

# Socialist Worker

Why is Irish politics corrupt? Pages 6-7

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

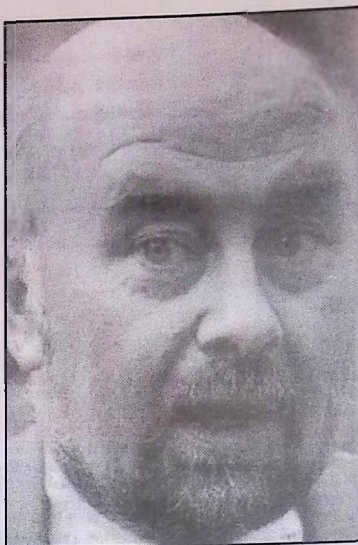
## DAIL IN THE GRIP OF BIG BUSINESS



# Throw them out!



# No money for the nurses but plenty for TDs



■ Finance Minister Ruairi Quinn

**JUST BEFORE** Christmas the deputies of Dail Eireann rushed through a Bill to give themselves big allowances.

Coming on top of the Dunnes scandal, it is one of the most brazen acts of scrounging in years.

They even managed to backdate their claims for more money so that they get to share out a £500,000 increase for expenses run up since January 1996.

This way even those who lose their seats in the next election will manage to get their hands on some loot.

## Privileged

From now on, Dail deputies will be able to live an even more privileged life. They will get:

■ A £2,000 telephone allowance.

Up to now they had to produce their bills but this has now been abolished.

■ A £54.48 overnight al-

lowance if they live more than 20 miles from Dail Eireann.

They do not have to produce any evidence that they stayed in a hotel or B&B. ■ More money for their parties. Fianna Fail's new allowance of £710,000 is more than double what they got before while Democratic Left can now claim £97,000 just because they have TDs in the Dail.

Ruairi Quinn has had the gall to argue that the pay hikes are "a very necessary

increase".

But this is the same Minister for Finance who has been telling nurses that there is no more money in the country for them.

## Expenses

TDs are already grossly overpaid.

They already earn £34,362 and that is before the expenses they get.

According to an RTE survey, only one in three Dail Deputies depend on their

Dail income as their sole source of earnings.

A politician like Michael McDowell earns more in a single day as a barrister than some workers earn in a month.

At the moment the politicians are trying to blame the Dunnes scandal on the fact that we do not pay them enough.

For tens of thousands of low paid workers whose taxes will now fund them, this is really a sick joke.

# Resistance defeated water charges



■ Water Charge protestors

**LABOUR's** Environment Minister Brendan Howlin has finally abolished the water charges.

This hated tax raised over £50 million for the state and angered PAYE workers who knew they were paying 'on the double'.

PAYE workers already provide the bulk of the country's tax and were in no mood to pay up once again for their services.

Labour and Democratic Left TDs are already claiming that Howlin's move is a result of their efforts in Coalition.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Water charges were beaten because of mass resistance.

Tens of thousands of people in the Dublin area simply refused to pay the charges.



■ Minister Brendan Howlin

## Courts

They were threatened with disconnection and were hauled before the courts—but they still refused to pay up.

In the Fingal Council area of Dublin hundreds of people attended local meetings to help organise protests.

The final straw came when 400 people turned up outside a court in Swords to make sure that anti-water charges protestors got off.

Scandalously, Labour and Democratic Left councillors regularly voted for the charges at local level.

They tore up their election promises and betrayed their supporters.

Deirdre Cronin from the Ballinteer against Water Charges group told *Socialist Worker*, "We are often told that ordinary people can never really bring

change. "But Howlin's move shows the power we have when we stick together.

If we can beat this government on water charges, we can defeat them on a lot more"

The Coalition will now try to pass on the cost of abolishing water charges on to the working class again. They are trying to get out of ending refuse charges. They are also trying to penalise people who drive cars.

But the money to pay for local authorities can be gotten from the rich. They pay only a small amount of tax. Fifteen years ago there were major demonstrations to demand a 'Tax on the Greedy not the needy'

It is as relevant today as it was more than a decade ago.

# Lowry: 'I did not pay tax!'



■ Ex Minister Michael Lowry

**'IT WAS** money I got for work done'. That was Michael Lowry's explanation of how he had managed to get £208,000 from Ben Dunne.

Lowry took a full three weeks to come up with an explanation.

He claimed that he had to consult his lawyers and accountants to work out exactly how he got his house renovated.

He thought he could treat working class people in this country like fools.

Who else would have such difficulty finding out how they came upon nearly a quarter of a million?

Lowry admitted:

■ That he has paid no tax on the money he got from Dunnes.

■ That he got no planning permission on the huge renovations which doubled the size of his house.

■ That he avoided paying Residential Property Tax on the value of his ex-

tension.

■ That he had no explanation for why Dunnes paid for his house but put it down as part of the cost of re-furbishing the ILAC Centre in Dublin.

■ That like other tax evaders, he had availed of the tax amnesty.

■ That he got other payments from Ben Dunne.

In other words, Lowry admitted that he was breaking the law.

## Proposed

Hundreds of working class people have been sent to jail for less.

People who have robbed small amounts from supermarkets have been criminalised.

And now under changes proposed when Lowry was a Minister, they can even be deprived of bail for offenses which are far less than Lowry's.

The most sinister aspect of the

scandal was that Michael Lowry was the main fundraiser for Fine Gael. He managed to clear off the party's debt within a very short space of time.

The sickest thing about the whole affair was the amount of sympathy that was displayed for Lowry in the Dail.

The Labour TD for the area Michael Ferris even went over and shook his hand.

Other TDs made no comment because knew that they could also find themselves in the spotlight for the same sort of activity.

Lowry has shown up the real attitude of the Irish rich. They do not believe that they should pay tax. They think that is only for suckers who are on the PAYE system.

The disgraceful behaviour in Dail Eireann before Christmas shows exactly why Lowry and the corrupt system he stands for have to be abolished by working class people.

# Abuse treatment doctor accused

Dr. Maura Woods, Director of the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) at the Rotunda Hospital, has been accused of professional misconduct by a group calling themselves "Victims of Child Abuse Laws".

Five parents are maintaining they were wrongly accused of child sexual abuse in the late 1980s at the Rotunda SATU.

Their children have since been returned to them by the courts.

Dr. Maura Woods has denied all charges of professional misconduct.

This group is chaired by Eddie Hernon. He is a parent of one of the five families whose child was assessed at the SATU.

He believes that child abuse does not occur in the family. He also believes that organisations like the Rape Crisis Centre and Women's Aid promote abuse!

All parents should have the right to challenge accusations which they feel are unfounded.

However, this is not a sim-

ple case of parents feeling they have been wrongly accused.

There is more to this story than meets the eye.

It is obviously a personal attack on Dr. Maura Woods.

She is somebody who has championed Women's rights and exposed child abuse all through her career as a doctor.

She was instrumental in

setting up the first Sexual Assault Treatment Unit and has constantly campaigned for more funding and a further extension of the units.

Three more units have since been set up.

## Criticism

Many of those who oppose Maura Woods want the whole area of abuse covered

up, like it was in the 40's and 50's in Ireland.

The Fitness to Practise Committee of the Medical Council has made an unprecedented decision to hold the hearing in public.

This committee is known to have a majority who support the Pro-Life movement.

The level of criticism by the medical profession against this decision has

been tiny.

The whole area of child abuse is a minefield at the moment.

Cases like this will do nothing to improve it.

What is needed is a climate where children have the opportunity to make complaints without fear.

In order to create that climate major funding needs to be poured into the area.

## inside the system

★ If you don't want to risk your brain turning to sponge, don't eat beef.

But you'll have no choice at all when it comes to eating genetically engineered food whose potentially harmful effects are not yet known.

Most manufactured food (like bread, breakfast cereals, margarine, chocolate etc) contains soya oil and US chemical giant, Monsanto, has de-

veloped a genetically engineered soya bean that will be used to make the oil.

The main benefit for Monsanto is that the new bean is resistant to herbicides — which Monsanto also make. So they will make double profits, from selling the seeds and the chemicals to treat the plants.

But food manufacturers using these beans - the first genetically engineered substance to be

allowed into the food chain - don't have to reveal their presence on ingredient labels.

Genetically engineered food is supposed to be cheap—a way of feeding the world's starving millions.

But capitalism isn't interested in feeding the hungry. Monsanto won't allow farmers keep beans from year to year to sow for the next season's crop.

The farmer has to buy

new seeds every year from the company.

Instead of getting cheaper, food will just get more dangerous.

And Monsanto's shareholders will be having a beanfeast.

★ Most children whose parents are semi- or unskilled manual workers are unlikely ever to see the inside of a third level college, according to stark 1991 census fig-

ures released in December.

While every other child from a professional background makes it into further education, "Only a negligible percentage of the children of manual worker, completed a third level course," according to the *Irish Independent*.

And over one in five kids from those economic groups even drop out of education altogether once they leave

primary school.

This compares to one in twenty for those for children of higher professionals and one in 17 for those from a lower professional background.

"Wealth gap decides who will go to college" gaped the *Independent*.

Not news for parents on average incomes who have tried to put a kid through college or to pay for grind to help them pass their Leaving Cert.

## what we think

# MUST DEMOCRACY BE A COSTLY BUSINESS?

**THE POLITICIANS of Dáil Eireann have found a new excuse for accepting donations from big business.**

Democracy, they claim, is an expensive business.

Modern parties are so complicated; they have to do lots of research; and giving the public information is just so costly.

