

Socialist Challenge

**In memory
of Bobby
Sands**

Demonstrate Sunday 10 May
Staines, Middlesex (Atkin's constituency)

Assemble 1pm
Staines British Rail Station
Train from Waterloo

BOBBY SANDS MP

**'We the
risen
people
will turn
tragedy
into
triumph'**



FREEDOM FIGHTER



Owen Carron, Bobby Sands' election agent, after Bobby's election triumph

A terrible beauty is born

By Gerry Foley,
Belfast, Monday

THE DRAMA of Bobby Sands' hunger strike is coming to its conclusion. The Irish Republican prisoner's life is rapidly ebbing away. Bobby is reported now to be blind and in great pain.

His eyes are dimmed with the red fog of burst blood vessels and appear sunk deep into his skull. But he has remained determined and politically clear-headed to the last.

His confidence in his principles and in the support of the Irish people seems to have given him serenity.

'He is prepared for the end', his mother said last Thursday as she came out of Long Kesh concentration camp after visiting her son.

She said this calmly and with resignation, although throughout the hunger strike she was visibly overwhelmed with worry and grief. Her wan but calm appearance seems to express the resolution of a tragic conflict.

Honour

She knew that her son was dying; that he had to die to maintain his honour and the honour of his people.

Like the resolution of a classical tragedy the end of Sands' hunger strike is producing a terrible clarity in which the humanity and self-sacrifice of the Irish fighters stands starkly counterposed to the hypocrisy and cynicism, cruelty and arrogance of the British rulers and their allies.

The Irish side is symbolised by Bobby Sands, a gifted and sensitive young person, a poet, forced to fight back against the system that first drove him from his family home and then drove him from his livelihood; by his mother, an ordinary working class woman who has shown her selfless acceptance of her son's sacrifice.

The British side is represented by the stony reiteration of Prime Minister Thatcher that

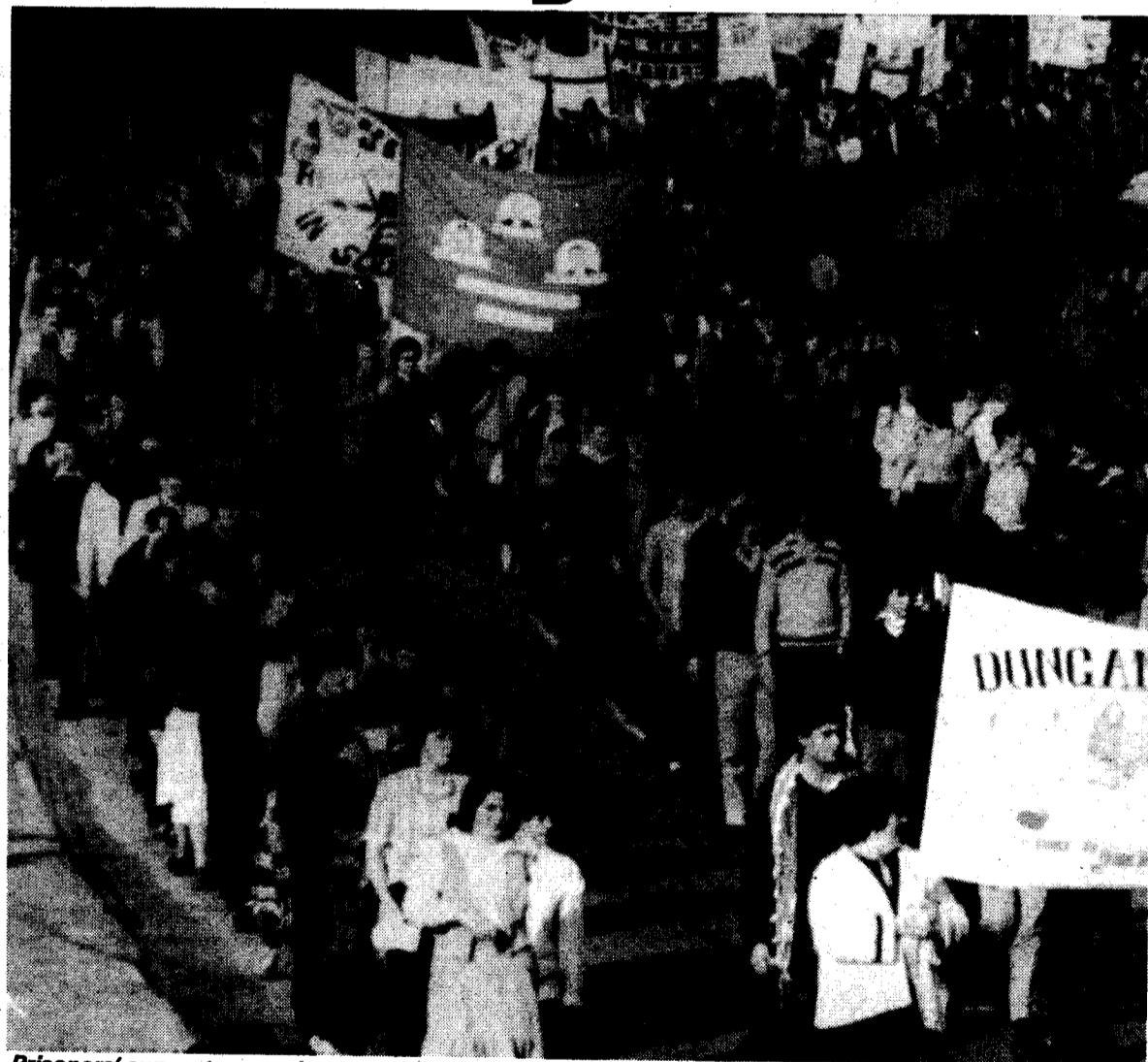
Sands is a criminal, even after he has been shown to have the sympathy of the electorate in Fermanagh and South Tyrone; and when the whole world can see that Sands has the support of the masses of oppressed people.

Taunt

Over the radio and on TV here in Belfast, we could hear Northern Ireland secretary Atkins and prime minister Thatcher say that they will never concede political status to a 'criminal' such as Sands, and hear British MPs shouting their approval.

This was an unbearable taunt to even the most conservative and conciliatory sections of the Irish people. In an editorial on 1 May the *Irish Press*, the daily paper most closely associated with the governing party in the South, stated:

'Safely ensconced in Westminster, British MPs may chorus "hear, hear" while Mr Atkins doles out the platitudes buttressed



Prisoners' supporters on the streets in Dungannon at the end of March

by Mrs Thatcher's reiteration of "not an inch", but the fact is that Bobby

Sands got more votes in being elected to the House of Commons than Mrs Thatcher, 10,000 more, and the rest of the world is not shouting "hear, hear", it's shouting "listen, listen", from New Delhi to Los Angeles.

'Something has moved over Northern Ireland. There is no status quo to go back to. The genie of discontent will not be returned to the lamp by a few sly rubs at England's legal code.'

The editorial denounced the British administration in Northern Ireland: 'Mr Atkins certainly

has some cheek when he can stand up in the House of Commons and appeal to people not to respond to provocations, while at the same time residing over an army and police operation that is setting in motion a form of internment.

Tension

'So far 60 known H Block activists have been picked up under seven-day detention orders, which means they can be released and picked up again in a week's time and so on.

'Could anything be more provocative to the Catholic population at a

time when tension rises like a tangible thing in the North as Bobby Sands' life ebbs away?'

The arrogant taunts of the British Conservatives were followed by a jackal-like yap made by the Labour Party spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Don Concannon. He visited Sands on Friday, calling on him to give up because he would get no support in the Labour Party.

Sands did not give his permission for the visit. Concannon just marched into the dying man's cell.

When he emerged he

said that Sands was still refusing to come off the hunger strike and that the prisoner had had 'quite a political argument' with him for 'about a minute'. Presumably that was all the time Sands needed to express his political opinion of Concannon.

Christ

The indignation of the Irish people began to boil over after Concannon's visit. This was reflected in an *Irish Press* editorial of 2 May, which compared Concannon to the Roman centurion who gave Christ vinegar instead of water as he hung on the cross.

A polarisation is clearly developing. The entire oppressed Irish nation is being pushed into confrontation with the British, including even the bourgeois forces that remain insolubly tied to imperialism.

The British government's intention seems to be to provoke the Catholic population into futile explosions of rage that will break harmlessly against its massive armoured power, leaving behind exhaustion and hopelessness.

Blood

What the British government is saying to the Irish people in effect is: 'We can do anything to you we like and there is nothing you can do about it.' It corresponds to the verse of a well-known Orange song that goes: 'We're up to our knees in Fenian blood, surrender or you'll die.'

As I write this, British soldiers are standing on a balcony in the block of flats facing my window and underneath a walkway on the ground. They seem to have been moved in deliberately to draw the fire of the population.

They have been kept standing there for hours, and they are being stoned by a crowd of children, some of them with rocks in one hand and lollipops in the other. I can see one five year old apparently trying to decide whether he would rather bounce his ball or throw a rock.

Groups of kids accompanied by small yapping dogs, are charging armoured vehicles and soldiers in riot gear, sending volleys of stones harmlessly off them.

Anger

The National H Block Campaign and the political groups that work in it are trying to build forms of mass protest to channel the anger of the nationalist people, to make clear to the entire Irish people and the world the inhuman and criminal character of British policy in Ireland and to mobilise the indignation of humanity against it.

The objective of the H Block Campaign leaders is to turn Britain's policy of provocation back on it; to point to the arrogance, cruelty and cynicism of the government so forcibly that all sections of the Irish nation will be welded together in opposition to it, and will be reinforced by world public opinion.

The words the Irish poet WB Yeats wrote when the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising were shot will bear repetition this coming week in Belfast: 'All changed, changed utterly, a terrible beauty is born.'

Belfast arrests

TEN people were arrested during the May Day demonstration in Belfast on Saturday. They were seized when an H Block banner was unfurled during the march.

Those held include John MacAnulty, Peoples Democracy candidate in the Northern Ireland local elections. John was detained for the entire weekend.

Police also confiscated the banner of a women's trade union group and arrested Ann Hope, a trade union official and member of the Communist Party.

WOMEN from Royal Pride and Lee Jeans are fighting back against the dole and for a woman's right to work. They should be leading the march, not the mayors and the church people.

We've been on strike for 10 weeks now fighting for union recognition and the national pay agreement. You can see how Thatcher and bosses like ours are using unemployment to attack the unions as well as our right to work.

I used to think that anyone could go out and get a job but now it's impossible in Manchester. My husband's been made redundant recently and 8 out of the 9 women at Royal Pride have husbands on the dole or on short time working.

ELSIE BROAD, marcher sponsored by FTAT and the Royal Pride strike

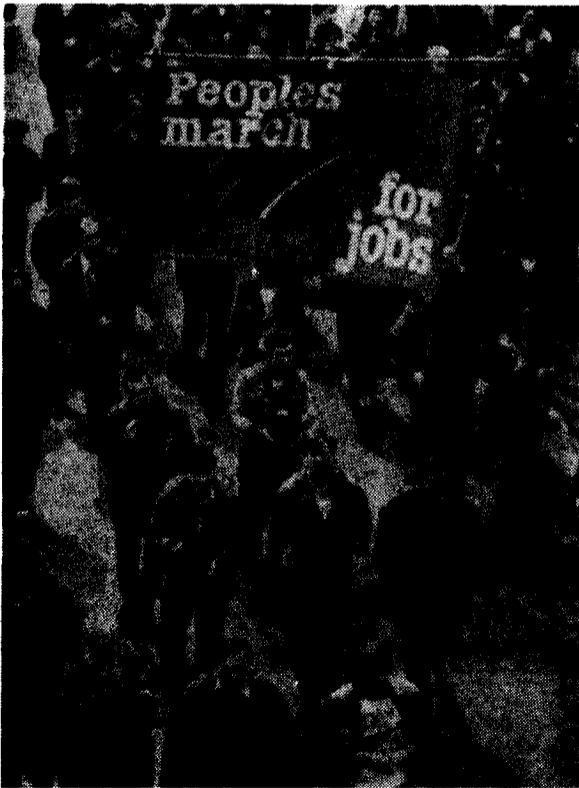


I USED to work at Perfection Tubing in Birmingham but then they sacked all the younger workers. I was only half way through the second year of my apprenticeship. When I started everyone on my course had a job, now two thirds of them don't.

Half my mates in Handsworth are on the dole along with 8,500 other people, which shows the way unemployment affects blacks.

Since the Brixton riots the police have been getting really heavy in Handsworth. Three months ago it was all 'community policing', but now it's panda cars all day and foot patrols in twos at night.

The reception for the march in Handsworth could be really good, but the black organisations like the IWA have done nothing except officially sponsor the march. GUS, sponsored by Birmingham Campaign against Racism and Fascism, is a 19 year old unemployed motor tuner and Revolution supporter from Handsworth.



We're working for an employer that's implementing the full Tory policies. He is purposely starving the Manchester factory of work because it has a strong trade union organisation.

We're working a two day week and the workers can just get by but there are rumours of a one day week. All the other Schreibers factories are on full time.

We want to use the march to bring to as many people as possible the situation of the unemployed and those on short-time. We hope to be able to address the rank and file at the factory gates.

We'll be trying to persuade people that they must organise in the workplace against factory closures and we'll advise that the best way is through occupations.

PHIL DAVIES, convenor of Schreibers in Manchester and national executive member of FTAT.

'Workers threatened with closure should occupy like us'

Lee Jeans women tell Welsh workers

By Celia Pugh

THE Lee Jeans occupation for jobs caught the imagination of South Wales miners when two young delegates from the factory made a four day visit to Wales last week.

At a May Day miners' social at Cwmbach, Cecilia McGrath and Elaine Patterson were presented with a book recording the history of the South Wales Miners' Federation.

Inside the cover was a special dedication from its author Hywel Francis and from Tower Lodge secretary Tyrone O'Sullivan: 'Your struggle shows the way for the whole working class. The Joint Lodges of Rhondda and Aberdare support the Lee Jeans workers... this is just the beginning, so don't give up'.

Elaine and Cecilia explained that they were 'choked' by this gesture, as they added the book to their collection of NUM badges and another miners' history presented by the Mardy Lodge committee, and signed by the South Wales NUM secretary Emlyn Williams.

Pithead

Earlier in the week the Lee Jeans women were warmly welcomed at three pithead meetings specially called before the miners went underground.

