

Socialist Worker

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HAUGHEY AND DUNNE: Don't let them away with another cover-up

As the politicians head to the polls, another cover up is being organised at the McCracken Tribunal.

Charles J Haughey, the former Fianna Fail leader who allegedly received £1.3 million from Ben Dunne, has been allowed to treat the whole proceedings with contempt.

Haughey receives a huge state pension and is still a member of the Council of State which advises Mary Robinson. But no one has told him that his privileges will end if he does not turn up as a witness.

Appear

Every day hundreds of working people appear before the courts. Part of the evidence used against them include verbal statements supposedly made to the Gardai.

But Haughey was able to stop written notes of a conversation between him and Dunne's solicitor Noel Smyth being used at the

Tribunal.

Throughout the whole proceedings, Ben Dunne argued that there was no trace of corruption about his huge donations to Haughey and Fine Gael. He even claimed that his family were known for their 'generous streak'.

Yet none of the 41 barristers who were present at the Tribunal asked him why his alleged generosity was never witnessed by his own workers who earn as little as £3 an hour.

These barristers earn 67 times the average industrial wage per hour. But one of them anonymously told the *Irish Times* that their instructions were to stay silent in order not to delay the tribunal.

The establishment want to close the can of worms that has been opened on corruption. This is why they are preparing a cover-up.



Bruton has been caught out lying

Bruton is a liar

JOHN BRUTON IS A LIAR. He has been found out because of the contradictory statements made at the McCracken Tribunal and the Beef Tribunal.

In 1992 Bruton said that he was not made aware of the contributions given by big business backers of Fine Gael. This was supposed to be the mechanism that stopped the rich directly buying influence.

But now, in 1997, Bruton has not only admitted knowing how much Dunne gave Fine Gael: he even said that he went around to collect the cheque.

Fine Gael used to claim that corruption only happened in Fianna Fail. But one of their principal fundraisers was Michael Lowry. This tax evader set up the meetings between Dunne and Bruton and Dukes. It only shows that all right wing parties are run in the interests of big business.

The tip of an iceberg

The Dunes scandal has given a glimpse of how Ireland's Golden Circle operates. But there are others:

■ **Planning Permission:** Recent newspaper reports indicate that three Fianna Fail TDs and some Fine Gael Councillors have been named for proposing the re-zoning of land from which they benefitted.

Planning decisions can sometimes be appealed to An Bord Pleanála.

But this board is open to political appointees.

In 1981 and 1982, Ray Burke for example appointed five new members to the appeal board as he was about to leave office. After the board

was re-constituted by Dick Spring, Haughey led FF out of the Dail amidst 'unruly scenes'.

■ **Beef:** The links between Fianna Fail and the beef barons have been extremely close. Goodman donated over £100,000 to the party and then got £100 million in grants from the Irish state.

Fraud

Even after fraud was discovered in his companies, no costs were imposed to pay for the

huge fines imposed by the EU.

The Tribunal to investigate the beef scandal turned out to be a whitewash. Afterwards the presiding judge, Liam Hamilton, was promoted to head of the Supreme Court.

■ **Mobile Phones:** The contract for the second national mobile phone network was awarded to a relatively small company, ESAT Digiphone.

Its founder, Denis O'Brien, gave donations to the Fine Gael Party.

The contract was awarded by one Michael Lowry. At one stage, it even looked like ESAT might be allowed to use the masts on Garda stations to establish their network.

What we think The price of parternership

MANY WORKERS have been shocked by the revelations at the McCracken Tribunal and want to do something.

If the ICTU or the leaders of SIPTU had called their members out on protest there would have been a huge response.

When Italy was rocked by a bribes scandal two years ago, the unions called strikes and protest marches.

One result was that leading

politicians were given jail sentences.

Silence

But in Ireland, the silence of the leaders of the labour movement has been deafening.

Not even a statement of protest has been issued. At the 1,000 strong May Day march in Dublin, not a word was mentioned about the corruption scandal.

The union leaders' policy of turning a blind eye is one promoted by the Labour Party. Dick Spring even pretended that there was no discrepancy between Bruton's contradictory statements about fund raising for Fine Gael.

This is the real price of social partnership. Not only has Partnership 2000 brought low wages but it has also produced silence from the labour movement on the greatest scandal in this state.

Spring's lame duck

WATERWORLD, Dick Spring's pet project in Tralee, lost £35,000 in the year ending April 1996.

Maybe the name brought bad luck: Waterworld was also the title of Kevin Costner's big budget film that flopped at the box office.

Spring received £50,000 from Ben Dunne for the Tralee venture.

The project was also funded by the food conglomerate, Kerry Group.

Tralee Waterworld Plc has 1,000 private shareholders, including Dick Spring. But this private company has benefitted from State grants of £3.18 million.



But you won't hear Waterworld's investors complaining about taxpayer's money being used to prop up a lame duck!

State defrauds pensioners

Last year the so-called 'scandal' of social welfare fraud was headline news.

But a scandal that has so far received much less attention shows the other side of the story.

Hundreds of pensioners have been denied money because they were misled about their entitlements.

Called

The Ombudsman, Kevin Murphy, has called on the state to pay arrears to a possible 1,000 people who made late claims through

no fault of their own.

The amounts due could run to thousands of pounds in some cases.

For years pensioners who claimed late were told they could only be given up to six months of arrears.

Thousands face insecurity

Thousands of workers in Ireland face insecurity in old age because their employers do not provide pension schemes.

More than half the workforce are not in company pension schemes, according to the Irish Pensions Board. Less than ten percent of part-time workers are covered. There are 152,400 part-time workers, 72 percent of whom are women.

The numbers entitled to pensions will drop even further because the proportion of part-time workers is growing and more companies are contracting out work.

Of course, none of this will affect company executives who will continue to receive huge 'golden handshakes' when they retire.

Up to 1993 the period was only three months.

The new Social Welfare Bill increases the arrears allowed for late claimants to one year.

But the Ombudsman says that Social Welfare Ministers have always had discretion to pay the full arrears in such cases.

Late claimants were never told about this.

So while the current Minister, Proinsias de Rossa, complains of welfare fraud; his department has effectively defrauded hundreds of people out of their entitlements.

what we think

Neither Bruton or Ahern: Vote socialist and organise to fight

DICK SPRING claims that the choice in this election is between a centre-left or a centre-right government.

But the differences between the Rainbow Coalition and the Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrat alliance could be measured by the width of a cigarette paper.

Two key issues should dominate this election. One is the scandal of corruption and bribery.

For the past year, the political parties have demanded more law and order. Instead of creating decent jobs, they all want more jails. But their hypocrisy is exposed when they do nothing about

the TDs who take bribes and avoid tax.

The message from both Ahern and Bruton is simple: If you are poor and break the law there is a prison place waiting for you.

If you are in the Golden Circle and organise bribes, there is a tribunal which can organise the cover up.

The second issue is the Celtic Tiger economy. All parties in the Dail claim that their policies helped to create the miracle Irish

economy. Yet the reality is that politicians are no more responsible for the booms than they are for the recessions.

Capitalism is a system that is out of the control of individuals states or companies. It is like a roller coaster where the success stories of today become the failures of tomorrow.

Ten years ago South Korea was the miracle economy of South East Asia — today it torn by strife and recession.

Celtic Tiger has coincided with a growing gap between the social classes in Ireland. While the rich invest their new found wealth in inflated property prices, 15% of the Irish population live in such abject poverty they cannot afford a second pair of shoes.

Instead of falling for the fake choice of a government lead by Bruton or Ahern, it is time to look for a real alternative.

Issue

The only important issue is who makes the gains from any temporary growth. Here there is a consensus in Dail Eireann to back the wage restraint contained in Partnership 2,000. All of the main parties argue there will be a 'trickle down effect' from the huge profits now being made.

In reality, it is myth. As we detail on page 5, the

Build a real alternative

The Socialist Workers Party has entered this election to give a voice to workers who are looking for an alternative to the sell-outs of the Labour Party.

We want to win as many votes as possible but our candidates have stressed that real change can only come when workers mobilise to take action themselves. A vote for the Socialist Workers Party and other socialists will be a signal that there is growing opposition to the system that breeds corruption and poverty.

Before

In all cases, we also urge a vote for the left before the naked right wing policies of the PDs, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail. Even before the election

was called the *Sunday Business Post* revealed that new confrontations are ahead. It claims that 'the government is to introduce extensive cuts in public spending' if it is returned. Fianna Fail and the PDs will do the same.

Over the last few weeks, the Irish Central Bank has shelled out £900 million attempting to shore up the Irish punt against speculators who are playing the currency markets.

Nothing could more graphically show the madness of the system we live under.

While the major parties agree on more sacrifices from workers, they unite in bowing to the money merchants.

We need to build a serious socialist opposition and the election will mean that thousands will get a chance to hear a different message.

But whoever wins the elections, we should remember that the big battles lie ahead.

That is why we say: **Vote socialist —but organise to fight.**

Ryanair: £10 million bonus for director £3 an hour for staff

THE PARTY of the Ryanair generation—this is how Mary Harney likes to describes the Progressive Democrats.

So why then did Harney and the other Dail parties have so little to say about the latest results from the company.