The poor creatures just have to go to Dunne and Goodman to fund their operations.

Inadvertently, they have revealed the real nature of democracy in capitalism.

Up to now the politicians simply argued that in a democracy every citizen had the right to vote.

We were all supposed to be equal when it came to influencing the affairs of state.

Yet now the establishment is admitting that vast amounts of money are needed to gain political influence.

Clearly those with money will never choose to fund organisations like the Socialist Workers Party who intend to remove their wealth. They will only back parties that promote their interests.

So far from everyone having an equal chance to decide what happens, we are now told that democracy needs to be able to call on big business who can in turn decide who gets political influence.

This means that left wing parties under modern capitalism will always be at a disadvantage.

But why do organisations like Fianna Fail or Fine Gael need such vast amounts of money?

Few people believe that they engage in great amounts of 'research' or that they produce highly informative material.

### Favours

The reason for the money has more to do with the relationship with their own supporters.

These parties back capitalism to the hilt but they need to win the votes of the working class.

They stand for a policy of cut-backs and 'flexibility' from workers—yet need their electoral support.

Their message can hardly motivate people in working class areas to go out and work to give them a lucrative career.

So they have to rely on money to pay canvassers and to promise little favours.

They also have to try to change the nature of political debate.

Instead of seriously addressing issues and openly stating their policies, they need to turn politics into a great and glamorous game.

They need millions for advertising campaigns that try to create an artificial buzz of excitement around some boring job in order to get people to identify with them.

Until recent times, the Labour Party mainly relied on funds from trade unions and from collections at local level.

But as their working class base begins to decline, they also turn to big business.

In Ireland, the process is only starting. But in countries like France and Italy, Labour Parties wallow in corruption the more they turn their back on their working class support.

The former leader of the Italian Labour Party, for example, is a wanted man who is in hiding in North Africa to escape a charge of corruption.

Giving parties money from the state does nothing to solve the problem of bribery.

It only adds insult to injury as working class people not only have to put up with exploitation but then get taxed to pay for parties who want to justify that activity.

### Control

The political parties should certainly be told to raise money from their own members.

That is how organisations like the Socialist Workers Party has always operated.

But we also need to recognise that the democracy of capitalism will always be limited.

You cannot have real democracy when you have no control over the economy of society.

If ordinary people are to really make decisions about how their society is organised, then they have to be able to control their own workplaces.

That in turn will mean removing the wealth from the likes of Ben Dunne. It is the only way to establish a real say for the people.

## It's no way to stop corruption

**THE COALITION are hoping to calm public anger over the corruption in Dáil Eireann by a new Electoral Bill.**

The bill places some limits on business donations to political parties and grants them state funding.

In reality, the measure is a sham that will help cover up the scandal.

Politicians will still be allowed to spend a staggering £18,000 per Dáil candidate in an election.

That means that the big right wing parties will have plenty of money to pay canvassers and dominate the media with their advertise-

ments.

Worse, the limit of £18,000 per candidate only applies at election time.

Up to the day the Dáil is dissolved, the political parties can spend a fortune on all sorts of ventures that help to buy votes.

### Root out

The Bill proposes that all donations over £4,000 be revealed.

Yet many of Ben Dunne's donations were smaller than this amount.

Under this provision, the Taoiseach John Bruton or Health Minister Michael Noonan would not have to re-



Ben Dunne and Michael Lowry—£208,000 worth of democracy

veal that they got donations.

There is also nothing in the Electoral Bill to stop a company getting a variety of trust-worthy executives to hand out a number of donations for £3,999.

The reality is that no Bill can stop the political corruption that comes with modern capitalism.

A year ago the Labour Party claimed that they had started to root out corruption in public life by introducing an Ethics Bill.

They argued that if there was a register of members' interests in the Dáil the resulting transparency and openness would stop corruption.

But the Bill did not force Michael Lowry to reveal that his house had been renovated with the help of Ben Dunne.

No matter what measure is introduced the rich always find ways of getting around it.

They have already become expert at dodging taxes through 'legitimate means' so there is little difficulty in undermining laws about political influence.

As long as there are people who control vast amounts of wealth, they will want a few politicians on the pay roll.

And there will never be a shortage of right wing parties who are more than willing to volunteer.

## Religion in decline

**RELIGION IS on the decline in Ireland. The influence of the Catholic Church is falling quicker than at any previous time.**

Throughout the whole of the 1980s, the numbers attending Mass at least once a week only dipped from 87% of the population to 85%.

The rearguard action fought by the Church on divorce and abortion helped to shore up their numbers.

Today the situation has changed dramatically.

Only two thirds of the population as a whole say they go to Mass once a week.

In Dublin, it has dropped to half while in the age group 18-24 it is lower still.

More importantly, the vast majority of people now claim that they do not let the Church dictate how they decide moral issues.

78% of the Irish population claim to follow their own conscience rather than the



Condemned prisoners on death row in the US targeted by Christian fundamentalists

teaching of the Church. Socialists welcome these changes.

### Submission

They show that working class people are no longer under the thumb of Bishops who preached submission and deference to au-

thority.

But already there are some voices arguing that a decline in the church means an erosion of morality.

They claim that if religious belief decreases, society will become more violent and greedy.

Yet this is to misun-

derstand the message that the Bishops preached. They have always been prepared to support the morality of the privileged and the status quo.

### Respect

Constantly, they tell their 'flock' to respect

the state and private property. They are ever ready to condemn strikes while preaching an acceptance of poverty.

In doing so they help to promote the very 'materialism' and egoism of capitalism that they then pretend to be the moral protectors

against.

The priesthood in Ireland was drawn largely from the wealthier classes in rural areas who grew after the famine in the last century.

These groups were obsessed with owning land and regulating sexuality so that there was no danger of 'illegitimate children' that would make a claim on their inheritance.

The result was a church which identified moral living with an ignorance of sex.

### Distorted

And while they preached abstinence except in marriage, they breached their own codes in the most distorted of ways.

The decline in this type of morality is a good thing.

The rise of a set of values which promote co-operation and a truly human society cannot be dependent on restoring the power of the Church.

It can only grow through deeper struggles against the market.

Only the rise of an active working class movement can bring with it the type of morality that can overcome the dog eat dog world of the free market.

# Orange Order drops its mask

"A MAN who would sell his soul to the devil" and who betrayed his birthright by "marrying a Romanist and serving communion in a Roman Catholic Church".

This is how the newly elected Grand Master of the Orange Order, Robert Saulters described Tony Blair.

Saulters came from the 'moderate' wing of Orangeism rather than the even more extreme 'Spirit of Drumcree' group.

But his bigotry exposes the lie that Orangeism is just an expression of Protestant culture. Tens of thousands of ordinary Protestants were appalled by his statement and wanted nothing to do with him.

Ever since Drumcree there has been a rise in petrol bomb attacks on the homes of people in mixed marriages. Tiny groups of bigots who support Saulters' views have been behind the attacks.

The Northern Ireland Mixed Marriages Association claim that up to 50 families have been attacked in recent months.

David Trimble's response to the controversy about Blair has been to back the Grand Master.

When he was asked to condemn the comments on RTE, he merely said, "Why should I?"

He then added that, "The Orange Order is an organisation of Protestants.

"I think it's perfectly in order for a person who is head of that organisation to make such comments as he considers appropriate with re-



■UFF thugs openly parade on Derry walls and (inset) Orange Grand Master Robert Saulters

gard to these matters".

The reality is that the entire Unionist establishment is infected with bigotry to the very core.

They deliberately encourage the violent thugs who want to attack Catholics.

On the Apprentice Boys march in Derry on Decem-

ber 14, a bandsman carrying a UFF banner appeared and was flanked by six men in black uniforms and berets.

## Innocent

The UFF was the cover name used by loyalist organisation who carried out

assassinations on innocent Catholics.

Yet the Orange Order welcomed these thugs onto their parade and enjoyed the co-operation of the police who turned Derry into an armed camp so that they could march through the city centre.

## Unionists keep Tories in power

JOHN MAJOR and the Tory government are hanging onto power with the help of the Official Unionists.

Their deputy leader John Taylor claimed the Unionists would only bring down the government over issues to do with fisheries, farming and the 'constitutional question'.

But already Patrick Mayhew's budget for the North shows exactly how all working class people are going to suffer.

The Unionist Party must be delighted to find that £120 million extra is being handed over to the law and order budget and cut from the poorest and most vulnerable people in society.

## Cutting

Single parents, of whom there are almost 100,000 in Northern Ireland, have had their benefits slashed in the budget to starvation level.

The Tories are cutting £11 a week from single parents leaving a single parent with one child to live on just £60 a week.

The Housing budget was cut by £22 million and Housing Executive

rents are to go up by 4 percent. Campaigners for the homeless say that bad as things are now, this cut will mean thousands more will have no chance of getting a house in the future.

## Ill-health

The Tories have now declared a 'war on prescription costs' in the North.

These are higher here than in Britain and for good reason.

Research shows that there is greater ill-health in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK, largely because of poverty and poor diets.

Unionist leaders like Trimble have always supported these right wing attacks on working class people. But up to now they have been able to hide behind the fact that they were not directly responsible for the attacks.

Their open support for the Tories means that will now start to change.

Incredibly, Blair's Labour Party has said it will not be reversing the cuts in housing benefit, or lone parents' allowance, when it comes to power.

## POLICE AUTHORITY SURVEY:

# One in three Protestants want RUC reformed

Many Protestants are deeply unhappy about the sectarianism and brutality the RUC displayed this summer, according to a new survey by the Police Authority for Northern Ireland.