At the Mardy pit canteen Elaine told 200 miners: 'There is no way we will take redundancy money. We will only take our jobs, by rights they are not ours to sell. If anyone tries to move us, it will be with great difficulty as we are determined to win.'

The fifty miners who gathered outside the

Penrhiwceiber lamp room the next day were moved by this determination, and overwhelmingly agreed to make a collection. The following day they spoke at the Tower colliery near Aberdare.

Almost £250 was raised in the collections at Penrhiwceiber, Tower, the

Joint Lodge social and a May Day miners' demonstration on 2 May addressed by Cecilia.

The Mardy Lodge plans to hold a collection next week, and at a half-hour meeting with South Wales NUM executive member Eric Davies, the occupation was promised 'a substantial donation.'

Further pledges were made by Newport Labour Party and delegates to the Wales TUC who took collection sheets back to their branches.

In the busy four day visit Cecilia and Elaine also spoke at a packed fringe meeting at the Porthcawl Wales TUC and at a rally in Maesteg, the nearest town to the first pit to strike for jobs last February. On Thursday evening 30 April they were welcome guests of Newport Labour Club.

One of the high points of their tour, which caught the attention of the local press, was a meeting with six members of the trade

union committee at the British Aluminium Rheola plant at Resolven near Neath.

This factory is threatened with closure later this year and Cecilia and Elaine spent an hour discussing common problems in the fight to save jobs.

When Bill Howell, the chairman of the trade union committee asked what support the Lee Jeans women wanted, Cecilia was quick with her reply: 'You can sit in. We've come to South Wales to get financial and moral support for our occupation. But we're also here to spread the message that workers threatened with closure should occupy like us.'

Commenting that 'we could be in the same situation as you in some months from now' the Rheola officials agreed to send a donation to the Lee Jeans workers.

Rallies

Invitations to speak at May Day rallies with MP Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock at Abertillery, Ebbw Vale and Bridgend had to be cancelled as Elaine and Cecilia cut short their visit to rush back for a mass meeting.

As their train prepared to leave for the long trip back to Scotland, Elaine and Cecilia explained to Socialist Challenge supporters who organised their visit: 'We've had a great time, everyone has been so friendly and helpful. It's certainly been worth coming to Wales even though it's made us a bit tired!'



The occupied Lee Jeans factory

Support grows for Peoples March eastern leg

By Rab Bird, AUEW shop steward, Sheffield

WORKERS from all over Yorkshire will converge on Sheffield on Friday 8 May to protest against the devastating effects of the Tories' economic policies.

From Huddersfield in the west and Doncaster in the east two spur marches totalling 200 people will meet at the outskirts of the city, in this high point of the eastern leg of the Peoples March for Jobs.

On Monday the marchers, dressed in the green colours of the Chartist movement, will set off on the 200-mile trek to London. There are 70 marchers from Sheffield, each sponsored for £75 raised mainly from the trade union movement.

The AUEW's construction section, faced with imminent redundancies at Humber Bridge and Drax power station sites, set the ball rolling with a donation of £1,000.

Joint shop stewards committees in GKN Shardlow's Sheffield, British Steel Stockbridge, and Rotherham BSC crafts

LIVERPOOL TO LONDON 1-31 MAY

ON THE MARCH AGAINST THE



TORIES

committee have matched this amount. And backing has poured in from other sources: the churches; personalities like Jack Charlton, Billy Bremner and Tony Capstick; and small business people ruined by the capitalist recession.

The 8 May Sheffield demonstration will show the shopfloor power needed to

solve the problem of unemployment.

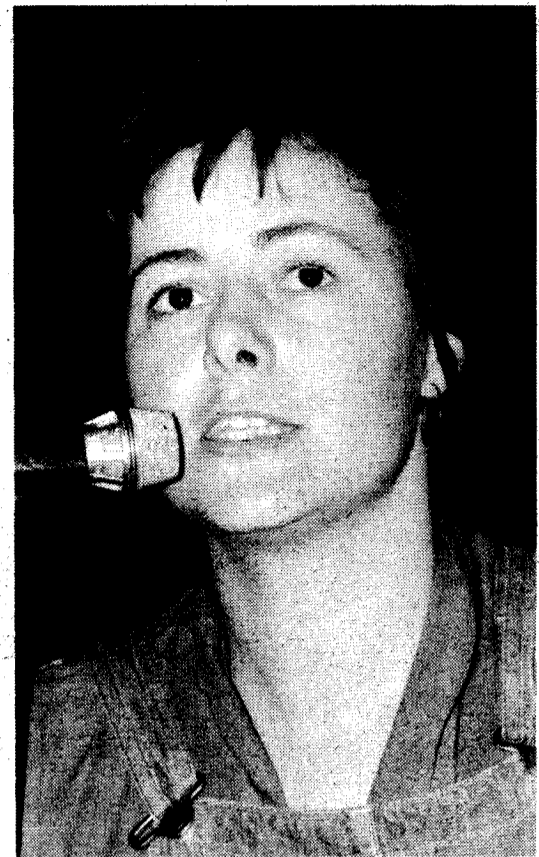
Mass meetings at Shardlow's, Bone Cravens, BSC Rotherham crafts committee, Lockwood and Carlisle's have already voted for a walk-out to join the march through the town. They will be met by 400 miners led by Arthur Scargill.

With more meetings being organised in other plants there is likely to be a rush of spontaneous walk-outs as the march comes through the industrial east end.

March co-ordinator Albert Bedford, a TGWU full-timer seconded to work on the march, claims that a similar response is being organised in all the towns and cities on the way south. Corby, devastated by the BSC closure, will probably come to a standstill.

The amount of union support is crucial. Brennan Bates, route organiser for the eastern leg and local AUEW militant, explained that the AUEW executive council could do a lot more to help:

'While we welcome its formal support for the march, the AUEW executive has given no financial support or circulated their branches urging support, in the way the TGWU has done.'



Lee Jeans women in Downing Street women's rights picket last Monday

Valerie Coultas: one of the marchers

'We need a Labour government committed to socialist policies'

THE People's March for Jobs arrives in Stockport on 7 May. It will be met by hundreds of trade unionists.

IAN TUCKER, convenor of Thos Storey's and branch president of Stockport Boilermakers union, told JEFF WEST about the jobs battle and the policies needed to fuel it.

In the early 1970s redundancies at Storey's were prevented by strike action, but now there is some complacency at work about jobs as we haven't been threatened yet with redundancies.


This attitude will continue until the union leadership determines a policy against unemployment and fights for it.

Stewards

Our branch has circulated all our shop stewards in Stockport about the march and we're sponsoring our branch secretary on the march from Liverpool. All the branch officers are taking Thursday off work to go round our members in the smaller factories.

We supported the Liverpool and Glasgow demonstrations and sponsored some unemployed members to go. One or two have since got involved in the branch activities. We've managed to

UNEMPLOYMENT:



A 35 HOUR WEEK NOW!

BY PAT HICKEY

20p

UNEMPLOYMENT: a 35 hour week now! New Socialist Challenge pamphlet by Pat Hickey. Only 20p. Order from Birmingham's Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6DR.

help one or two of our members to find jobs, thereby showing that the union can help the unemployed and is prepared to support those fighting for jobs. We have supported the Gardner's and Lightning Mixers occupations.

I think the unions are to blame for letting the government get away with 2½m unemployed. The miners have shown that the Tory government is not unbeatable. The unions nationally should organised more action to achieve the same.

I don't agree with import controls, as they can backfire on us. We lost a bridge order in Indonesia because of some restrictions made on their goods.

Solution

Action by those in work for a shorter working week would start to solve the problem of unemployment. Overtime should be banned in the next round of national engineering negotiations. Coupled with a 35-hour week this would make an immediate difference to unemployment.

The unions and the next Labour government would have to look at ways of creating jobs and retraining people into viable industries.

What we need is a strong government prepared to carry out Labour Party policies: a Labour government and party that involves shopfloor workers and relates to their needs. In fact, a Labour government committed to socialist policies and prepared to stand by them through thick and thin.

It's better to lose an election by fighting for

these policies than losing one by watering them down, as Callaghan and Healey did.

I think Tony Benn would be capable of leading such a government — at least he has the enthusiasm for carrying out Labour Party policies.

I believe the money to pay for all these policies could be found. For a start all the money wasted on unemployment benefits could be used instead to create jobs.

Resources are wasted on atomic submarines. I don't think we need a nuclear warhead. That

money could be used to invest in our future, through the health service and our children's education.

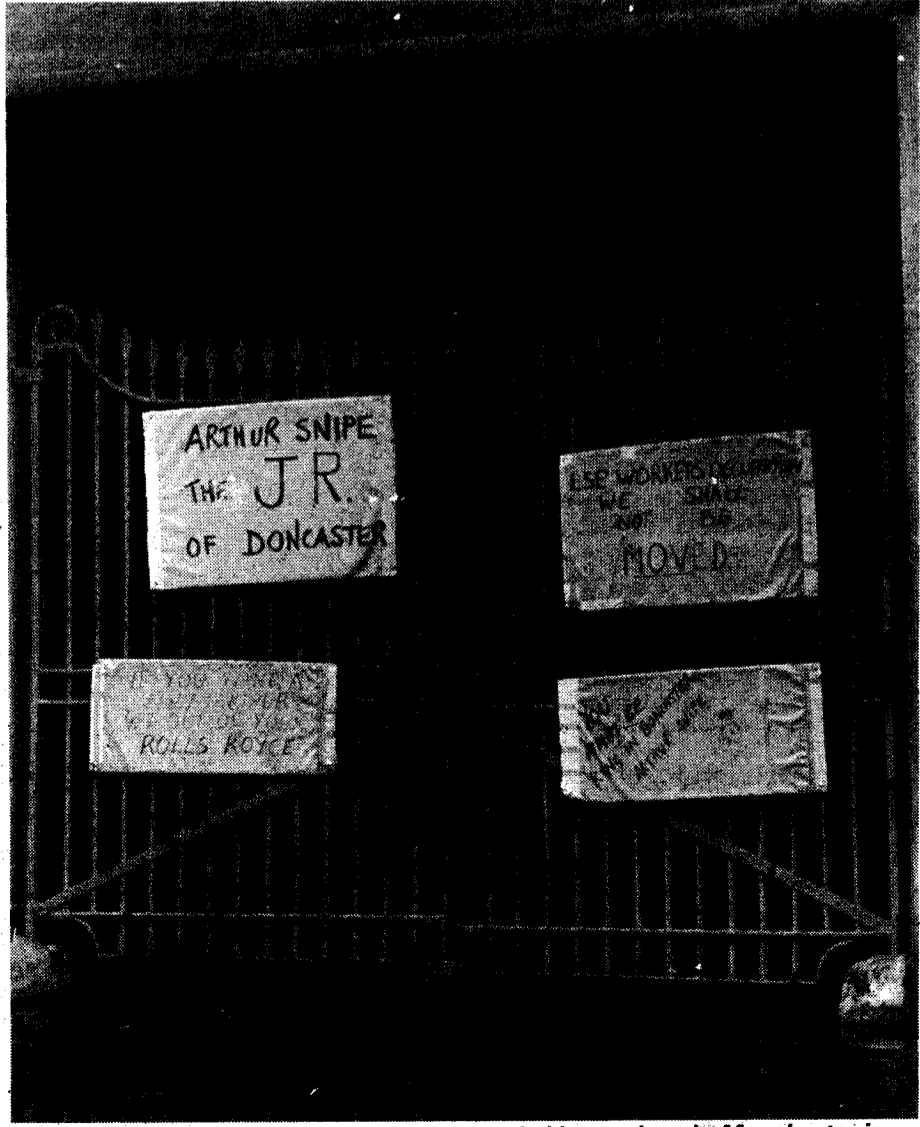
The unions should challenge the government over youth unemployment. Money is needed for retraining to allow young men and women to choose a trade they want to follow. The YOPS schemes are just 12 months off the dole queues.

And the unions should pressure firms to employ women and offer them opportunities, not to use the excuse that there are no toilets. Job applicants should be treated equally

and not put off because they're women.

Little has happened yet to recruit the unemployed into the unions. The government is putting them in a position of starving or taking low-paid jobs. We need a national minimum wage, otherwise we're going back to a situation where the working class is downtrodden and cap in hand.

That was the reason for the unions in the first place — to defend workers' interests. They should start doing that now.



Laurence and Scott's: another factory occupied by workers in Manchester in the fight for jobs

DIARY OF A JOBS MARCHER

THURSDAY: 'Liverpool will be the Jarrow of this generation. The important difference with Jarrow is that they went cap in hand. This march is of breadth, strength and determination.'

This was how Jack Dromey of the South East Region of the TUC sent us on our way in Liverpool at the start of the People's March.

He was speaking at the briefing meeting for the 250 marchers who, when it swells to 500 people at Bedford will be part of the 'largest ever march to London.' We would be writing a chapter in history, participating in the most important event since the Second World War.

'Dhobies itch' would be the biggest peril facing us on the way, warned a Liverpool doctor; nylon underpants and socks would have to be removed; feet should have been soaked for a week.

Some marchers began to realise that they were not so well prepared for the greatest event since the Second World War.

It was stressed by the organisers that it was a broad march. Everyone had to obey the stewards. The eye of the nation was on us.

FRIDAY: Thunderous applause greeted Tony Benn as he gave the departure speech on Pier Head by the River Mersey.

'If the press will not tell the people of Britain what this march is about, then the march will have to take the message to them. Why don't the press publish the number of people out of work every day? Why don't they publish the numbers of schools and hospitals closed down?' he went on.

'I believe that there must be a fundamental change in the structure of the economy and society. But this country cannot simply be changed by a Labour Cabinet, nor by Labour councillors, nor by Labour MPs. It can only happen if the vast majority of the people want it.'

Amid the ovation that followed this speech the People's March moved off to Halewood. Workers came out of their factories to greet us. Spirits were high among the marchers when we reached St. Peter's school in Halewood.

Both Elsie, a worker from the Royal Pride factory currently on strike for union rights, and myself were wearing sashes in the suffragette colours demanding 'A woman's right to work.'

Much discussion was provoked by the sashes. A young woman from the Young Communist League asked to wear one. Another woman from Liverpool told us 'Keep those sashes on.' One of the TUC stewards objected however saying it was divisive. A discussion on a woman's right to work ensued.

The matter was happily resolved. Now all the women on the march can wear sashes made by the North West TUC!

