupt into a great social battle.

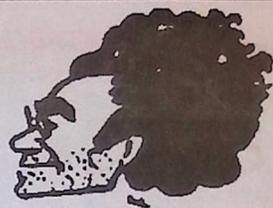
But what course such struggles then take, and what their outcome is, is not inevitable but depends on the ideas which influence those involved, their level of confidence and degree of organisation.

It is precisely because we want to help make history in the battles to come that Marxists seek to build the influence of socialist ideas and build socialist organisation.

So Spartacus could lead an inspirational slave revolt against the mighty Roman Empire 2,000

The real socialist tradition

ANTONIO GRAMSCI Blazing a trail to workers' struggle



MANY SOCIALISTS today will not have heard of Italian revolutionary Antonio Gramsci or know what he stood for. Gramsci died in Italy 60 years ago, on 27 April 1937.

His life is an inspiration to all who seek to change the world, and his ideas are some of the most important for those involved in that fight.

GRAMSCI WAS born on the island of Sardinia, but when still a youth moved to mainland Italy. Europe was being torn apart by the First World War and soon he became a socialist, joining the main Italian workers' party of the day — the Socialist Party.

As a journalist on various socialist newspapers he gravitated to the left of the party.

He and those around him criticised the timid approach of the party's leaders, who despite their often radical rhetoric in practice insisted on working within the system rather than fighting for fundamental change.

With the war's end huge revolutionary workers' movements swept across Europe.

Russian workers, led by the Bolshevik socialist party, had successfully seized power in October 1917. Their example inspired workers across Europe.

In Italy the "two red years" of 1919 and 1920 saw workers build factory councils, occupy their workplaces and pose a fundamental challenge to existing society.

Gramsci had moved to the great industrial city of Turin, which was at the heart of the factory councils movement.

There he and his comrades began producing a socialist workers' paper, *Ordine Nuovo*, seeking to push the movement forward.

But the weaknesses Gramsci had already pointed to in the leadership of the Socialist Party, and the trade unions, held the workers' movement back and it ended in defeat.

Gramsci joined those who drew the lessons from that defeat and split from the Socialist Party, a party akin to the Labour Party of that time.

They launched the *Communist Party* seeking to build the kind of mass revolutionary socialist party that could ensure future struggles ended in victory.

But the price of the workers' defeat of 1920 was high. Benito Mussolini's fascist movement was growing in strength, and winning support from bosses who were terrified by the revolt of 1919-20.

The bosses looked to the fascists as a battering ram against the workers' movement.

In 1922 Mussolini was handed power and began constructing a repressive state—crushing democracy and jailing opponents.

Despite the repression Gramsci continued to fight and emerged as the key leader of the Communist Party.



A HUGE wave of factory occupations swept Italy in 1920

BUT IN 1926 he fell victim to the repression, and was thrown in jail. The prosecutor at his trial insisted, "We must stop this brain working for 20 years."

In that, at least, the fascists failed, for throughout his years in jail Gramsci continued to write.

But the years in jail took a heavy physical toll. His health, poor since childhood, suffered badly in what he called his "dark years of wretched oppression and misery".

His health finally broke, and the fascists only released him from jail shortly before he died.

Throughout his life Gramsci attacked the idea that socialism could be won gradually through parliament and the institutions of existing society.

Instead he insisted that only a revolutionary transformation, with workers taking control of society from below, could win socialism.

"The only class which can accomplish a real deep social transformation is the working class itself", he insisted.

He denounced those who looked only to parliament for real change, likening them to a swarm of "flies on hunt for a bowl of blancmange in which they get stuck and ingloriously perish".

He argued, "The socialist state cannot be embodied in the institutions of the capitalist state. The socialist state must be a fundamentally new creation."

Only the workers' movement, "placing itself at the head of the insurrection of the great majority of the population and channelling it towards the creation of a workers' state", could achieve socialism.

Gramsci saw the power workers could gain through strong trade unions, but said it was a mistake to rely on the trade union leaders to achieve real change.

Their role in negotiating compromises between workers and bosses meant they became "a veritable caste" who had "a group psychology of their own completely at odds with that of the workers".

He argued for "the urgent need to combat the whole bureaucratic mechanism of the trade unions, which aims to stifle every revolutionary initiative on the part of the working masses".

Gramsci never wavered from these views throughout his life. In jail he stressed how "one has devoted one's life to a single end and focused on this the whole sum of one's energies and will power."

GRAMSCI understood that much of the time workers accept many of the "common sense" ideas justifying existing society. But he also argued that workers' own experience challenged those ideas.

The result of this clash was to produce what he called a "contradictory consciousness".

Workers' ideas, he argued, are "made up in a queer way".

They "contain elements of the cave-man and principles of the most modern advanced learning, shabby prejudices of all past historic phases and intuitions of a future philosophy of the human race united over the world."

So workers can unite on the picket line against their boss while still accepting that there must be bosses in general. They can look to their own struggles to win change, but also believe that voting for a new government can improve their lives.

White workers can unite with black workers in struggle — yet still accept some racist ideas and prejudices. Workers can stand in solidarity with workers in other countries while still accepting nationalist ideas.

