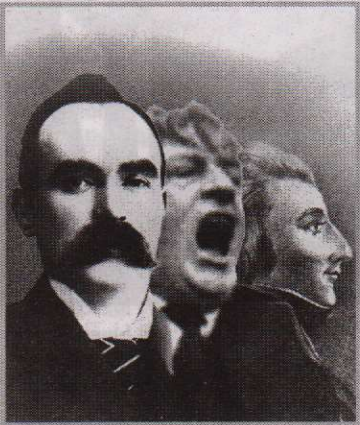


# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

*It will be socialism or barbarism!*

**Pay cuts for us.  
\$1 million bonus  
for bankers.**



**Inside  
this  
week**

20 page

picture

special:

"A

Workers'

Guide to

Ireland"

# Tories' Xmas message

● **VAT on fuel** ●

● **Unemployment Benefit cut** ●

● **£10 a week extra tax** ●

● **Hospital closures** ●

● **Student grant cut by 10%** ●

● **Homelessness increases** ●

● **Invalidity Benefit cut** ●

See article page 2



## WE SAY

## Who will stop the fascists?

WHO WILL STOP the fascists? Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's "Liberal Democrats" could be the biggest or second-biggest party in Russia's parliament after the elections on 12 December. Despite its name, this party is fascist. Zhirinovskiy talks about "curbing the power of Jews", stopping crime by shooting criminals on the spot, and banning all non-Russians from trading in Russia. It is also, apparently, the best-organised of the parties. The others, including the "Russia's Choice" party favoured by Yeltsin, are haphazard coalitions.

The shift to capitalism in Russia is not the triumphant growth of democracy and prosperity which Western ideologues promised. It means disruption, inequality, and poverty. Yeltsin, the West's favourite democrat, is edging towards dictatorship in order to control the process.

To the millions hurled into despair, and disillusioned both with official "socialism" and official "democracy", no wonder the fascists look good. Even in the countries of well-established capitalism, crisis and decay are boosting the fascists. Italy's second-richest capitalist, Silvio Berlusconi, has openly come out in support of the fascist MSI, which got 40-odd per cent of the vote in the biggest cities on 5 December.

For the first time in half a century, a major magnate has backed an openly fascist party. He will not be the last. His class is becoming aware of the historic alternatives. Five years ago our magazine "Workers' Liberty" had a front cover, "Le Pen: a Hitler for the 1990s?" Many people thought we were alarmist, losing our sense of proportion. Few would be so complacent today. There is a race between the forces of working-class socialism and those of the far right. One or another will reconstruct society. We cannot predict the pace of this race, nor every twist and turn of its course; but we know, as our masthead says, that "it will be either socialism or barbarism", and that a great deal depends on what socialists do now to prepare, educate, and organise ourselves for the coming showdowns.

## AWL Xmas prize draw

THE ALLIANCE FOR Workers' Liberty's Xmas raffle will be drawn on 30 December.

All profits will go to help the AWL and our paper, *Socialist Organiser*.

Quite a bit of money has already come in. Thanks to comrades in South East London, Leicester and South West London for cheques and raffle stubs sent in during the

past couple of days.

Send in money now! For more details/extra books of tickets phone Mark on 071-639 7965.

**1st prize: Video Recorder**

**2nd prize: Colour T.V.**

**3rd prize: Case of Wine**

**4th prize: £20 Book Token**

## Nursery victory in danger

LABOUR council leaders in Islington, north London, are trying to weasel out of the decision to keep Springdale nursery open made by a joint Labour Group/Labour Local Government Committee meeting on 22 November.

The nursery has been occupied by parents for seven months to stop the council closing it.

Council leaders have written reopening the nursery into 1994-5 budget calculations — but they may well try to chop it on the grounds that the Government's pay-out to Islington for next year is lower

than expected.

Organised action is needed on three fronts.

- Sustain the occupation.
- Build large and militant lobbies of the crucial Labour Group meetings in January which decide the budget.
- Get the January Labour Party ward meetings to pass motions insisting that the 22 November decision be carried out.

Donations and messages to, and information from: Islington Under-Fives Action Group, c/o Springdale UFEC, 15A Springdale Road, London N16 (071-923 0263).