Shopworkers keep 40-30-30 formula

By Chris Jones, Bolton USDAW (in a personal capacity)

THE annual conference of the shopworkers' union (USDAW) voted last week to retain the 40-30-30 electoral college as union policy on electing the Labour leadership. This was despite an impassioned speech from Labour leader Michael Foot. The conference threw out proposals for a 33-33-33 formula and for 'one-member, one vote'.

In a smart move the union executive argued for keeping the status quo position but against switching to the 33-33-33 formula if 40-30-30 fell at the Labour conference.

That way they hope to leave the right-wing dominated conference delegation free to switch to Michael Foot and the right wing's preferred 50-25-25 option.

The new right wing grouping in the union, 'Mainstream', had argued for conference to reject all the formulas so that the conference delegation could decide.

Rejected

The conference however clearly rejected the proposal to vote for Benn as deputy leader. The argument went that Foot and Healey were a unifying team to deal with the party's biggest problem, the Tories.

Though the left suffered setbacks in the elections some advances were made on union policy. Conference voted for a woman's right to choose and for outpatient abortion facilities on the NHS.

The executive was also instructed to inform all branches of decisions taken by the union delegation to Labour and TUC conferences and to explain why the decisions were made.

In his conference address Michael Foot argued for Labour's main priority on returning to office to be leading the campaign for world disarmament.

He failed to mention unilateral disarmament however, and the conference went on to pass motions not only opposing Cruise and Trident and in favour of a European nuclear free zone, but also supporting both unilateral and multilateral disarmament.

The union left wrongly supported both positions on disarmament. The result unfortunately leaves the executive with a free hand to interpret conference decisions as they please.

Despite the passing of some militant policies the union still lacks a leadership willing to fight in the interests of its members. The left has a long way to go to transform this situation.

AUEW leader wants open debate on Benn candidacy



BOB WRIGHT, assistant general secretary of the Engineering Union, is backing Tony Benn's bid for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party. This is what he told Socialist Challenge:

I support Tony Benn, of course — or rather I start from the principles affecting the wider movement.

I support all aspects of labour movement democracy, and particularly Tony Benn's strong stand on the question of public disclosure. He and I want an Act of Parliament completely cutting back government secrecy.

I support all the policies Tony Benn stands for. The fuss about his candidacy is wrong. No democratic party can oppose the workings of democracy and elections.

As far as the AUEW and the Labour Party are concerned, an increasing number of our members think that what Benn stands for represents a much closer reality of the feelings of the rank and file.

I believe that the process agreed at the Wembley conference has got to be put into operation. Tony Benn is totally entitled to stand.

The AUEW leadership has already declared a position without any mandate. The union conference is to consider this issue this month.

In general in the unions my appeal would be for the rank and file to campaign for an open and clear election. Every union conference should have an open debate and issue a clear mandate.

Otherwise this vital issue will be left to wheeling and dealing at a solely leadership level.

Battle for Benn moves into the unions

AS THE round of annual union conferences begins the campaign for deputy leader of the Labour Party is hotting up. Across the country Labour constituencies are likely to back Benn but in the unions only

NUPE seems certain to support him. Below we look at the outcome of the APEX and USDAW conferences and profile the 'other' candidate — Denis Healey, the favourite of the right-wing.

Denis Healey — politics without principle

By Geoff Bell

DENIS HEALEY'S campaign for deputy leader of the Labour Party is currently being touted around the trade union conferences by right-wing union bureaucrats, the media and, occasionally the Rt Hon Mr Healey himself.

He is the negative candidate in the race. He's against the policies associated with Tony Benn; against disarmament; against withdrawal from the EEC; against the internal reforms of the Labour Party.

Denis Healey is for ... Denis Healey.

This has always been the way of the man. His over-riding principle has always been self-advancement.

As a senior civil servant, quoted in the *Guardian* last March, said of the current deputy leader: 'There certainly isn't a trace of socialism in him.'

Revolution

Healey first caught the attraction of Labour Party members at the 1945 party conference in a famous speech which reflected — or rather played to — the then prevailing left-wing sentiment.

He said: 'The crucial aspect of our foreign policy should be to protect, assist, encourage, and aid that socialist revolution wherever it appears. The upper class in every country are selfish, depraved, dissolute, and decadent.'

'The upper class look to the British army and British people to protect them against the just wrath of the people. We must see that this does

Healey argued in a pamphlet produced by the Fabian Society: 'You meet the need for arms first and then distribute what you have left to other things.'

He was elected as an MP for a Leeds constituency in 1952 and became a time-server for the right-wing leadership of the party. In

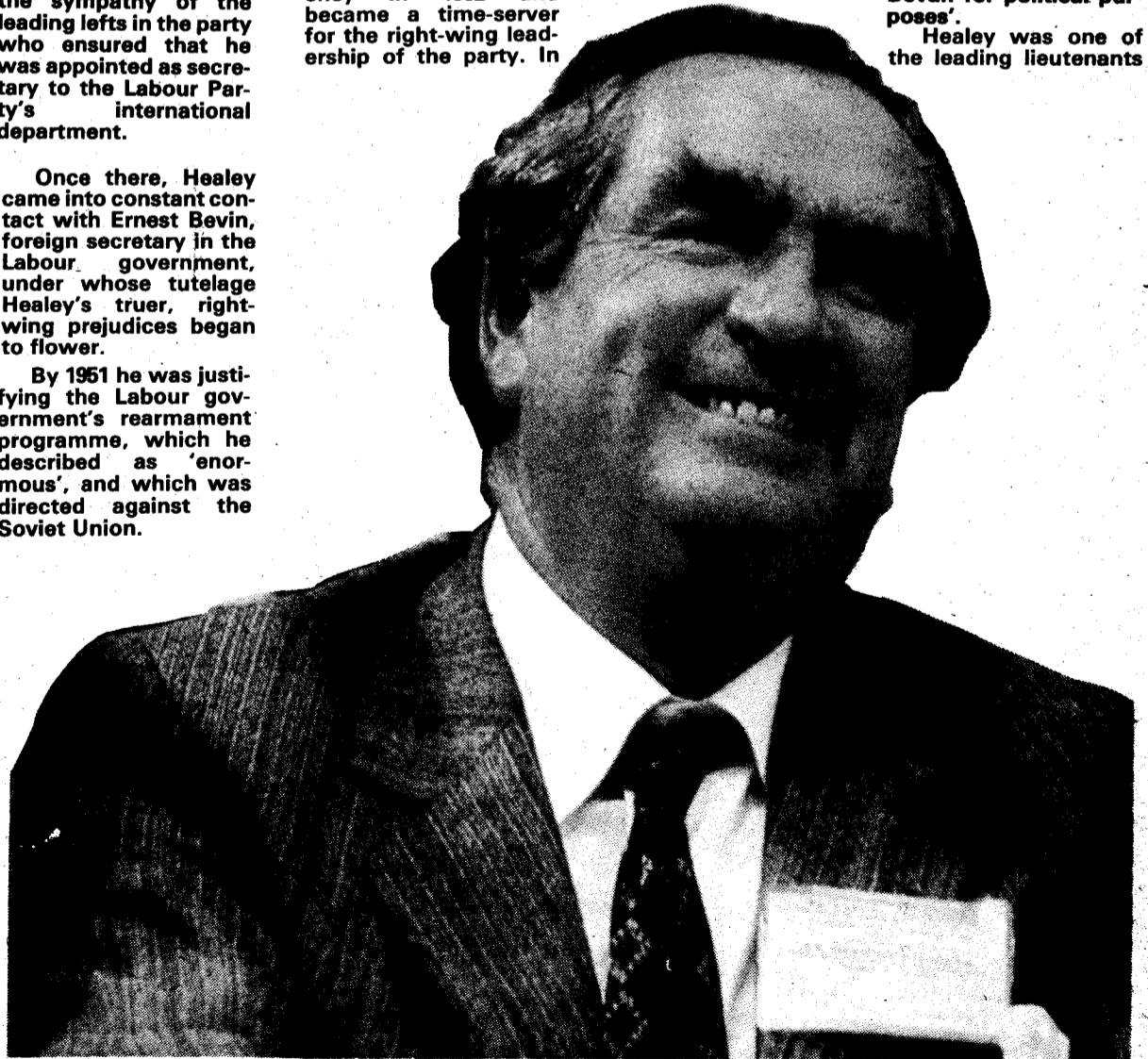
one particularly nasty incident — exposed ironically by Michael Foot in his biography of Nye Bevan — Healey wrote in an article in a US magazine:

'Aneurin Bevan was fined in court last month for two offences

which might serve as his political epitaph — dangerous driving and failure to stop after an accident.'

Foot notes that this was 'the only instance where this incident was used directly against Bevan for political purposes'.

Healey was one of the leading lieutenants



APEX votes for Healey



By Socialist Challenge APEX supporters
ALL THE debates which will dominate every union conference this summer were reflected at the white collar union APEX's annual conference last week.

The union, dominated by the right wing, endorsed its usual brand of 'social-contract policies'. The union president and shadow minister Dennis Howell also bemoaned Shirley Williams' defection to the Social Democrats rather than attacking her politics.

'You should have stayed and fought with us, Shirley, to help us get the party back on the right lines,' he complained.

Stage-managed debate and undemocratic procedures saw off close challenges to the union leaders from CND supporters and those seeking a real fight over hours, overtime and jobs.

But it was over the Benn/Healey election for deputy Labour leader that the union leaders' reactionary politics were fully revealed. Over 150 delegates and visitors to the conference heard Tony Benn address a Campaign for Labour Party Democracy fringe meeting, despite disciplinary threats against the APEX delegates who invited Benn. The con-

ference went on to vote for Healey against Benn.

Over the next few days Howell and general secretary Roy Grantham became increasingly demagogic and paranoid against the growing challenge from the left in the union.

They were helped by Michael Foot's address to the conference, which was little more than an attack on Benn and the democratic changes inside the Labour Party.

His speech destroyed many left illusions in his leadership, and was praised by Howell as 'a great speech by a man we didn't vote for'. It was indeed an inspiration for the left to organise.

Socialist Challenge industrial workers' conference

Why we're fighting for a party of industrial workers

By Brian Grogan

WORLD CAPITALISM is in crisis — nowhere more so than in Britain, where the crisis has led to a completely new political situation. To solve its problems, the ruling class, in addition to its war drive, is forced to launch more and more attacks on the workers. A new political attitude is being created inside the decisive sections of the British working class.

This change creates new opportunities for fighting for the revolutionary marxist programme — the fight to make the working class the ruling class. But all experience shows that for a socialist outcome to the crisis — the victory of the working class — a disciplined combat party is needed, which groups together the most class conscious and clear-sighted workers.

Ultimately, this militant minority can only become a *majority* by being able to mobilise the mass of workers in the nerve centres of the capitalist economy — in the factories, the pits and shops. It is always these core sectors which determine the outcome of the struggle.

The organisations of the Fourth International, like the International Marxist Group in Britain, have always stood on the programme of workers' power — and in that sense have always been workers' parties, even when the majority of their members have been students and white-collar workers.

The character of an organisation is fundamentally determined by its programme. But if a revolutionary organisation over a long period of time fails to root itself in the working class, then its social composition comes into contradiction with its programme.

One or the other has to give way.

The Bolshevik party, from which we draw our inspiration, was in 1917 a

party of worker-revolutionaries. It was because of the Bolsheviks' influence centred in the industrial working class that they were able to lead the revolution.

It has not always been the case. The Bolsheviks, as is often the case with revolutionary organisations, accumulated their first forces outside of the industrial working class. But they seized on opportunities provided by the radicalisation of the working class to implant themselves in the core sectors of the class.

Both the Bolsheviks in the early 1900s and the Trotskyists of the late 1930s found it necessary to root their organisations in the ranks of the industrial working class. Today the beginnings of a radicalisation among the industrial workers in Britain, particularly as the crisis deepens in the Labour Party, makes it possible for us to do likewise.

Between 1902 and 1905 Lenin's party was made up mostly of students and intellectuals. But in 1905 the revolution dramatically radicalised the workers — they were 'spontaneously social democratic' (i.e. revolutionary), as Lenin put it.

This created the opportunity of rapidly drawing workers into the party, which required a sharp change. For example, at the Bolshevik congress in 1905 not a single delegate was a worker.

Accordingly Lenin demanded that the proportion of workers in the



Bolshevik committees be raised to 80 per cent.

Six months later he declared that 'now we must wish for the new Party organisations to have one Social Democratic intellectual to several hundred Social Democratic workers'.

Through this campaign the situation of the Bolsheviks changed rapidly. By 1907 a third of the members were industrial workers.

A similar problem faced the Trotskyists in the United States in the early 1930s. Trotsky commented:

'The party has only a minority of genuine factory workers. This is an inevitable beginning for every revolutionary social-

ist party. The non-proletarian elements represent a necessary yeast, and I believe that we can be proud of the good quality of these elements. But the danger is in the next period we can receive too much 'yeast' for the needs of the party.'

He therefore proposed a re-orientation for the whole party: 'the task is naturally not to prevent the influx of intellectuals by artificial means... but to orientate in practice the whole party towards factories, strikes and the unions'.

In Britain today we are living through literal rebellions — epitomised by the uprising of black youth in Brixton. The economic and social crisis

has shaken the faith of large numbers of workers in the old capitalist ways of doing things.

In the industrial unions there is a ferment of discussion provoked by this crisis and its political results, particularly the fight inside the Labour Party. These are the factors which pose the opportunity of making substantial gains in the fight for socialist policies in the industrial workplaces.

But it is not simply a question of the numbers of workers, but of making work in the industrial unions central to political work. It is in this spirit that we are building the Socialist Challenge industrial workers conference.

in the campaign against Bevan and his advocacy of disarmament. But as the mood in the party began to change, so did Healey, and by 1957 he was making left noises again.

He wrote in another Fabian pamphlet that NATO had 'become a symbol of a vanished stage in the Cold War, increasingly remote from the facts of international life and from the aspirations of the people it represents'.

He concluded: 'Disarmament and disengagement should be seen, not as an alternative to NATO... but as an alternative policy for NATO.'

In 1974, as minister for defence, Healey had the opportunity to put such policies into practice, but they were quietly forgotten.

Before the election of that year Labour had promised to withdraw British army forces from East of Suez, and Healey went along with that in office, although defence spending generally remained high.

Now in the cabinet, Healey once more tried to prove himself a good loyalist.

He told Cecil King, the newspaper magnate, that what he learnt from Wilson was that 'having no convictions is a great help... he can make a purely pragmatic approach to any problem'.