The balance between the different types of ideas shifts depending on the level of struggle. The more workers resist and fight back the more easily they reject ideas which divide them.

But Gramsci said that socialists could not simply sit back and hope workers' ideas would automatically change.

An organised socialist party was needed to intervene in such struggles and fight inside them for socialist ideas, to develop "the potential" they showed "to the maximum."

He saw socialist papers like *Ordine Nuovo*, which he produced during the factory councils movement, as crucial weapons in this battle of ideas.

Gramsci wrote delightedly of how the paper "became the journal of the factory councils. The workers loved *Ordine Nuovo*."

"Why did they love it?" he asked. "Because in its articles they discovered part, the best part, of themselves."

SOME ACADEMICS have tried to claim that Gramsci was in favour of gradual change through parliament and would have welcomed the Labour Party's shift to the right during the 1980s and 90s.

The Russian revolutionary Lenin wrote that it seemed to be the fate of every great revolutionary to be hated by our rulers while alive, but turned into a sanitised icon when they died.

This distortion of Gramsci's life of struggle is made easier by the fact that much of his work was written in code in an effort to get round the prison censor.

But the idea Gramsci would have any time for the idea of changing the capitalist system from within is still galling.

In his ideas and actions he burned with the idea of workers struggling to make a better world through their own actions. That is why Italy's rulers hated him and why the fascists who the bosses hoisted to power tried to break him.

by PAUL MCGARR

P.D.s

Harney targets single mothers

The PD's 'new deal'—as their election manifesto is called—has shown the party at its right-wing reactionary best.

Their latest target is single parent families. Mary Harney says young women have been encouraged by 'anomalies' in the Social Welfare system 'not to get involved in stable relationships'.

In the PD's eyes single mothers are like sheep, mindlessly caught up in the 'dependency culture', (whatever that is) deliberately getting pregnant so that they can claim the extravagant sums on offer from the Department of Social Welfare.

This is an old trick already tried by the Tories in Britain. Mary Harney is scapegoating a vulnerable group in society—single mothers—simply in order to win votes. The fact is that just 4% of social welfare spending goes to single parents, and this includes separated and widowed parents, women and men.

The PD's have veiled their attack in caring language. Mary Harney claims that she is "worried" about young mothers setting up one parent families and living in poverty on council estates.

She claims she wants to "encourage" single mothers to live with their parents.

This, she says, would encourage them to get involved in a stable relationship.

Childcare

If she is so concerned, why is she not promising decent childcare facilities that would allow single parents more freedom to work or study and escape from poverty?

A study on lone parenting in the Coolock area of Dublin last year found that most single mothers, whether unmarried, separated or widowed, were adamant about their intention to return to work, or start training—once their children were older.

But each of the single mothers interviewed cited the lack of publicly funded reliable childcare, and access to training as a barrier to finding employment.

The author of the report, Tony McCashin, pointed out that the desire to be both mother and worker 'is shared by many mothers in two-parent families'.

On the subject of lone parenthood and poverty he highlighted that there was nothing natural or inevitable about the connection:

"The source of poverty among lone mothers resides in the economic vulnerability of women in general—low pay, poorer skills, lower earnings and gender inequality."

It's tempting to conclude that Mary Harney wants to treat unmarried mothers like children, forced to stay at home when they don't want to.

But the PD's agenda is far more dangerous than that. The party deeply resents the provision of social welfare and doesn't give a damn about the poor.

The PD's conveniently ignore several facts. One is that the families of single parents will usually provide whatever support they can, both financially and emotionally. They don't need to be forced to do so.

Another is that 'home' for many people is not the cosy stable environment conjured up by the use of the term 'family'.

Unemployment and poverty makes it impossible for many young people to stay at home without eating away at their families' resources.

A lot of houses and flats are too small to accommodate the family, plus a lone parent with one or more children.

Many 'homes' are made miserable and even dangerous by domestic violence or alcoholism.

The PD's real agenda is to cut social welfare spending and maintain a low-wage economy.

They've already attacked people who are on the dole, claiming that most of them simply do not want to work.

Now they've turned their attention to single mothers, but only single mothers on welfare, in other words poor single mothers.

Meanwhile the party is busy encouraging a different type of 'dependency culture'.

They want tax cuts for the wealthy and for businesses, they want 'state handouts' for employers, and the profitable privatisation of the VHI, telecom and the transport services.

The other parties have denounced Harney, but remember it was Roisin Shortall of the Labour party who whipped up hysteria about drug-crazed single mothers last year.

Single parents have as much right as anyone else to get on with their lives independently and raise their children with dignity.

For this reason the type of argument put forward by the PD's needs to be tackled head-on.

Caricatures of single parents as 'irresponsible' or morally inadequate people need to be challenged and the focus switched to the real need for decent childcare facilities and educational or employment opportunities.

—SIMON BASKETTER

book

Cutting the boss down to size

by Roisin Cronin

MICHAEL MOORE is best known for his documentary *Roger & Me*, about the closure of a General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan.