## The Tories' Xmas message to you

From front page

"WE'LL squeeze the poor until the pips squeak!"

That's the Tories' message to working-class people this Xmas.

And they are deadly serious. Just look at some of the policies they have pushed through in the last few weeks:

- VAT on fuel
- cuts in Unemployment Benefit
- taxes up £10 a week
- 10% cut in student grants.

These policies are designed to make working-class people — and in particular the most vulnerable — pay for the massive economic and social crisis of British capitalism.

These attacks come on top of fourteen years of sustained attacks on working-class living standards.

The gap between rich and poor has grown. The average pay of top bosses is over £10,000 a week. The average income of the poorest 10% of the population is £54 a week.

Tory tax cuts have also made sure that the rich get to keep a bigger share of their fat

salaries. £31 billion have been handed out in cuts in income tax since 1979. The top 1% of the population received 27% of this, whilst the bottom 50% received just 15%.

While the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. In the past five years alone top executives received pay increases of 133%. At the other end of the scale, the bottom 10% of the population is now 4% worse off than it was in 1979.

Homelessness is rocketing. Mass unemployment has become the norm both in and out of recession. Trade unions have been shackled by anti-union legislation. Local government democracy has been virtually destroyed. A two-tier system — one for the rich, one for the poor — is being created in health, education and the social services.

The response of the labour movement leadership to the Tory onslaught has been pathetic. For Labour Party leaders in particular, the response has been: if you can't beat them, join them. They have allowed the Tories to set the political agenda and transformed Labour's policies into a version of pink Toryism.

This situation cannot be



Out to solve their problems at our expense

allowed to continue.

The central drive of the Tories' policies is now directed against what remains of the NHS and the rest of the welfare state.

After having spent the last fourteen years attempting to weaken and undermine the bedrock organisations of the British working class — the trade unions — the Tories have now trained their sights on the highest conquest of our movement so far: the welfare state.

Either the labour movement begins to find ways to launch a fightback against the Tories in 1994 — with the aim of driving them from office — or working-class people face a grim future indeed.

- For a mass campaign of political action to defend the welfare state.
- For a one-day public sector strike against cuts, mob losses and the pay freeze.
- Labour and the TUC must fight!

## The industrial front

## RAIL

RAIL UNION RMT leader Jimmy Knapp has just finished his whistle-stop tour of Britain's railway towns. His mission: to tell rank and file rail workers what he, and the rest of the right-wing majority on the council of executives, are not going to do to fight privatisation. All Jimmy can manage in the way of strategy is the vain hope that railworkers can keep the national Promotion, Transfer and Redundancy (PTR) agreement even after the national structures within which it was negotiated at BR are abolished.

## UNISON

ACTIVISTS in the giant public sector union UNISON are planning a fightback confer-

ence on 15 January 1994 in Newcastle. For details contact 091-232 8520 ext 6504.

## PRISON OFFICERS

CONFLICT between the Prison Officers' Association (POA) and the Tories is still brewing. The POA is set to go to court before Christmas to get their industrial action against Market Testing — the contracting out of prison work — declared legal. But if they fail action could still take place. They will claim that by refusing admissions they are carrying out the duty of "constables" in preventing a breach of the peace.

## AMBULANCE WORKERS

A BIG majority of London ambulance workers have voted

for an overtime ban in protest against management attacks on jobs and conditions. Unfortunately the ballot was only "consultative". A proper ballot should start now with action in the new year.

## WELFARE STATE

AROUND 160 people attend-

ed the Welfare State Campaign conference on 4 December in London. The conference attracted a broad spectrum of labour movement activists. Unfortunately, the conference focussed solely on opposing the right wing in the Labour Party (admittedly an important task) and ignored the need for a mass campaign on the streets.