Indeed pragmatism was a watchword for Healey in the succeeding years as he climbed up the Labour hierar-

He could tell the 1974 Labour Party conference that he was going to 'squeeze the rich until their pips squeak', and then he went on as Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the standard of living of the working class and raise that of the upper class for the first time for decades.

He got angry if anyone pointed out that perhaps these actions were inconsistent with a Labour government.

When 38 Labour left-wingers abstained on a vote on public spending cuts in 1976, Healey stood in front of them in the chamber of the House of Commons and repeatedly screamed at them 'You fuckers, you fuckers'.

Such then are the ways of Denis Healey. 'As slithery as they come' an anonymous former cabinet colleague is quoted as saying of him in the *Sunday Times* in July last year.

Healey's aim in life has been to use the Labour Party to slither to the top of the political establishment. For trade unionists to vote for such an individual to be deputy leader of the Labour Party is to vote for cuts, the International Monetary Fund, and NATO.

But more than that it is to vote for the old school of Labour politics which the internal reforms of the party have begun to challenge — a school in which the first lesson is to succeed, and the second is to have no principles.



Women in the new Grenada

THE National Women's Organisation is affiliated to the New Jewel Movement. PATSY ROMAIN is a member of its national executive and she recently spoke to Intercontinental Press about the NWO.

The National Women's Organisation was started around 1972. We could not organise women to have meetings in the open because of fear of victimisation by the Gairy regime.

At present we have a membership of 1,500. Since the revolution women in Grenada have seen many benefits. You have equal work for equal pay. You have women getting their equal rights in this society. You have women getting the maternity leave law.

We are hoping in this year to push forward showing the women the need for birth control, how it will be good for them — the advantages and disadvantages in birth control. As for abortion, there is no law in Grenada stating whether women have the right to abortion or not. We haven't worked this out yet.

The activities of the NWO are to push forward all the programmes of the People's Revolutionary Government. There are a number of women playing an active part in the People's Militia and the People's Revolutionary Army.

From the very first day that the militia was formed, the NWO had the task to get all the women organised into it.

Before the revolution, boys were taught to do more of the science work and girls were taught arithmetic, sewing, cooking and so on. This has been changed. Teachers show girls that they should and can do the same amount of subjects as the boys.

Now when a scholarship is offered for a woman to learn to be a dentist or to go away and study and come back to teach people about agriculture, engineering, mechanics, you see women coming forward and saying that they would like to be trained to do this.

We did not have this before. Women were not seen as being equal to men. Women were always thinking that their place was in the home. But a lot of work has to be done and is being done to show women that their place is not only in the home but to be equal, working alongside men.

PEOPLE in Grenada will remember the terror imposed by Gairy's 'Mongoose Gang', the regime's corruption and Gairy's obsession with unidentified flying objects. The achievements of the People's Revolutionary Government's first two years is impressive.

Colonial rule left a legacy of underdevelopment. The world's main nutmeg supplier was not even allowed to grind its own nutmegs! Under direct British rule, construction of industry on the island was banned until the late fifties.

Before the revolution, Grenada had an unemployment rate of 50 per cent; one-third of its arable land was not farmed and the country imported approximately three-quarters of its food. There was little mechanisation of agriculture and few adequate access roads in the countryside.

The People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) has designated 1981 as the 'Year of Agriculture and Agro-Industries.' Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Grenada's economy.

Prime Minister Maurice Bishop has stressed the importance of 'growing more food, laying the basis of industrialisation, building our economy and in so doing building our revolution.'

Threats

'It is the revolutionary nature of our society that will ensure that all of our people will be involved in this drive.'

The tasks facing the Grenadians are enormous — not least because the country is threatened with hostility from several quarters. Last year 40 per cent of Grenada's vital banana industry was destroyed by Hurricane Allen.

British Foreign Office Minister Nicholas Ridley refused aid to the island at that time on the grounds that 'Grenada is in the process of establishing a kind of society of which the British government disapproves, irrespective of whether the people of Grenada want it or not.'

The United States is openly discouraging Common Market countries from helping Grenada build its international airport. Such an airport, with facilities for night-landing and large modern planes, is essential for the development of tourism and the agro-industry.

The US recognises its importance for the survival of the island but hides its true position

GRENADA

'A big revolution in a small country'

TWO YEARS AGO the vicious Eric Gairy dictatorship in Grenada was overthrown by the New Jewel Movement and a People's Revolutionary Government was installed.

Grenada is a tiny island in the Caribbean with a population of 110,000. It is still formally part of the Commonwealth (which makes the Queen the head of a revolutionary government!) and its revolution is the first in an English-speaking country.

For the New Jewel Movement the Grenadan revolution is indivisible from

behind a smokescreen of concern about the setting up of a 'Cuban military base'.

Other countries are coming to the aid of the Grenadians. Algeria, Syria, Libya and Iraq have given £9m towards the airport. Machinery and labour have been supplied by the Cubans, and Venezuela has given 10,000 gallons of cheap diesel oil.

Airport

Airport bonds have raised a further £125,000 but another £14m is still needed to make the airport part-operational by the end of the year.

The PRG's response to the US's attempts at intimidation was to call a mass mobilisation at the airport site on 12 April. Maurice Bishop spoke at work-

places in the preceding weeks and the nationalised weekly paper *Free West Indian* published letters of support from organisations as diverse as the Union of Catholic Mothers and the Grenadan Employers Federation.

On the day 10,000

'The development of the people, the participation of the people, that to me is the greatest achievement.'

Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister

Grenadians — out of a total population of 110,000 — were there, despite the difficulties of the transport system.

As the revolution unfolds in Grenada, the dire economic circumstances can result in misjudgements and sometimes

those of Cuba, Nicaragua and the Prime Minister Maurice Bishop: 'Cowboy Reagan'

But imperialism threatened and it has economic sabotage. Solidarity with Grenada is urgent.

NEIL SIMPSON Grenada after a month. He gives his impression of the island and the progress

serious political mistakes. This was shown in the recent public servants' strike.

Some 2,000 workers grouped in three unions — the Public Workers Union, the Grenada Union of Teachers and the Technical and Allied Workers Union — put in a pay

claim for a 62 per cent rise over two years. Their wages were certainly low, £10 a week being not uncommon.

But the dispute became quite divisive. These unions are members of the Caribbean Congress of Labour and the



Achievements of the revolution two years on

*Trade union membership has increased to 80 per cent from 30 per cent under the Gairy regime. Workers are protected by the Trade Union Recognition Act. More than 2500 new jobs have been created.

*The Land Reform Commission was set up to put all idle lands into production and cooperatives have been formed.

*The National Import and Marketing Board reduced the price of sugar, rice and cement. It buys and distributes food at controlled prices.

*The army was completely destroyed at the time of Gairy's overthrow. The police were purged and reorganised. They are no longer armed. The People's Revolutionary Army now exists, which is highly political. The people's militia is open to all for weapons training.

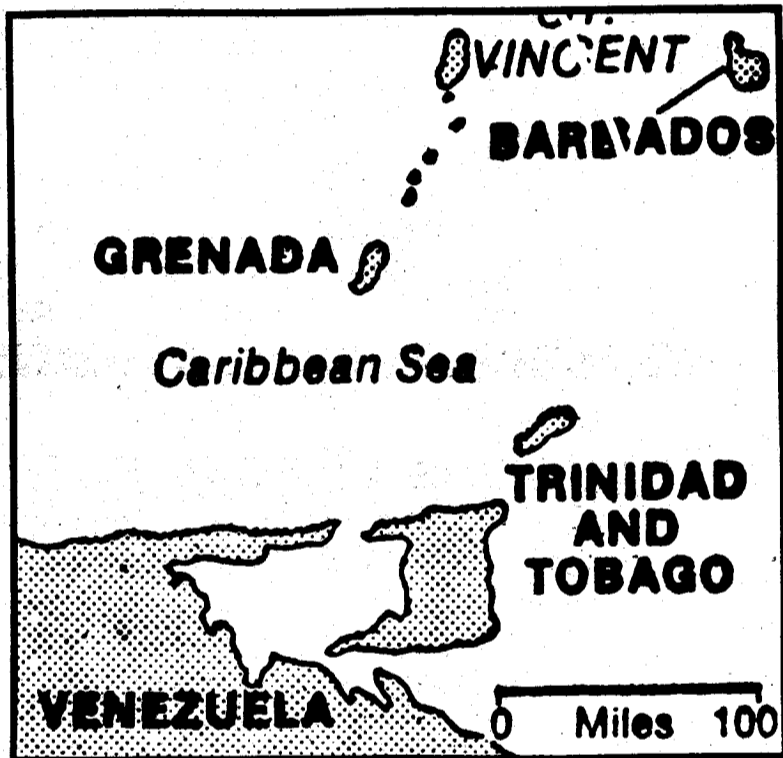
*Discrimination against women has been outlawed. Mass organisations of women and youth are in the process of formation.

*Free medical care introduced in local health centres with increased medical and dental facilities.

*Over 200 Grenadians are now studying on scholarships (it was 3 in 1978). Secondary school fees have been reduced and will be abolished by the end of the year. Primary school children receive free milk and cheap meals. The first phase of the literacy campaign has been completed.

*Parish councils have been established with delegates from villages, workplaces, trade unions, women's and youth organisations.

A
in



electricity — but this too takes time and money.

The PRG did set up an inquiry which recommended that the company be made accountable locally. It also advocated that the board of directors be changed to include 'professional persons'. It remains to be seen what substance the PRG will give to its urging of workers' participation.

A government which sees itself as revolutionary cannot preside over a capitalist economy for any length of time without provoking retaliation from the capitalists or becoming discredited in the eyes of the workers.

Vanguard

Bishop had to finish his talk to the power workers with a call for moderation: 'As workers in this essential service, in this key industry, you are in the vanguard of the working class and as such you have a responsibility not to be manipulated and manoeuvred.'

The airport, the public workers' strike and Grenlec are but three recent examples of how imperialism tries to tie the hands of the revolution by starving it of funds. In addition, prices for cocoa and nutmeg, two of the main export earning crops, have dropped dramatically.

The export of bananas, which is controlled by the British firm Geest, is also not profitable. Geest pays the equivalent of 3.3p a pound.

Many important initiatives in Grenada are held back through lack of funds. Agricultural co-operatives have been set up which are intended to produce a variety of much needed crops and to involve



'We need to remain vigilant, to continue to build our People's Militia, so that in any situation our people will be able to defend our country and our process.'

Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister

agua and El Salvador. Bishop said recently 'this not your ranch.' Shows its interests are responded with lack of aid. is thus extremely just returned from of voluntary work. ns of life on the s of the revolution.

American trade union federation AFL/CIO. Slogans of 'No CIA unions' appeared and some of the students who supported the revolution were critical of their striking teachers.

The government's response was to offer 22.5 per cent over three years and to issue letters which suspended, transferred or warned various workers. The unions demanded withdrawal of the letters before entering into further negotiations.

Other workers complained about the public servants' 'excessive' wage demands claiming that the unions were involved in new year budget preparations and therefore realised the difficulties in demanding such an increase. At present it seems that an

agreement has been made with 36 per cent for the lowest paid, but the letters have not been retracted and an uneasy truce reigns.

This episode indicates a contradictory position that the PRG seems to hold on the question of independent trade unions: on the one hand it regards Solidarnosc in Poland as a 'tool of imperialism'. Yet on the other occasions in Grenada the PRG has gone out of its way to open the books to the trade unions and to promote free trade unions in its industrial relations.

The situation with the power company in Grenlec, in many ways epitomises the PRG's difficulties. Grenlec is part of the Commonwealth Development Corporation which 'assists' poor countries and is now the Commonwealth's largest and most successful company.

Privileges

There are many things that are wrong with Grenlec: it generates electricity from oil; it can adjust prices without accountability; its privileges are protected until at least 1991 and working conditions are dangerous to workers' health.

Profits are so good in other places that CDC has run down its investment in Grenlec which

has in turn led to the interruption of Grenada's power supply and price rises.

Profit

Prime Minister Bishop has told electricity workers that they have no responsibility to the CDC 'which only operates in the interests of profit to the detriment of Grenadan workers and consumers.'

He accused the company of 'massive corruption', asserting that greater workers' participation in Grenlec's affairs would ensure a higher level of efficiency and better services.

'We are continuing the struggle to end imperialism and imperialist presence in our country.'

Maurice Bishop, Prime Minister

The company manager threatened to 'put the country into darkness' for the second anniversary festival. For his pains he was detained for two weeks. But there is no easy course for the government.

It could try to find funds to buy shares in the company. Possibly it is reluctant to make an outright acquisition at a time when it is hoping for EEC aid. It could push ahead with developing alternative energy sources — particularly hydro-

unemployed youth. But such a project has to be established with loans.

Fidel Castro has described the events in Grenada as a 'Big revolution in small country'. The workers' movement in Britain has a special responsibility to help.

The year 1981 in Grenada should perhaps be called a Year of Perseverance and Vigilance. In Britain we should make it a year that sees the building of a significant solidarity campaign.

Britain-Grenada solidarity

THE Labour Party national executive's draft manifesto pledges support to progressive regimes like Grenada.

But the need for direct assistance must be taken into the labour movement urgently. There should also be widespread condemnation of the Tory government's complicity in the US's destabilisation tactics.

The British-Grenada Friendship Society has recently been established. It hopes to set up branches throughout the country.

There is a shopping list of urgently needed goods ranging from slide-projectors, cameras and badge-making machines to books, especially the left-wing variety.

Immediately helpful would be a campaign to import and sell Grenadan goods such as honey and jams. Airport bonds can be bought and, of course, tourists are more than welcome.

It is an extremely beautiful and interesting place to visit. A slide show and films on Grenada are available.

Join the British-Grenada Friendship Society c/o 105 Grand Building, Trafalgar Sq, London WC2.

Listen to Radio Free Grenada 15.105 Mhz short wave (19m band). Best reception after 8.30pm.

US socialists put government on trial

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

Scotland
ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring 011 896 284.
BURDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.
EDINBURGH: SC sales every Thursday 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrew's Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Saturday 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
GLASGOW: SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde Books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop Collective, Crosswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.
HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat., outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Elliot St, Hamilton.

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CARDIFF: every Sat in Bute Town 10.30-12. Also available 1-0-8 Books, Salisbury Road.
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PONTYPRIDD: SC sales every Saturday outside Open Market 11-1pm.
SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

England
BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.
BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.
BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BRIGHTON: SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info from Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.
BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.
CHESTERFIELD: SC supporters sell outside Boots, Market Place, Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: SC sales in Time Square, Saturdays 10.30-1.30pm.
Huddersfield: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
LEEDS: Every Saturday 11-1 at Leeds Lane Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingley Arndale Centre Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.