Three directors of Ryanair shared out a bonus of £24 million over the last three years. The chief executive, Michael O Leary got a staggering £10 million last year alone.



Michael O'Leary: received £17 million wage.

Gained

The one group who have gained nothing from the profits are the actually workers who created them.

Pay at Ryanair starts at £3.00 an hour and there is no extra pay for working shifts or for Sunday or Bank holiday work. Unions are banned and a climate of fear dominates.

As the SIPTU negotiator at Dublin Airport, Paul O Sullivan, put it, "Ryanair pleaded the poor mouth but the fat cats at the top creamed off money that could have been used to pay the workforce a decent

Labour has sold out

In 1992, thousands looked to the Labour Party to provide that alternative.

Spring had shifted to the left in his rhetoric and promised that Labour would destroy the Golden Circle that linked the top politicians to big business.

In office, Labour has betrayed the hopes of its supporters and propped up the very politicians who gained from the bribes and corruption.

As Minister for Finance Ruairi Quinn responded to the demands

of the wealthy for ever more tax concessions grants. Today over £1 billion is handed out in tax break and grants to the employers.

But for those who voted Labour into office there has been a different message.

When nurses pressed for higher pay rises, Labour told them there was no money in the kitty. When semi-state workers in CIE and Aer Lingus

tried to defend their conditions, Labour told them they had to be more efficient and flexible.

The Labour Party rests on the votes of workers but it seeks to manage capitalism. It pretends it can serve two masters — the god of profit and the cause of workers.

But if it is not able to bring real gains for workers when Irish capitalism is at its most successful, then the whole idea of social partnership is a fake.

UDA launch hate campaign

THE UDA magazine Warrior has called for a massive escalation of sectarian violence this summer.

It says, "There is for unionists ultimately one method of preventing this republicanism of Ulster...the use of the only weapon that has proved successful in politics and history...and that is the use of naked raw violence".

But the sectarian thugs of the UDA are out of step with the thinking of ordinary Protestants, most of whom reject such bigotry.

In the recent General Election the UDA's political wing, the Ulster Democratic Party did not even stand candidates because it was so humili-

ated by its miserable performance in last year's forum elections. Most Protestants do not want confrontation on the parades issue.

Confrontation

A survey conducted by Ulster Marketing Surveys in February found that 62 percent of Protestants want a compromise on parades.

Despite taking out advertisements in the Belfast Newsletter, Joel Patton of Spirit of Drumcree could only get 400 Orangemen to attend a mass meeting in Co Antrim.

And most Protestants oppose the Loyalist protest outside the Catholic church at Harryville in



BREAK THE GOLDEN CIRCLE!

Vote No 1 Socialist Workers Party

£10,000

Appeal

THANKS TO OUR readers who contributed £1,700- to the SW appeal this fortnight. This brings the total to £8115

All the bosses parties now have a budget of over a million pounds for the election. The Socialist Workers Party is not funded by big business, but purely from the support of working class peoples. Our target is £10,000 to cover the cost of a new printer and of standing four candidates in the general election.

Help spread the ideas of socialism by giving to the appeal this fortnight. 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

Montupet Strike:

A fight for every worker in Northern Ireland

by Colm Bryce

THE FOUR week old strike at Montupet car components factory in Dunmurray, outside Belfast, is turning into one of the most important industrial battles of recent years.

The management at the French-owned plant are going all out to smash the strike and break union organisation.

The Montupet management, who have taken millions in Industrial Development Board grants, have thrown the full weight of the Tory anti-union laws at the strikers.

They have sacked 20 union activists, intimidated their families and brought in 50 scabs from France to break the strike.

Around 280 production workers at the factory walked out on unofficial strike on 13 April for a decent wage rise and union rights on the shopfloor. The workers had asked for a 4.5 percent pay rise.

A similar rise last year had been cancelled out when a four-day week was imposed.

The management offered 2.5 percent and when this was rejected reduced the offer to 1.4 percent. Montupet made a profit of £4.5 million last year.

A record of intimidation

WORKERS have put up with months of intimidation. Union activists have been victimised and a merit pay scheme introduced to divide the workforce.

"It got so bad that managers were following people to the toilet to make sure they didn't take too long," said a shop steward at the plant.

The final straw came when two workers were suspended for refusing to work on an unsafe machine and were prevented from speaking to their shop steward.

Speaking

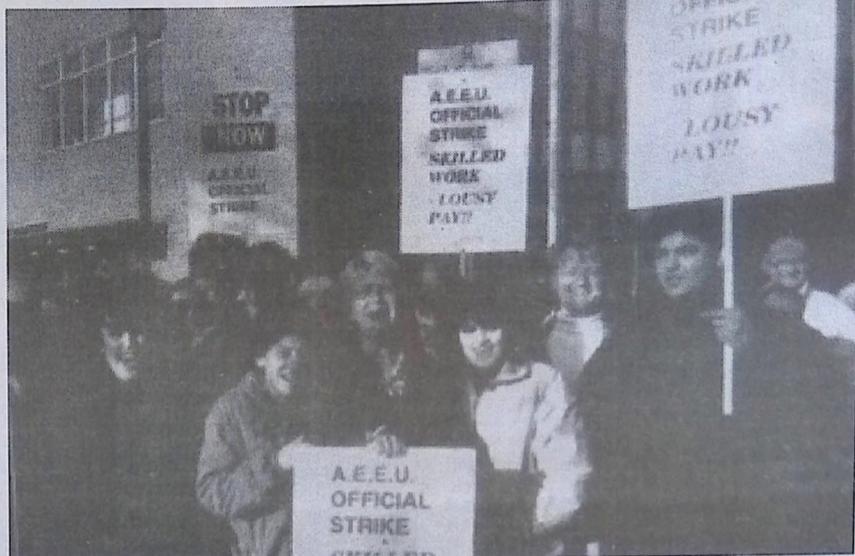
One of the strike leaders told *Socialist Worker*, "I would have been one of the more moderate people in the union, but when they suspended the two boys that was it. You have to draw the line somewhere. We walked outside to have a union meeting and everyone voted to go out indefinitely."

Since the strike began it has become clear that management's agenda is to break union organisation in the plant. They have recently invested over £140 million in new machinery and want to introduce 12 hour shifts and change working conditions at will.

Catholic and Protestant workers united to fight

IF MONTUPET are allowed to get away with these union-busting tactics it will give a green light to every ruthless boss in Northern Ireland. That's why the Montupet strikers need the support of every worker and trade unionist.

At a time when politicians in the North are advocating a low pay paradise for the multinationals and promoting sectarian divisions among workers, the Montupet strikers are a magnificent example of Catholic and Protestant workers standing together. One worker told *Socialist*



The AEEU organises thousands of workers who could be a base for building solidarity for the Montupet strikers, but it has refused to support the action.

ist Worker, "Even a couple of weeks ago, you would hardly know anyone on the other lines in the factory, and you'd be wary, wondering who was a Catholic and who was a Protestant. Now it's brilliant, we're all really close. It was the managers who

tried to divide us, playing us off against each other."

Strikers

One of the victimised strikers said, "I'm a Protestant and I'm proud that we're united here."

"The union official told one of our boys that this was all being stirred up by republicans from West Belfast."

"He's wrong. This company wants to walk over us

and we have to stick together to beat them. It's as simple as that."

"And it's not just us. Everyone in Northern Ireland and people on the mainland, like the Liverpool dockers, is in the same position."

"People have had enough. And I think that if we win it will be an example to them all, that we could even be the spark that leads to a bigger explosion."

Tory laws used by multi-nationals

ON APRIL 30 shop stewards at Montupet went to the Labour Relations Agency hoping to negotiate a settlement.

But while they were making their case, the news was phoned through that Montupet had issued writs on 26 strike leaders.

The strikers appeared at the High Court on 2 May and were advised, disastrously, by their barrister to accept the terms of the injunctions even before the case went to trial.

Picket

This means that they are prevented from going to the picket line or even talking to other workers about the strike.

"All the writs talked about intimidation on the picket line," said one striker. "But there were all these contradictions in their statements. We didn't even get a chance to challenge them."

But the writs have made many of the strikers more determined. At a meeting on the picket line that day, addressed by a visiting Liverpool dockers, the message was clear. The other strikers now had to take a leading role in the strike.

"This has to make us more determined to win and to go back in there with everyone reinstated."

As *Socialist Worker* went to press, there were reports of an offer being made. But one shop steward dismissed it: "It's rubbish. There's been no offer. There's still 250 men outside this gate and we'll be staying here until everyone is reinstated."

Why won't the AEEU back this strike?

The AEEU is one of the strongest unions in the Belfast area. But it has abandoned the Montupet strikers because of a fear of the anti-union laws.

"They said our strike was illegal and that they would be fined for supporting us," a striker said, "but what did we pay all our union dues for? Twenty thousand pounds a year went out of that factory in union dues, that's all they're interested in."

The plant convenor was prevented from using the phone at the union office to raise support. A delegation of strikers who went down to protest were barred from the building.

"Our union official came down here and told us to go back into work and rebalot for strike action. But we'd done that already and the company got their

lawyers to challenge it on a technicality. "Meantime they were building up stockpiles to ride out a strike. If we went back in we'd be cutting our own throats."

