

CONFIDENTIAL

PEOPLES MARCH FOR JOBS '83

Conservative Research Department

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PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR JOBS, AND RALLY (HYDE PARK, 5th JUNE 1983)

"Its main purpose is to focus national attention on rising unemployment, and the need for policies geared to create more jobs. If a June election is called, it could be a powerful focus for anti-Government feeling on an issue on which it is vulnerable." (FT 23rd March)

PEOPLE'S MARCH

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5th OF JUNE RALLY

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Newspaper abbreviations

MS Morning Star
T Times
DT Daily Telegraph
ST Sunday Telegraph
O Observer
FT Financial Times
G Guardian

A. BRIEF FACTS

The TUC originally rejected the idea of a March in the Autumn of last year, but owing to the persistence of certain affiliated unions - notably the TGWU and NALGO - this decision was reversed and a TUC appeal for £250,000 was launched on March 28th.

Organisers were excited by the possibility that the March might coincide with a June Election.

Youth organisations welcomed the March.

It was planned to sponsor 500 official marchers, each provided with comprehensive kit. It was expected that local authorities and other organisations would provide accomodation in the 100-plus towns which would be visited.

The objective was to repeat the success of the 1981 Peoples' March which culminated in a rally of 250,000 people in London. This event, according to Ron Todd and Alan Jinkinson (1983 chairman and secretary respectively), boosted the issue of unemployment to the place of first in public concern. Opinion polls suggest that the march and rally postdated the change in public priorities.

The first marchers left Glasgow on April 23rd.

A Yorkshire 'feeder' left Keighley on April 27th and was joined by a Hull branch-line at Rotherham on May 5th.

A Tyneside feeder left Newcastle on April 30th.

A Merseyside feeder started from Liverpool on May 9th.

A Lands End feeder set out on May 11th.

The East Anglia section will join the main body at Luton on May 30th.

The March will reach London five days before polling day, on Saturday June 4th. On Sunday morning it will form up in Battersea Park and march through Westminster to Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park. It is expected to form the centrepiece of a massive rally.

Sources

Guardian 29/3/83

FT 29/3/83

Morning Star 2/4/83

B . SUPPORT FROM EXTREME LEFT

It is difficult to disentangle the Communist origins of the March from the TUC origins. The following is an extract from a '2 minute news review' issued by the Economic League:

"Marching for Communism

The so-called "Peoples March for Jobs '83"...is a carefully planned and closely controlled activity in which the Communist Party is the major influence.

Application forms to join the march required two passport-type photographs, had to be completed by a "nominating body" and sent to regional secretaries of the TUC. Of the 11 of these named at least six are known to be members or supporters of the Communist Party.

Proof

The march organisers provide conclusive proof of Communist pre-eminence in the event. The national committee of four includes Ron Todd TGWU, the chairman, and Ken Barlow UCATT, both consistent supporters of the Communist Party, whose new industrial organiser, Pete Carter, will play a key organising role.

Gerry Cohen, a member of the Party's executive committee, says Communists "were to the forefront in the fight" to get the march to take place in the face of TUC and Labour Party opposition. At the time of writing ten regional march organisers had been named:

Scotland	*Ronald M. Rigby	North East	Bob Howard
North West	*Colin Barnett	West Midlands	*Don Groves
East Midlands	*Alan Duxbury	Yorkshire	*Roy Rix
East Anglia	*Ivor Jordan	South West	Phil Gregory
Wales	George Wright	South East	*Jack Dromeay

*Member or supporter of the Communist Party."

It is noteworthy that only the Morning Star among national dailies has provided significant coverage of the March. The Morning Star has 'March' articles daily, and has had itself adopted as the March's newspaper.

From the start the Morning Star has left readers in no doubt that such a march is only necessary because of 'capitalist crisis and Tory government policies' (8th 4), and that it is in the finest traditions of the 'extra-Parliamentary struggle of the British people and its working-class movement' (25th 4).

The Northern Communist Party (MS 30th 4), Stockport Communist Party (MS 9th 5), and the North Nottingham Communist Party Candidate (John Peck, MS 13th & 14th 5), have all associated themselves with the March.