Bookshops
BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.
DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.
ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.
MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.
LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centerprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC; Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's.

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RATES for What's Left: 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance. Phone 01-389 8380.
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FILM SHOW: El Salvador, Revolution or Death; and White Man's Country. Sun 17 May, 7.30pm. London Film Makers Co-op Cinema, 42 Gloucester Ave, London NW1.

International Marxist Group notices
NATIONAL LESBIAN/GAY Fraction 16 May National centre 11 am. All codes welcome even if not active around this question. Main item: perspectives document, orientation to labour and womens movement. Pool-

Revolution Youth notices
BRANCH Organiser's fraction 16 May 11am at UCL students unions, Gower St, London WC1 nr Euston station. Note: writing and speaking school planned for 17 May postponed.
STUDENT fraction with IMG on Fri 22 May, 11-5pm at UCL students union.
IRISH national fraction on 10 May. Irish sbctte at 6pm.

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By Davy Jones
SOMETHING remarkable is going on in Room 302 of the federal court building in Foley Square, New York. Since 2 April a profound political clash has been taking place in the court-room between the ideas of revolutionary socialism and the US government's security forces.

In July 1973 the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), American co-thinkers of the Fourth International, launched a \$40m lawsuit against the FBI, CIA and other US government agencies.

The lawsuit seeks damages for forty years of government spying and harassment, and an injunction to stop further illegal government activities against the SWP and YSA.

It has forced the US government to hand over hundreds of previously secret documents detailing its campaign of subversion against the American socialists.

These included: FBI burglaries, telephone bugging, bomb threats and physical violence, hundreds of informers and spies, and the use of the FBI to hound people from their jobs.

The documents also revealed how the FBI had plotted against the black and anti-Vietnam war movements, as well as against trade union activists. SWP national secretary Jack Barnes explained at a courthouse press conference:

'In our trial we are fighting not only for our own rights but for the rights of all working people — the miners now on strike against the coal operators, the people of El



Veteran US socialist Farrell Dobbs has been a key witness for the SWP

at least 92 burglaries of SWP offices, photographed over 8,000 letters, regularly rifled through the SWP's trash cans and kept files of all known SWP members' addresses.

He was also responsible for organising the recruitment of informers on the SWP/YSA and for 'disruption' and smear campaigns against the party and individual members aimed at driving them out of politics.

Secondly, as they concede that the SWP/YSA's activities are legal, they have been forced to try the socialists for their ideas. The courtroom has therefore echoed to the words of veteran socialist Farrell Dobbs and Jack Barmes explaining the fundamental ideas of revolutionary socialism and the history of the marxist movement.

On the eighth day of the trial a former FBI street agent, George Baxtrum, was called to the stand to recall his 16 years of dirty work against the SWP/YSA. During six of those years he carried out

carried out in the name of the various 'thought-control' laws in the US: the Smith Act of 1940 against the advocacy of socialist ideas, the Voorhis Act which prevents the SWP from affiliation to the Fourth International, the 'loyalty programme' started by President Truman and maintained ever since to keep 'subversives' out of 'sensitive' jobs, and the Immigration and Naturalisation Act which permits the harass-

ment of non-citizens on the basis of their political ideas. Support for the socialists' lawsuit is growing inside the labour movement and from black, women and civil rights' activists. As the SWP national committee statement on the trial says: 'A victory in this case would be a victory for all victims of government spying and harassment and for all working people in this country.'

May Day jackpot for our fund drive
WHAT a great weekend for the Socialist Challenge fund drive! Our supporters in East London raised more than £800 for their May Day banquet while in Outer West London our supporters raised a further £300 from a May Day fair. Here is how they both did it.
Mountains of jumble, enough food to feed an army, acres of potted plants, and masses of wholefood — all in a heap. That was the scene at nine o'clock two hours before the opening of West London's May Day fair. Comrades burrowed into piles of jumble wondering if it would ever be sorted out.
At ten the first customers start to queue outside. More jumble arrives, deepening the chaos. On the refreshment stall comrades start to heat the food. Five minutes before opening everything miraculously falls into place and the doors are thrown open.
A hundred people flood in, the first of the seven hundred visitors to the fair, with its stalls from Chiswick CND, Socialist Challenge, Ealing women's group and Revolution Youth.
At four o'clock the fair closes and everyone flakes out before the clearing up begins. When the cash is counted there are more ten pences than anyone has ever seen before, totalling £300 in all. Time to celebrate in the local pub!



Disco
Fennis Augustin, High Commissioner of Grenada told of the efforts of Grenada to establish workers' democracy.
Then Jaime Lopez from the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign won a big response when he explained the next stage of the struggle in El Salvador.
The evening was a tremendous success, with guests from Sheffield, Rotherham, Newport, even Australia, Iran and Germany!
Packed to the gunnels with delicious food, laughing at the outrageous auction, stripped of every conceivable asset and exhausted by a driving disco people faded into the night.
So after weeks of counting quiches, turkeys, salads, cutlery and comrades, it was finally over. All that had to be done was to wash the dishes, and go to the bank with over £800.

Labour Party School
 Sat/Sun 23/24 May
 Day 1
Formation of LP & developments to 1945/ Election of 1945 Labour govt and rise & decline of Bevanism
 Day 2
Rise of new LP left & Bennism/ Tasks for socialists in LP now
 Workshops
History of LP women's sections/ 1931 LP split/ Labour League of Youth in 1930s/ LPYS in 50s & 60s
 School open to Socialist Challenge supporters. Admission by ticket only. Price £2.50 for both days or £2 single day. Limited places available so apply urgently to local Socialist Challenge organiser. All applications must enclose payment, cheques to 'The Week'.
Forum
Socialist Perspectives for Europe
 Fri 22 May at 8pm
 Camden Town Hall, opp St. Pancras station London
Speakers: Ernest Mandel, Ken Livingstone, GLC councillor
 Hall opens at 6.30pm with displays on women's movement; anti-nuclear struggle; Irish liberation struggle; struggle of youth; Polish crisis; El Salvador and Turkey.
 Buffet available with rolls, cakes, tea and coffee.

CND labour movement conference and multilateralism

IN LAST week's Socialist Challenge, Alasdair Beal, a member of the CND national council, criticised both myself and the paper on two points in relation to the CND labour movement conference.

He wonders what we thought we achieved when we overturned the decision of the conference organising committee not to take resolutions, and he takes us to task for our attitude to multilateralism.

On the first point, Alasdair is just wrong. Socialist Challenge supporters — and there were more than 150 delegated to the conference — abided by the organising committee decision not to consider resolutions. Indeed, Martin Collins, one of our supporters and a member of the organising committee, spoke for the committee to advise against taking resolutions.

But we would put Alasdair

Beal's allegation in context. The last national council of CND was treated to a series of accusations about Socialist Challenge disruption from CND officers. No attempt to present these complaints to Socialist Challenge, or discuss them with us has been forthcoming.

Socialist Challenge supporters initiated and led the fight — and it was a fight — to get CND to support the labour movement conference.

Harm

In the course of this fight we had to defeat some silly ideas being put forward by the Socialist Workers Party at the planning meetings. Faced with the hostility of CND officers to the idea of the conference, the SWP wanted us to 'go it alone'.

They wanted a Socialist Challenge/SWP/Manchester against the Missiles conference. But we said no: we wanted a genuine CND conference

which would involve important forces in the labour movement. So we persevered in trying to involve CND.

Once the final organising committee had been established, Socialist Challenge supporters argued for a statement of policy and a vote of the conference. In this we were supported by the SWP, but defeated on the organising committee by seven votes to six.

We warned that this would be extremely unpopular, but after a long discussion decided that it would only harm and confuse the conference to raise this question at the conference.

Appeal

Since no resolutions had been sent beforehand, resolutions put to the conference would only lead to confusion.

In the event, when conference voted for resolutions to be put, some good resolutions came forward but the conference was treated to less than

inspiring speeches from the RCT saying that we should be discussing Ireland, and from the Spartacists, denouncing us



all for supporting imperialism! As the conference went on, it became obvious that delegates were getting increasingly weary of this wrangling. The final 'Appeal', moved by

myself, was the only resolution that no one voted against, and received long and loud applause precisely because it got the conference back on the issues again.

Evasion

Naturally, it was unmentioned in either the CND press statement on the conference or in the two accounts of the conference published by the SWP.

The second point raised by Alasdair Beal is that of the position we put on multilateralism. We argued that it was impossible to support both, and doing so only causes confusion — we think that this is a crucial issue facing CND.

Saying that the two aren't contradictory enables endless doubletalk and confusion. The confusion it causes is shown by the fact that Michael Foot, a self-proclaimed unilateralist, appointed Brynmoor John, a multilateralist and supporter of Cruise missiles, as his defence

spokesperson. Both based themselves on Labour conference decisions since it passed resolutions in favour of both.

The necessity to concentrate on the fight for unilateralism is shown by the recent *Guardian* survey, which showed that while a majority opposed Cruise and Trident missiles, only a minority favoured unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Mixing up unilateral and multilateral disarmament creates the basis for evasion — the kind of evasion that was all too evident when Michael Foot refused to give clear answers in favour of unilateral disarmament in his recent *Panorama* interview.

This kind of slipping and sliding has to be fought against — we shall have to force a future Labour government to unilaterally disarm, as many supporters of CND realise. That fight should start now.

BRIAN HERON, London

100,000 march against US intervention in El Salvador

By Phil Hearse

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND people marched to the Washington Pentagon, headquarters of the US military, on 3 May to protest against United States' intervention in El Salvador. The march organised by the Peoples Anti-War Mobilisation and the 3 May Coalition was the biggest demonstration against American foreign policy since the anti-Vietnam war movement.

Among the marchers were representatives of a number of labour movement organisations, including public sector workers, hospital and auto workers. But prominent among the marchers were also large numbers of church people, and a high proportion of youth, blacks and Latinos.

American observers noted in particular the number of high school students — a 'new anti-war generation.'

Among the speakers best received by the vast crowd was Herbert Daughtrey of the National Black United Front, who linked the struggle of blacks in America with the fight against US aggression abroad. 'We're fired up', he said 'and we won't take it no more'.

Mad

Daughtrey also denounced US threats against Grenada and the pro-South Africa stance of the Reagan government. He said the government was 'mad' to support the

apartheid regime. The biggest cheer of the day was given to Arnaldo Ramos, the representative of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador.

Paul O'Dwyer, former New York city council president, was given a warm reception when he denounced British repression in Ireland and supported the stand of hunger striker Bobby Sands.

Huge

The huge turn out for the demonstration brought together the increasing opposition to the Reagan administration, policy both on domestic and foreign issues. Many demonstrators carried placards demanding 'money for jobs, not for war'.

Supporters of the US Socialist Workers Party sold 1500 copies of their newspaper *The Militant*, and distributed thousands of leaflets explaining their case against harassment by the FBI and other government agencies. (see page 10).

US troops set for Middle East bases

By John Marston

UP TO 3,000 US troops could be based in the Middle East by next April. This shock news was recently revealed in the *Economist* magazine (4 April).

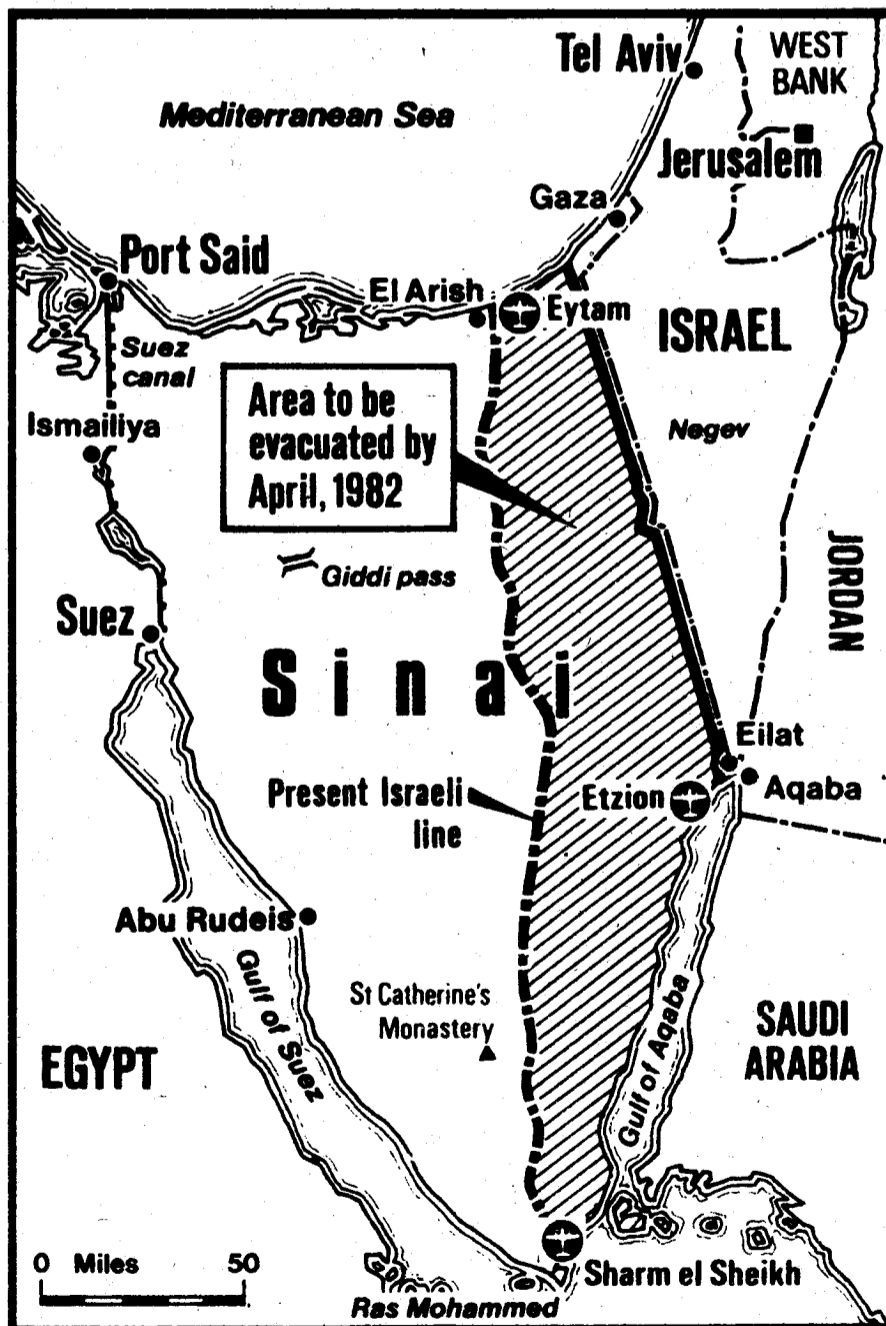
Washington has run into a lot of trouble since it first announced plans for a Rapid Deployment Force to intervene in the Gulf. But now a solution has appeared. The RDF is to be disguised as a 'multinational peacekeeping force' with token participation by such countries as Australia and New Zealand.