One in three Protestants now want the RUC to be reformed.

This is up from one in four or 23% last year. An even higher number, 39%, said they had "little or no confidence" in the RUC due to Drumcree,

"Community policing" can't change that either. One quarter of Protestants surveyed think that their local police are doing a "fairly or very poor job"—almost twice as many as in 1995.

And when it comes to parades as many as 29% of Protestants want a temporary ban on all parades, 33% want a special body to decide future marches instead of the RUC, and 14% say there are "too little" restrictions on Protestant marches.

These are Protestants who don't necessarily see the RUC as "their" police force and who are willing to side with Catholics against sectarianism, whether it comes from the RUC or loyalist thugs in Harryville.

# Roisin McAliskey—innocent until proven guilty?

Roisin McAliskey is seriously ill. Underweight and ill before she became pregnant, every doctor who has examined her agrees she needs specialist treatment.

After her arrest at her home in Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, she was transferred to Britain.

For some time, she was held in the all-male top security prison Belmarsh where she was in solitary confinement and unable to receive visitors.

## Danger

Outcry at her treatment led to her transfer to Holloway where, says lawyer Gareth Pierce, her health is deteriorating rapidly and she is in



■Bernadette and Roisin McAliskey

clear danger of miscarrying her baby.

Roisin has suffered from stress induced asthma and other illnesses since she wit-

nessed her parents being shot by loyalist assassins when she was only nine. As a result, she weighed less than seven stone before her arrest.

In any decent society, she would be in hospital on a drip. Instead, she is in a high security prison with little or no suitable medical care and suffering frequent, degrading strip searches.

Sick as she is, she's hardly likely to be able to jump bail. Yet, although she has not been charged, she is still denied bail.

The reason for this inhuman and degrading treatment is clear. She is the eldest daughter of civil rights leader and former MP, Bernadette McAliskey.

## Treatment

Normally, the child of a former MP could expect a different kind of special treatment—an open prison and quick bail.

But Bernadette treated the House of Commons with the contempt it deserves, refusing to go along with its silly rules—shouting down bigots and striding across the floor of the house to punch Reginald Maudling after Bloody Sunday.

Ever since, the British ruling class have wanted to get back at her.

They haven't been able to do that, so now they're threatening the life of her pregnant daughter.

## international news

# South Korean workers on the move

**WORKERS IN South Korea threatened to strike on two days in December in protest at the government's planned new labour laws.**

The 1.1 million strong, legal, Federation of South Korean Trade Unions threatened the partial stoppages unless the new laws, which were due to go through parliament, were postponed.

## Postponed

Earlier, the illegal Korea Confederation of Trade unions postponed a planned 4 hour strike of its 500,000 members in 300 companies.

It said the labour regulations had no chance of becoming law before parliament broke up for Christmas.

The ruling New Korea Party wants to revise labour laws to meet the conditions for joining the OECD club of "rich nations".

OECD officials say South Korea needs to liberalise its anti-union laws, most of which date from the days of military dictatorship.

That would mean lifting the ban on more than one union being recognised in a single company and allowing trade unions to donate money to political parties.

But the government's proposals only promise to introduce these changes gradually. Worse, they will remove basic legal safeguards on job security which limit layoffs and flexible working.

Increasing "flexibility in the labour market" is also one of the demands of the

OECD, along with loosening controls on foreign investment.

The military dictatorship in South Korea was forced to concede limited employee rights to head off a major strike wave in the late 1980s.

## Attack

Now, under the cover of allowing freer trade unions, the government wants to incorporate trade union leaders and strengthen the hand of management.

Bosses of South Korea's biggest firms, like Daewoo and Hyundai, want to use the opportunity of joining the OECD to attack workers' organisation.

There have been only 100 strikes so far this year, but both the illegal and legal union federations are growing.

Although only 15 per cent of South Korea's workers are in trade unions, they are concentrated in key areas of the economy like ship building, engineering and electronics.



Police repression against protestors last year

## Australia: Politicians' racism sparks protests

**ANTI-RACISTS in Australia have been hitting the streets in their tens of thousands to stop politicians scapegoating Asian immigrants and Aborigines.**

There have been anti-racist demonstrations in every major city in Australia after newly elected independent MP Pauline Hanson used her maiden speech in parliament to whip up racism.

Hanson said, "We are in danger of being swamped by Asians" who "do not assimilate".

One report found racist attacks against Asians doubled after Hanson's speech.

Racist politicians crawled out of the woodwork to back Hanson up and demand an end to all immigration and "multicultural" policies funded by the government.

They also demanded that the newly elected Tory coalition government slash funds to Aborigine groups.

Aborigines still face massive discrimination in Australia, with successive governments going back on claims for compensation for the Aborigine population who had their land stolen when the country was colonised.

Tory prime minister John Howard refused to condemn Hanson, said she had a right to "free speech" and then said immigrants do cause unemployment.

This has stung anti-racists into action. In Melbourne more than 30,000 people joined a protest called by the unions and backed by 250 organisations.

In Sydney 10,000 demonstrated and in Adelaide 3,000.

Around 1,000 marched through the heart of Hanson's constituency in Queensland.

■ **New Zealanders' illusions that proportional representation can deliver reforming governments was shattered by the final outcome of the New Zealand general election last week.**

The country went to the polls two months ago, with a majority in favour of kicking out the hated conservative National Party government.

An electoral system based on proportional representation was used for the first time after left wingers and various groups successfully campaigned for it as a way of "controlling" the major parties.

But instead the poll delivered a hung parliament with the New Zealand First party holding the decisive votes.

New Zealand First campaigned on a mixture of anti-Asian racism, increased public spending and Maori rights.

But despite the fact that its leader, Winston Peters, attacked the National Party, he has now decided to go into coalition with it.

That means effectively another Tory government, despite most people voting to get the Tories out.

# Zaire's rebels put pressure on Mobutu

**AFRICAN governments gathered at a summit meeting before Christmas as the crisis in Zaire reached a new turning point.**

In the east of the country a rebel movement has inflicted a series of defeats on the army of Zaire's dictator President Mobutu and on the Hutu militiamen who carried out genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

The offensive, sparked by Mobutu's attempts to scapegoat people in an effort to hang on to power, was so effective that proposed Western intervention has now been called off.

But the forces fighting Mobutu are a mixture of two elements.

## Divides

On the one hand there is a genuine movement from below which brings together people across group, ethnic and religious divides.

On the other hand the movement is influenced and supported by the governments of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

These governments offer no real democracy

and no challenge to the multinationals and the local rich.

Behind them stand the United States government and its plans to build up a block of states under its influence to

counter and supplant French power in the region.

## Negotiate

The summit will increase pressure on

Mobutu to negotiate with the opposition, but it will also step up the coercion of the anti-Mobutu forces to rein back its demands.

Meanwhile Tanzania has expelled huge num-

bers of Hutu refugees who fled Rwanda in 1994.

They were driven back to Rwanda at gunpoint, despite their fears that they face harsh treatment once they return home.

# Strikers join anti Milosevic protests in Serbia

**AFTER FOUR weeks of mass demonstrations every day in Serbia, the movement against President Milosevic looked much stronger in late December as eight factories came out on strike.**

Six factories are out in the capital, Belgrade, one in the industrial city of Nis and one in Mladenovac.

"The strikes are primarily about pay and conditions, but we are supporting the students and opposition demands," said Milan Nikolic of the metal workers' union.

Organised groups of workers joined the marches in Belgrade for the first time in December. "We were also here before as individuals, but for the first time we are here today in an organised way," said Rade Radovanovic.

"When the workers come out against you, you are finished," he warned

Milosevic.

The workers are showing the potential for a movement that could not only topple Milosevic but also offer a way out from the poverty and despair in

post-war Serbia and across ex-Yugoslavia.

## Talks

But opposition leaders are not focusing on the

strikes. Instead they are in talks with John Kornblum, the US assistant secretary of state, and are hoping that Western governments will broker an agreement with Milosevic.

## IN BRIEF

■ **RUSSIAN MINERS** ended their ten day old strike to demand the payment of wage arrears last month.

The miners' union ordered the return to work after action by 400,000 miners forced the government to promise to pay all wage arrears by the end of the year.

Miners were joined in some areas by teachers and other public sector workers who are also owed

wages.

But the crisis hit government has broken past promises to pay wage arrears, and widespread discontent is likely to continue.

■ **OVER 20,000 people** marched against Jean Marie Le Pen, the leader of France's Nazi National Front, in Grenoble on Monday of last month.

The protest was one of the biggest ever

against Le Pen, who was visiting the city to address a 500 strong Nazi rally.

The march was called by 70 organisations, including the main trade union federations, but was overwhelmingly made up of young people from schools and universities.

In recent weeks there have been a series of mobilisations against Le Pen from Paris to Le Havre.

# Dunnes Stores better value

Dunnes Stores has never been famous for its generosity. Their workforce has had to mount two major national strikes over low pay and many still get only £3.50 an hour.

But the family know that paying out millions of pounds to politicians, planners and newspaper executives is better value than paying their workers decent wages and pensions.

Ben Dunne gave Michael Lowry £208,000 pounds to do up his home.

He gave over £1.1 million to a prominent Fianna Fail politician named by the *Phoenix* magazine as Squire Haughey.

He gave £180,000 to the Fine Gael party and £15,000 to the Labour Party.

That much we know. Now politicians in the Dáil have closed ranks to make sure the people who voted for them don't hear who else benefited from Ben Dunne's generosity.