The March has accumulated an allegedly unsolicited following from the Far Left Press (such as Workers Revolutionary Party's Newsline) (FT 12th 5). They hang about the March "like so many wasps round a picnic (and) try to sell each other papers by mistake" (ST 15th 5). It had originally been hoped to keep such 'vote-scaring' factions away, but Trotskyists swarm ahead of the March chanting anti-Tory slogans, passing off Newsline as the official March paper and pocketing donations. (ST 15th 5).

C. SUPPORT FROM THE UNIONS

As indicated in Section A, the March project was pushed through to TUC endorsement by trade union militant elements.

Originally Len Murray (like Michael Foot, see Section D) declined to support the March through fear that it might divert and expend scarce resources (T 23rd 4). Frank Chapple, **Chairman of** the TUC, also opposed the March: "I put the kibosh on this unemployment marching business. There won't be any of that while I'm in the chair" (The Democrat 9th-20th 12).

The £250,000 to be raised by the TUC through union branches, shop stewards committees and towns committees (MS 8th 4) was to equip each of 500 marchers with a comprehensive kit including: a green and yellow anorak, sweat shirt, 2 T shirts, underwear, walking boots and socks, and a bed-roll (mainly MS 8th 4).

Among the unions which have given conspicuous support to the March are:

- TGWU (an originator) (MS 12th & 31st 5)
- NALGO (an originator) (MS 4th, 12th, 14th & 31st 5)
- AUEW (MS 22nd & 28th 4)
- NUM (MS 4th 5)
- NUPE (MS 4th, 6th & 14th 5)
- GMWU/GMBATU (MS 4th & 10th 5)
- UCATT (MS 4th 5)
- Fire Brigades Union (MS 12th 5)
- ASTMS (MS 12th 5)
- SOGAT (MS 25th 4 & 14th 5)
- Inland Revenue Staff (MS 14th 5)
- NGA (MS 20th 5)
- EEPTU (MS 25th 4)

D. LABOUR ON THE BANDWAGGON.

Originally Labour's enthusiasm for a march was hesitant, even negative.

Michael Foot did not, at first, take up the march's cause through the belief that it would divert the time and resources of Labour Movement activists away from a possible election campaign (T 23rd 4).

Labour's alignment with the March grew through external circumstantial reasons:

1. The TUC's adoption of the March (see Section A)
2. The fundamentally anti-Government connotations of the March.

With regard to the latter, while the organisers have sought to suppress overtly anti-Tory rallying cries (see Section F), many such statements occur. For example:

- "The Tories have got to go; we need a new type of Labour government which will challenge big business" (MS 23rd 4)
- The March supports "an alternative economic strategy" (MS 22nd 4)
- "The People's March for Jobs will bring a message of inspiration and hope to millions, to counter the Tory-imposed resignation and despair of unemployment" Gerry Cohen, Communist Party Morning Star Campaign Organiser (MS 23rd 4)
- "...four and a half million victims of Tory policies" (MS 26th 4)
- March will be "going right to 10 Downing Street" (MS 30th 4)
- A crusade against "Government policies (which have) deliberately created unemployment" Jack Dromey (MS 13th 5)
- Opposition to the Conservative Government is explicit in the 'Marchers' Song' (MS 9th 5)

The coincidence with Labour's election platform is such that, since the announcement of the General Election, the marchers have been "bored down to their blisters by some of Westminster's most egregious windbags" (ST 15th 5)

Among those who have taken advantage of passing marches are:-

Labour Parliamentary Candidates

Ken Eastham (MS 13th 5)
the other Jim Callaghan (ibid)
Tony Brunt (MS 14th 5)
Martin Upham (MS 23rd 5)
Stan Orme (MS 9th 5)
Gerald Kaufman (ibid)
Joan Lester (ibid, & 11th 5)
Ossie O'Brien (MS 11th 5)
Bob Litherland (MS 14th 5)
Bob Edwards (MS 20th 5)

MICHAEL FOOT spoke to a March rally in Norwich (MS 23rd 5)

TONY BENN pushed a March casualty into Bristol in a wheelchair (MS 28th 5)

Labour papers

Militant
Labour Herald
Socialist Organiser
Socialist Youth
Labour Weekly

have all espoused the cause of the March.