He is also known for his TV series *TV Nation*, which was at times brilliant in showing up the hypocrisy of a whole range of targets, from corrupt politicians to profit-hungry businessmen and anti-abortion activists.

In his new book *Downsize This!* Moore goes after the same targets. He exposes the real effects of what the corporations sensibly call downsizing and the ever-growing divide in the US between rich and poor.

Moore gives some very interesting figures about companies like General Motors. GM made \$34 billion in profit over the last 15 years; over the same period they sacked more than 240,000 workers.

The chief executive officers, Moore tells us, of America's top companies, receive 212 times more than their average worker earns. The CEO of IBM was receiving \$2.6 million a year when he 'downsized' 60,000 workers.

Result

As a result of such actions there are now 7.2 million people registered as unemployed in the US, another 5.4 million unemployed but uncounted, and 2.5 million working in full time jobs but earning so little that they're below the poverty line. Real wages in the US are now lower than they were in 1979.

The effects of this are felt right throughout society. One study showed that for every 1% increase in unemployment, homicides go up by 6.7%, while deaths by heart disease rise by 5.6%, and deaths from strokes rise by 3%.

One of the best chapters in the book covers the 'welfare', in the form of tax breaks and hand-outs, that the multinational corporations get from the state.

Michael Moore contrasts the \$170 billion that these companies receive each year with the measly \$50 billion that's spent on social programmes, a figure which has been under attack from both Republicans and Democrats over the last year.

Attack

McDonald's, for example, received \$1.6 million from the government between 1986 and 1994 to market Chicken McNuggets in Singapore.

Exxon, the corporation responsible for the world's biggest ever oil spillage, was able to claim \$300 million in tax deductions from the settlement they paid.

It's these "welfare mothers" that Michael Moore vents his anger on, and he does it brilliantly.

He also hits his target when he talks about corporate crime, pointing out that while hand-guns resulted in 15,000 deaths in 1995, unsafe working conditions and occupational diseases led to the deaths of more than 56,000

workers.

TV Nation had as its mascot 'Crackers', the Corporate Crime Fighting Chicken, in opposition to 'McGruff' America's crime-fighting dog. When a phonenumber was set up through which people could report corporate crime, there was a phenomenal 30,000 calls. It was a chance for these people to show how sick they are of big companies making millions out of their workers' misery.

Moore manages to cover a whole range of topics, includ-

ing the scapegoating of immigrants and how businessmen like winemakers Ernest and Julio Gallo donated \$1 million to Bob Dole's campaign in return for huge tax breaks,

Scapegoating

Some parts of the book aren't so good - in particular where he suggests that all Germans were responsible for the Holocaust. In places he's just plain silly - for instance when he's talking about his "forbidden love for Hillary (Clinton)".

The real weaknesses in his politics emerge when he puts forward his strategy for

change. He advocates that people take over the Democratic Party and reclaim it for themselves.

What he fails to see is that the Democrats are a bosses party just the same as the Republicans.

He believes that corporate America can be controlled by introducing legislation which would prevent them from being able to move to other countries in search of cheaper labour.

He never really calls for workers themselves to take action, although he is very much pro-worker and pro-union and does dedicate one chapter to the sell-outs of the union leaders.

But he doesn't give a coherent strategy for change.

Despite its faults this is a book that's well worth a read. Moore's anger with the big corporations who put profit above everything else, including human beings, is clear.

Considering that we're more used to US exports like *Friends* and *Melrose Place*, Michael Moore is a very welcome reminder that there are huge numbers of people in America who aren't willing to accept the dreadful conditions that they live in.

Downsize this! Random Threats from an unnamed American. Michael Moore, Crown Publishers, £14.95 (hardback)

film

Black proud and fighting

To millions of black Americans Muhammad Ali epitomised the slogan, 'Say it loud, we're black and proud.' Ali was a thorn in the side of the US establishment and a hero to ordinary black people.

His rise to fame took place against the background of an increasingly militant civil rights movement.

The political establishment hated Ali because he was a brash and articulate black man at a time when 'Negroes' were expected to speak only when spoken to, and because he condemned the racism and hypocrisy of US society.

Victories

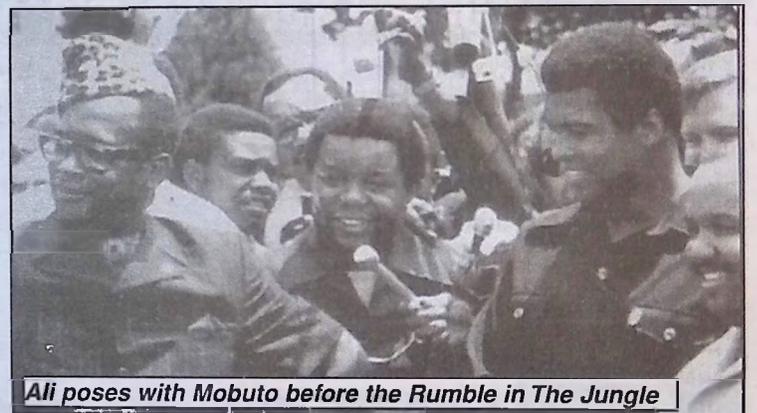
When we were kings chronicles the events surrounding one of Ali's most spectacular boxing victories, the 1974 championship bout against the then world champion George Foreman. The fight, known as the *Rumble in the Jungle* took place in the newly independent African state of Zaire.