## On strike at Xmas

DON'T FORGET these workers who will be spending Yuletide on the picket lines. Messages of solidarity and donations to:

## MIDDLEBROOK MUSHROOMS

Carol Westerman, 2 Tythe Barn Way, Kellington Goole, North Humberside

## HILLIER'S ENGINEERING

8 Launceston Avenue, Caversham Park, Reading RG4 0SW

## HARVEST PRINTERS

GPMU, Graphic House, 35 Albert Street, Rugby CV2

## REVELL &amp; GEORGE

29 Warwick Road, Chorlton, Manchester

## ARROWSMITHS

c/o Mike Vine, 45 Leinster Avenue, Bristol

## Postalworkers reject pay freeze

POSTALWORKERS have demonstrated the level of disgust that exists amongst public sector workers against the Tories' pay freeze. Sorting and delivery staff in the UCW have thrown out the Tories' 1.5% pay offer by a margin of 3 to 2.

The union's leadership should now build on this anger. A clear wage claim worth fighting for should be hammered out and linked to the demand for a shorter working week. That way resentment over pay can be fused with the burning issue facing postalworkers: the defence of jobs in the face of the introduction of new technology.

## Defend the Tower Hamlets 9!

NINE youths were arrested following a vigil for Qudus Ali — victim of a vicious racist attack — held outside Whitechapel Hospital on 10 September.

Qudus Ali has still not recovered consciousness and has been moved to a hospice.

The vigil was attacked by the

police and the youth defended themselves. The nine youths arrested have been charged under Section 1 of the 1986 Public Order Act. This charge — of riot — carries a maximum life sentence.

Drop the charges! Contact the Defence Campaign on 081-548 0099.

## Emergency appeal

## Funds needed

INTERNATIONAL Workers' Aid has a convoy of aid returning from Tuzla in Bosnia. They have another on the way and more planned. They urgently need help. Donations and affiliations to 'IWA', PO Box 30, London SE15 5EP. Affiliation costs £25 for national organisations; £20 Labour and trade union branches; £5 individuals.



Cheese and whine

GRAFFITI



By Cyclops

**H**AVE YOU ever thought what the world would be like if Ken Livingstone had never become involved in politics?

This is a question to which Lord Red Ken of the Cheese Commercials has applied his intellect. In the *Observer's* very interesting "Any Questions" column he answers the question "If you were not a politician what would you like to be?" with "I would like to be a conservationist working with whales or great apes". Why wait? Go to it Ken!

That would do a lot for our political environment, which the cynical "fake left" Livingstone pollutes.

**T**HE British legal system is on trial (again). Case for the defence: the British judiciary are fair and impartial; barristers are rational people who know how best to defend their clients; cases are heard on their merit.

Case for the prosecution: call the first witness, London lawyer Mark Stephens: "We keep a selection of old boys' ties, so lawyers can pick out the appropriate one to keep the judge happy. One day you can be an old Etonian and the next day a Pauline".

Verdict: case dismissed on the grounds of insufficient public school education.

**D**REAMING of a green Christmas? Now you can get environmentally friendly Christmas trees — plucked from a Welsh hillside, repotted, delivered to your door and then on Twelfth Night, collected and returned to its home.

£40 gets you a 6ft Norway spruce and £60 an equally impressive Scots pine.

**I**N PARTS of the "Third World" capitalism reduces many to scavenging on rubbish tips for articles to sell as scrap or secondhand goods. The sacred market rules, okay? And in Britain?

At the Department of Transport's Register of Seamen and Shipping section management have circulated a memo among staff about how much was saved by the department from a couple of window frames dumped by builders renovating a neighbouring building and appropriated and used in the section for redecorating for which management had won the contract with an in-house bid.

The staff are asked to keep an eye out for any other building materials and office furnishings left lying around. They are also asked if they wouldn't mind decorating their offices in their spare time.

The first Civil Service car-boot sale cannot now be far away.

# There's nothing like a thriller...

Matt Cooper reviews *The Hawk*



Directed by David Hayman



Annie Marsh (Helen Mirren) confronts her brother-in-law (Owen Teale) with a large pointy stick

**M**OST OF THE major studios released their Christmas blockbusters weeks ago and so this week's best new release is a low budget British film on the appropriate Xmas theme of serial killers.

*The Hawk* was originally filmed as a BBC "Screen One" production but was considered good enough for a big screen release — probably a misjudgement born of the BBC's new commercial ethos.