E. OTHER ORGANISATIONS ASSOCIATING WITH THE MARCH

1. The Church

- The Bishop of Manchester has called the March "a blow against evil" (MS 23rd 4)
- Graham Kent (Yorkshire Methodist minister), a Father Rosser (Yorkshire Catholic priest) and the Rev. Jack Gardner (Burnley Council of Churches) have all welcomed the Marchers (MS 28th 4 & 4th 5)
- The Rev. David Warner, St. Mary's Church, Wombwell, Yorkshire, washed the Marchers' feet and said that the movement came from Jesus Christ (MS 6th 5)
- The Bishops of Lichfield, Shrewsbury, Stafford, and Wolverhampton were all scheduled (according to MS 17th 5) to join the March for short stretches. As there was no further mention, it is unclear whether they actually did so.
- The Birmingham Council of Christian Churches (includes the Bishop Hugh Montefiore) has issued a supportive statement (MS 21st 5)
- The Bishops of Coventry and Warwick have also greeted the Marchers (MS 23rd 5)

2. Minority and Alternative Groups

The Marchers apparently support every pacifist, feminist or anti-racist cause which crops up along the wayside. The March has had days for: Women, Children, Ethnic Minorities, and Youth (MS 8th 4).

The following groups are among those which have identified with the March:

The Society of Friends (MS 9th 5)
Indian workers associations (MS 20th 5)
Plaid Cymru (MS 6th 5)
SNP (MS 25th 4)
CND (MS 25th 4, 9th & 31st 5)

CND's successful penetration of the March - many Marchers wear their badges - can only distance the March from popular support.

F. MODERATE IMAGE

Organisers have "a near paranoid deference to the public's suspicion of extremists" (G 23rd 5) Trotskyists are a source of embarrassment.

Since many of the organisers are Communists, the distinction is rather a fine one. A few disruptive Workers Revolutionary Party members have been expelled (MS 14th 5), but how much this was due to factiousness among the Far Left (ST 15th 5) is unclear.

Recurring claims to political respectability have been apparant.

The success of the march must largely depend on a public perception of reasonableness, and some of the organisers are evidently disturbed by the image of extremism which the March can so easily attract. Numerous declarations have been made to broaden the political appeal of the event:

- Early on, the secretary of the Great Manchester Communist Party warned that "While it is very good that trade unions have taken the initiative of putting the march on the road, the People's March is not the property of the trade unions alone. If so, it would only appeal to its committed members... Thatcherism won by mass populism. Our answer is by popular mass involvement" (MS 5th 4).
- "The march has had its share of political problems. The march organisers have been keen to broaden its appeal as much as possible, and to attract support from right across the political spectrum" (FT 23rd 4)
- The Morning Star derided the Sun's description of the March as "a Trotskyite stunt", without disowning the political purpose of the exercise (MS 27th 4)
- Morning Star goes to great lengths to paint the marchers as ordinary everyday exploited folk (e.g. MS 3rd 5)
- While sympathisers chant "Maggie Out!", the marchers have allegedly opted for less specific slogans "in response to disquiet over outside attempts to involve them in ultra-leftish chants, out of character on the march" (MS 5th 5)
- FT observes that marchers from varying age and social groups were selected "to demonstrate the breadth of unemployment" (FT 7th 5)
- "Every single person of whatever sex, colour, age, creed or political affiliation who is concerned about mass unemployment should support the March and join it wherever possible. It has one central demand -- that whatever government is elected on June 9 has to make the ending of unemployment its first priority" John Peck, Communist Party candidate (MS 13th 5)
- FT found marchers sceptical about Labour's 'New Hope For Britain', and one was emphatic that "If Labour is in power in four years time with 3.5 million unemployed then we will be on the march again". (MS 12th 5)
- "The TUC's stated intention was an 'unpolitical' march comprising a representative 'broad church'--an artificial notion even if no election were pending... Strategies for Full Employment are a Labour party preserve" (ST 15th 5)
- March speechmakers only implicitly urge listeners to vote Labour (MS 21st 5)
- MS reported Bishop of Lichfield's belief that no government had the solution to unemployment (MS 21st 5)
- MS claims that the Tory charge that the March is political has been "disproved" (MS 8th 4)