The documentary starts with footage of Ali speaking out against the Vietnam war, saying he would not take part in the war because 'no Vietcong ever called me nigger'.

Ali was stripped of his world heavyweight championship title in 1967, and threatened with a prison sentence, because he refused to be inducted into the US army.

The film moves on to look at the hype and sporting rivalry between the two fighters.

But there was another reason why the bout was so eagerly anticipated by millions of African Americans. Foreman was the antithesis of the outspoken Ali. He was the only black American athlete to win a medal in the Mexico Olympics of 68 who didn't raise his



Ali poses with Mobutu before the Rumble in The Jungle

fist in the black power salute.

When we were kings also reveals why the event was hosted in Zaire. The brutal African dictator Mobutu Sese Seko was the only person promoter Don King could get to put up the \$10 million needed

to stage the fight. During the documentary reporters recall 'how bizarre' it was to see such an extravagant event in a country where the majority of the people barely had enough to eat.

This film is not just for boxing connoisseurs or sports fans. *When we were kings* manages to convey well both Ali's sporting genius and the political stance that made him a hero to millions.

video

Using a hidden past to make a better future

LONE STAR is yet another brilliant film from the left-wing director John Sayles.

While not as overtly and obviously political as his 1987 film *Matewan*, which dealt with a miners' strike in West Virginia in 1920, it nonetheless deals with issues of race both historically and in their contemporary context.

Set in Rio County, along the US border with Mexico, *Lone Star* opens with the discovery of a body which has lain hidden for forty years. What follows is the local sheriff's attempts to piece together what really happened.

In a story that's skillfully pieced together the lives of three generations are linked, all finally coming together to offer an explanation of the present. In the process the past is brought firmly into the open and accepted notions of

how things were or should be are questioned.

Race and racism are at the centre of this film. In a town that has a large number of Mexican immigrants and blacks that's no surprise. In a series of flashbacks Sayles shows the racism that pervaded in fifties America, where non-whites found themselves at the mercy of the racist establishment. This racism is best shown through the character of the vicious corrupt cop, played almost too well by Kris Kristofferson.

But Sayles never lets us forget that this racism is still there - although the huge advances that have been made are to be seen - whether that's in terms of the debate over the teaching of American

race-blind history or the fact that Mexicans are still shown risking their lives to cross the border into the US.

But what comes across so well in *Lone Star* is the contradiction between the way in which official society sees the different races as separate, and the reality of people's lives which means that they are all very much linked together.

It is this that makes *Lone Star* such a refreshing film to watch.

It's an optimistic film, optimistic about the way in which the real lives of people can conflict with the racial strait-jacket of official society.

It's about how the past can be crucial in explaining the present but it's also about how the past can be cast aside to make a better future.

—ROISIN CRONIN

where we stand

Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM
The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system. The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion. To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:
The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination. **FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION**
We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression. **FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:**
Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class. Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic. **FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:**
Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it. We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action. **FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:**
To win socialism workers need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

Vote Socialist Workers Party

THE CANDIDATES

Waterford

JIMMY KELLY is the union convenor of the Waterford Crystal plant where he has worked for 30 years.

Jimmy first came to prominence when he led the campaign of glass workers against the unjust PAYE tax system.

The slogan was 'Tax the greedy, not the needy'.

In more recent years Jimmy Kelly has played a major role in helping to organise the union at the Waterford Regional Hospital and in fighting water charges in the city.



Jimmy Kelly

Dublin South East



Peadar O'Grady

PEADAR O'GRADY is one of the few candidates ever to have been arrested for making an election speech.

The Public Order Act was used to stop him making a speech about corruption. (See Page 2)

Peadar played an active role in resisting the water charges in the

Ballinteer area.

During the election campaign, he joined a delegation to Eithne Fitzgerald to protest at a letter sent out from the local council threatening to declare non-payers bankrupt.

"It was like talking to the wall" said another member of the delegation.

Dublin South Central

BRID SMITH works for the shop workers union MANDATE and fully endorses their call for a ban on Sunday trading.

She was active during the Dunnes strike, helping to strengthen picket lines and raising money for solidarity. In the course of her election campaign,

she organised two pub collections for the Mountupet strike in Belfast, raising nearly £200.

Brid finds herself in a tight constituency with several other left wing and independent candidates. But all the signs are that she is getting a very positive response.



Brid Smith

Dublin North Central



Ritchie Browne

"How do we know you won't sell-out?" This is one of the most common questions that **RITCHIE BROWNE** gets asked on the doorsteps.

Dublin North Central has had more than its share of candidates who have betrayed their radical promises.

Ritchie's own record is one of struggle not sell-outs. In the midst of his election campaign he

organised a collection in his job which raised over £100 for the Mountupet strikers.

He has a simple answer to the sell-out question.

"I am a member of a revolutionary party which has proved it is committed to the overthrow of capitalism.