Organised

In the second week of the strike, AEEU National Officer, Peter Williamson, organised and led a group of scabs through the workers' picket line.

"We couldn't believe it. Using our own union building, that we paid for, to organise scabs and then taking them through our picket line," said the AEEU convenor at

the plant.

The AEEU are giving in to Thatcherism at a time when millions of working class people are rejecting the free-market policies of the Tories.

Blair has given no commitment to remove the Tories anti-union laws which are being used against the Montupet strikers.

The strikers are now in the same position as the Liverpool dockers, who have been abandoned by their union, the TGWU. The dockers have only been able to stay out for 19 months through collections in workplaces around the country.

The Montupet workers need to get the same sort of support to keep their struggle going.

Escalate the action to win

THE STRIKERS have begun to tap into widespread support, with hundreds of pounds coming in from other workplaces and from street collections.

It is now crucial that the Montupet strikers escalate the action to win this strike. Every striker and hundreds of other trade unionists need to be mobilised for regular mass pickets.

Hoping

The company is hoping that the workers will be isolated and intimidated back to work.

There are already re-

ports that some production is continuing inside the plant, with a handful of scabs helping managers to run lines and some production being moved out at night.

Scabs

If more scabs are brought in this will be a turn for the worse for the strike.

But the company is still under enormous pressure.

In the last week, the strike committee has been expanded and regular mass meetings are planned. This is a great step forward.

Now the strikers should show that they have wide-

spread support by calling a mass demonstration to the factory.

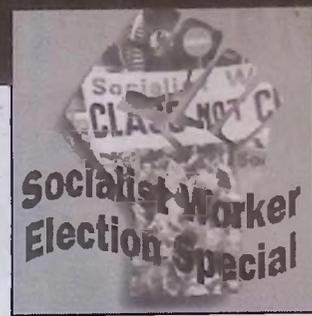
They should issue an open appeal to other trade unionists to join them on a mass picket.

In the meantime every supporter of the Montupet strikers should take collections and visit the picket line (beside Derraghly train station).

A victory for the Montupet workers would be a victory for us all.

Send donations and messages of support to Montupet Strike Committee, c/o 41 Queens Rd, Parkhall, Co. Antrim BT41 1AL

The CELTIC TIGER: Roaring for the rich



THE ECONOMIC and Social Research Institute has issued a report that claims that the Irish economy will boom for the next ten years. It seeks to convey a 'feelgood factor' for politicians who have found themselves under pressure from the Dunnes scandal. EIMEAR MALONEY takes issue with the heady optimism.

Last month four directors at Irish Life saw fit to raise their salaries by 17%. They now get more than £260,000 each.

But for much of the staff at Irish Life it is a very different story. They have been locked out for more than three months, forced to survive on the meagre £30 a week strike pay from their union, MSF.

It's a clear case of one rule for the bosses and another for the workers, and its happening in every sector of the Irish economy.

The top men in AIB and Bank of Ireland are millionaires. Last year AIB alone made record profits of £429 million.

But the idea that a job in the bank is a 'job for life', a secure 'respectable' middle-class one, has gone out the window. Bank staff are now being hired on a temporary basis and on low wages. Many work for nine months, they're fired, then rehired for another nine months so that they'll never be able to claim the benefits and security that goes with full-time work.

Boom

All this is happening in the middle of an economic boom. The annual growth rate of 7% compares with an average of 2% across Europe. Output per person in Ireland is supposed to have overtaken that of Britain. But the only people who are benefiting is a section of the upper middle class.

Those with investments in the stock market saw returns of up to 23% last year alone. A recent article in the *Sunday Tribune* showed how 12 chief executives of some of Ireland's leading companies had become millionaires, thanks to the share options they hold and the surge in the stock market.

Executive salaries have also risen. In Dublin's Financial Services Centre around 250 executives are now on salaries of £250,000 a year. Again many of them will also have share options, company cars and numerous other perks.

As a section of the upper middle class rake in the money through profits and shares, they are investing in property. Because of this demand, property prices have gone through the roof in Dublin and elsewhere.

Yet wages have stayed low because they are pegged down under Partnership 2000. This leads to the situation where workers earnings bear no relation to property prices, making it virtually impossible for many people to buy a home.

People

In the 1960s, the Fianna Fail leader, Sean Lemass, used to say that 'a rising tide lifts all boats'.

An economic boom was supposed to produce a trickle down effect. But not any more. Despite the economic 'miracle' the government says it cannot afford to raise wages or spend on education, the health services, or social welfare.



The boom is leading to a huge growth in the hotel trade but thousands of workers are trapped in low paid jobs

And the Fianna Fail/Progressive Democrat opposition agrees.

If they cannot spend during a boom, it's frightening to think of the cuts that will be made when the bubble bursts.

The growth in the economy has failed to make a dent in unemployment, which still stands at 260,000.

For a real indication of the amount of unemployed add to that figure the 90,000

people who are on FAS courses.

The conference of Religious in Ireland estimates that more than a million people in Ireland are living in poverty.

A Combat Poverty survey finds the number of poor has actually grown in the past 10 years. For all these people, the roar of the Celtic tiger has not been heard.

There are several reasons for

the current boom. For the past number of years Ireland has been enjoying huge EU subsidies. These are due to be cut dramatically in 1999.

At 10% the rate of corporate tax is the lowest in Europe, it compares with 33% in Britain and 28% in Sweden.

Multi-nationals who are feeling an increasing pinch on their profits now seek out these tax advantages and this is why so many have come to Ireland. But

Ireland's low rate is due to expire in 2005.

Another reason for the growth of the economy is wage agreements, such as Partnership 2000.

Because of these agreements Ireland has been able to guarantee multinationals high levels of productivity from a low-wage workforce.

But history shows that the boom in the Celtic Tiger could be having another effect that the rich have not predicted:

Revival

It is leading to a revival of confidence of shop floor workers.

With new workers being hired, there is a feeling that we are more needed.

Above all the widening of the class divide is fuelling an anger and a desire to fight. As the production lines increase and profits soar, there is a feeling that industrial action by workers could work.

The boom could allow workers to bring all the bitterness that accumulated during the years of defeat to the surface.

That is certainly what happened in Ireland in the 1960s. Then a sudden growth in the economy after the depression of the 1950s led to a huge upsurge in workers militancy.

The growing signs of industrial unrest shows that this pattern is starting to re-emerge.

It shows that no matter who wins the election, the real fights are still ahead.

"It really annoys me knowing we're making all this money for them"

CLAIRE AND RACHEL could be the sort of people the politicians write political slogans about.

Aged 17 and 18 they are "the youth of today" and "the country's future". They are bright, lively and chatty and, naturally, they want the best that life can offer. But so far, life under the Celtic Tiger hasn't offered them that much.

Charges

The two left school last year, now they work as chambermaids in a city centre hotel which charges £160 per night per room. They make £3.25 an hour.

They work at break-neck speed to clean 15

rooms a day. Anyone who's ever worked as a chambermaid will know what a tough job it is. "Most of the rooms have double beds, and my back kills me with the weight of them," says Claire. "You are fit for nothing when you get home, your knees are in bits and your legs are covered in bruises."

The two often work through their breaks and say they're lucky to get out when they're supposed to, at 4.30. Any overtime they do is unpaid.

Respect

"Without us the hotel would go down the drain, but no one thinks of the crap we have to clean, we're looked down on and it really annoys me knowing we're making all this money for them."

Rachel and Claire

haven't heard about Ireland's economic miracle, and it's no wonder.

For them it doesn't exist. But their experience is shared by thousands of workers in the service industries where there are no unions.

The people who own and control the hotel industry are benefiting hugely from Ireland's economic boom.

The Doyle family, who own most of Dublin's fanciest hotels, are ranked amongst Ireland's wealthiest top ten, with a fortune of £150 million. But their fortunes are made from the sweat of workers like Claire and Rachel.

A manifesto for real change

IT IS TIME for real change. The Irish economy is booming but few rewards are returning to the workers. While the profits escalate, a quarter of the Irish workforce are living on poverty wages. Unemployment is still higher than it was at the start of the nineties.

Corruption is rife in Dail Eireann. Politicians who have taken bribes from supermarket magnates and beef barons are allowed to walk free. Prison, it seems, is only for the poor.

An anger is growing among working people. More workers want take action to improve their pay and conditions. It is time that a real socialist alternative was established in Ireland.

HYPOCRITES

THE POLITICIANS preach zero-tolerance for crime and demand more law and order. But not a single figure who has been implicated in the Dunnes scandal has been arrested.

Ben Dunne claims that he gave donations to politicians because his family has a "generous streak". The workers in his stores consider this a bitter joke. Many earn as little as £3.00 an hour while the part time workers, who comprise the vast majority of the staff, are denied pensions and holiday pay.

When big business makes grants to political parties it is clear that they are getting something in return.

How else can we explain the fact that Larry Goodman gave big donations to Fianna Fail in the 1980s and then received grants of £100 million in 198, while the Department of Agriculture turned a blind eye to the fraud in his factories?

The McCracken Tribunal, just like the Beef Tribunal before, will produce another cover up.

Expensive barristers who are paid by the public purse have allowed Dunne and the politicians to make outlandish claims without being questioned.