G. DISAPPOINTING RECEPTION SO FAR

The march has been a flop (compared with 1981's march) in terms of:

1. Turnout
2. Local public reactions
3. As a national media event

1. Turnout

- The Kent march was cancelled for precisely the reasons originally feared by Michael Foot; resources were needed at home to fight the election (DI 13th 5).
- The march is far smaller than in 1981 (ST 15th 5).
- Morning Star avoided mention of numbers in the total Cornish march, 25 were mentioned at Lands End (MS 11th & 12th 5).
- 4 people from Northern Ireland joined the Liverpool march; 3 marchers set out from Skelmersdale (MS 10th 5).
- One marcher came from Hereford (MS 18th 5).

2. Local Public Reactions

- 30,000 well-wishers were expected to see the Scottish march off (T 23rd 4), 3,000 turned up (MS 25th 4).
- It passed through Crewe with no mention on local radio or TV (CTU report 16th 5).
- 150 marchers assembled in Derby marketplace before a gallery of half a dozen onlookers (ibid.).
- The marchers entrance into Penzance was so effective that shoppers were "stunned" into silence (MS 12th 5).
- Entering Leicester marchers outnumbered their welcomers (G 23rd 5).
- According to MS 800 people turned out in Manchester Free Trade Hall for rousing speeches (14th 5); according to ST 200 people turned out and the evening was a shambles (15th 5).
- MS speaks repeatedly of hoots of support from passing cars; G speaks of motorists angry at delays (G 23rd 5).

The marchers therefore made little impact on the public, this is apparently due to Tory mass brainwashing (MS 15th 5).

3. As a National Media Event

Only Labour and Far Left papers have given the march regular coverage. The Sun has described it as "a Trotskyite stunt" and "pathetic" (Sun 26th 4) The Guardian, Observer and Financial Times have shown sporadic curiosity.

It must not be assumed from all this that the March's arrival in London, and the Rally, pose no threat to the Conservatives.

The Rally is a gift to the Labour Party, which has expended little time or resources on the March. The Rally is certain to be a major media event, whether it is numerically successful or not.

H. KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE RALLY

The occasion for the Rally is the arrival of the People's March for Jobs in central London.

The purpose of the Rally is to "start a tide of opinion so great that it will engulf the architects of despair in this government on June 9".

(Jack Dromey, SE area organiser, MS 1st 6)

Timetable of events

- Thursday 2nd June: Marchers enter London at Harrow, 10.30am
Rally in Brent Town Hall, 2.30pm, speakers include Ken Livingstone.
(Overnight: Preston Manor School, Brent)
- Friday 3rd June: Rally at Southall Community Centre, 3.30pm, speakers include Moss Evans (TGWU).
(Overnight: Sikh Temple, Havelock Rd., Southall)
- Saturday 4th June: Reception at Battersea Bridge, 11.30am.
Reception by GLC in County Hall, 12.30pm.
Festival for Jobs at Crystal Palace Bowl from noon till 8pm, Marchers arrive at 4pm.
- Sunday 5th June: NATIONAL MARCH AND RALLY
March (and supporting multitudes) assemble in Battersea Park at noon. Entertainment provided. Move off at 1.15pm: destination Hyde Park. Speakers at Hyde Park include Michael Foot and Len Murray (both of whom originally opposed the March). Prunella Scales, Glenda Jackson, CND Chairperson Joan Ruddock, Student's president Neil Stewart and several speakers from unemployed centres.
- Monday 6th June: Marchers visit 10 Downing Street to hand card to PM.
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Support

- Ron Todd expects 250,000 in Hyde Park (FT & G 29th 3).
- It is intended to be the biggest demonstration Britain has yet seen (T 23rd 4, MS 13th & 23rd 5).
- It is intended to appeal even to the Toties (MS 20th 5).
- Nine trains and 200 coaches have already been booked (MS 1st 6).
- NUR are paying for whole train from Edinburgh and Glasgow.
- The Rally has Communist backing (MS 17th & 25th 5).
- Several unions (NUPE & Firemen) have pledged to mobilise contingents from all over the country (MS 19th & 21st 5).

I. OPPORTUNITY FOR LABOUR AND THE GLC

LABOUR have had their Election Manifesto taken apart piece by piece. The unemployment issue has nowhere near reached what they consider to be its latent potential as a pro-Labour motivator of the electorate.