"Other former left wing candidates belonged to parties that wanted to manage the system".

On the election trail

Parties' pact of silence on corruption

THE MAIN parties in the election have a pact to avoid any discussion of corruption.

No one has demanded that Haughey should be forced to appear before a tribunal to explain his £1.3 million gift from Ben Dunne.

In return, the opposition have said nothing about Bruton's lies on how Fine Gael raised its money.

All of the main parties are now involved in a cover up to hide their links with big business. None of them have revealed who is backing them financially.

Many have commented on the bright

glossy leaflets that even parties like Democratic Left are able to produce.

But the DLs have also got their share of hand-outs from the Allied Irish Bank.

The Socialist Workers Party, however, is raising the issue with its slogan "Jail the Corrupt Politicians."

At an election stall at the Crumlin Shopping Centre the SWP canvassing team for Brid Smith ran into one Richard Mulcahy, a Fianna Fail candidate.

"We gave him such a hard time about his party's links to big business that he scuppered off. But when he spotted 5p on the ground, he made a beeline to pick it up".

NEEDED: A MINIMUM WAGE OF £5 AN HOUR

"I WORKED for Peter Mark for 90p an hour. I was supposed to be a trainee hairdresser.

"But what training do you need to wash hair?" that's what Mary told one of Ritchie Browne's canvassing team in Dublin North Central.

The Socialist Workers Party demand for a minimum wage of £5 an hour is going down well on the doorsteps and terrible stories about low pay come up all the time.

Low pay

In one case a confectionary worker told about getting £1.65 an hour while a worker in a small computer company, Microchips, got as little as £1.80 an hour.

During the election campaign in Waterford, the SWP candidate, Jimmy Kelly, went on the radio to debate the issue with the local Chamber of Commerce.

Accused of not having a partnership approach, Jimmy replied "I am not going to start sipping brandy with the bosses. I am only interested in meetings when you start negotiating about low pay".

There were loud cheers as the programme was broadcast inside Waterford Crystal.

Anything for a vote

If you find a canvasser on your doorstep with no views on social issues, justice or Northern Ireland. He or she is probably working for Fianna Fail's Tom Kitt.

"They've been told to keep their personal views to themselves. "Do not argue—agree to differ!" a detailed leaflet for canvassers warns them.

They are not even allowed to give Tom Kitt's views. "If a voter attempts to get your opinion of Tom's view of something controversial, ask them what theirs is first."

One wonders whether Tom Kitt's view turns out to be exactly the same.

★ ACCORDING to the *Evening Herald*, Charlie Haughey has offered to canvass for Fianna Fail's Brian Lenihan in Dublin West.

But strangely enough Lenihan's advisors are urging him to pass up on his generous offer.

It seems Haughey isn't too popular on the doorsteps these days.

★ AN ELECTION candidate in Clare, Bridin Twist, has landed in hot water with the shopworkers union MANDATE.

They say she passed a Dunnes Stores picket during last year's strike, she denies this.

Her party seems a little confused. They issued a statement saying Twist had passed the picket when she dropped a worker off at the door of Dunnes Stores in Ennis.

The next day they retracted the statement. And what party does Bridin Twist belong to? Labour!

It's about more than votes...

THE Socialist Workers Party is aiming to win votes—but it wants much more.

It wants to build an organised network in the working class that is ready for the major battles ahead.

A number of people have joined the party during the election campaign. Eileen from the Dolphin House flats explained why she got involved.

"No one should have to live under the conditions that we have to put up with. I want to be in a party that fights back and that is what the SWP is

known for".

Des, a musician from Donnycarney in Dublin, joined after canvassing for the SWP in the area.

"I didn't think a lot about politics before but seeing the anger on the doorsteps has convinced me to get involved".

Network

Throughout the election campaign hundreds of copies of the election issue of *Socialist Worker* have been sold. Marnie Holborow, the director of elections in Dublin North Central explained "We hope to have a network

of nearly 200 people taking the paper on a regular basis in this constituency after the election.

"One of the complaints you often hear on the doorstep is that you only see politicians at elections times.

"The SWP is different. We will be around the week after the election with the paper encouraging people to get involved in the struggles ahead."

Join us now!

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

If you want to join *Socialist Worker*, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

Name

Address.....

Phone.....

news & reports— politics; the unions
 send in your reports: telephone (01) 872 2682, fax: (01) 872 3838

Irish Life

Bitter lesson for workers

AS WE GO to press the 17 week long lock-out at Irish Life may be coming to a close. The results of binding arbitration which members of MSF voted to go into a number of weeks ago have just come back from the Employer Labour Conference.

60 SIPTU members have so far rejected binding arbitration but may decide to go back in with their colleagues.

The ELC deal is substantially the same as that which was rejected overwhelmingly by the workforce at the start of the dispute.

As news of the ELC findings emerged there was huge bitterness among the workforce who had been led to believe by union officials and ICTU negotiator at the ELC, Kevin Duffy, that certain minimum demands would be defended in any deal that was struck.