The Price Waterhouse report contains around 1,500 names of people who got money from Ben Dunne. Instead of publishing that report in full and letting people make up their own minds, the politicians pretend that there are 'complex legal issues' involved.

It is nonsense.

A few weeks before the Dunnes scandal, the Criminal Assets Act was rushed through the Dáil.

This allows the state to seize documents where they suspect fraud or drug dealing.

This means the police could raid Dunnes headquarters in the morning and take away documents that help to trace the trail of bribery and corruption.

And there is a lot they could find. Leaked reports to the press indicate that when Ben Dunnes was leaving the family company he signed a sensational affidavit containing even more detailed allegations about politicians on the take.

But none of the TDs want their cosy relationship with big business held up to public scrutiny.

Not a single TD used their parliamentary privilege to read out the names of key people who got money off Dunnes.

## Big Business

All of them agreed with John Bruton that they should shut up about the names.

This affair shows yet again that big business runs this country.

But the Dunne's payments are just the tip of the iceberg.

They only came into the open because Ben Dunne has fallen out with his brothers and sisters.

All big companies know that investing in politicians makes sound financial sense.

In recent years the main political parties have miraculously cleared debts of £4.5 million pounds. Where did they get the money?

In the eighties Larry Goodman gave over £200,000 to political parties.

In return he was allowed to monopolise the Irish beef industry.

When Ireland was fined for irregularities in Goodman's beef industry, Goodman did not have to pay a penny in damages.

The bill was passed on to the Irish taxpayer.

Politicians' claims that massive donations from private companies don't influence policy are laughable.

They always tell workers who want more pay increases that "there is no such thing as a free lunch".

That's why they're so desperate to hide where their money comes from.

Throughout the country thousands have signed petitions calling for the jailing of corrupt politicians.

## Crime

It is the only way to prise open the tiny golden circle of establishment figures who have dominated Irish life.

The politicians have been very quick to get on their high horses about social welfare fraud and crime.

They run ominous ads every day on the radio warning of dire consequences for people who double job when on the dole.

But it is far worse to use an elected position to advance the interests of a wealthy backer.

If and when they are found out there is only one place for this sort: behind bars.

# Don't tax us, we're the Dunnes

**DUNNES STORES** pay minimal taxes. The company is organised into a trust so as 'to minimise its tax payments through legitimate means'.

Being a trust means that they are not liable for the capital acquisitions tax. This allows them to keep the wealth in the family over generations.

If they were taxed like other companies, it is estimated that Dunnes would have to pay £125 million in back taxes.

But successive governments in Dáil Éireann have allowed them to keep trust status.

When the scandal broke, Dunnes were even lobbying for another measure that would cut their tax bill by £80 million.

It is no wonder that they were willing to make a small investment in TDs.



## HOW THE HAUGHEYS LIVE

SEAN HAUGHEY, the Fianna Fail TD for Dublin North Central, got £10,000 off Ben Dunne. He has given no explanation to his constituents why he was worth so much.

His father Charles Haughey, the former Fianna Fail leader, lives in unbelievable luxury in Kinsealy. A lot of questions are now being asked about how the Haughey family got its wealth.

Their house in Kinsealy contains

■ A 300 acre grounds with one of the finest rose gardens in Europe.

■ A freshwater lake which is the only one in North Dublin.

■ A 'traditional Irish bar' designed by the architect Sam Stephenson.

■ Stables for a stud farm and even their own dairy.

Alongside the house, Charles Haughey owns an island off Kerry, known as Inishvickaune, which is valued at £250,000.

His son Ciaran owns the 60ft yacht, *Celtic Mist*, valued at £250,000.

## Wealth

Most of this wealth, we are led to believe, was accumulated by a hard working accountant who started out in Haughey and Boland.

For more than two decades the Haughey family dominated the politics of the northside of Dublin.

They were renowned for small handouts to clubs and individuals.

Their canvassers in elections were always well paid.

But they used the votes of workers to promote the interests of the rich and powerful.

The donations scandal shows why its time that the power of this family dynasty was broken.

## PDs: Not so clean

DURING THE Dunnes scandal, the standing of the Progressive Democrats rose dramatically in the opinion polls. They have overtaken the Labour Party and now command the support of 11% of the electorate.

The PDs try to present themselves as different and cleaner than the other Dail parties. They even try to hide the links between their party and big business.

But the PDs also accept big donations from companies and refuse to reveal exactly who gave them money.

The party will enter the next general election in a 'very healthy financial position' yet they have organised very few public collections. Most of their money comes from wealthy backers.

One of the donations that became public was from Larry Goodman. He gave the party £20,000 in 1987.

The former leader of the Progressive Democrats, Des O'Malley, resigned soon after it was revealed that he re-

ceived money from the mining company Tara Mines.

The PD leader Mary Harney has claimed that Hong Kong is an ideal economy for Ireland to follow.

But unions there are severely restricted and political organisations are often fronts for private companies.

## Pay Off

The reality is that every party that supports capitalism gets money from the employers. Companies pay off politicians as a form of goodwill which will result in later favours here and there.

All of this is covered over with the justification that companies get grants and tax breaks because of the 'national interest'.

When anyone attacked the Goodman empire, for example, the Fianna Fail leader Haughey accused them of 'national sabotage'.

The PDs can no more escape the stink of corruption than the Fianna Fail party from which they came.

## 'It's say

"It's a kick in the Dunnes work we're not a bit s

That about sums tude of many Dunne the recent scandal. (My real name) has been part-time for Dun years.

"The two times we v always thought there coverage and politician tle to say. It makes se dirty work.

"If they're not gettin one company it's anotl Another worker, a agrees.

"When you see the go ting money from Dun that's why we didn't g we needed when we w She says recent even her eyes.

"We now know pol help us, we didn't kno time"

"Dunnes Stores sho their workers first.

"They said they coul pay us a couple of pe week, but they're givin a million pounds to po Dunnes workers stru

year to force the compa an annual turnover pounds, to concede bas as minimum contract h pay schemes.

Their strike got tree port from the general

# Dunne beats them all



Just used tens and twenties now, Ben

### The Dail Eireann price list

John Bruton .....	£1,000
Ivan Yates .....	£5,000
Michael Noonan .....	£3,000
Sean Haughey .....	£10,000
Colm Hilliard .....	£1,000
Sean Barrett .....	£1,000
Michael Lowry .....	£208,000
<b>Dunnes Better Value Beats them all</b>	

## Ex Fianna Fail judge to investigate politicians!

BEN DUNNE's friends in the Dail have promised to investigate the Price Waterhouse report. And like Dunnes Stores they believe in keeping it in the family.

They've appointed Judge Gerard Buchanan to oversee the operation. They can trust him. He ran as a Fianna Fail candidate in the 1973 general election. The judge will select names from the report and pass them to a committee made up entirely of .... you guessed it..... TD's. These politicians will then get down to the serious business of investigating themselves and their party colleagues.

The public has been assured that this complex process will get to the bottom of the matter. Who are they trying to kid?

## 'It's a kick in the teeth!' say Dunnes workers

It's a kick in the teeth for Dunnes workers, but we're not a bit surprised."

That about sums up the attitude of many Dunnes workers to the recent scandal. Marie (not her real name) has been working part-time for Dunnes for two years.

"The two times we were on strike I always thought there was very little coverage and politicians had very little to say. It makes sense. Politics is dirty work."

"If they're not getting money from one company it's another."

Another worker, a shop steward, agrees.

"When you see the government getting money from Dunnes, you think that's why we didn't get the backing we needed when we were on strike."

She says recent events have opened her eyes.

"We now know politicians won't help us, we don't know that at the time."

"Dunnes Stores should look after their workers too."

"They said they couldn't afford to pay us a couple of pounds extra a week, but they're giving a quarter of a million pounds to politicians."

Dunnes workers struck earlier this year to force the company, which has an annual turnover of a billion pounds, to concede basic rights such as minimum contract hours and sick pay schemes.

Their strike got tremendous support from the general public.

Both women say industrial relations in the company are as bad as ever.

The shop steward says workers who joined the company before October '94 are being victimised because they're too expensive.

She cites the case of one woman who's worked for the company since

1984. She made a small mistake and since then she's not allowed to do her work unless there is a manager by her side.

### Contempt

"They treat their workers with contempt", says Marie.

She says the company gave £500 worth of Dunnes Stores vouchers and a thank you note to all members of management who had gone to work during the recent strike.

"That really annoyed me," says Marie who earns around £3.50 an hour, "Coming up to Christmas I could do with £500."

## Why we need an alternative to Labour

THE LABOUR Party made major gains in the 1992 elections when they promised to break the golden circle that linked big business to the Dail.

But now it has been revealed that they have taken money from Ben Dunne to help finance Mary Robinson's election campaign.

While they pretended to support the Dunnes strikers who came out against the use of South African apartheid produce, their leaders were approaching Ben Dunne for money.

No wonder they now sit

back and join the rest of the parties in organising a cover-up of the present scandal.

The attitude of the Labour Party shows that a real socialist alternative is now needed. It has to be one that will take out companies like Dunnes rather than try to appeal to them.

### Attitude

The Socialist Workers Party has never received a single penny from big business. We don't want their money because we know it always comes with strings.

Our attitude to the Dunnes, Goodman and O'Reilly is one of implacable hostility.

We say openly that we intend to build a movement in this country that will be strong enough to take their wealth from them. Money that was earned from exploitation will be made available to those who work.

Our organisation is financed entirely by the contributions of our members.