A mouse-ish Manchester housewife with a history of mental illness, Annie Marsh (Helen Mirren), begins to suspect that her husband Stephen (George Castigan) is "the Hawk" — a serial killer of women who plucks out the eye of his victim in the manner of a hawk.

The film vainly aims at the suspense of Alfred Hitchcock's *Suspicion*. Is

Stephen the Hawk? Will anyone believe his neurotic wife? Or is the Hawk really the brother-in-law, a decidedly dodgy garage mechanic (Owen Teale)? Or is it just the delusions of a woman losing contact with

reality?

The problem with *The Hawk* is that the suspense is never really turned up. For most of the film the viewer is left in little doubt about who the killer is or about Annie's mental state.

## Addams family values

"Addams family values" (on general release) is a genuinely funny film and even, up to a point, a useful little satire on bourgeois American values and institutions. It is a lot better than its predecessor, "The Addams family". The cast is terrific: 13-year-old Christina Ricci, Joan Cusack, Anjelica Houston and Raul Julia. The best "Christmas" film around.

Where there are areas of doubt the characters are neither fully developed or interesting enough to make us care. The result is a suspense thriller with little suspense and few thrills.

# Di-lovely, Di-licious, Di-vious

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**W**HATEVER you think of the monarchy, it would take a heart of stone not to have read the reports of Princess Di's emotional farewell without feeling even the smallest urge to laugh out loud.

For most of the last twelve years this pampered parasite has basked in media adulation. Even as her "fairytale" marriage gradually collapsed she cultivated the tabloid rat-pack, feeding them her side of the story in a series of calculated leaks. She was — and remains — an intuitive PR person of enormous skill. She also has the advantage of being somewhat

more photogenic than her husband. Quite a few members of the rat-pack (notably the *Mirror's* preposterous James Whitaker) were literally infatuated. The most Walter Mittyish of them all, Andrew Morton, even persuaded himself that his schoolboy fantasies were reciprocated: "She's looking at me! She's looking at me! She fancies me!" he once whispered breathlessly to a colleague after Di had glanced in his direction.

Morton, of course, was the instrument of her boldest exercise in media-manipulation, the book *Diana: Her True Story*. She didn't deal directly

with Morton, but did authorise her circle of sloaney friends to bad-mouth Chazza in off-the-record interviews. The book was serialised in the *Sunday Times*, and Buckingham Palace hit back by putting it about (in the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Spectator*) that Di, Morton and Andrew Neil were embarked upon a campaign to bring down the monarchy.

Naturally, Di came off better in the row that surrounded Morton's book. Charles's men lacked the contacts and the rapport that Di had developed with the rat-pack. The lovely princess remained, for a while, the tabloids' favourite pin-up. But the very success of Di's coup was to rebound on her in the longer term. Tabloid editors know when they've been take for suckers: from then on Di was fair game. The *Sun*, *Mirror* and the rest splashed revelations

of bulimia nervosa, suicide attempts and, of course, the "Squidgygate" tapes, throughout 1992. For the first time, the media princess discovered that the press can be a fickle friend. Even simpering admirers like Whitaker could not protect her from the logic of the process she herself had set in motion: just like the film stars, pop singers and other tawdry "personalities" she emulated, Diana learned that the press can knock you down just as quickly and easily as they build you up — especially during a circulation war.

Di's "friends" are now busy putting it about that the final straw was the Mirror Group's publication of the infamous gymnasium photos (a line gleefully peddled also by the *Sun* in its newfound incarnation as guardian of press morality). But, strangely, all the press

## Socialist Organiser at Xmas

This week's *Socialist Organiser* has an unusual format because it is a special issue covering the Christmas period. *Socialist Organiser* No. 585 will be out early in January.

seem to have been remarkably well briefed in advance of the princess's "shock" announcement last week. The *Sunday Telegraph* went so far as to suggest that the speech had been prepared before the *Mirror* published its photos. Clearly our Di has not lost her touch for PR.

## Who can't afford the Welfare State?

**T**ORY BRITAIN can't afford decent provision for the old, the sick, the young, and the jobless. But it can afford bonuses of over \$1 million each for 100 executives, and over \$5 million each for 161 partners, at the Goldman Sachs investment bank.