The Socialist Workers Party demands jail sentences for corrupt politicians and businessmen.

This in itself will not end the graft which is inseparable from capitalism.

BONANZA FOR THE RICH

Irish politicians rarely talk about the class divide.

They pretend that social class only matters when there is a House of Lords and posh accents.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The distribution of wealth is more unequal in Ireland than many other countries.

Working class men in Ireland have double the death rate of professional men. Our hospitals are based on a blatant class divide.

The rich get access to private hospitals with the help of tax subsidies while the poor queue for an inadequate service.

It is the same story in education. Only 6% of teenagers in the working class area of Ballyfermot in Dublin go to college, while in the leafy suburbs of Dublin 4 half will make it. Very few working class people get into the Royal College of Surgeons or King's Inns where barristers are trained.

Today the boom in the Irish economy is making the class divide even wider. Directors of companies regularly take home salaries of over £200,000 while others have to survive on wages of £2.50 an hour.

Houses prices have shot through the roof as the upper middle class buy property as an investment. Today many working people on an average

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY FIGHTS FOR:

- a Minimum wage of £5 an hour.
- A shorter working week and the right to retire at 55.
- Tax the rich: Cut PAYE.
- Substantial across the board wage increases for workers.

LABOUR'S BETRAYAL

In 1992, thousands of working people looked to the Labour Party to break the Golden Circle and to bring greater equality. But Labour's record has been one of abject betrayal.

In government, Labour has done nothing about the blatant corruption. It has supported the tax amnesty which allowed the rich to salt away their ill gotten gains. It even backed a scheme allowing wealthy investors to buy Irish passports while poor refugees are denied access to the country.

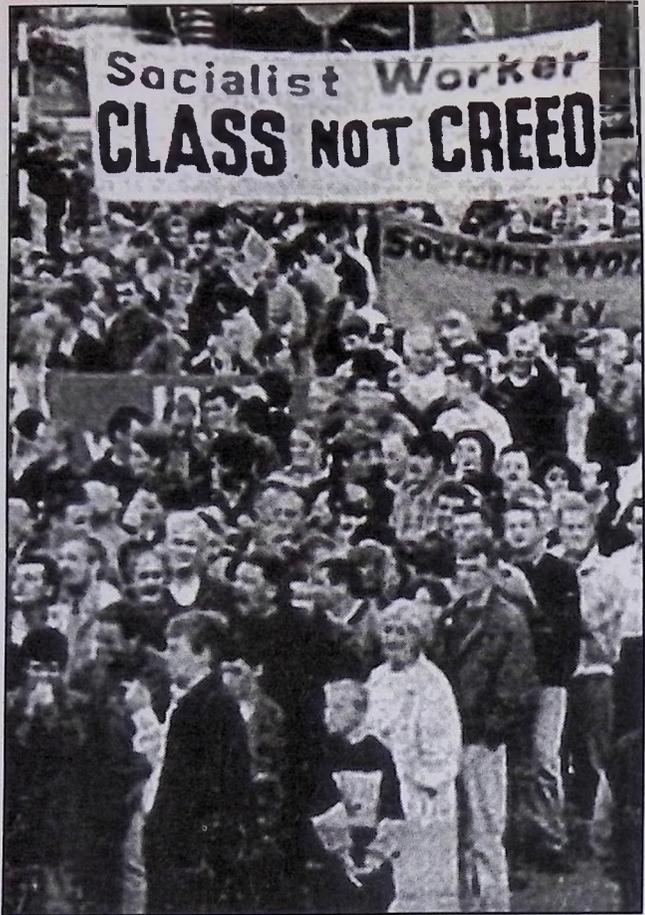
Traditionally Labour claimed that it could never have real influence until it won control of the Department of Finance. But Labour's first Minister for Finance, Ruairi Quinn, has bowed to most of the demands of the rich. Even the *Sunday Business Post* called his first budget a 'bourgeois budget'.



...the royal College of Surgeons or King's Inns where barristers are trained. Expensive barristers who are paid by the public purse have allowed Dunne and the politicians to make outlandish claims without being questioned.

mands jail sentences for corrupt politicians and businessmen. This in itself will not end the graft which is inseparable from capitalism. But it will throw key figures of the establishment onto the defensive.

Houses prices have shot through the roof as the upper middle class buy property as an investment. Today many working people on an average wage can no longer afford to buy their own home.



The SWP has been at the centre of the struggle for Workers unity in the North



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...ing about the blatant corruption. It has appeared the tax amnesty which allowed the rich to salt away their ill-gotten gains. It even backed a scheme allowing wealthy investors to buy Irish property while their investments are abroad.

Quinn has demanded that workers show pay restraint in order to get a miserable 1% cut in PAYE tax. But it is a different story for the wealthy. Tax on company profits has been reduced by 4% while the inheritance tax on farmers has been cut drastically. Yet none of these sectors have been asked to make sacrifices in return.

Labour betrays its supporters because it wants to manage capitalism rather than change it. The rich always claim that they need incentives to invest or that they have to reduce 'unit costs' because of competition. Labour goes along with them because it accepts the logic of the market.

The alternative to these betrayals is a party that bases itself on working class struggles and seeks fundamental change in the whole of society. That is what the Socialist Workers Party is about.

WHAT COULD BE DONE

The politicians always claim there is 'no alternative' to the existing consensus. But there are many things that a party determined to stand up to the rich might do:

- They could cut the £1 billion a year subsidy that is handed out to industrialists through grants and tax breaks. The whole of the health budget costs £2 billion. Even a small transfer of resources could alleviate the huge queues for treatment in our hospitals.

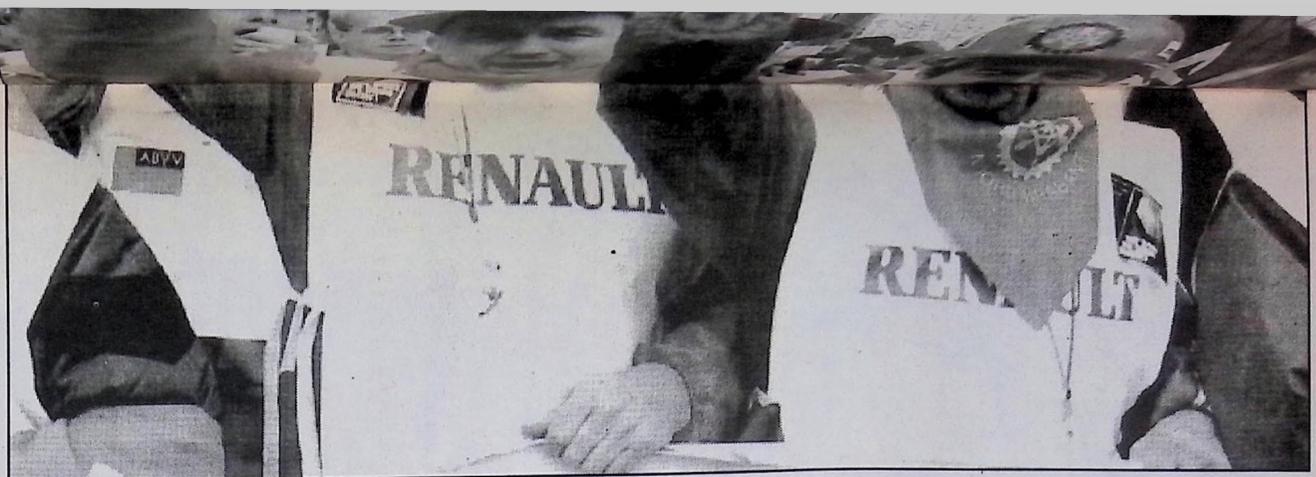
- They could provide creches for working mothers. This government has handed out £15 million to the Irish Racehorse Authority which could be put to better use. But they claim there is no money in the kitty to even think about making provision for childcare.

- They could end the crazy situation where money is given to big farmers to 'set aside' their land. Last year, Irish farmers got £722 million from the Irish state and the EU even though the amount of arable land declined.

- They could end the situation of local contributions to schools. This only happens because the Bishops insist that we have a 'voluntary school' system. We should have 100% funding of schools and democratic control instead of church control.

THE NORTH

The two years of peace in Northern Ireland has been squandered by the British government. John Major said openly 'I am a Unionist' and placed absurd pre-conditions on all-party talks. The root cause of the violence in Northern Ireland lies in a sectarian



WORKERS in Europe are fighting back. We should too.

state that was built on the oppression of nationalists. The continued cover-up by the British army over Bloody Sunday shows that this oppression has not gone away.

Socialists are opposed to the IRA going back to armed struggle. It is counter-productive and can only increase sectarian tensions between workers.

Equally we oppose the strategy of seeking a pan-nationalist alliance with Fianna Fail and right-wing Irish Americans. How could a US Congressman like Peter King, who supports discrimination against black people in America, play a positive role in ending oppression in Ireland?

The Socialist Workers Party is organised in Northern Ireland with members from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. We campaign for workers unity, emphasising what workers have in common.

Like Connolly we oppose partition because it has led to a 'carnival of reaction' where right-wing politics has dominated both states. We see it being removed as part of a fight for a united socialist Ireland.

