

Telethon – A hypocritical sham

Workers Solidarity Movement

1994

ON FRIDAY MAY 20th, starting at 3 pm., R.T.E. will broadcast over 10 hours of the “People in Need” Telethon. All over the country people will – with the very best of intentions – organise fund-raising events to raise money for “the poor”. There are two main reasons why we feel the Telethon should be opposed

Charity – no matter how well intentioned – cannot solve the poverty crisis. Poverty is caused by the unjust social and economic policies of successive governments which place profits before people. It cannot be challenged by any amount of charity but only through serious and thorough political change. Events such as the Telethon serve only to deflect attention from this fact and from the fact that essential services should not have to depend on charity provision for their survival.

-> A glance at the list of trustees of the “People in Need” organisation is indeed very revealing. It includes such illustrious names as – Margaret Heffernan (personnel director of Dunnes Stores), Noel Gilmore (managing director of Gilmore Communications), Charles Kenny (chair, Clancourt Management), Norman Kilroy (managing director, Grafton Group). As directors of prominent private sector Irish companies, all of these people have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Margaret Heffernan, for example, contributes greatly to the creation of poverty through Dunnes Stores’ policy of low wages and part-time workers.

The involvement of these people is pure hypocrisy and an attempt to salve their own consciences and gain a few “brownie points” for “charitable deeds”. Trade unionists should be asking themselves why the name of Billy Attley appears on this list of trustees, although it is no surprise to us that Attley would find more in common with these bosses than with their exploited workforces. This telethon is just a sham.

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Retrieved on 18th November 2021 from struggle.ws
Published in *Workers Solidarity* No. 42 – Summer 1994.

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