Defended

"We were told there would be no independent chairman at the ELC and there was. We were told that we would get a substantial improvement on the original LRC proposals and we didn't. We were lied to by people who are supposed to be on our side," said one of the locked out workers.

Workers at Irish Life have learnt a bitter lesson about the role of trade union officials and the ICTU. Rather than look at ways of escalating disputes quickly and building solidarity the union bu-

reaucacy are more concerned with ending strikes regardless of the costs to the workers.

When staff finally return to work the key is to establish a strong elected joint shop stewards committee including reps from both unions. Unity and strong shopfloor organisation will be crucial to fend off further attacks from management who will seek to exploit any division. But it will also be vital to ensure that in future members tell officials what to do rather than the other way around.

All the workers on the picket line point to the change of attitudes they have undergone during the dispute and the solidarity that has built up over the 17 weeks on the picket line. The key is to build on this for the future.

The dispute in Irish Life also shows the reality behind the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' economy. Irish Life was privatised by the Fianna Fail led government in 1991. At the time workers were promised their jobs and conditions were safe. Since then profits and directors salaries have rocketed while workers have faced attack after attack.

The company's contempt for workers on the picket line shows

what the rich in this country are really like. The company's Directors gave themselves a 21% pay rise and were recently flown to New York for a board meeting at a cost of thousands of pounds, where they were wined and dined in the best hotels while the workforce fought for their livelihoods on the picket line.

The 'boom' in the Irish economy is one enjoyed only by the rich at the expense of the majority of ordinary workers.

What is needed is for rank and file members of the unions to get organised and force union leaders to start fighting instead of getting into cosy partnership deals with the bosses.

Building a socialist organisation throughout the working class movement will be the key to ensuring that this starts to happen and that the struggle of the Irish Life workers was not in vain.

SIPTU

Carolann Duggan runs for vice-president

The Waterford factory worker, Carolann Duggan, has decided to run for Vice-President of SIPTU. Carolann rocked the union bureaucracy when she won 42% of the vote in the election for president of Ireland's largest union last April.

The result was a huge victory for worker's democracy. It showed a massive dissatisfaction with the way the union is being run.

Disatisfaction

An ordinary worker, and a member of the Socialist Workers Party had pitted herself against SIPTU's then Vice-President, Jimmy Somers, and managed to get almost 38,000 votes. But Carolann Duggan says despite her huge vote none of the issues she raised have been addressed.

"SIPTU is still not mobilising over the minimum wage, union recognition or the Industrial Relations Act. The union has no intention of addressing the huge



salaries that are being paid out to full time union executives. Those salaries are not even up for discussion. Like many workers I'm sick of the rot within the union, that's why I've put myself forward again."

Once again Carolann Duggan is the only rank and file member who is standing for the position. The three other people who have said they're running, Des Geraghty, Noirin Greene, and George Hunter are all full-time union officials.

"I'm the only worker who's in there fighting for the interests of ordinary members and against

the union bureaucracy. All the other candidates for the vice-presidency are part of the union machine."

Carolann Duggan is seeking a nomination from SIPTU's Waterford branch on June 4th. Even at this early stage in the campaign she knows she's got a fight on her hands.

She says the right-wing in the union have mobilised and they're determined to get one of their own in.

"The official union machine was so shocked and angry when 42% of the voters turned against them the last time round. This time they are going all out to try and stop me."

They are really trying to smother my campaign."

But Carolann is confident the shop stewards and other rank and file members throughout the country who backed her presidency campaign will support her again.

Carolann Duggan needs the support of rank and file SIPTU workers.

If you can distribute information in your workplace or help with her campaign Contact Carolann at (051)70426 or ring Dublin 8722682.

Irish Sugar Strike ends in victory

THE 49 DAY strike at the Carlow Sugar factory has ended in victory for the workers.

The dispute was part of a national issue between SIPTU and Greencore. It arose from the failure of the company to offer a proper deal to workers on a new grading structure.

After the ICTU had sanctioned an all-out at the 200 strong Carlow plant, the company - which has been making massive profits since privatisation-gave into most of the demands.

Taking into account the grading, the workers were looking for a 26% pay rise. They got, on average, a 17% rise. Greencore had originally offered around 5%.

CPSU

Conference shows solidarity and starts campaign

THE CIVIL and Public Service Union conference showed that the spirit of solidarity is alive and well.

Hundreds of delegates gave a standing ovation to two of the Montupet strikers from Belfast.

A motion from Telecom No 1 Branch was passed, urging collections in every branch of the 12,000 strong clerical union. Socialist Worker supporters and Telecom members organised a bucket collection at the conference which raised over £560.

Solidarity

This mood of solidarity was matched by one of anger against attempts by union leaders to sell out the members.

Low paid civil servants have waited years for a decent pay deal. When the outgoing General Secretary, John O'Dowd, took over ten years ago he launched a low pay campaign.

That campaign has now been diverted into negotiations on grade

restructuring, which would mean small increases in return for increased flexibility.

A dispute last year was called off by the union's Executive Committee on the basis of a deal that was later rejected. CPSU members are awaiting a new deal under arbitration. The conference demanded a better pay deal, urged resistance to cuts in Telecom and

opposed motions which sought to curtail free speech within the CPSU.