The excuse if provided under the terms of the Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel. Next year Israel is due to withdraw from the Sinai peninsula. That will be the cue for the Americans to go in to 'patrol' the area.

It is proposed that the US would be handed three major bases and three smaller military camps. The major bases are at Eytam (giving the US its first air base on the southern Mediterranean coast since it was thrown out of Libya); at Etzion, near Eilat (one of the biggest air bases in the world); and at Sharm-el-Sheikh.

The camps along the Gulf of Aqaba are described by the *Economist* as 'primarily storage facilities, where equipment and a logistics nucleus can be pre-positioned for possible crisis action'.

The one possible snag is that Egypt has yet to sanction such a handover. This is not because President Sadat objects to an



American presence. After all, he has already agreed to provide 'facilities' for the Americans at Qena in upper Egypt and Ras Banas near the border with Sudan.

What Sadat fears is Arab reaction to a plan which further threatens

the aspirations of the Palestinian masses and is clearly a dagger pointed at the heart of the Iranian revolution. Thatcher's present Middle East visit, following hard on the heels of Haig's tour earlier this month, is intended to smooth the way.

Once US troops are established, how long will it be before some British involvement is proposed (perhaps the troops due to be withdrawn from Belize)? Imperialist hands off the Middle East! Solidarity with the Palestinian revolution!

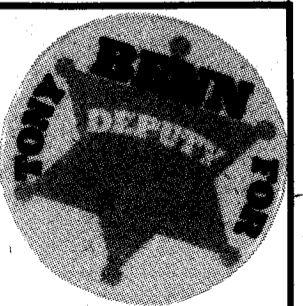
CND challenges marchers' ban

THE blanket bans imposed on political demonstrations, supposedly to counter the prospect of violence on fascist demonstrations, is taking its toll on labour movement activities.

The 28 April El Salvador demonstration was substantially disrupted by the ban, but particularly badly hit is CND. Its three-day march planned for June would fall victim to a three month ban on marches in Scotland.

If long-term blanket bans on demonstrations continue, it will be virtually impossible for CND to maintain the momentum of its campaign.

CND is therefore challenging the bans in the courts. They aim to have the ban on demonstrations imposed by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner on 25 April declared illegal.



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Anti-racism

Deptford fire inquest

'You're trying to rubbish my mind'

THE inquest into the Deptford fire that killed 13 young black people earlier this year must be unique in the history of such inquiries.

The political campaign organised by the New Cross Massacre Action Committee has put the police on trial amid scenes of black anger and a refusal to be intimidated.

TONI GORTON went to the inquest last Thursday and gives her impressions.

The coroner's court at County Hall, Westminster, where the inquest is being held is a strange place.

Dr Arthur Davis, the coroner, sits on a high-backed chair, flanked by two shorter chairs — the focus of the sloping semi-circular chamber.

On the tomato-coloured leather benches to his left are the jury and the mainly black relatives and friends of the 13 youth who died. Various leaders of the New Cross committee, such as John La Rose, follow the proceedings closely.

Directly facing the coroner are the press benches, filled with journalists from the big national dailies, the TV companies, and a few like myself from socialist, black, and community papers.

Galleries

To the coroner's right sit the police, including the brass, who listen intently and for the most part without expression.

The eye rises, lingers on slabs of especially horrible streaked marble, moves on to the corinthian columns, and then to the public galleries insinuated into the walls.

These are filled with black people who shout, clap, and jeer according to what is being said and who is saying it.

The day begins badly for the court administrators. First, three witnesses can't be found, then when the next witness is called, his lawyer isn't there.

The machinery finally gets into gear; 19-year-old Leroy Saunders has taken the oath, and the questioning by the coroner starts. But then all hell breaks loose outside in the hall.

A woman's voice comes through into the chamber. 'You fucking racist bastards... let me see them.'

The reporter from *The Times* tries to get out to see what's happening but the court flunky on the door won't let her. She comes back muttering in disbelief.

Locked up

The proceedings come to a halt because other journalists and black leaders are tearing out, and the noise from outside is totally distracting. It emerges that the court had locked two young witnesses in a room and when Mrs Williams, the mother of the 15-year-old, had tried to speak to her son she was not permitted to do so.

From the beginning of the investigation the police have excluded all explanations for the fire other than that it was the

result of a fight inside the house and that one of the youths who died caused it.

The police have persevered with their story and they have gone to enormous lengths to force the survivors of the fire to substantiate it.

Leroy, the witness, explains that there hadn't been any fight and that he hadn't gone into the front room where the fire started.

He had made statements to

What had led to his change of story?

On 24 February Leroy says he had seen one of his friends being taken away in a police car. He phoned the police station and then went down 'to see what was going on'.

After Leroy had been sitting in the police station for 10 minutes a woman police officer took him into the canteen and questioned him for several hours without writing anything down.

Truth

A statement saying that there wasn't any fight was taken down, which Leroy signed. He explains that he was then moved to Lewisham police station where he was put in a freezing cell, with two blankets and a bed that was 'just like

'Sgt Cork threatened that if I didn't tell the truth he would charge me with conspiracy to subvert the course of justice and that he'd break my neck.'

'He kept on and on at me. Was he ever told that he couldn't be arrested for telling lies? No.'

Did anyone tell him his legal rights? No. Was a solicitor called? No. Did they tell Leroy how long he would be locked up? No.

Why did he say that there had been a fight when previously he said there wasn't?

'Because I thought they were going to let me rot in there and I thought I might get beaten up if I didn't.'

Two-facing

Michael Corkery QC, who is the council for the Metropolitan Police, then questions Leroy.

His line, heavy with menace, aimed to trap the youth into admitting that he conspired with the other people at the party and that the 25 February statement was true.

Unfortunately for Corkery he got himself trapped into an exchange where he asserted that he was just trying to get at the truth. Leroy, exhausted by over three hours on the stand, snapped back: 'You're not — you're trying to rubbish my mind with your questions... You're two-facing.'

During the day there were constant challenges from the blacks. More than once a bereaved mother screamed out in frustration and rage at the coroner and the police. Friends would calm and console her while the coroner looked uncomfortable.

Take on

Speaking to some of the women outside the court, they not only suspect the police of a cover-up but also that they are involved in the attack. They refer to the policeman's father who went into the house at the time of the fire and left without speaking to anyone.

'Why shouldn't he tell anyone in the house about the fire unless he was involved himself?'

The women are conscious of the political importance of this trial. One of them spoke of things not going very well for Thatcher these days — the Irish fighting in Belfast, the hunger strike, the burning of Brixton, and 'what we're doing here'.

One of the mothers says that before that night she used to keep out of the way of the police but now she was prepared to take them on.

'They have hurt me as much as it was possible to hurt me and nothing much more can happen to me.'

Money to pay for the legal costs of the families is urgently needed. Send donations to: New Cross Massacre Action Committee, c/o 74 Shakespeare Road, London SE24 OPT.



Stop Jaswinder's deportation

JASWINDER Kaur faces a terrible choice. Her son Manjit was born here, is a British citizen and cannot be deported. But Jaswinder, who has lived here since 1975 and married a man already married to someone else, has no legal right to stay.

Jaswinder cannot face separation from her son, but if she takes him to India his father — who was deported for violence — has threatened to harm Manjit.

The campaign has linked up with that of Nasira Begum in Manchester and Nasreen Akhtar in Rochdale. Like Jaswinder they face deportation after their marriages broke up.

One of Jaswinder's supporters says: 'Now we want to work with the Cynthia Gordon Action Group in Manchester. Cynthia, a Jamaican, is facing deportation and separation from her children.'

'Thousands of black people are being split up by the immigration laws. Anwar Ditta has shown us how determined we have to be to win.'

Further information from: *The Friends of Jaswinder Kaur*, LAP Box JK, 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds LS2 9HD. Tel 0532-689882.

Stop Jaswinder's deportation
DEMONSTRATION
 Saturday 16 May
 2pm, Banstead Tce, Leeds 8

Anwar Ditta

Benefit Folk Concert

Leon Rosselson, Frankie Armstrong,
 Flowers and Frolics,
 Julie Carter & Jim Younger

Imperial College Union
 Prince Consort Rd, Kensington
 12 May at 7.30



this effect to the police on 4 and 24 February.

But on 25 February he made a detailed statement that was read out by the coroner. Yes, he had seen a fight; a gold chain had been stolen, furniture had been ripped, and so on. But in court he says the police forced him to lie.

this' he says, banging his hand on the wooden counter in front of him.

Why had this happened? Because he hadn't told the story that the police wanted to hear, Leroy tells the coroner. The cops kept saying he hadn't told the 'truth'.

What happened in the cell?

Abortion campaign in Seville is 'too big to handle'

By Leonora Lloyd

ABORTION is completely illegal in Spain, but many people, including medical workers, have learned to do abortions. In some areas a service is provided that the police know about but shut their eyes to.

Prosecutions usually only arise when something goes wrong and a woman ends up in hospital.

A year ago in Seville five women and three men formed a group giving sexual and contraceptive advice. They performed abortions up to ten weeks.

Then a woman went to the police because her husband wanted her to have an abortion.

It was obvious that the police already had an informant because they immediately arrested the eight workers and questioned 432 women who

had had abortions.

The eight were released on bail after three days' detention. All 440 were then summonsed to appear before a civil judge.

Declared

A campaign began early this year for a general amnesty and legalisation of abortion.

All 432 women when

questioned in court admitted having had abortions. As part of the political campaign another 2,500 women including MPs and others prominent in public life went to the judge to declare that they, too, had had abortions.

A further 20,000 women throughout the country signed similar statements. The judge has summonsed all of them and sent statements to their local judges.

He has asked for the Seville trials to be transferred because they've become too big for him.

Signatures continue to be collected and ICASC,

the international abortion campaign, has taken it up throughout the world.

Meanwhile in Bilbao a trial suspended since 1979 because of international pressure looks like being re-opened. Since the failure of the coup in Spain tension has risen in the Basque country and the chance of mounting a mass protest there is small.

ICASC is meeting in Seville on 27-28 June and is asking women to take their holidays there at that time.

Copies of the form for signatures and a special petition for medical workers can be obtained from: NAC/ICASC, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1. Tel 01-278 0153.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

LONDON WC2 RED LION SQUARE

16 MAY 1981
CONWAY HALL

A day in solidarity with women around the world fighting for safe contraception, legal abortion, and without sterilisation abuse

afternoon
Speakers from Britain, Ireland, Spain, Holland, Namibia, China, Brazil, Columbia and Greece/ Songs and Theatre/
Film: *Blood of the Condor*

evening
African dinner by the Calabash restaurant/cabaret by Jane Richler/international music theatre and dance introduced by Maggie Steed, includes Mayapi, Carmen Maldonado/Mary Duffy/African Dawn, Spring River, Pauline Melville, Steel'n Skin.
Tickets: whole day £3 (£2 unwaged) evening £2 (1.50 unwaged) dinner £1.50.

Margaret Thatcher — we charge you and your government with crimes against women

By Judith Arkwright, women's organiser of the International Marxist Group

THIS weekend at the Festival for Women's Rights, Margaret Thatcher is to be charged with crimes against women. She stands accused of the betrayal of her sex for the sake of her class.

Her crimes are familiar. Female unemployment is up by 207 per cent since 1975, compared to 61 per cent for men.

Five per cent fewer abortions have been done on the NHS during the past two years.

Inflation, cuts in social spending on housing, health, welfare and education which the Tories say is a return to community care actually means that women will bear extra responsibility.

The festival aims to bring together various experiences in order to identify the attacks and what they mean. It is also about how we build a women's movement that can fight these attacks on our rights and unite all oppressed groups in society to bring down the government.

We can't afford to wait until 1984. We can't stop Tory policies without finishing off the Tories themselves.

Women workers from Lee Jeans and Royal Pride are showing the way. They will be at the festival to assert that 'women's jobs are as important as men's' and that women have the right to work. They don't accept Tory myths that women should go back into the home and give jobs to men — and they demand that the labour movement as a whole shouldn't accept them either.

Women are beginning to organise right in the heart of the labour movement — in the trade unions and the Labour Party. Despite rising unemployment, women continue to join trade unions at a greater rate than men — in the public employees union for example, female membership has gone up almost 250 per cent in 10 years.

Special women's sub-committees are springing up in the transport and municipal workers' unions.