As the "Guardian" pointed out, Goldman Sachs' total rake-off — from juggling with money, not from producing anything useful — was about the same as the total income of 23 million people in Tanzania last year.

THE NATIONAL Health Service, which can't afford proper treatment for patients, can afford to increase spending on company cars for its managers by one-third in a single

year, to £70 million. At that rate, three years' car expenses would pay for building a whole new hospital! Spending on managers' pay in London has increased by 109% over four years, while 23% less was spent on nurses and midwives.

ANOTHER LITTLE extra the Tories can afford is pay-outs for ministers who resign or are sacked. £193,000 has been paid out tax-free since the last General Election to ex-ministers, on top of the £31,000 most of them continued to get as MPs, and on top of the large incomes they got from new jobs. David Waddington, for example, was paid £13,000, then went straight to a £68,000 job as Governor of Bermuda.

THE DRIVE, heavily backed by the Tory government, to get people into "personal pension" schemes, has been an almost complete rip-off, according to the official Securities and Investment Board. The Board says that 80 per cent of the 500,000 people who have transferred out of company pension schemes since 1988 were sold bad deals by unscrupulous salespeople. Theoretically they have to be compensated for their losses — totalling over £1 billion — but loopholes are certain. Hundreds of thousands were also misled into opting out of the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme. They may not get compensation. That's how the free market works. The Government still backs personal pensions.

## Benn on video

**W**ITH a few honourable exceptions, the "left" Labour MPs are a sorry lot — dispirited, timid, cowed by the Labour Party machine. Even where they make a mark usually it has little specifically left-wing about it. Tony Benn, now almost 70, is the outstanding exception. He has not made his peace with the Labour establishment. He fights for the left. He tries to prepare the

future. His ideas are often quite a few miles from ours — on the EC for example — but that is a matter of argument and debate within the left.

Benn has now produced the "first Parliamentary video", consisting of excerpts from twelve of his recent speeches on key issues, for example on the Gulf War. It costs £16. Write c/o Tony Benn, House of Commons, London SW1A 1AA.



# SOCIALIST

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Labour Party purges activists

## Defend the Wallasey six!

By Gail Cameron

# Strikes can stop the pay freeze!

By Tony Dale,  
Manchester City Council UNISON

**K**ENNETH CLARKE'S budget stepped up the Tory war on public sector workers. Following this year's 1.5% pay policy, the Chancellor has declared a three-year pay freeze. Now it is clearer than ever before that the Tories want to make public sector workers pay for the economic crisis.

To balance the government's books public sector workers will be expected to accept a pay freeze. Of course the government won't accept a pay freeze for themselves. They along with the rest of parliament will continue to vote themselves handsome pay rises.

Will the pay freeze hold? Council workers, health workers and others have seen their living standards eroding year after year. This year's 1.5% pay limit was only accepted after a number of strike ballots. One third of white collar council workers who voted in this ballot voted for strikes against the pay limit.

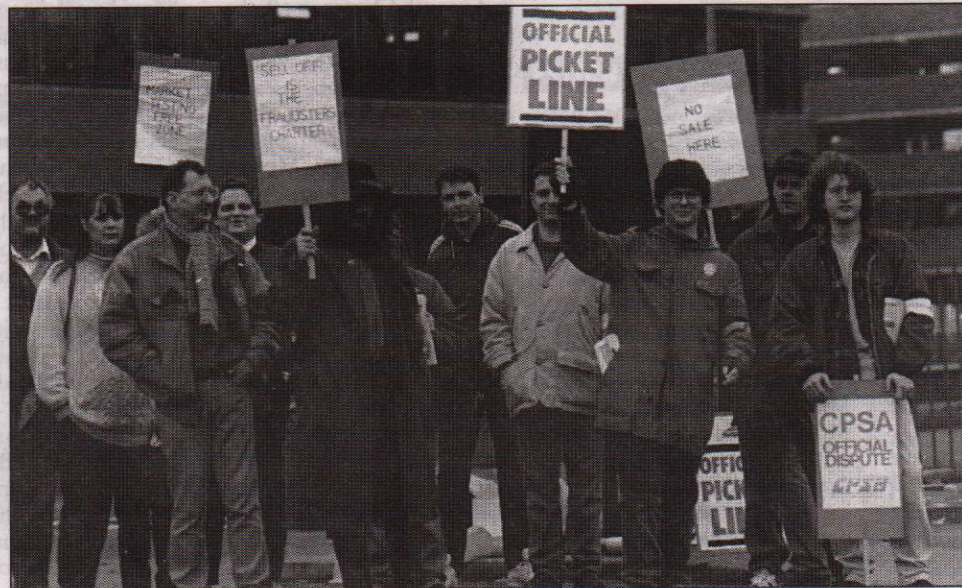
A public sector-wide campaign is needed to break the three-year pay freeze. UNISON is already looking at linking together the white collar and manual local council pay campaigns. Motions going to UNISON's local government sector conference in March are calling for "a public sector wide campaign against the Tories' pay freeze", "a campaign for industrial action to break the pay freeze".