Other motions passed included: ■ An Emergency Motion opposing the Supreme Court judgement against equality measures for disabled workers;

■ A condemnation of the way in which Partnership 2000 was railroaded through with little time

for debate;

■ Demands for the right to retire at 55 and for a national minimum wage. The election to the Executive Committee showed a shift to candidates who have opposed the sell-outs of the leadership. But this will need to be matched by a move to the type of militancy more recently displayed by nurses and paramedics.

Belfast Royal Victoria Hospital

Management at Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital are trying to force workers, visitors and patients to pay for the 'privilege' of parking their cars in the hospital grounds.

They plan to charge 90p for a four-hour stay, and three pounds for up to twelve hours. They want to charge staff £178 a year for full-time car parking facilities.

But workers have reacted with fury to the plan. Hundreds of staff attended a union-organised meeting and rejected the scheme.

Rejected

A union organiser said their anger was "unprecedented".

"We see this charge as a pay cut", Tony Carlin told the Irish News. "We also think it is immoral to charge the sick and their families to visit a hospital - many of whom

may be on benefit and unable to afford the expense."

The hospital got a private company to build their new two-storey car park.

They have the cheek to say that staff will actually benefit from the scheme because they will have "upgraded" parking facilities. The new car park is a ten minute uphill walk away from the hospital. Staff say it will be a daunting walk for patients and workers on dark winter nights. So much for free healthcare.

MANDATE

THE TRADE UNION MANDATE has called for a referendum on Sunday trading. According to the union a referendum to change the constitution is needed because the government says at the moment it can't legislate to control the situation without effecting the opening hours of smaller shops as well.

Maurice Sheehan, of MANDATE, says since the larger stores started opening on Sundays there has been a marked deterioration in pay and conditions for all workers, including those who don't work on Sundays. It costs the stores more to open seven days a week so they make up for it by cutting pay. He says Ireland has the highest ratio of part-time and casual employment in the sector in Europe, and it's the only country, apart from Sweden, that hasn't introduced laws to control the situation.

Any attempt to regulate Sunday trading, including a referendum, is to be welcomed and supported. But, after a referendum, what sort

of legislation would the government introduce? It is highly unlikely any government would introduce the sort of legislation workers would like to see. As Maurice Sheehan says: "The politicians have let the major multiples, which is really a few people in a boardroom, run riot on Sunday trading. The department of Employment and Enterprise doesn't want to do anything about it."

The reason for this is clear. People like Ben Dunne have paid hundreds and thousands of pounds to political parties and individual politicians. Those politicians naturally want to keep their friends happy and the money rolling in.

But she says the union failed to support its members when they went on strike over Sunday trading last year.

"MANDATE let us down. They gave Dunnes management three months notice of strike action. But when it came to balloting the girls about whether to stay out or go back. We only got 24 hours notice. I found out about the meeting in the teletext. Lots of people didn't hear about the meeting at all and some of the staff there didn't know exactly what they were voting for."

Instead of turning to politicians MANDATE should look to its own members. The recent strike at Dunnes Stores, which had massive support from the general public and other shop-workers, shows the way forward. The issues of Sunday trading and low pay and conditions was at its heart.

As well as calling for a referendum and decent legislation MANDATE should concentrate on building the union and on mobilising workers against Sunday trading and poor conditions.

Mary, a Dunnes worker, says she supports any move to control Sunday trading.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

Inside:

The socialist alternative

-Pages 6 & 7

Will Blair make any peace moves?

-PAGE FIVE

Montupet: Facing jail for going on strike

THE six-week old strike at Montupet car components factory in Dunmurray, outside Belfast, is reaching a crucial stage. The strikers urgently need support from other trade unionists.

Five of the Montupet strikers face jail sentences under the Tory anti-union laws for taking part in the 24-hour pickets at the plant gates.

But at a mass picket on Friday 23 May the strikers showed their determination not to be beaten back to work.

"We're prepared to go to jail if it comes to that," one of the five told the crowd of 200 strikers and supporters. "but we need to know that you're behind us."

The Montupet strike is the most significant industrial battle in Northern Ireland for years.

Mixed

"We're not just fighting for our own jobs, we're fighting for everyone here."