GLOBAL CRISIS

Since the 1980s, a myth has emerged that the 'free market' is the only way to run an economy. Yet all around the world the evidence shows, that the market brings inefficiency and waste.

Today BSE affects cattle because farmers engaged in an uncontrolled competitive drive to raise their profits. They imported huge amounts of bonemeal because it helped to reduce their 'unit costs'.

Our environment is under threat because competing companies refuse to invest in measures to cut back on pollution.

Everywhere there are signs that capitalism is in decay. In the 1960s, people thought that their children would enjoy a bright future.

Today these hopes have turned to dust. Few people think that their chil-

dren will have a better life than themselves.

Over a quarter of the world's people have become poorer in the last twenty years. Famine, wars and poverty mean that 37,000 children die every day from preventable diseases such as diarrhoea.

One simple fact underlies the need for real change. The 358 richest people on this planet have a combined wealth that is equal to the poorest half of the world's population.

Such billionaires are to blame for the plight of the rest of us. But they will not simply give up their wealth and power.

OUR POWER

The Dunnes scandal has shown that real power in our society does not lie in parliament. John Bruton, the present Taoiseach had to go cap in hand to Dunne and then lied through his teeth about not knowing where funds for Fine Gael came from.

The key decisions which affect our lives are made in the boardrooms of big business.

This means that the Socialist Workers Party approaches the question of parliament in a different way to other parties.

If elected, a TD from the Socialist Workers Party pledges to:

- use their office facilities to openly support workers in struggle.

- use their parliamentary privilege to name employers who breach the safety laws and so caused the death of 13 building workers last year.

- take only the average industrial wage and to return the remainder of the salary of £34,000 to furthering the cause of workers.

But in all of this, we do not claim that socialist TDs can deliver real change on behalf of workers. Even if a majority of left-wing TDs were elected to form a government, it would meet frenzied resistance from the rich

and powerful.

They would move their money out of the country to sabotage all attempts at real change. If all else failed the rich would turn to force, to the police and the army, to hang onto privileges.

This means that socialist TDs must act as a voice to mobilise workers outside parliament. The real power to defeat privilege does not lie with individual TDs but with the organised power of our class.

WE CAN WIN

When ordinary people protest, demonstrate and strike we can defeat the most ruthless governments and bosses.

In the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher was known as the Iron Lady — but she was destroyed by the tens of thousands who took to the streets to defeat her poll tax.

In South Africa, the apartheid regime thought it would last forever but it was broken by the strikes and protests of ordinary black people.

Right-wing economists claim that giving people the right to retire at 55 will destroy civilisation as we know it. But French truck drivers won just that when they staged militant struggles last year.

In Ireland, every party was at one point committed to introducing water charges. But they had to back down after tens of thousands defied them by refusing to pay.

Mass action by working people is the way to bring real change. This is the only power that can destroy the influence wielded by the wealthy and privileged.

FUTURE BATTLES

This election takes place in a background of relative social peace. The boom in the Irish economy has given

the government scope to make some concessions on pay demands for the nurses and others.

But whatever government comes to power, it will be determined that we pay for the concessions of yesterday with more sacrifices in the future.

Throughout Europe, capitalism is moving towards recession. The road to a single currency is exacerbating the splits and divisions among the rulers of Europe. No matter how loud the Celtic Tiger roars, it cannot remain immune to these developments.

The response of our rulers to this uncertain future will be to demand ever greater cuts from workers. But they will also find themselves confronting a working class whose old confidence and militancy is returning.

The Socialist Workers Party therefore enters these elections in the knowledge that they represent one episode in the many battles ahead. Win or loose, the party will be arguing that we fight around demands like:

- Jail the corrupt politicians who have taken bribes from Dunne.

- A minimum wage of £5 an hour.

- The right to retire at 55.

- Break Partnership 2000. Substantial across the board increases for workers.

- 100% state funding of schools. Democratic Control — not church control.

- Abolish the Industrial Relations Act. Full support for workers in struggle for trade union principles.

- Workers' unity to oppose a sectarian state.

In all of this, the key is to build a movement that is determined to fight the whole system - to fight for socialism.

That is what the Socialist Workers Party stands for.

If you agree with us, then make sure that you are getting our paper regularly.

Better still, join us in building an organised socialist alternative.

Socialist Worker

The Socialist Workers Party candidates:

Waterford

JIMMY KELLY

JIMMY KELLY has worked at the Waterford Crystal plant for 30 years where he is now a convenor with the ATGWU.

He played a major role in the defence of jobs and wages during the 1990 strike.

His record of struggle is second to none. He led the fight of the glass workers on the PAYE issue and has been active in resisting service charges in Waterford.

In more recent years he helped to organise the strike at the Waterford Regional Hospital in defence of temporary workers who were being discriminated against.

"We can show up the sell-outs of Labour and put across our message that a few TD's alone won't change things" says Jimmy Kelly who is standing for the Socialist Workers Party in Waterford.

"I have no illusion in what goes on in the Dail but we can use it for all manner of reasons.

"If elected, I would put down a private members bill to call for an amnesty for those who have not paid the water charges. The rich got a tax amnesty, so why shouldn't we?"

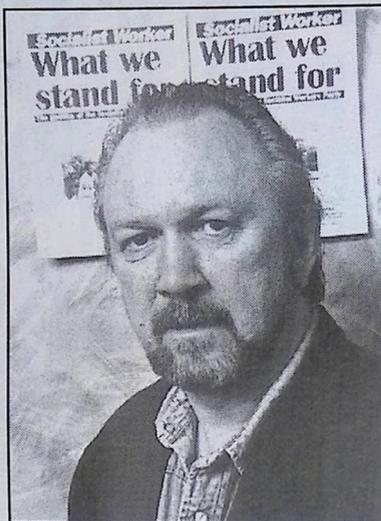
"But it is not just a question of proposing bills — it would need to be linked with real protests and demonstrations.

"That is the only thing that really frightens the establishment."

Wages

Today low pay is rampant in Waterford despite all the talk of the Celtic Tiger.

"We will be picketing the Chamber of Commerce conference in Waterford following a very successful petition drive for a



minimum wage by the SWP in the city. I don't see why anyone should be getting less than £5 an hour. We do not just campaign around election times — but right across the year."

When the Progressive Democrat candidate, Katherine Bulbula, toured the Waterford Crystal factory she was greeted with boos and jeers. It was a taste of the mood among workers in the city.

"The parties in the Dail have a consensus that it is OK to screw workers for whatever they can get. They are firmly on the side of the employers.

"We need a party that fights for workers interests with the same degree of enthusiasm".

Dublin South Central

BRÍD SMITH

Brid Smith lives in Drimmagh and works for the trade union MANDATE which organises shop workers.

She was very active with the union during the two major Dunnes strikes.

She was the first female shop steward in Dublin Bus where she worked previously. During her time there she organised a protest demonstration of 300 busworkers outside the *Sunday World* after they printed a scurrilous piece about the women drivers.

Socialist Worker asked her why she became politically involved.

"I think all my life I have always been aware of inequality. I come from a republican background and when the present troubles began, I saw immediately the role the British army and the RUC were playing. It made me determined to change this country.

"Many of the later struggles convinced me that there had to be a party that was deeply rooted in the working class. It had to be ready to push arguments, to go beyond economic questions and raise other political issues".

Arguments

Brid has attended a number of meetings about drugs in her constituency.

"I think that there is a core relation between the use of heroin and the rising level of alienation, unemployment and poverty in society.

"The heroin addiction is concentrated in the most deprived areas. I can understand why communities want pushers out of their areas but you also have to recognise that unless you tackle the real social roots of addiction, you will never really get rid of the problem.

"I would rather see the anti-drug movement mobilising their forces to march on the Dail to



demand more resources. We have to make the hypocrites there put money where it is most desperately needed"

Brid believes that real change comes when workers launch the type of strikes which occurred two years ago in France over cuts in social welfare.

"I think this type of action is a real possibility in Ireland.

"We are already witnessing a new level of militancy. Strikes among nurses, hotel workers, bus workers are raising the issue of low pay, union recognition and the minimum wage.

"No matter which government comes to power after this election they will press for more cuts as they prepare for EMU. They are going to come up against a more confident working class. The ingredients are all there for a social explosion".

Dublin North Central

RITCHIE BROWNE

"In the last election, I voted for Labour and back then I was not involved in any political party. Right through my working life, I was always told to depend on your union and Labour leaders. But experience has taught me that working class people have to take matters into their own hands"

These are the words of Ritchie Browne who is standing in the Dublin North Central Constituency for the Socialist Workers Party.

Ritchie is currently living on Enaville Road on the North Strand.

He left school at 17 to take a job in CIE where he worked until 1990. Later he joined TEAM Aer Lingus where he became active on the branch committee of his union, the ATGWU.

Attacks

Ritchie knows all about the attacks that workers have suffered from recent governments. He was locked out for six months in 1994 with the backing of the Fianna Fail/Labour government.

Ritchie Browne is opposed to the run down of semi-state jobs and the continual threats of privatisation. He believes that workers in companies like TEAM and Aer Lingus should stick together to resist any plans for cuts backs from whichever government is elected.

In his local area, Ritchie Browne has come out openly against the building of the Port



Tunnel on the Northside of Dublin.