They dare not talk of Defence, their public expenditure plans, or the question of the leadership of their own party.

THEY HAVE EVERYTHING TO GAIN AND NOTHING TO LOSE by mobilising full resources behind an already-planned mass demonstration against the alleged sins of the Conservative Government.

The Rally will be A MAJOR MEDIA EVENT. If it fails Labour will have nothing left to say to the British electorate. If it is a massive success they could be back in the election race.

The effectiveness of a huge demonstration could be blunted for Labour by the high profile taken by Left Wing movements. If the media focuses on the CND element the public will be reminded of their defence disaster.

The Rally remains Labour's best chance of rejoining the election race.

The GLC is threatened with extinction by another Conservative government. It can only be expected that Livingstone will support the demonstration with everything at his disposal.

According to **the GLC's** news service they are going to spend £24,125 of ratepayers' money supporting the march.

J. CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDE: OPTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Calls for mass support for the March and Rally may be expected over the next three days (2nd - 4th June).

It would seem that we have the choice of three basic attitudes to take in response:

1. Ignore it
2. Ridicule the March as an irrelevant Trotskyist stunt
3. Discredit Labour's right to be associated with the cause of the jobless.

1. Ignore it

While we should not launch an attack until (or unless) Labour begin to associate publicly with the event, it is suggested here that we cannot afford to ignore it. To do so would amount to ignoring a banana-skin which we know to be there.

The media will not ignore it.

To ignore it would imply that we had no answer: it would be conceding vital territory by default.

2. Ridicule the March as an irrelevant Trotskyist stunt

It is important that the Far Left connections of the March and Rally be brought to the public's attention. It is the March organisers' own fear that they are particularly vulnerable on this point (see Sections B and F), therefore presumably they are. A precedent has been established with CND, so possibly the public would need little persuasion. CND is now a liability to Labour and people who have qualms about Labour's defence policies may prefer not to attend a demonstration which gives a platform to CND.

Union involvement is also an obvious unpopular vested interest.

London ratepayers could be reminded of the money being wasted by the GLC.

HOWEVER we must be careful how far we go to deride the Marchers themselves. No doubt some honest, blistered, unemployed people have yomped from Glasgow, Newcastle or wherever, and the Church has leant eloquent sympathy. It may damage our efforts to show ourselves to be a compassionate caring party if we do not respect their efforts and agree that they are right to be concerned about unemployment.

It is suggested that we should not question the sincerity of the Marchers, and that the message about the extremism behind the event should not form the main plank of our attack.

3. Discredit Labour's right to espouse the cause

The Marchers do not threaten us: Labour does. In the final analysis it does not matter about the Rally, as long as we get re-elected. To attack the event rather than Labour may be seen later as an unfortunate deflection of our effort. There are plenty of grounds for discrediting Labour on:

- a. their contribution to present unemployment
- b. the nonsense of the unemployment 'solutions'.

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J. Cont....

The recent Harris Poll, published by the Observer on *May* 29th, showed findings which would not have been possible if the public did not share our view of the causes of unemployment. This is the occasion to push home Labour's culpability vigorously. It seems that the electorate is receptive to the message.

MORE PEOPLE TRUST THE CONSERVATIVES TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS ON
UNEMPLOYMENT THAN LABOUR

Favour the Conservatives:	37%
Favour Labour:	30%
Favour the Alliance:	17%
Don't Knows:	17%

(From Harris poll, published by THE OBSERVER, 29th May 1983)

Labour's culpability for unemployment

The last Labour Government's dependence upon its trade-union paymasters resulted in the support of restrictive practices, overmanning, resistance to new and less unionised industries, and the featherbedding of the public-sector monopolies, with predictable consequences for Britain's competitiveness.

Between 1970 and 1980 pay in the United Kingdom rose nearly twice as fast as in our main competitor nations, while productivity increased by only half as much; this could only result in higher Unit Labour Costs, and between 1975 and 1980 labour costs rose more than twice as much as among our competitors. Lost customers inevitably means lost jobs.

At the same time Labour's irresponsible fiscal policies created runaway inflation and undermined the foundations of Britain's economic future.