Montupet is a French multi-national with a mixed workforce of Catho-

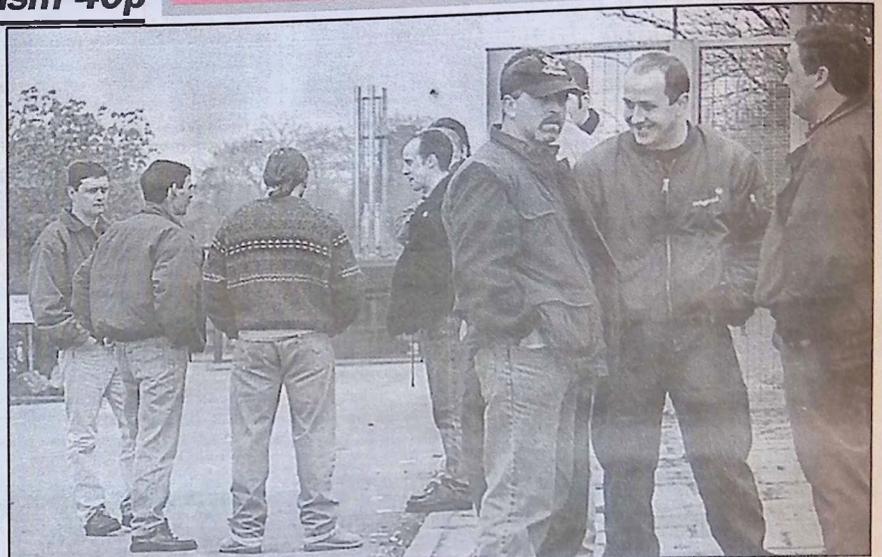
lics and Protestants.

Like dozens of similar companies in the North, they set up with massive grants from the Industrial Development Board to take advantage of low wages.

Promised

Montupet promised to create around 1000 jobs but after seven years employment is still at around 400.

Meanwhile the company has raked in millions in profit. Last year they made over £4.5 million.



BUILD THE SUPPORT!

Bosses try to intimidate the strikers

THE STRIKE began on 13 April after months of intimidation and delays over the annual pay rise.

"They were never satisfied," a striker told *Socialist Worker*, "Every week it was continual pressure, always on your backs to produce more."

"They cut the shifts from three to two but we were still expected to produce the same amount of heads as before."

But from the beginning Montupet management has raised the stakes, sacking 20 of the most prominent union activists, serving injunctions on 28 people preventing them from coming near the picket line or even talking to other workers about the strike.

The company has mounted a massive scab operation, bringing workers from their factories in France and phoning strikers and their families to try to get them back.

Each day the scabs are bussed in with police escorts through the picket line.

Montupet management have employed public relations experts to spread stories in the press that the plant is back to full production.

"That's just nonsense," says Jeff McClay, the sacked AEEU convenor in the plant. "Before the strike the company had streamlined production that much that men were afraid to even take a day off because they would be missed."

"There's no way that they have production up and running. Anyone who comes down to the picket line can see just how many scabs are going in. There's nowhere near the numbers for a full shift."

Invested

Montupet has invested heavily in new machinery in recent months. Their real agenda in this strike is to destroy union organisation in the factory so that they can change shift patterns and working conditions whenever it suits them. Montupet has refused all offers to negotiate with the strikers.

Now the manager, Georges Senninger, has instructed lawyers to act on the injunctions and move to jail the strikers.

"How can anyone say that this is fair," said Jeff McClay. "These men are just standing up for their rights and now they're threatened with jail."

"We are not criminals or hoodligans. We're hard working men who only want our rights."

The response from the workers' own union, the AEEU, has been nothing short of disgraceful. It has walked away from the strikers and even tried to organise scabs to go through the picket line. In the middle of the strike the AEEU officials signed a wage deal with the company behind the backs of the strikers. The strikers have also heard that AEEU officials have been telling shop stewards in places like Shorts and Harland and Woolf, that the strike is being manipulated by "republicans" and not to support it.

"It's an absolute disgrace," said one striker. "One of the best things about this strike is that there's no sectarian feeling on the picket line. We got that stuff from the management, trying to set us against each other. You don't expect your own union to do it as well."

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ORGANISE THE SOLIDARITY

"This strike has brought us all together. I've been in houses during this strike that I never thought I'd ever be in," said a striker. "And people are learning all the time. I've grown up my whole life seeing the police and the courts used against ordinary people."

"Now they're being used in the same way against us and it doesn't matter what area you are from, it's because you're standing up for yourself and people are beginning to see that now."

The strikers have now begun to organise mass rallies each week, inviting other trade unionists to the picket line to support the strike.

At the first rally on 16 May, they were joined by delegations of busworkers from Dublin, hospital workers from Lisburn, workers from Alexanders in Belfast, ATGWU and MSF members and dozens of other supporters in a marvellous display of solidarity.

It is important that such mass displays of support are escalated, especially if any of the strikers are jailed. The strikers have been over-

whelmed by the support from workplaces around Ireland and Britain.

Delegations of strikers have visited workplaces in Derry, Waterford, Dublin, Liverpool and Wales. Among the workplaces and unions that have supported the strikers are the following:

United Technologies (Derry), Fruit of the Loom (Derry), Waterford Glass, Dublin busworkers, Team Aer Lingus, National Union of Journalists (NI) AC Delco, Tower Colliery, Wales, Shorts Dunmurray. The SWP branch in Drimnagh, Dublin, collected £180 for the strikers.

SWP members also arranged for Montupet workers to address the CPSU annual conference in Kildare.

Over £560 was collected and the union has agreed to organise an official collection throughout the union.

Send donations and messages of support to Montupet Strikers and Families Support Group c/o 41 Queens Road, Parkhall, Co. Antrim BT41 1AL. To request speakers to address your union meeting phone (01232) 243 920.

Donations can be lodged directly at Ulster Bank, Sort Code 98 05 90 Account No 83204031.