"The tunnel from Whitehall to the docks will cause massive disruption to working class people.

"You would never see such a thing happening in Dublin 4".

He is also opposed to the sell-off of church lands in Beaumont.

"We need to keep these green spaces. The money to buy the original property came from the contributions of local people.

"It is terrible to see the Bishops trying to cash in on the property boom by ignoring the people's wishes".

Dublin South East

PEADAR O'GRADY

Peadar O Grady is contesting the South East Constituency for the SWP. Peadar is a 32 year old child psychiatrist who has been very involved in the unions.

When he was a shop steward for Junior Doctors in the Galway Regional Hospital he helped to implement a limit on working hours and pushed management to create jobs.

Peadar is a former member of the Labour Party who left shortly after they joined the Coalition with Fianna Fail in 1992.

"Since Labour have been in power, with Fianna Fail and then Fine Gael, they have become part of the establishment.

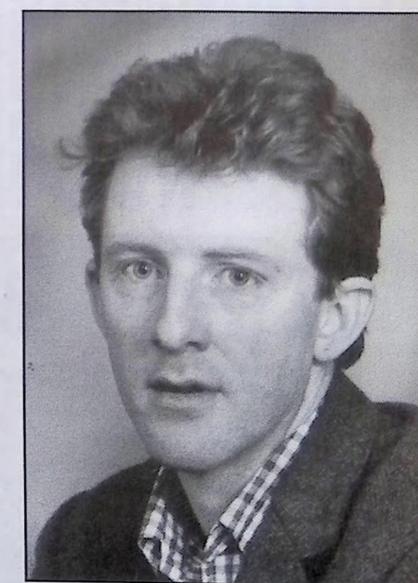
"They have stood over sectarian measures like the Education Act which gives schools and hospitals the right to refuse people jobs because of their religious or non-religious beliefs.

Refuse

"They have attacked civil liberties by pressing the bail referendum which means that 600 innocent people will spend time in prison. Yet they are hypocritical enough to stand over corruption. Labour has betrayed the working class and we need a real alternative to them".

Peadar O Grady is particularly concerned with the state of the health service.

"The health service in this country needs change. You have consultants making vast sums of money out of the service.



"We have a two-tier system of healthcare where money allows you to skip the queue and get treated in a private hospital.

"But for others there can be anything up to a five year wait for hip replacements. I want to see a health service that puts people before profits".

Peadar played an active role in resisting water charges in the Ballinteer area, speaking at several protests there.

"It showed me that when we organise and stick together we can beat any government."



book

Managing to survive after all

"WHEN I LOOK back on my childhood I wonder how I managed to survive at all. It was of course a miserable childhood... worse than the ordinary miserable childhood is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood."

This sentence, in the first page of *Angela's Ashes*, sets the tone for the rest of the book.

Frank McCourt's memory of growing up in poverty in the '30's and '40's is honest and at times terribly sad, but it's a wonderful read; full of heart, humour, and good people trying to get by.

The book follows the McCourt family from the tenements of Brooklyn, where they spend the first few years, to the back lanes of Limerick, where the children grow up.

Frank McCourt's mother, Angela, married Malachy, an alcoholic, in New York. The family returned to Limerick when the death of a child and Malachy's drinking left them broken and destitute.

But life in the slums of Limerick is even worse. Reading the book you do tend to wonder how Frank McCourt, as he says himself, "managed to survive at all".

Record

The book is an important record of how life must have been for many thousands of people, growing up, not just in Limerick but all over Ireland in the 30s and 40s.

Frank McCourt describes a dark class-ridden society, where the poor are outcasts and treated as such, where the Catholic Church rules every aspect of life with a rod of iron, and where whole families die because they are denied such basics as food, clothing and decent homes.

It's an important record because there is often a tendency to deny such things happened here.

Frank McCourt, because he is poor, is not allowed to become an alter boy.

Although he is bright, the Christian Brothers deny him an education, again because he is a child of the slums.

When Frank's father runs off to England his

Frank McCourt's memory of growing up in poverty in the '30s and '40s is honest and at times terribly sad, but it's a wonderful read; full of heart, humour, and good people trying to get by.

mother is publicly humiliated by welfare officials when she looks for assistance. The author's anger towards the church, and the state, is palpable throughout.

The characters in the book are tough and un-sentimental. They are degraded by their poverty and lack of status. Angela begs and even sleeps with a cousin so that her children will have a roof over their heads.

But despite their hard lives they are compassionate and generous when they can be. When Frank works as a telegraph boy he knows the best people for tips are the poor not the rich.

Since Frank McCourt wrote *Angela's Ashes* there has been a rash of commentary in the media from people who say he exaggerated, they say life wasn't as bad as he makes out or if it was it was their own fault because the father was an alcoholic.

Queued

When Frank McCourt returned to Limerick last year to sign copies of his book, people queued up to talk to him.

In an article he wrote about the experience he says everyone had their own story they wanted to share with him and he wanted to down his pen and go for a pint with every single one of them.

Clearly his book has tapped a vein of experience common to many who grew up at that time.

—EIMEAR MALONEY

book

Basic instinct for rebellion

by ANDY ABEL

B TRAVEN'S *The Rebellion of the Hanged* is a magnificent novel about the birth of revolution in Mexico in 1911.

It represents the climax to his five celebrated "Jungle novels" of oppression and resistance in colonial South America.

Traven is best known as the author of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* on which John Houston's film is based.

He was a German revolutionary who took part in the short lived Bavarian Soviet Republic in April 1919.

Escape

After it was crushed he made a daring escape from a death sentence and fled to Mexico where he lived until his death in 1969.

The peasants and workers of Mexico, both Indian and Spanish, provided the material for his novels.



Peggy Ogdens' exhibition of photography "Pony Kids" is on open air display around Smithfield market in Dublin. Over sixty photographs of children and their horsest shown in the setting where they were taken, make it well worth a visit.

The Rebellion of the Hanged is a welcome reprint after the inspirational "revolt of the red bandannas" the uprising in Chiapas, southern Mexico, in 1995.

The "hanged" are the workers on mahogany plantations. They are

debt slaves to calculating owners whose need to repay bank interest by felling more and more trees finds its expression in tyrannical overseers and brutal foremen.

The bosses realise their savage beatings of cutters who produce less

than four tons of mahogany per day, have less and less effect. So they find another tactic that works for a while.

They string men up from trees by their hands and feet for a few hours so the mere memory of the mosquitos and ants

provides the spur to achieve the quota for the next day.

Yet human beings can be impassive in response to suffering only when they suppress their natural instinct to rebel.

At first one and then others begin to sing defiance.

You are left in little doubt that revolt hangs in the air too.

When new recruits to the camp bring news and experience of struggles elsewhere in Mexico, leadership, organisation and strategy are married to the indomitable instinct of the Indians.

There is nothing crudely inevitable about the uprising, which is beautifully written by B Traven.

Storm

He paints the gathering storm of rebellion in all its human shades and emotions.

The unbearable humidity of the jungle is a metaphor for the dead weight of centuries of oppression.

Resistance, first immediate but quickly generalised, throws a shaft of light onto dark brutality.

Next time you come home exhausted by a bullying boss, think of a red bandanna, a machete, and pick up this book.

The Rebellion of the Hanged, by B Traven, £8.99, published by Allison & Busby.

—Colm O Riain

sport

Tiger bites back at the racists

WHEN Tiger Woods put his little white ball in the hole in Augusta course, it shook the golfing establishment in America.

Augusta National Golf club, a bastion of wealth and racism, had been conquered by a young black man. It was forced to allow Tiger to become their third non-white member.

As Tiger himself said, in a Nike advert, "There are courses I'm not allowed to play on because of the colour of my skin. Golf was originated in Scotland by rich whites. When it was brought here, we made our country clubs exclusively for whites".

Golf has always been in the hands of the rich and powerful and has resisted attempts at racial integration.

In 1962, the US Professional Golf Association was due to hold its tournament in Brentwood Golf Club where blacks were banned.

After a scandal broke about this, the tournament was moved to Philadelphia

rather than allow blacks to play.

As late as 1990 two prominent US clubs took their names off the roster for professional tournaments after guidelines were produced against racism.

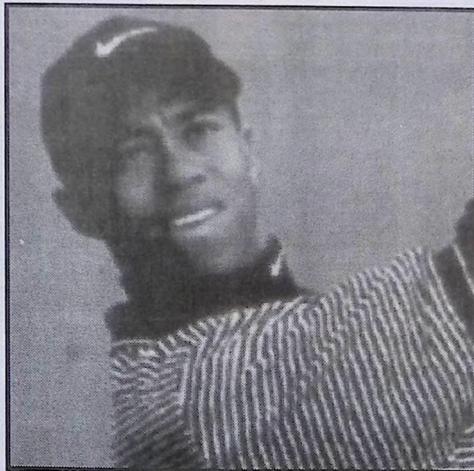
The former US President George Bush was a life long member of a golf club which banned Jews from membership.

Exclusive

Tiger Woods' win in the most exclusive tournament in America deserves celebration.

But little has changed for the majority of blacks in the US. Tiger had the opportunities to succeed at golf because of his well-off background.