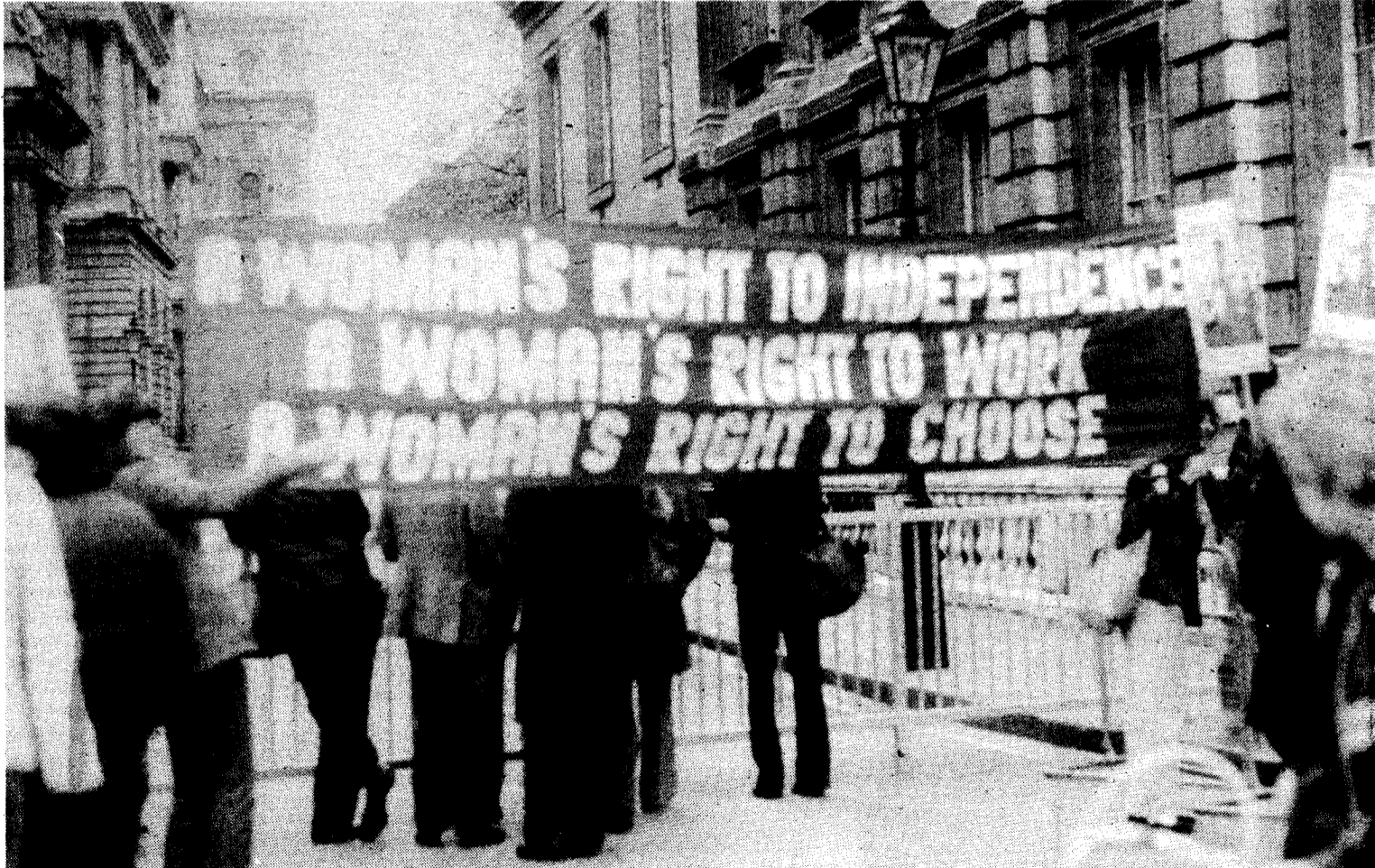
In the Labour Party, women's sections are abandoning their previous role of organising jumble sales to become real campaigning bodies.

Issues

As Marcella Fitzgerald, who is in the Post Office Engineering Union says: 'In British Telecoms we are trying to get women organised so that we are strong enough to work out our demands and then make sure the union takes them up.'

'We want to discuss with other women at the festival who are doing the same sort of thing.'

It is not just how women fight that is important but also the issues which we fight around. Some unions are taking up the discussion on positive action to guarantee women a minimum share



Handing the charge sheet to Thatcher

of jobs when companies are hiring. This should be raised together with the demand for non-discriminatory lay-offs.

The future Labour government should be committed to change the law to back up positive action in favour of women's right to work. It also has to change the law on abortion, making it mandatory for the NHS to provide a

service for all women regardless of where they live, decriminalising abortion and giving women the absolute right to make the decision on this question.

The importance of the debates in the trade unions and Labour Party on the questions of democracy and accountability which focus on Tony Benn's candidacy for deputy leader of the LP should not be

underestimated.

The right-wing leadership of the Labour Party has done virtually nothing for women. The Equal Pay and the Sex Discrimination Acts, which were instituted by Labour have proved inadequate to meet the needs of women.

One blessing of the recent disputes in the party has been that anti-abor-

tionist Shirley Williams has disappeared.

Women should take up their demands in the trade unions and Labour Party as part of the political discussion around Benn's candidacy and ask where Benn stands on all the questions of women's rights.

In order to bring down the Tory government we

have to develop a national perspective to take action against the Tories on issues like the nuclear arms race, on child care, on abortion and unemployment.

And a vital part of our job is to give solidarity and support to women in struggle against this government like the women from Lee Jeans.

Coventry anti-racists organise

By Anna Reese

SHOCK and anger are the black community's response in Coventry to the murder of Satnam Singh Gill and the increasing number of attacks on black people and their property.

After the murder three weeks ago the police warned black people against walking in the central shopping precinct in the day time, because 'white people get intimidated when they see more than two or three blacks at a time and cannot therefore go about their normal shopping.'

Many black people — mainly Asians — showed what they thought of this advice last Saturday when they went to the precinct in response to a call by the Coventry Campaign Against Racism.

Groups of racist youth gathered but were chased out of the precinct. The police then attempted to clear all black people out of the city centre. That failed but some arrests took place.

Gangs

In the meantime, more gangs of white youth gathered on the other side of the precinct. Fascist organisations are trying to incite a racial confrontation. The massive anti-racist presence — about four hundred — ensured that the racists did not venture into the precinct.



Photo: PETE GRANT (Socialist Challenge)

A successful picket was held in Southall last Thursday to prevent the National Front meeting at a local school. The Front never showed up but six people were arrested later in the evening after a window was smashed in a pub which refuses to serve black people.

The black community is challenging any idea of no-go areas. Police blame black people for Saturday's incidents.

'Look at what you have done — this is a very sad day for Coventry — go home and stay home,' were the words of a police officer addressing crowds of angry Asians protesting at the arrests and police behaviour.

The response to that

was: 'Here to stay, here to fight'.

Unfortunately, the black community says it will no longer organise people to go down on Saturdays, which is to tacitly accept that the precinct is not a safe place for blacks.

The Tories' policies have done much to boost racist attacks. Thatcher put it explicitly on the

weekend when she said: 'We have 2.5m unemployed here and rising. I do not think it is the time to increase the number of people coming in.'

The labour movement can no longer afford to ignore racist attacks and the increasing influence of racist ideas among young people. Black people in Coventry will no longer accept intimidation, discrimination, or attacks.

A demonstration has been called for 23 May to protest at the increasing number of racist attacks. The Asian community is organising the fightback and there needs to be a large labour movement presence.

Carriage cleaners locked out

By Hazel McPherson, Paddington No1 NUR branch

BRITISH Rail carriage cleaners at Old Oak Common in North-west London have been locked out by management since the beginning of April. They are meant to be cleaning twice as many coaches for the same money.

Carriage cleaners earn a basic wage of around £58 a week — one of the lowest on the railways. This attempt at increased productivity breaks a 1974 national agreement.

The NUR has been party to this contravention by making a separate agreement at sectional council level to work these 'regional timings'. As one cleaner on the picket line said: 'We're doing the job we pay our full-time officials to do. We're only defending a national agreement.'

Although the workers at Old Oak Common have received no support from the union leadership, all the rail workers at Paddington station came out on strike for 24 hours in solidarity two weeks ago. The cleaners' strike is unofficial.

Messages and donations to: Ms M Keating, 18 Bromley Lodge, Lynton Rd, London V

Full support to the demonstration is being given by the National Union of Students. Satnam Singh Gill was a student at Henley further education college, where he was active in the student union. Ann Henderson from the Socialist Students Alliance, who spoke at a meeting at the college, writes:

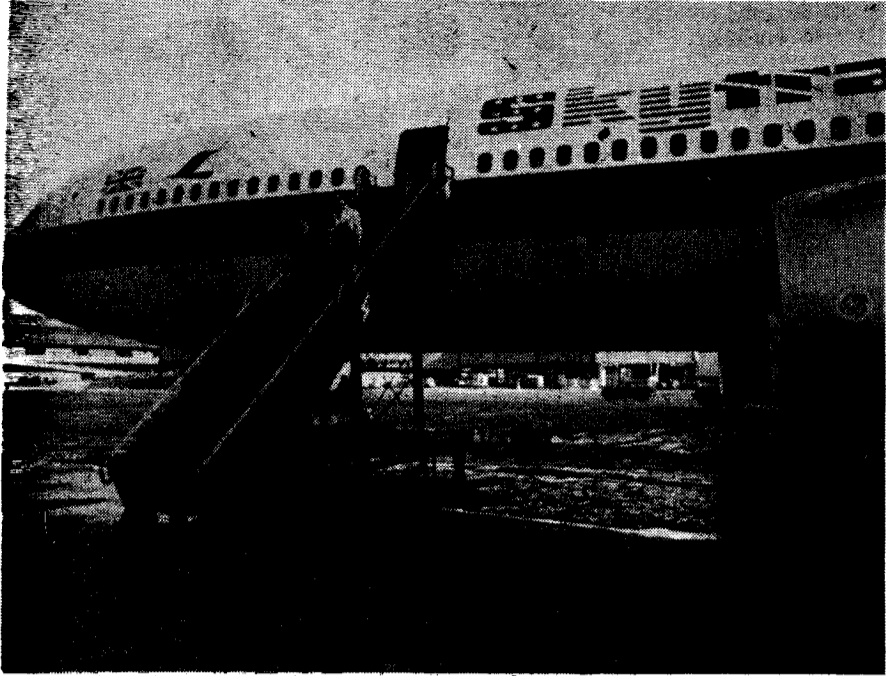
The speakers emphasised the need to organise against racist attacks within the colleges and the community. As Bob, the chairperson of the Asian Society, explained: 'It's really getting bad in Coventry. The racists are in our schools and in our colleges.'

The meeting was very militant and it was brought home that racism is a student issue.

For speakers at your college ring Steve Reicher on 01-387 1277 or Ann Henderson on 01-359 8301.

Demonstrate Saturday 23 May

Assemble Edgewick Park 1pm March off 2pm to Coventry precinct. Called by Coventry Committee Against Racism c/o Mr Singh, Guiu Namak Temple, Harmall Lane, Coventry Supported by ANL and NUS nationally



Air traffic controllers' industrial action is causing disruption, but is it enough to win the claim?

The million pound strikers

By Phil Dexter, CPSA Newcastle

THE nine-week old civil service strike is costing the government £5,000m a week in lost revenue — which adds up to a million pounds for each striker.

But despite the enormous success of the selective strikes, it is now becoming clear that tactic on its own is not sufficient to win the dispute.

Consequently, members of the civil service unions are becoming increasingly frustrated by the poor leadership shown by the national council of the civil service unions.

In some cases workers have taken matters into their own hands and have come out on unofficial action during the past week.

For example, the Livingstone computer centre, which processes giro checks, was out for three days, closing to the public most of the unemployment benefit offices in Scotland and the north of England.

Calls for stepping-up the action will be heard over the next couple of weeks when the trade unions involved are holding their annual conferences.

For the CPSA conference many branches have tabled emergency motions calling for an all-out strike from the end of May. Newcastle Central Office DHSS branch is demanding complete stoppages at ports and airports, to be followed, if this doesn't win the dispute, by across-the-board action.

Civil servants have never engaged in an all-out strike, and they have never even been on strike for more than a day for anything less than full strike pay. But more and more union members are beginning to realise that they don't have any choice but to go the whole way once the selective strike strategy has been exhausted.

When that happens the union members could be most uncivil servants. The indication is that there is a growing determination to win the dispute.

Wales TUC Congress

Right wing grip begins to slacken

By Barry Wilkins

AT the Wales TUC congress last weekend the largely right wing leadership started to lose its domination.

At the 1980 Congress it had succeeded in stifling almost all debate and opposition. But since then the crisis in Wales has rapidly worsened and unemployment has increased to 13.6 per cent — nearly one in seven of the workforce.

As a result a left opposition to the leadership has begun to emerge. Two issues in particular brought open opposition.

A motion from Merthyr Tydfil Trade Council demanded a special conference on youth unemployment, and Lliw Valley Trades Council called for the establishment of a youth section of the Wales TUC.

Despite opposition from the General Council both motions attracted substantial support, although the chair — JM Griffiths from the TGWU — dubiously declared them defeated.

It was the massive opposition to the Wales TUC's social plan which most rattled the leadership. The plan seeks agreement between the unions, the CBI, and the next Labour government on economic policies, and the General Council felt obliged to withdraw the resolution endorsing the plan.

The document and debate was purely consultative. Speech after speech slammed the plan.

Derek Gregory, full-time officer for the public employees' union NUPE led the attack, calling the plan 'a manifesto for the Social Democratic Party'.

Emlyn Williams, South Wales miners' union president, explained that the social plan was an attempt to get a new version of the social contract and that he had been mandated by the NUM to urge total rejection of it.

The NUM and NUPE delegates began the fight for alternative left policies at the congress, though there is still a long way to go.

Strike

Des Duffield, vice president of the South Wales NUM, made one of the most important contributions. He attacked the pathetic leadership of many unions over unemployment, emphasising that 'people are ready for a fight now, given the right lead'.

And in a none too veiled reference to Wales TUC general secretary George Wright, Duffield added: 'Don't apologise for using the strike weapon when the employers are kicking you in the guts.'

The social plan is to be debated at another Wales TUC conference, and that can only accelerate the formation of this emerging left current around the NUM and NUPE.

The steel union leaderships will play no part in this process. Despite the continuing loss of steel jobs in Wales there was not a single motion on the agenda from either the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation or the National Union of Blastfurnacemen. Their delegates maintained a deafening silence on all major issues before the conference.

Michael Foot and NUPE general secretary Alan Fisher were guest speakers at the conference. Fisher carefully avoided giving support to Tony Benn for the Labour Party deputy leadership, and both speakers failed to make any specific commitment on unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The congress overwhelmingly adopted a motion supporting unilateral disarmament and called for money to be spent instead on rebuilding the economic and social structure of Wales.

At a fringe meeting organised by the Wales Labour Co-ordinating Committee, there was enthusiastic support for Tony Benn for deputy. Derek Gregory pointed out that it is Benn and not Healey who stands for party policy.

And Labour MP Stuart Holland argued that it was 'a fudging of issues and right wing consensus' which lost Labour the election in 1979. 'To pull our punches now in the party and in the trade unions,' he said, 'will make it difficult to know which twin is the Tory in the next election.'

Superman discovers reality.... and it hurts!



By Yvonne Taylor

FOR a split second, there is complete quiet. The jabbering of voices has ceased. In an instant, all eyes are focused in the same direction. Concentration is needle sharp.

And then all hell breaks loose. Screams and cries tear the silence. Shripping whistles echo around the walls. Cheers and catcalls, clapping hands and stamping feet rock the foundations.

Superman II — on general release just in time for the school holidays — is being given the reception traditionally accorded to superheroes by cinema-going youth down the decades.