If you want to break the golden circle that links big business and the political establishment, the Socialist Workers Party is who you are looking for.

Over the last few weeks we have embarked on a major recruitment drive.

Now is the time to get involved.

## What do socialists say?

### Is the state neutral?

"I AM not on any side. I'm just here to enforce the law," says the cop harassing the picket line.

"The civil service is impartial. Its role is simply to serve the elected government of the day," says the school politics text book.

Such claims are part of a political myth of capitalist society—that the state is neutral.

### Masks

The state is the interlocking network of institutions which stand above society and exercise general authority over it—the armed forces, police, judiciary and top civil service bureaucracies.

The idea that this network is neutral is crucial to the capitalist class because it masks their immense political power.

It is also crucial to the claim that our society is a democracy—ruled by the people.

Since there is no democracy whatever in the armed forces, police or any other state institution, it is essential to claim that they are neutral servants of the public for the notion of democracy to have any credibility.

Finally, the idea of the state's neutrality is fundamental to the Labour Party, Democratic Left and all similar parties.

Ever since its foundation the Labour Party has believed the way to change society is to win elections and form the government.

This government will then use its control of the state machine to run society more fairly and efficiently.

This strategy only makes sense if the government really does control the state and if the state is a neutral apparatus which will do the bidding of its supposed "political masters".

In fact the everyday experience of working class people repeatedly

many cases they are personally related. Inevitably therefore they share the same values and outlook.

Through the structure and ideology of the state institutions.

These are all strictly hierarchical and controlled from the top.

Even when odd individuals from working class backgrounds gain advancement within the state it is only on condition that they accept completely the capitalist ideology of the state.

Through the objective role of the state in society.

The state rests upon a capitalist economy.

### Economy

But a capitalist economy functions only on capitalist principles.

If the state ever tries to go against capitalist interests the economy will start to break down.

This gives the capitalist class enormous leverage over the state.

Even if parts of the state apparatus fall out of the direct control of the capitalist class they can still use their economic power to keep the state in line and ensure it serves their interests.

Karl Marx drew a conclusion of the utmost importance to socialists from this understanding of the class nature of the state.

It was that the workers' movement cannot simply take over the existing state machine and use it for its own purposes.

Instead, the only way workers can control society is by destroying the old capitalist state and creating a new state apparatus based on their own organisations and arising out of their own struggle.

This has always been the fundamental difference between revolutionary Marxists and reformists of every kind.

— JOHN MOLYNEUX

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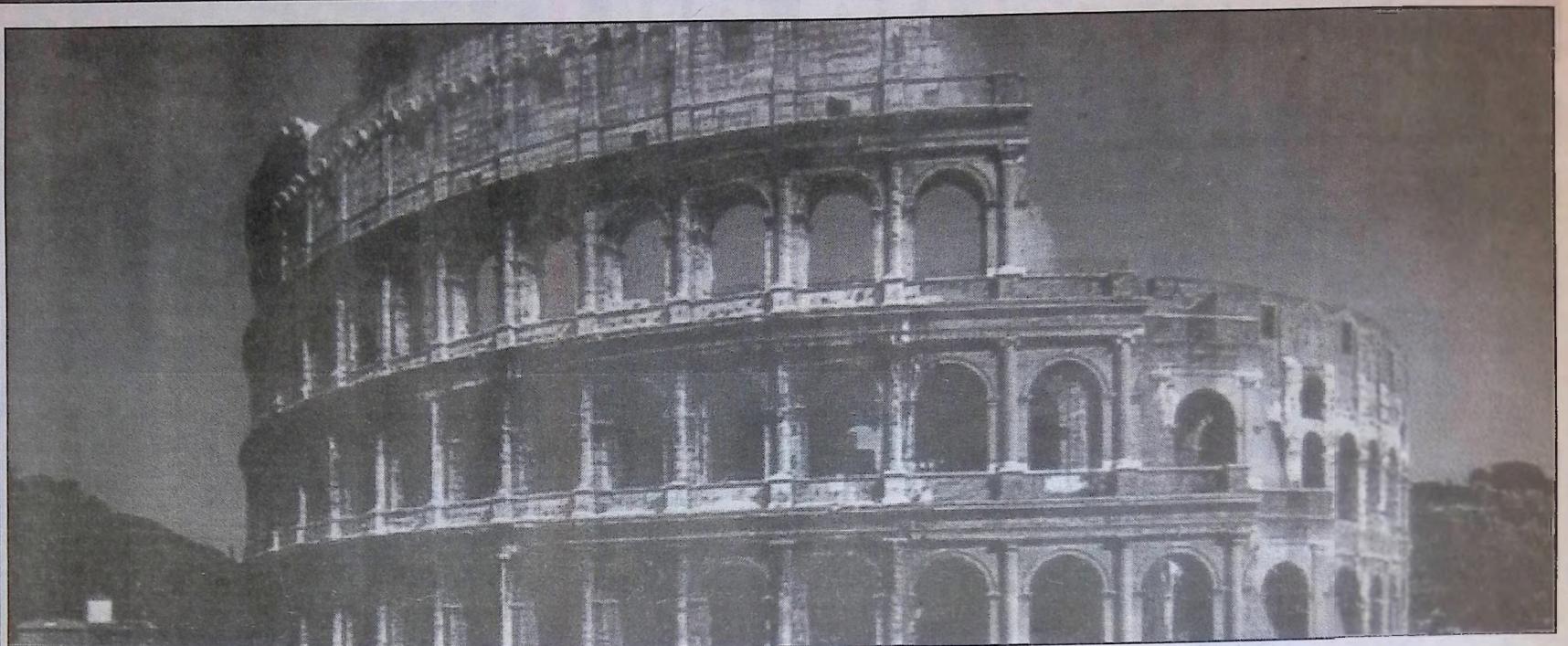
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# WHAT CAN THE ROMANS TEACH US?



Rome's Colosseum. What made the empire fall?

**STARVATION, disease, war, unemployment and political turmoil.**

That is a picture of late 20th century capitalism but it also describes the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century AD.

Ancient Rome highlights the way that societies have risen throughout history, flourished and been destroyed. It has clear lessons for us today.

That great socialist Karl Marx observed that any given society develops until it reaches the limits of the way it organises production.

Then there is either a revolution which overthrows the old ruling order and establishes a new mode of production or there is "the mutual ruin of the two contending classes".

Marx had in mind the transformation from capitalism to socialism but the decline and fall of the Roman Empire illuminates his thinking.

**R**OME EMERGED about 2,500 years ago and came to dominate the Mediterranean world until the fifth century AD.

The society was based on the exploitation of slave labour in agriculture.

There were always large numbers of small farmers working plots of land, but it was gangs of slaves on great country estates which provided the Roman ruling class with its wealth and underpinned the military and political expansion of Rome.

One historian estimates that in 225 BC there were 4.4 million free people living in Italy and 600,000 slaves. By 43 BC there were probably 4.5 million free people and three million slaves.

Over this same period Rome was transformed from a peripheral power to one which subdued its rivals in Italy and challenged the older and richer empires centred on what is now the Middle East and Egypt.

For 300 years Roman society flourished. Cities grew, supplied with water by aqueducts and connected by roads.

In literature and art Roman intellectuals took over and developed the culture of the earlier Greek city states.

This same period saw a modest but significant advance in technology, particularly on the land—the most important area of production.

Economic growth was, however, on nothing like the scale of the last 200 years. The ancient economy was fantastically

## Decline and fall

by KEVIN OVENDEN

wasteful in comparison with even the crazy standards of modern capitalism.

Today most of the profit capitalists screw out of workers is reinvested in new means of production. In the ancient world, however, the bulk of the surplus product was consumed by the rich.

Roman society reached a high point in the second century AD but then became gripped by an all encompassing crisis which continued for the next three centuries.

It was rooted in the mechanism which had made Rome so successful in the first place—production based on slavery. This mode of production placed limits on technological innovation.

**S**LAVERY IS efficient for labour intensive unskilled work which can be supervised at a distance by a single overseer. But to get the most out of sophisticated tools requires some degree of commitment from the labourer.

So there was no incentive to go beyond basic improvements and introduce new techniques in the ancient slave based economics.

The most common way slave owners attempted to increase the output of their land was simply to make slaves work harder rather than try to find labour saving innovations.

There were other inbuilt limits to the generalised use of slaves in production.

It was far cheaper to capture adult slaves through wars than for Rome's rulers to raise slave children who would be unproductive in their early years.

That meant there was constant pressure to replenish the stock of slaves by military expansion.

Huge resources were diverted from developing the economic heart of society into financing an enormous army.

Through the period of Rome's expansion one in ten of all free adult males were in the legions at any one time.

The army was composed of conscripted peasants. When they returned from five years service they usually found their land occupied by an unscrupulous landlord and worked by slaves.

The landless poor drifted into the cities, driving the population of Rome up to over 750,000—a staggering figure when the total population of Italy was about eight million.

There was little industry in the cities. Most of the urban poor remained unproductive and dependent on free grain distributed by the state to head off food riots.

Even after the Roman Empire reached the geographical limits of its expansion in the third century AD it was forced to keep a massive number of men in uniform to defend its borders and crush internal dissent. As one historian put it, "Most states have an army. The Roman army had a state."

**T**HE END of Rome's wars of conquest led to a shortage of slaves. Agricultural output fell as the price of slaves rose. Corn prices rocketed to 200 times what they had been two centuries earlier.

The currency, the silver denarius, was repeatedly devalued until it was worth only 5 percent of its value during the early centuries of the empire. Famine, closely followed by plague, laid waste large parts of the empire.