Poverty and discrimination means that US blacks are more likely to end up in prison than in college. A recent report from the



Tiger Woods prestigious Harvard School of Education claims that a system of "American Apartheid" now exists. It noted that "in race relations, the bridge from the twentieth century may be leading back to the nineteenth".

The sports company Nike sponsored Tiger Woods for \$40 million. But

its actions reeks of hypocrisy.

Nike's huge profits come from paying kids in Indonesia less than a dollar a week to make its expensive sports gear.

Breaking racism in the US will take a little more than putting a ball in a hole.

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 socialists 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.

International news

Zaire: The tyrant falls

THE RULE of the dictator Mobutu is fast coming to an end in Zaire.

The much hated regime looks certain to topple in the face of the advancing Tutsi-led rebel forces of Laurent Kabila.

The only people who will shed any tears for him are the Western powers who kept him in power for so long.

Former

The former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, for example, has praised him as a democrat.

Already the rebels control almost two thirds of the country and are heading towards the capital Kinshasa.

Mobutu, during his 32 year rule, has robbed a country rich in mineral wealth and has amassed an estimated personal fortune of £4 billion.

The opulence of Mobutu's lifestyle is incredible. He has built a huge palace for himself, along with a casino and extensive ornamental gardens. He has an airport with a runway large enough to cater for the Concorde that he leases from Air France.

When he was diagnosed as having cancer last year, Mobutu ensured that he got the best treatment Europe could offer and spent months recuperating in Switzerland.

Meanwhile Zaire is economically devastated, the mineral wealth of the country totally squandered. State owned mining companies have been driven into the ground by corruption and looting. Today workers are rarely paid.

One of Zaire's biggest copper and zinc mines stopped production in 1993 because Mobutu and his backers diverted earnings into their own pockets and neglected to buy new machines or repair the old ones.

The regime has bled the country dry and as a result the Zairean people are among the poorest on the planet.

Ten percent of children die before their first birthday.

In 1992, one thousand children per day, under the age of five, died from malnourishment and associated diseases.



Past and present: dictator Mobutu surrounded by his guards and Laurent Kabila head of the rebels

Is Kabila a liberator?

AMID THE horrors of Zaire, it is not surprising that the rebels are seen by many as an army of liberation. When they entered Lubumbasi, Zaire's second city, they were welcomed with open arms.

As a taxi driver in Kinshasa told a Western journalist: "We are all waiting for Kabila. He is like a Messiah to us. I was born in 1972 and have known nothing except poverty under Mobutu."

Under him, my life has made no progress. We need a change."

However there is a big question mark over what change Kabila will bring. He has not encouraged the peasants to take over big farms as his forces marched towards Kinshasa.

Instead of promoting a workers' revolt, he has shown himself to be an enthusiastic supporter of free enterprise.

US mining conglomerates have been racing into Zaire and striking deals with the rebels.

The Canadian Tenke Mining Company was recently given access to one of the biggest copper mines in the world.

With an initial investment of \$650 million, they now have access to a mine where the proven worth of reserves is \$33 billion. The actual worth could be much more.

Deals like this are being done right across the country, ensuring huge profits for Western business interests but guaranteeing nothing for ordinary Zaireans.

Wonder

It is no wonder the US is keen to see Kabila, the former 'Marxist', take power.

Bill Clinton has sent an envoy to persuade Mobutu to step aside and ensure a 'peaceful transition to democracy'. US imperialism sees the change of regime as a way of increasing their influence in the area at the expense of the French.

The rebels themselves have been accused of human rights abuses against Hutu refugees.

The estimated 100,000 or so people involved are the rump of the one million who fled from Rwanda in 1994 after the

genocide of Tutsis was ended. Some of the Hutus were undoubtedly among the extremists and have used the refugee camps in Zaire as a base from which to attack Rwanda. But many more are ordinary people who were fleeing starvation and persecution.

None of this provides any justification, however, for Western intervention.

It was Western colonialism that encouraged the divisions between different people in Africa to help maintain their rule. After propping up Mobutu for decades, they should not be let feign any concern about 'human rights' now.

The solution for Zaire lies in the type of mass workers' struggles that have shook the regime in recent years. Zaire has two million industrial workers and three million others in services and administration.

One third of the population live in cities. Whichever grouping is in power the working class will remain the key to real change.

A puppet of colonialism

MOBUTU took power in Zaire — then called the Congo — in 1962.

This followed a Western backed coup which ousted the nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba.

Irish troops joined a United Nations 'peacekeeping' contingent at the time. But far from being neutral, UN troops kidnapped and killed Lumumba at the behest of the US government.

Mobutu has been a firm favourite of the

West ever since. He was able to provide stability in an area considered to be of strategic importance in Africa.

Zaire was not only rich in minerals but also provided a base for Western initiatives in the region.

Supply

The CIA used Zaire as its main supply route to the right wing UNITA guerrilla movement who waged war against the government of Angola.

In return for Mobu-

tu's 'friendship', the West turned a blind eye to the human rights abuses within Zaire and the crushing of pro-democracy movements. Instead the West armed Mobutu to the hilt.

As late as 1991 France and Belgium sent in troops to prop up the regime after soldiers mutinied when they were not paid.

Mobutu's bloody regime operated as a puppet for Western imperialism in Africa. This is why there will be great joy throughout the continent when he falls.

News from the SWP:

NEARLY twenty more factories are now receiving copies of Socialist Worker.

This follows a successful campaign to increase the circulation following the huge 38,000 strong vote received by an SWP member Carolann Duggan in the race for president of the union SIPTU.

The importance of a socialist network in the unions and workplaces has been illustrated by two important recent struggles.

As soon as Belfast SWP heard about the strike in Montupet (page 4) they were able to bring strikers to a number of factories for collections. Plans are now afoot to get delegations to visit towns

as far away as Waterford to build support.

In the Irish Life dispute, SWP members have also worked hard to build solidarity. A Mayday organised in Dublin brought in a few hundred pounds and collections are also taking place at a number of workplaces.

Campaign

Meanwhile, the SWP is stepping up its recruitment campaign.

Throughout the general election in the South candidates have argued that votes are not enough bring real change — we need to organise to

get mass action from workers. To do that it is vital to build a strong socialist party.

After the election is over we want a network of hundreds of readers of Socialist Worker in the housing estates where we are standing.

And we also want to expand. This is why we will be urging people who agree with our policies to get involved.

Throughout the election campaign there will be weekly meetings for new members to explain and discuss our policies. Those wanting to join, should fill out the coupon on this page.

SWP branch meetings

BELFAST
Meets every Wed at 8pm
Upstairs Whytes Tavern

CORK
Meets every Weds at 8pm in
Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket St.

DERRY
Meets every Tues in Badgers Bar
at 8pm

DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets every Tues at 8pm in
Smyths Pub.

DUNDALK
Meets every Weds at 1pm in
Dundalk RTC

ENNISKILLEN
Meets every fortnight Contact
national address for details

GALWAY
Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm
in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square

LIMERICK
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in
Costello's Tavern, Dominick St

MAYNOOTH
Contact 8722682 for details

WATERFORD
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in
ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST
Meets every Tuesday at 8:30pm
in The Snug, Dorset St.

DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLock
Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm
Contact 8722682 for details

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm
in the Black Forge (formerly the
Bentley), Drimnagh Rd

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL
Meets every Wed at 8:30pm in
Conways, Parnell St.

DUBLIN RATHMINES
Meets every Wed at 8pm in
O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL
Meets every Thur at 8pm in the
Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN
Meets Monday at 8pm in the
Steering Wheel, Clondalkin

There are Socialist Worker members in:
COLERAINE; LURGAN; CAVAN; DONEGAL; NAAS; KILKENNY;
DUNDALK; ATHLONE; DROGHEDA.
If you would like to get in touch, contact our national office
at (01) 872 2682, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

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Irish Life

Strike reaches critical phase

THE 14 week old dispute at Irish Life has reached a critical phase. Members of the MSF union have voted to go into compulsory arbitration at the Employer Labour Conference (ELC) after a recommendation from their union leaders.

Although a significant minority opposed this move they failed to convince the bulk of the membership.

The promise that a "bottom line" of the workers demands would be given to the ICTU negotiators swung the vote in favour.

Scheme

Those who voted for the scheme believe that the ICTU representatives, Peter Cassells and Kevin Duffy will pull out of the talks if the proposals coming out of the ELC go below the workers bottom line.

However, the ICTU's record in mediation is not a good one.

It was the ICTU along with Pat Rabbitte who persuaded Packard workers to accept working an extra two hours per week to save their jobs. All 800 jobs were gone within a number of months.

Rabbitte and the ICTU are more concerned with settling this dispute before an election than they are with securing the interests of the workforce.

Dublin Corporation

Workers set to vote against restructuring

WORKERS in the IMPACT and SIPTU unions are looking to throw out proposed changes in Dublin Corporation. At a meeting on April 24th on a new restructuring agreement in the Corporation, many delegates walked out in protest.

Their unions were recommending a deal which demanded several serious concessions from the Unions. These include:

- Redeployment of Workers to different areas without consultation.

- Flexibility in work practices, a worker must do anything and everything they are told to.

- An open door for management to reduce staffing levels, without any suggestion of how many jobs they will cut in the future.

Delegates at the meeting were disgusted that their Union was recommending this deal.