At first sight, it seems that the supermale of the 1980s, like his audience, has undergone little essential change.

Brawn

He possesses as much brawn and as little brain as he ever did. And while improved film technology lends today's superhero undreamt powers, the storyline is the same.

By dint of sheer muscle power, he manages to kill the bad guys, save the world and get the girl.

But that's only at first. A second look reveals a Superman not quite so unaltered by time.

For a kick off, who ever heard of a superhero film with an 'A' certificate? Has the British Board of Censors gone mad? No self-respecting youth can be expected to turn up to a Superman matinee with parents in tow. It's positively embarrassing to see young people forced to the expedient of having adults 'front' for them at the box office and then sneak in.

Sex

Why has the young film fan been forced to such an extremity? Gradually, the reason emerges. Superman — like Flash Gordon — that other recently revived matinee hero — has discovered sex.

Where once these intrepid adventures would not have ventured beyond a brotherly arm around the girlfriend's shoulders,

today's supermale is not above the odd sexual encounter.

The increased concentration on the 'human interest' angle in *Superman II* failed to elicit the same among the younger viewers. In between the 'action' scenes, attention wandered until audience participation became possible once more.

Neither *Superman* nor *Flash Gordon* were revived for the traditional children's matinee audience. Both films have been geared to an older generation of cinema goers: the nostalgia market.

Flash Gordon in particular is a sentimental send up, pure and simple. *Superman II* does try to achieve something more.

Victim

Christopher Reeves as Superman manages to infuse the comic strip hero with a real personality. In one scene his Superman jabs discordantly with the accepted image.

Having renounced his super powers to live an ordinary human life with Lois Lane, Superman experiences what it's like to be the six-stone weakling having sand kicked in his face. He learns what it's like to be on the receiving end of physical violence.

He is beaten up with shocking realism. It must be the first time ever that blood has poured down a victim's face in a superhero film. And the victim this time is the superhero himself!

Crackle

Miserable in the lonely life of a supermale, and unable to cope with life as an ordinary man, for a while there — Superman was not quite so confident about his mission to fight for truth, liberty and the American way!

Superman III has been promised. It remains to be seen whether the seeds of self-doubt sown by *Superman II* will be allowed to grow.

After all the financial double-dealing that surrounded the making of *Superman II*, Christopher Reeves has intimated that it will take more than the crackle of dollars to persuade him to play Superman III. If he stands by his word, it could be a film well worth watching.

Women live - and laughing!

By Margaret Ford

WOMEN IN ENTERTAINMENT is an amalgamation of working women in various areas of the entertainment industry.

It plans to put women on the map in May 1982 with its 'Women Live' project.

The aim is to put on productions created by and about women, demonstrating women's technical and artistic abilities, as well as presenting women in non-stereotyped roles.

The project wants to encourage the employment of women in all aspects of production,

direction and performance.

Women in Entertainment exists to create more work for women. It fights for adequate child care and abortion/contraception facilities so it is possible for women to work.

Support

And it challenges sexism and sexual stereotyping of women both in the workplace and in the type

of material women are expected to perform.

The 'Women Live' project hopes to persuade cinemas, radio stations, theatres and television companies to put on productions which have a 'female emphasis'. The head of BBC Television Plays, Keith Williams, is supporting this enterprise.

Pressure can be put on local TV and radio stations, theatres and cinemas to schedule programmes relevant to women

during the month of May 1982.

The project has the backing of many women in the entertainment world: Anna Ford, Julie Christie and writers Caryl Churchill and Pam Gems are a few of the women to lend their support.

Alive

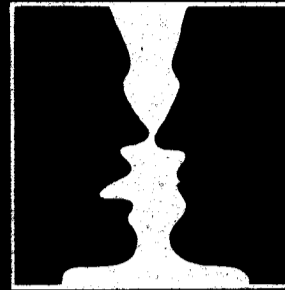
Activities like this venture are important for women both in and out of the entertainment business. As *Women in Entertainment* explains: 'How

women see themselves portrayed in the media is all important in perpetuating women's negative images of themselves and the roles they are expected to play in a male world.

'For a month at least, "Women Live" plans to change those images and maybe May 1982 will prove to men and more importantly to women, that women are indeed alive, well and kicking!'

For further information contact Margaret Ford (01) 483 0077.

THE RIGHT OF REPLY



A guide for those misrepresented and misrepresented in the press and other media

With a preface by Moss Evans, Bill Keys, John Jackson, Owen O'Brien & Joe Wade

Campaign for Press Freedom

How to reply to press bias

By Geoffrey Sheridan, Editor, *Free Press*

THE Campaign for Press Freedom has just published a pamphlet on the right of reply which is a valuable guide for all those on the receiving end of press bias or distortion.

It explains why the right of reply is needed, and how it can be obtained with the help of the unions in the newspaper and magazine industries.

Details are given of the policies of the journalists' and print unions, together with advice on contacting workplace union representatives.

The 16-page guide is part of CPF's Right of Reply Campaign. 'The first aim of this campaign,' the pamphlet states, 'is to increase public awareness of the importance of extending access to the media and of giving people the right of reply.'

It adds that the campaign looks to trade unionists employed in the media to help secure that right, if necessary by industrial action.

The pamphlet is endorsed by five union leaders, who write in an introductory statement that all those involved in the press 'have some responsibility for the product of their labours'.

The statement is made by Moss Evans, who is chairperson of the TUC's Media Working Group, and the general secretaries of the print unions NATSOPA, NGA, SLADE, and SOGAT.

For years print union members have been discouraged from 'interfering' in the freedom of newspaper proprietors and editors to peddle whatever lies they like. In some cases action by print workers to secure the right of reply has resulted in disciplinary measures by their union.

The pamphlet presents a step-by-step guide to gaining access to the press, and further recommends discussions with journalists and print workers at both local and national level.

While the campaign has yet to formulate policy on gaining access to broadcast media, over a hundred Labour MPs, union leaders, and professors have recently written to the broadcasting authorities protesting about anti-labour bias.

In a letter, whose signatories include the general secretaries of the broadcasting unions ACTT and ABS, they have demanded a television series in which this can be examined and discussed.

The Right of Reply, price 40p (pre-paid), from the Campaign for Press Freedom, 274-288 London Rd, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2DE.

Free Press, the campaign's 8-page bulletin, is published bi-monthly.

The campaign's AGM is being held on Saturday 9 May at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. It starts at 10.30am.

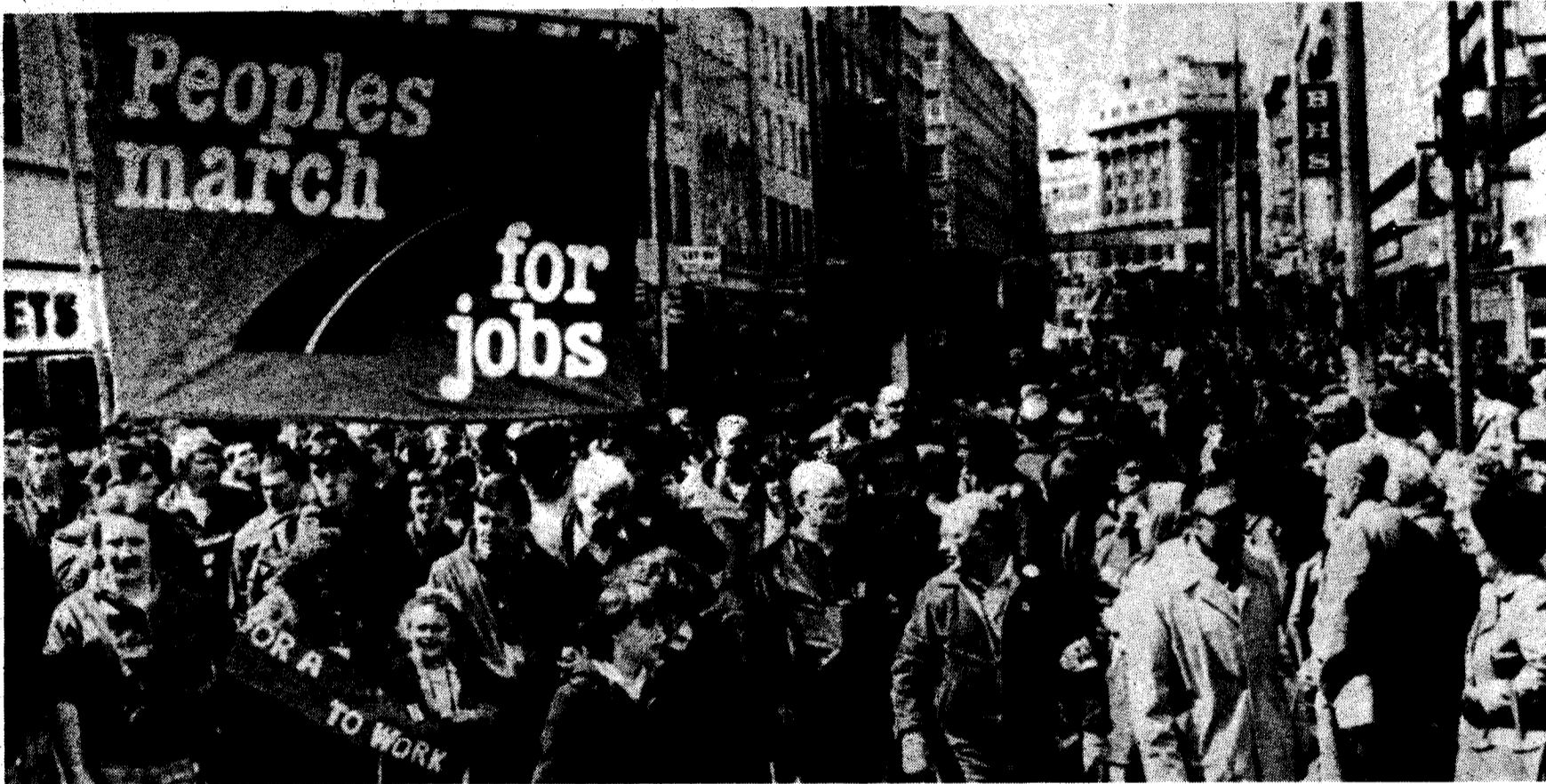
Socialist Challenge

'We want to be Manchester workers not Doncaster rovers'

By **Pete Clifford**

THE SIT-IN at Laurence Scott's is now in its third week. By a clear majority a mass meeting last Sunday voted to continue the fight against the closure of the Louisa Street works in Openshaw, Manchester.

LAY A RED CARPET FOR THE PEOPLE'S MARCH



By Patrick Sikorski

OVER 5000 workers swelled Liverpool's Pier Head on May Day to send off the People's March for Jobs.

They reserved some of their loudest applause for the president of Liverpool District Labour Party, who called on the TUC to organise a one day general strike in London to greet the march.

The message from the rally was that every one of the 500 official marchers represented at least 5000 unemployed workers according to government statistics. And the speakers explained that the real level of unemployment was much higher than 2½ million.

Ovation

Theresa Martin, a shop steward at the recently closed Tate and Lyle factory, pointed out that many women don't bother to register as unemployed if they are married. Even so there are 20,000 women registered in Liverpool alone.

It was fitting therefore that the banner leading the march should be carried by a young woman wearing a 'woman's right to work' sash.

Over half the marchers are young unemployed people. Some are straight from school, others have had a variety of low paid unskilled jobs or been used as cheap labour by the widely discredited Youth Opportunities (YOPS) schemes.

support for the march from working people across the country. It is seen as a national focus for their hatred of this Tory government.

The marchers left the Pier Head with supporting banners and delegations from seventeen unions to the chants of 'Maggie, Maggie, out, out, out,' and, 'Occupy, organise, kick the Tories out.'

Elsie Broad from the Royal Pride strike in Man-

their areas the support would be tremendous.'

But it took the Labour Party national executive until two days before the march set off to give its support. Such an endorsement would have boosted the call by union militants for the TUC and Labour Party to jointly call for a one day general strike in London to greet the march.

Call

Some 200,000 workers responded to the Labour Party's call for demonstrations against unemployment in Liverpool and Glasgow. They understood that kicking out the Tories and replacing them with a Labour government is essential to solving unemployment.

The People's March has caught the imagination of working people. It can play a vital role in stimulating the fight back against the Tories and their unemployment policies.

To achieve that the march should link up with as many workers as possible on the route. And workers in struggle like the Lee Jeans and Laurence Scott's occupations should take pride of place on the march.

March for Jobs London 31 May



The appalling waste of unemployment and the plight of the young unemployed in particular has fuelled the tremendous

chester told Socialist Challenge: 'If all the unions joined together to call actions to support the march as it goes through

Socialist Challenge

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The meeting was told of management's threats to sack the whole workforce and therefore withdraw redundancy pay if they didn't return to work.

But the workers' reply came loud and clear: 'We want to be Manchester workers, not Doncaster rovers' (referring to the Doncaster-based firm Mining Supplies Ltd, the new owners of the Laurence Scott group).

'We refuse to be browbeaten into submission,' they said, and a great cheer went up when the vote was announced.

Some 650 jobs are at stake in the closure battle, which is the latest episode in the long saga of job destruction in the Manchester area. That's why so many people are rushing to support the strikers.

The local Labour MPs have given their support.

Movement

Mining Supplies' boss, the appropriately named Arthur Snipe, announced at the time of the takeover last October that he was 'quite content with the Manchester works because of its regular profit contribution to the group.'

His decision to now close the factory is a classic case of capitalist logic which puts profits before people. It was explained in a letter from the sales director at the other Laurence Scott's factory in Norwich as 'a policy of rationalisation.... so that investment.... can be implemented on one site'.

In other words, strip the assets, sack the well-organised workers in Manchester, and transfer the works to Norwich. The one snag in this profit-maximising scheme was the united action of the workforce.

When the workers at Norwich heard that the sit-in had started in Manchester, they decided to refuse work that was transferred and to pay a weekly levy to the strike fund.

Appeal

A united strike committee involving stewards from all unions on site, shopfloor and staff, has been established at the Manchester plant. Committees have been set up to run the occupation and so far 590 of the 650 workers have been involved in the sit-in.

Convenor of the joint shop stewards' committee Bob Pension told Socialist Challenge: 'If Snipe gets away with this no trade unionist has got the right to strike. Thousands of little Snipes will be watching for the outcome of this fight.'

What they need now is money. Rush donations and messages of support to: Appeal fund, c/o George Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Rumley, Stockport, Cheshire.