The economic stagnation intensified the conflict within the ruling class which was now drawn not only from Rome but army

from every land in the empire.

In the 50 years from AD 235 to AD 284 there were 20 emperors of whom only three died a natural death.

In AD 283-4 there was a series of risings by the rural poor in what are now France and Spain.

**T**HE EMPIRE was saved from immediate collapse by Diocletian, made emperor in AD 284, and by his successors. The measures they took fended off the immediate crisis but accelerated the underlying drift towards collapse.

The army doubled in size to 450,000 men—and increased again to over 600,000 in the closing years of the empire.

That was enough to suppress the immediate military threat from within and without but it led to even more pressure on the economic base of society.

The number of provinces was doubled to over 100. This made them more manageable but intensified the rivalry between different nobles and officials.

The economic crisis had led to a crisis of ideas as people lost faith in the traditional religions and ways of making sense of society.

In AD 312 the emperor Constantine quelled this turmoil by adopting Christianity—one of the increasingly popular brands of eastern mysticism—as the official religion of the empire.

The growing Christian priesthood helped to stabilise imperial rule but it also added to the parasitic burden on the wealth producing economy.

Towards the end of the Roman Empire the state took between a quarter and a third of agricultural output in taxes.

The small farmers, who had been spared extortionate taxes when the labour of slaves was enough to provide for their masters, now found taxes pushing them below subsistence level.

Their legal rights as Roman citizens were eroded until they were little better than slaves.

Even the moderately rich found the tax collector taking more and more to pay for the army, the church and the conspicuous consumption of the very rich. Class antagonism and conflict intensified.

The urban population fell as city dwellers reversed the journey of their ancestors and returned to the land where they hoped to stave off starvation.

Political power shifted from the imperial palace to armed frontier encampments which through diplomacy and force tried desperately to prevent incursion by new powers outside the empire.

When the invading Germanic tribes crossed the Danube in AD 407 they confronted an empire which existed in name but which no section of society was prepared to defend.

The economic underpinnings of the bloated imperial superstructure had rotted away. The western half of the Roman Empire succumbed very quickly. The eastern half, centred on Constantinople, managed to adapt and survive.

In the five centuries following the fall of Rome a new way of organising production emerged in western Europe.

In the dying decades of the Roman Empire there had already been a shift away from slavery towards production based on peasant households which were tied to the land and owed allegiance to a local lord.

Both serfs and local lords had an interest in introducing new productive techniques.

Over time this system—feudalism—replaced the remnants of slavery. Feudalism developed productivity and carried society forward before it ran up against the particular limits of its own form of exploitation and was itself thrown into an epoch of crisis.

**L**ATE TWENTIETH century capitalism is in deep crisis. Like the later Roman Empire this crisis affects all areas of society and is drawn out over a period of time.

Now, as then, our rulers' attempts to shore up their system bring short term relief but make the overall crisis worse.

But the advances in production of the intervening 1,500 years mean the crisis of capitalism does not have to be resolved by introducing a new exploitative system.

We have the means to give everyone a decent standard of living.

The modern working class, like the ancient slaves and peasants, is exploited. But unlike them it has the potential to organise independently of all sections of the rich to fight to abolish class society.



## book

## Clann na Poblachta: Republicans making their peace with the system



■ Archbishop McQuaid who demanded the Mother and Scheme be scrapped. McBride failed to support Browne against the bishops

AT THE end of World War II a new political force entered Irish politics. There was disillusionment with Fianna Fail who had been in power since 1932 and within a short space of time Clann na Poblachta emerged as a potential rival.

The Clann was founded by former members of the IRA. One of its most charismatic characters was Sean McBride, son of John McBride who was killed in 1916.

McBride became Chief of Staff of the IRA in the 1930s. But like Gerry Adams today, he wanted a way out of the militant Republicanism of the past. After Fianna Fail introduced a new Constitution in 1937, he saw an opportunity to go down a different road.

Many Republicans followed him into the Clann, hoping to give Republicans a voice in the Dail.

The Clann promoted politics that were similar to those of Fianna Fail when they were founded in 1926. They were based on a mixture of 'real republicanism' and social justice.

At first the Clann won tremendous support. TDs like Noel Browne who took on the terrible problems of TB by opening new hospitals struck won genuine sympathy.

But soon the honeymoon came to an end. McBride fell out with Browne over the Mother and Child controversy, which tried to give voluntary ante- and post-natal care for mothers, along with free medical care for all children under the age of 16 with no means test.

The Catholic Church opposed the measure because they hated any idea of a welfare state.

McBride always saw himself as a good Catholic and never in anyway sought to denounce the Church, even though the Church and Fianna Fail ran a red scare campaign against the Clann's policies.

### Fell apart

Eventually when the Coalition government fell in 1951 the party saw a dramatic fall in its vote. Its only TDs who did well were those who stood up against the Church on the Mother and Child Scheme.

After this, the party fell apart amidst splits and disillusionment and was finally dissolved in 1965.

The Clann's biggest mistake was not to take on the power of the Church. The consequences were that the Church dominated the scene for decades.

The experience exposed the limits of republicanism. Republican movements often move away from armed struggle to constitutional politics by promising to promote more social justice. Fianna Fail, Clann na Poblachta and the Workers Party have all taken this road.

But none of them seek to break the power of capitalism through the organised power of workers. This is why they compromise with the powerful. It is a lesson that is very relevant for today.

The Clann is a brilliant read. It's full of the period which was a crossroads in Ireland. If you want to read about the story of the Clann, this comes very highly recommended.—GINO KENNY

■ The Clann, by Kevin Rafter, Mercier Press £9.99

## film

# From Spacehoppers to the sleaze of Fianna Fail

*The Last of the High Kings*  
reviewed by DAVE McDONAGH

IF YOU want to see an absolute cracker of a movie then *The Last of the High Kings* is the one to go for.

It is based on Ferdia MacAnna's novel of the same name and is set in Howth, Co Dublin in the summer of 1977, around the time of Elvis Presley's death.

It tells the story of seventeen year old Frankie who is determined to enjoy the few months he has left before his dreaded Leaving Cert results.

### Weird

But first he has his completely weird family to deal with.

Frankie's father,

played by Gabriel Byrne, is an actor who makes a dramatic entry before swanning off abroad to star in yet another play.

Frankie's mother is a nationalist bigot who believes her children are descended from the High Kings of Ireland.

She commands them to march up and down the wall overlooking the Protestant neighbours'

house because she won't be lectured by 'blow-ins'.

### Furious

She is furious when Frankie refuses to chaperone an Irish American cheerleader who comes to stay with the family and even fetches the priest when Frankie loses his virginity with a

'Protestant slut'.

The film celebrates teenage rebellion against authority and pulsates with music from the likes of Thin Lizzy, Elvis Costello and Mott the Hoople.

It captures the atmosphere of the time in which it is set, complete with references to Carrie at the Savoy Cinema, the election of Jimmy Carter as US President and the 'spacehoppers' craze.

But this is no mere trip into seventies nostalgia.

For *The Last of the High Kings* has a political edge that fits perfectly with the events of the mid 1990s.

One of the central characters is local politician Jim Davern, played by Colm Meaney.

He is a sleazy and lecherous Fianna Fail TD with a base in Dublin's Northside (not that he bears any resemblance to any former FF leader we know of!).

Frankie's mother is Davern's biggest fan and drags Frankie and his mate to the polling booth to vote for him even though both are under age.

She is thrilled when Davern decides to celebrate his victory at her house in Howth where she leads the guests in a rousing rendition of 'A Nation Once Again'.

The parallels with recent events in Ireland will not be lost on audiences—the same sleazy politicians clambering to the top with the help of nationalist rhetoric and backhanders.

Through Frankie's rebellion the film reminds us how a new generation has begun to throw off the shackles of the past by challenging the authority of the Church and the hypocrisy of the politicians.

Above all *The Last of the High Kings* is full of laughs and manages to be a 'feelgood movie' without being over sentimental.

Go and see it at least twice!

## pop

## Sugar and spice rebels



■ The Spice Girls—pushing a pretty reactionary message

So the Spice Girls think that Margaret Thatcher is great.

"We Spice Girls are true Thatcherites," Spice Girl Geri said recently. "she was the first Spice Girl, the pioneer of our ideology."

I suppose it shouldn't really be that surprising. After all, the Spice "Ideology" fits quite nicely with Thatcherism—it's about getting out there and making things happen for yourself.

Except that the Spice Girls are hipper than Margaret Thatcher ever was.

One of the strangest things about the Spice Girls phenomenon is that these women have

somewhere along the way managed to get some credibility.

Those people at the *New Music Express* put them on their cover not only because they reckon they make perfect pop, but also because they like their attitude.

It's as if some people really do think that they have something to say. Spice Girls are being presented in some quarters as the true embodiment of feminism in the nineties.

Except we are not talking about angry young women fighting for their rights.

With the Spice Girls, feminism is FUN.

### by ROISIN CRONIN

Their Girl Power is about asserting yourself in a tough world.

The Spice Girls have taken on an industry that's always been dominated by men. Spice Power means they are in control.

At least that's what their manager and their record company and their marketing manager told them to say.

Because the funny thing is that Spice Girls are every bit as manufactured as the likes of Boyzone.

Just like Boyzone they were formed in response to an ad for fresh new talent. And from then on everything they do has been choreo-

graphed and perfectly planned.

Another crucial part of Spice Power is asserting your sexuality.