Alan Jinkinson, UNISON's General Secretary, has warned "this three year pay freeze will cut living standards by 10%".

The Tories are squeezing public sector pay as the key to cutting public sector spending. The battlelines are drawn. The time has come for UNISON and the other public sector unions to launch a campaign to defeat the pay freeze. Such a campaign must be public sector-wide and based on industrial action.

Alongside the pay freeze, Kenneth Clarke in the budget announced plans to slash government funding for local council services.

Councils are to face cuts in central government funding of £860 million this year and



Civil Service workers show the way to fight back

double that the year after. "In real terms, the cut is 5%" is how the *Economist* reported it.

Up and down the country, in council after council, a 5% cut in funding represents a massive attack on public services. How will local councils respond? If they follow their track records Labour councils will meekly comply and pass on the Tory cuts by hiking up rents and putting through cuts. They will also try to comply by contracting-out more and more jobs so as to reduce their overall wage bill.

Council Tax bills are set to rise by at least 7%. Some councils are planning to put through 20% rises. Higher bills for declining services.

At the same time thousands and thousands of council workers' jobs are under threat.

The TUC predicts that up to 270,000 jobs will be lost over the next two years because of public spending cuts.

Public sector unions need to respond with a mass campaign to defend public services. *Socialist Organiser*/AWL supporters in UNISON have been arguing for one-day strikes to defend the NHS and to defend council

services as a launch pad for campaigns to oppose the rundown of public services. We will continue to keep up the pressure.

**O**VER THE LAST few years Labour Party membership has declined by a third. In Wallasey, on Merseyside, the picture is even worse. Denied the right to select a parliamentary candidate, with the CLP unable to meet, and with six leading members suspended and under threat of expulsion on unstated charges, party activists have become demoralised and many have left. In little over a year membership has decreased by about 50%.

This week the Regional Official, Eileen Murfin, announced plans to stop the rot. Her answer — further reduce internal democracy and accountability. From 1994 it is proposed ward Labour parties should meet quarterly, preferably for no longer than half an hour. It appears members may no longer be allowed to hold party representatives to account, discuss or make policy. Their time can be spent fundraising and going to socials.

Clearly this is just another attempt to create a passive membership, a membership unable to get involved in determining the direction of the party.

Pass motions demanding the full reinstatement of the six members and the CLP, and send to Labour Party HQ, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17, with a copy to Wallasey Socialist Campaign Group, Flat 2, 51 Egremont Prom, Merseyside L45 7PZ.

Out soon: new *Workers' Liberty special*

### Socialism and democracy

Especially since the East European revolutions of 1989, all the mainstream press and politicians seem agreed on one thing: democracy can only mean Westminster-type parliamentary democracy, and socialism as a revolutionary alternative to capitalism can only mean tyranny and bleakness. Yet the amount of real self-rule by the majority under the present system is more and more obviously feeble; the need for a radically different system more and more clear. This new *Workers' Liberty special* exposes the official lies and looks into the real issues.

100 pages, £2. Advance orders post free. From: WL Publications Ltd, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

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**SOCIALIST** Inside this week  
**MALCOLM**  
Behind the hype

**Buses, rail, pits, public sector**

**STRIKE TOGETHER!**

Unite to beat sackings, sell-offs, cuts