Sean, a corporation member was livid: "This deal is stupid, the union is telling us to take a pathetic deal and they know it".

The information given by the union admitted as much. A leaflet from the union officials stated that:

"This is not a great package. We never said it was. Jobs as we know them will change. Individu-

A worrying indicator is the speed with which Jean Woods and the company bosses agreed to accept the proposal for binding arbitration.

It is up to the workers on the picket line to ensure that no attempt to sell them anything less than their bottom line is tolerated.

If the proposals put forward by the ELC do go below this line, workers should reject them.

Proposal

No proposal can be considered binding if the promise to defend the workers bottom line is broken.

Whatever the outcome of the dispute, it is crucial that unity is maintained between the two unions involved in the dispute, MSF and SIPTU.

SIPTU have so far rejected any proposals for binding arbitration and are set to continue the strike.

Picket lines should be respected by all workers regardless

of the outcome of the ELC.

Any divisions between the workforce will be exploited by the company and make it easier for them to launch further attacks on the workers in the future.

Greencore

SINCE the 1st of April 80 SIPTU workers have been on strike against attempts to reduce the number of grades from eight to four and to reduce the number of staff.

Greencore was formed out of the privatisation of the Irish Sugar Company. The company recently agreed to pay higher prices to beet farmers and now wants to

get the workers to pay for this.

The Labour court made a recommendation in favour of the management proposals. This has rightly been rejected by the workers; the strike remains solid and the SIPTU members are receiving support from the craft workers.

Messages of support can be sent, c/o SIPTU Barrack St. Carlow.

Quinnsworth

Striking against the sell-off

WORKERS in Quinnsworth and Crazy Prices struck out against the owners of the company who sold their workplaces out from under them.

Quinnsworth and Crazy Prices were owned by the giant multinational Associated British Foods (ABF). Their profits were obviously not enough for ABF, and so the company was sold for £640 million to Tesco.

There was no communication with the employees' union MANDATE. The first time the workers heard of the sale was in the evening news.

Profits

Workers in supermarkets in Sligo, Limerick, Clare and Tullamore took action seeking guarantees about job security, and also demanding a share of the millions that ABS are pocketing.

It was their work for pov-

erty wages which made Quinnsworth and Crazy Prices so profitable and a loyalty payment is the least they deserve.

Instead of championing the workers' action, the workers union MANDATE argued that it should be called off. The action that the workers took was unofficial and the union refused to sanction it.

The argument that the union leaders made was that they should go through "official procedures" of negotiation so as not to be in defiance of the Industrial Relations Act.

But the workers who took unofficial action showed the real way that the trade unions should defend conditions in this country.

CPSU Conference

The Civil and Public Service Union (CPSU) holds its conference in late May with rumours of a new deal on grade restructuring.

Grade restructuring is often seen as a means of tackling low pay in the Civil Service.

It involves amalgamating the Clerical assistant and Clerical Officer grades.

But restructuring also involves flex-

ible work practices and moves towards 'atypical employment':

- Socialist Workers Party member, Dave McDonagh is running for election to the CPSU Executive Committee at the conference. Dave opposed Partnership 2000 and is arguing for a return to industrial action over low pay. He works in Telecom Eireann where he has argued for resistance to proposed cuts.

a fancy term for part time work. The pay increases on offer for concessions like this are not enough.

CPSU members should take their cue from the nurses and paramedics and fight for substantial increases across the board, without any concessions about flexibility attached.

IMPACT

Health workers make an IMPACT

PARAMEDICS at hospitals throughout Ireland returned to work after their union, IMPACT, abruptly called off the strike. But just after they went back, radiographers were set to come out.

The ten day old paramedic strike won some concessions from the government with wage increases of between 5% and 12% being granted.

But far more could have been won.

The strike created a hole in the government's argument that the pay for nurses was exceptional.

The paramedics strike was extremely strong with solid picket lines and patient's groups issuing messages of support.

Support

One picket at the Beaumont hospital told *Socialist Worker*

"We were out for better pay — but we also wanted to maintain healthcare standards in the public sector.

"Low pay rates have meant that highly qualified physiotherapists and speech therapists are moving out into the private sector.

"Unless we do something, only the wealthy will be able to afford aftercare service which stroke victims and oth-

ers need today".

The union leaders did not match the enthusiasm of the paramedics.

Although groups like radiographers are fighting for similar pay rises, they were not called out on strike.

Instead, IMPACT and SIPTU drew up plans for them to come out after the paramedics had gone back.

As one Cork radiographer put it,

"It looks like the union leaders are as terrified about breaking Partnership 2,000 as the government. They stitched us up so that we did not have a united strike".

At the Dublin meeting which ended the paramedic strike, many walked out in disgust.

The details of the recommendation were not even discussed and many felt that the strike should not have been called off without any information on what was on offer.

As the radiographers prepare for battle, they should keep a close eye on their union leaders.

Telecom

Resist Kane's cuts

For the past few years Telecom Eireann boss Alfie Kane has been shadow boxing with the unions.

Kane — who is paid £200,000 a year — has talked about a possible halving of the workforce and claims he is 'wading through treacle' as staff resist change.

- A 5.3 percent pension contribution: in effect a pay cut;

- Agreement to 2,500 voluntary redundancies;

- Late evening and Saturday work combined with reduced overtime payments;

- Contracting out of work presently done by Telecom staff.

- "Grade and geographic mobility", an open book to management to move employees around, from departments or even workplaces plus cuts in travel allowances.

- A 'new industrial relations paradigm' where unions would agree further cuts with the minimum of resistance.

For these concessions, the CWU is proposing that employees can get up to 15% in shares. But Communications Minister Alan Dukes told the Communications Workers Union conference that he would not concede more than 5% in shares. So much for 'social partnership'!

Some angry delegates argued for strike action before the election to force the government's hand.

This is a good idea. But it would be wasted if it were simply to focus on increasing the level of shares.

Instead the workforce should strike to oppose the planned cuts.

Socialist Worker

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AFTER THE LABOUR LANDSLIDE:

Blair has no excuse not to bring change



THE LANDSLIDE victory of Labour in the British General Election deserves celebration.

It was a massive class vote. One survey showed that Labour achieved a staggering 40% lead over the Tories among unskilled manual workers.

It was also a rejection of Tory values. For the last eighteen years the Tories held up the rich as saviours of society. They destroyed the health service by subjecting it to market compe-

tion. Now millions have said: No More.

Unfortunately of these issues were debated during the North's own election.

Issues

Instead there was another sectarian head count on the constitutional issue. But tens of thousands of Catholic and Protestant workers

will still look to Blair for change.

The huge landslide majority means there can be no argument that Blair's hands are tied and cannot deliver. If changes do not happen it is because the Labour leadership does not want them.

There is much that could be done.

Take the Liverpool dockers, for example. Over five hundred of them have been sacked for daring to stand

up for trade union principles. Across the North, thousands of workers have made collections for them.

Tony Blair could give these dockers back their jobs immediately.

An open letter to Tony Blair from John Pilger, Ken Loach, Paul Foot, and thousands of trade unionists points out the British government has the biggest single block of shares in the company which sacked them, MDHC. All he has to do is order their reinstatement.

Vicious

Or look at the 11 plus system in Northern Ireland. Blair says he wants an education system where all get an equal chance. A move to scrap the vicious 11 plus system would be hugely popular with both Catholic and Protestant workers.

But all the signs are that Blair will do none of these things. For the last two years, he has moved steadily to the right. His close supporters show a contempt for the unions and refuse to repeal the Tory laws that set out to weaken them.

If Labour cannot deliver real change after such a landslide—it is time to look for a more serious revolutionary alternative.

Break the Unionist veto

When Mo Mowlam took up her post as Northern Ireland Secretary she did a walkabout in Belfast and got a reception which Patrick Mayhew could not have dreamed off.

It was a sign of the high hopes which many have greeted the new Labour government.

The Tories wrecked the chances of peace in Northern Ireland by backing the Unionist Party. If Mowlam wants to bring change there are some immediate things she could bring.

She could openly say that there will be no veto on

who is allowed enter all-party talks in June. Sinn Fein has won an increased mandate from thousands of nationalist voters.

There will never be peace if they continue to be disenfranchised.

She could stop a new Drumcree by insisting that no Orange parade will be allowed through areas where there are not wanted.

But that would mean that Labour would have to stand up to the British army generals and RUC chiefs who have pulled the strings for decades.

Record

Labour's past record under its last Northern Secretary Roy Mason gives little cause of optimism here. Instead of waiting for Labour to deliver peace from on high, workers throughout the North need to forge their own unity from below.

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Montupet: Unity on the Picket Line

The French multi-national Montupet are trying to break the union in their plant in Belfast.

Twenty six leaders of the strike committee have been injunctioned and banned from their own picket line under the Tory laws.

The RUC, which claimed they could do little to prevent Orange blockades at Drumcree, has no difficulty protecting scabs who have been especially flown in.

The strike has united workers from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. There needs to be solidarity collections throughout the North to sustain it. The strikers can win if there is open defiance of the anti-union laws.

Instead of waiting for Labour to dismantle the anti-Tory laws, let's show them some workers unity and do the job ourselves. (For full report on Montupet turn to page 4.)