### Objects

Here again they reckon they are in control. Except of course they are not.

In a world where women are viewed as sex objects and commodities, Girl Power does nothing to challenge that sexism. Sex sells Spice Girl records.

Despite their image the Spice Girls are no rebels. Although music journalists seem intent on telling us otherwise, beneath the dreadful music, the Spice Girls are pushing a pretty reactionary message.



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.

# Stop the execution of Brian Roberson!

ON THE 24th January, Brian Roberson, is scheduled for execution in an American prison for a crime he did not commit.

He has been on death row in Texas for ten years—facing an imminent threat of death at periodic intervals.

His story can be repeated with some variations probably for many of the 3,000 Death Row inmates across the U.S.A.

Brian is black. When he was 20 years of age he went out clubbing with his friend Daryl one night.

On their way home they stopped off for a quick piss up an alley.

Unbeknown to them a few blocks away near where Daryl's van was parked an elderly white man was murdered.

A few days later Daryl was taken into custody under suspicion of the murder. He died in custody.

Brian didn't even know he was arrested until he heard of his death.

## Evidence

The police found out that Brian was with Daryl that night and arrested him.

Two years later without any substantial evidence—Brian's fingerprints were not found on the murder weapon and there was no positive identification of him at the murder site—Brian was sentenced to death by execution under the law of the State of Texas.

The main body of evidence against him was that he had



■ Campaigning against the death penalty in Texas

been a disruptive teenager and that he had been disturbed by the fact that his own father had been murdered by a white man years earlier. It was claimed that Brian had wanted to seek revenge.

His mother, Betty Roberson, has now sold her house to pay for his legal fees and at present Brian has had 5 stays of execution.

Each time he appeals on different legal ground—which costs huge sums of money.

Brian talks of the barbaric prison regime: "I am allowed out during the weekdays for a period of only three hours per day.

"I live in a six foot by nine foot cell. The cell is equipped with a toilet attached to the wall. There are two bunks. There is a light and two

shelves above the door".

More worryingly there is much concern over supplements which are added to prison food. Since March 1995 Vita-Pro has been added to prison food nationwide.

Many prisoners and guards have been getting extremely ill.

This is a soya-bean compound and when it first arrived in prisons it was labelled 'not fit for human consumption'.

## Regime

The barbaric prison regime obviously does not consider the prisoners 'human'.

Unfortunately for Brian, Texas has executed the most prisoners since the re-introduction of the death penalty.

Executions in Texas account for 32.7% of all executions.

Brian Roberson is a very brave man. His time in prison has politicised him and made him aware of the class and racist nature of America (as he calls it).

He says "In any part of the world, as long as these type of regimes are in power, these conditions will continue to be common. Only true revolution, waged by the exploited masses, will bring about the end of this worldwide".

Like many others he wants to build a revolutionary movement that will relegate the gas chamber, the electric chair and the lethal injection machine to the museum where they belong.

■ Brian is Prisoner #886, Ellis 1 Prison, Huntsville, Texas.

## State barbarism

THE US President, Bill Clinton, has championed the death penalty and even ordered the execution of a mentally retarded man in his home state of Arkansas.

The death penalty is outlawed in most 'developed' countries of the world. The U.S, however manages, to go one step further.

It is one of only four countries worldwide who enforce the death penalty for juveniles. Since 1990, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Yemen all have executed 1 juvenile each, the United States has executed 6 juveniles.

However, the Death Penalty was not always part of the U.S. legislation. The Death Penalty was temporarily stopped in 1972 on the heels of the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement and the Black Power movement.

When there is an upturn in class struggle it has a direct effect on the way racism and barbarism is challenged in society.

## Racism on Death Row

84% of prisoners executed in America since 1977 were convicted of murdering white victims despite the fact that blacks and whites are the victims of homicide in roughly equal numbers.

Numerous studies have shown that murders involving white victims are far more likely to result in death sentences than those involving black victims.

In Brian's case, the white man who murdered his father got 13 years sentence in prison and was released after 2 or 3 years yet Brian automatically got the death sentence.

## News from SWP branches

# IF you hate the politicians— join the SWP!

"You will be charged with incitement if you go on with this meeting" said the Garda "And who are we inciting hatred against?" asked Brid Smith, who

was chairing the meeting. "Against politicians" came the reply.

Over a hundred people gathered in North Earl St in Dublin in December to insist on the SWP's right to hold a street meeting on the corruption scandal.

Ten people joined the party immediately afterwards.

The scandals in Dáil Eireann show why it is so urgent to build an alternative.

In the next general election a number of SWP candidates will be running.

They are pledged to expose the privilege and corruption in Dáil Eireann.

But they will also argue that parliament can only be used to give voice to the anger outside.

It is not the place where real changes in society can be organised from.

The SWP is now engaged in a rapid recruitment campaign to drive home the message that corruption is rooted in capitalism and can only be ended when working class people struggle against the system that breeds it.

## Target

In December, the party set a target of recruiting 70 new members by the new year.

The shift in the political atmosphere means that all branches have now begun to recruit. The

organisation as a whole is well on target to begin to expand.

But already the scale of anger in Irish society has meant that our previous objectives are far too modest.

In the North, the logic of Paisleyism is there for all to see in Harryville. In the South, the burning issue is who will fill the vacuum left by Labour's betrayals.

What is needed now is a party of several hundreds for the struggle ahead. This is why:

■ Every supporter of the party will now get a New Year's message making a direct appeal to get involved.

■ On street sales in the New Year, the SWP will also be engaged in a major recruitment drive.

## SWP branch meetings

**BELFAST**  
Meets every Wed at 8pm  
Central Hall Rosemary St.  
**CORK**  
Meets every Tues at 8pm in  
Deriney's Pub,  
Cormmarket 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 Old Brogue,  
Dorset St.

**DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK**  
Meets every Thursday at  
8.00pm Contact 8722682  
for details

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

**DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL**  
Meets every Wed at 8.30pm  
in Conways, Parnell St.

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

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

**DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN**  
Meets Tues Tallaght Welfare  
Society, Tallaght Village.

★ 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

## 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

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

## ICTU TRIES TO RUSH THROUGH PARTNERSHIP 2000

# Vote No to the Social Con Trick!

**THE TRADE Union leaders are trying to rush through a new national pay deal to replace the PCW.**

Ballotting on 'Partnership 2000' takes place in January followed by a special ICTU conference at the end of the month.

The deal is being hailed as a new 'social contract' but should be called the 'social con-trick'.

We are supposed to be impressed with the combination of pay increases and tax cuts on offer but these amount to very little and there are major strings attached.

The main points of the deal are:

■ **PRIVATE SECTOR:** Increases of 2.5 per cent in January 1997, 2.25 per cent in January 1998, 1.5 per cent in January 1999 and one per cent in September 1999.

These are tiny increases when you consider that inflation is now running at 1.9 per cent.

■ **PUBLIC SECTOR:** An increase of 2.5 per cent on the first £200 a week in July 1997 with 2.5 per cent on the balance in April 1998. This will be followed by 2.25 per cent in July 1998, 1.5 per cent in July 1999 and one per cent in April 2000.

■ **LOCAL BARGAINING:** A local bargaining increase of up to two per cent is on offer in both

sectors but the bosses will try to squeeze out more productivity in return for this.

In the Public Sector the two per cent will be subject to proof of increased productivity.

■ **TAX CUTS:** The lower rate of income tax will be cut by a miserly one per cent to 26 per cent but there will be no cut in the top rate of 48 per cent.

### Bosses

Meanwhile the bosses will get away with a reduction on Corporation Profits Tax and PRSI payments.



■ **Bruton, Qinn and Bruton address the talks**

The deal will leave thousands of workers on poverty wages.

It does nothing to force employers to pay a minimum wage and will not stop them from re-

cruiting yellowpacks on even lower rates of pay.

Above all the new programme is an insult to workers who have created huge profits for the rich

in recent years.

Instead of selling this deal to their members, trade union leaders should be organising a fight for decent pay in every job.

## WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON ICTU?

THE ICTU leaders have divorced themselves from the anger of thousands of workers and have tied themselves into government policy.

For the past few months they have been cobbling together another lousy pay deal instead of leading the opposition to the government.

■ The ICTU's silence over the Dunnes Stores scandal was remarkable. Instead of mounting demonstrations against the corrupt politicians the union leaders were inside government buildings stitching up a new programme.

■ The ICTU stayed silent when Proinsias De Rossa launched his attack on the unemployed.

This has paved the way for measures to force people into low paid jobs - in turn this will push down wages, just like the Job Seekers' Allowance in the North.

The union leaders' commitment to 'social partnership' is really a commitment to managing Irish capitalism.

### Qualify

They have accepted the limits on public spending needed to qualify for European Monetary Union. But EMU has led to big attacks on workers' living standards throughout Europe, resulting in huge struggles in France, Germany and elsewhere.

Partnership 2000 will further extend 'social partnership' into individual enterprises. The unions will promise to negotiate 'change' in return for local pay increases.

But 'change' is simply a buzzword for get-

ting us to work harder for longer hours, with cuts in overtime and other allowances. In short it means increasing profits by squeezing workers even harder.

To add to this pressure we will be encouraged to own shares in the companies we work for. But this means that workers will be told they have to give more concessions in order to improve their 'stake' in the business.

There will even be a new National Centre for Partnership which will offer joint training for union officials and human resource managers!

But how can workers be partners with the likes of Dunnes Stores or Tony O'Reilly? These people gain their wealth by exploiting workers and so-called 'partnership' will only increase that exploitation.

## THE DEAL CAN BE BEATEN

Trade unionists should be organising now to defeat Partnership 2000.

This time there is a better chance than ever before of winning a NO vote.

Workers are increasingly bitter that they have gained nothing from three previous deals over the past ten years. Profits have soared but wages have fallen far behind.

Above all the programme can be beaten because groups of workers have begun to see the alternative posed by militancy.

From the victorious strike at the Royal Dublin Hotel to the threat of action bus workers which forced the payment of an overdue increase, there are signs of a return to struggle.

Every activist should campaign for a NO vote on the new deal but this should go hand in hand with building support for workers in struggle.

■ Order VOTE NO leaflets from SWP, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel (01) 872 2682

## NURSES:

# All set to strike

Nurses have been balloting on strike action after turning down another miserable offer from Ruairi Quinn.

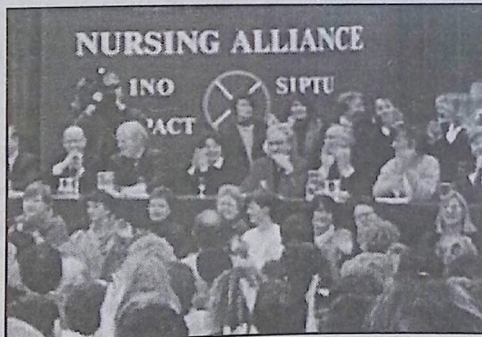
Nurses are now looking for three main improvements.

They want:

■ The abolition of pay cuts for young nurses who come out of college.

■ The right to retire at 55. They want parity with psychiatric nurses who can retire at this point.

■ Proper pay increases for those at the lower end of



■ **Last year's nurses' rallies**

the scale.

The deal that Quinn offered gave pay increases to those at the top of the

scale.

■ An end to the situation where up to 50% of staff in some hospitals are on

temporary contracts.

A national strike of nurses would galvanise the trade union movement. Already there are indications that it would be hugely popular.

### Support

A poll in the *Sunday Independent* has shown that 77% of the population would support the nurses if the strike goes ahead.

The main danger now is to stop the leaders of the Irish Nurses Organisation trying to patch up another rotten compromise.

## CIE management climbdown

THE THREAT of all-out action on the buses and railway forced CIE management to back down in December.

The company tried to refuse to pay a 2.5% pay rise due under the national wage agreement from October.

The Labour Court intervened and urged the unions to postpone strike action pending their decision.

But immediately the National Locomotive Drivers Committee—a rank and file group of train drivers—demanded the company agree

to pay or face an immediate shutdown of the railway.

As one loco driver told *Socialist Worker*: 'We have been organising for two years and were able to force

the issue.

'It was our willingness to take action that made the Labour Court recommend CIE pay up, which it did.'

This is a magnificent

springboard from which to fight the Viability Plans which CIE now want to implement from March 31.

A Dublin Bus driver spoke to *Socialist Worker*:

'The unions begin negotiating on these plans in January and rank and file CIE workers need to get organised to prevent any union concessions on jobs, wages and conditions.'

'We have formed an Action Group in Dublin Bus to fight the viability plan and to fight for an all-out bus and rail shut down if any group of CIE workers is attacked.'

### CITYBUS VICTORY

Belfast busdrivers struck for two hours after they heard that a colleague had been dismissed.

The strike was unofficial and happened after shop stewards toured around the city buses bringing them to a halt.

The man was quickly re-instated after this magnificent gesture of solidarity.

## YOUTHREACH WORKERS VOTE FOR STRIKE ACTION

ALMOST 700 workers in 65 Youthreach centres around the country have balloted for strike action over a long-standing claim for better pay and conditions.

Youthreach was set up as a temporary scheme to cater for early school leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds who had nothing to look forward to but long-term unemployment.

But now, seven years on, highly motivated and dedicated staff who run the

scheme are still all employed on temporary one-year contracts.

Unlike school teachers, Youthreach staff get no salary increments and have no pension rights.

### Grievances

They work a longer week (35 hours) and much longer year (48 weeks) than teachers but for much lower wages.

A confidential report, written by consultants for the Department of Education last April, acknowledged that all the staffs' grievances were genuine and in urgent

need of resolution. But the Department—under the control of Labour's Naimh Breathnach has done nothing.

Only when a one-day strike was called last month did the Department agree to last-minute talks with the Teachers Union of Ireland which represents most of the staff.

But the TUI leadership is dragging its feet, afraid that if the Youthreach staff win parity with teachers, the Department will use this as an excuse to erode teachers' working conditions to the level suffered by Youthreach staff.

## DUBLIN CORPORATION

Dublin Corporation have won acceptance of a productivity deal by its craft workers.

The core of the deal is an attack on demarcation and increased flexibility with painters doing the work of carpenters etc.

Union leaders backed the deal and with the offer of a £200 cash payment before Christmas the deal was accepted by 281 to 163.

Despite this there was considerable opposition to

this attack on conditions with UCATT, for example, voting 31 to 21 against.

One UCATT member told *Socialist Worker*:

'I see the deal as the thin end of the wedge. The trade union leaders played on divisions between tradesmen and general workers.'

'Instead of colluding with management and encouraging bickering between different groups of workers, the trade union leads should be giving a lead.'

Following last month's

rejection by general workers of a productivity deal one worker described the mood as "very militant".

But the fear is the deal will simply be repackaged in the Labour Court.

A Corpo general operative told *Socialist Worker*, "The Corpo want to bring in more private sub-contractors."

"There is big opposition to this. We see it as paving the way for privatisation of Corporation services."

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

**Inside:**  
**Unionists keep the Tories in power**—PAGE FOUR  
**Decline and fall of the Roman Empire:** PAGE EIGHT

## HARRYVILLE:

# The bitter fruit of Paisley's hatred



**A TINY number of bigoted thugs are inflicting terror in Harryville, Ballymena. They have been stirred into action by the rhetoric of the Reverend Ian Paisley.**

One of their anonymous leaders has told the local Ballymena paper that they are sure of 'private support from Unionist politicians'. Catholic families who live in the area have been petrol bombed, dragged from cars and beaten.

### Hardened

People attending the local Mass are called "Fenian scum" by a three month old picket of hardened loyalists. "We've lived in Harryville for 30 years" said one Catholic family. "We can't take this terror. We've decided to go". The strongest party in the Ballymena area is the Democratic Unionist Party led by



One of the Catholic homes in Ballymena wrecked by loyalist thugs

Ian Paisley. They have nine councillors in the town and have even dubbed the town 'the citadel of the DUP'. Some of Paisley's biggest rallies are held in the local town hall.

For decades Paisley has been spewing out a message of hate against Catholics.

### Curfews

He claims that they "self ghettoised themselves out of

a blindfolded loyalty to republicanism and Roman Catholicism".

He has called for curfews in Catholic areas and for Sinn Fein to be banned.

No wonder a group of hard-

ened thugs have taken him at his word and embarked on a campaign to remove the few remaining Catholics from their area.

### Murder

As the violence has escalated, Paisley has tried to distance himself from his followers.

This is nothing new. As far back as the mid sixties, one Hugh McClean made the famous statement. "I am terribly sorry I ever heard of that man Paisley or decided to follow him".

He had just been charged with the Malvern St murder of two Catholic barmen.

As usual Paisley distanced himself from the murder—but McClean knew where the message of hate came from.

This time around there is even more direct evidence of connivance between Paisley and the thugs.

## Baby Doc warned of 'dire consequences'

**VIOLENCE AT Harryville only seriously escalated after 'Baby Doc' Paisley told the neighbouring Catholic population of Dunloy that they were 'scum' and that they should expect 'dire consequences'.**

At first Paisley Junior was actively involved in organising the protests at Harryville. The pretext used was that they were in retaliation for the blocking of Orange marches.

### Thugs

But there is no comparison between a parade that is designed to express superiority over Catholics and the rights of people from whatever faith to attend a religious building.

Orangeism is not an 'expression of Protestant culture'. It is a movement that is built on bigotry and hate. The only differences between the thugs who attack Catholics at Harryville and Paisley is that they have not learnt the tactics of evading responsibility for their actions.

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## The bigots who feed off poverty

**THE HOUSING** estate of Ballykeel is where most of the loyalist protestors come from. Like many other Protestant estates, it suffers from dire poverty.

A recent survey by the Housing Executive showed that there was a male unemployment rate of 50%.

Paisley pretends to represent poor Protestants against the 'fur coat' brigade. But his method is to turn the anger and bitterness that comes with poverty against Catholic scapegoats.

He often claims that Catholic areas—and even 'Catholic countries' in Europe—are grabbing scarce resources from Protestants.

But it is the Tories not Catho-

lic workers who are responsible for the run down of jobs and the introduction of the JSA.

And they are only in power today because Trimble and Paisley continue to vote for them in Westminster.

Paisley also helps the Tories by sowing divisions between workers everywhere he can.

### Opposed

His thugs must be actively opposed at Harryville.

If they manage to close down this small Catholic congregation it will encourage every bigot to try the same thing in their area.

The trade union movement organised huge demonstra-

tions to demand peace two years ago. But over the last three months they have done nothing over Harryville.

In the New Year, they should immediately call a mobilisation of their members to end the scandalous intimidation of people attending a religious ceremony.

But they should also go further. From now on Paisley should be ostracised from any trade union event. Never again should union leaders welcome him onto worker protests at they did in the midst of the Compass strike.

This man stands for one thing: sectarian hatred. Harryville shows exactly where that leads.