

# CUTLASS

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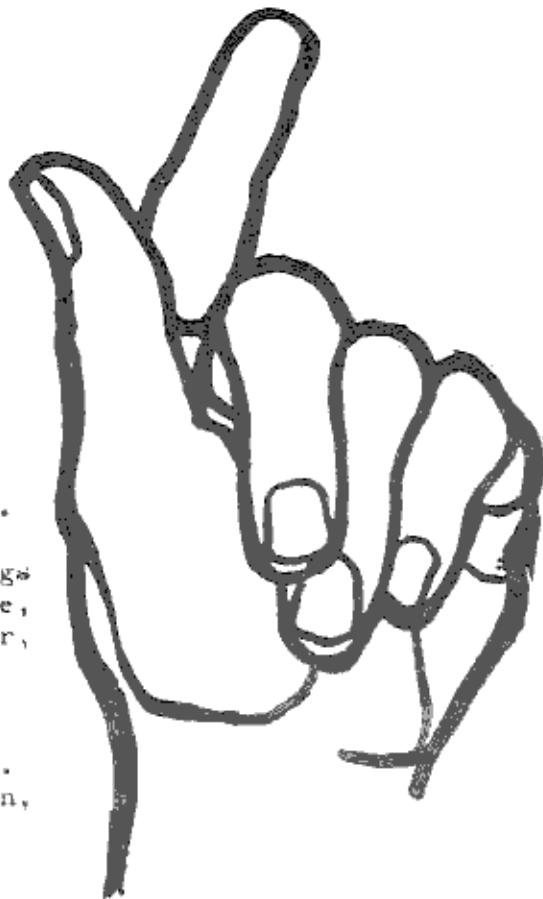
## THE MANDATE OF MAY

What an inspiring moment in history every May Day is. A day of hope and promise -- that carefully embraced in the future is a time when the month of May will dawn on a world emancipated from the reign of imperialist exploitation and domination. And that the sweep of that emancipation will eventually erase such social distortions as racism, sexism, residual nazism, and the threat of fascism and genocidal war.

But equally, May Day brings retrospection. For instance, in our greetings last year, 1977, we stated our firm support for "the restoration of the Panama Canal to the Panamanian people". And now that they have won, their glorious victory is certainly our joy.

In such reflection we are strengthened by the invaluable lessons which the Caribbean carries to the international solidarity movement. For deeply carved in Caribbean history is the confirmation that no matter how difficult the conditions of struggle, the peoples of the world can, and will triumph over every form of oppression and exploitation.

First Iberian plunder led to a genocidal act against Caribbean natives, notably the Indians of the Arawak



tribe. Their enslaved African successors were to rebel again and again against their state of total dehumanisation on the plantations of the colonial enclaves. And in 1804 some triumphed in Haiti, establishing national sovereignty there for all times. Significant victories, albeit less spectacular, followed until the stupendous Cuban leap of 1959 from the Yankee-guarded dungeon of neo-

colonialism to the broad open road of socialism.

But even under the status of neo-colonialism, in 1930, when Hitler was flexing his muscles of death in Europe; when one of David Owen's predecessors schemed at the League of Nations to give Italian fascists a free hand to spray Ethiopian peasants with poisoned gas, 1000 Cubans were joining the International Brigade in the fight for democracy in Spain. And in 1890, Cuban workers joined the first celebration of May Day. No wonder young Cubans of today find it a noble duty to respond to the call from Anglo and Ethiopia to help the people of those countries defend their sovereignty and democratic ideals.

This year the whole world will salute the British Labour Movement when for the first time it joins the international working class movement in celebrating May Day in its legitimate form as a public holiday. Significantly, most of Britain's semi colonies and ex-colonies in the Caribbean have been doing so for many years now. For historical reasons Jamaica does so on May 23rd. And we could go on because the lessons are rich.

But on this day of May we

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## A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN POLITICS

"Women do not seek charity, they only demand equality" These were the words of Jamaica's Minister of State for Womens Affairs in her speech at the opening of the International Womens Day exhibition in Kingston in March. The celebrations an exhibition, cultural events, discussions and a rally - were attended by Jamaicans from all walks of life, including Prime Minister Manley, representatives from the Soviet Union, Cuba, Guyana, the Jamaican Women Teachers Association, the Y.W.C.A. the Jamaica Library Service and the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation. The exhibition traced the historic role of women in the struggles of the Jamaican people and linked their aims and achievements with those of women internationally.

The breadth of support for the International Womens Day events reflects a growing awareness of the im-

portant role women play in Jamaican society and politics, and the growing strength of Womens organisations.

While visiting Jamaica in April, the Assistant Secretary of CLS, Ann Hodges, was able to have discussions with the Committee of Women for Progress and workers at the Womens Bureau.

The Womens Bureau is set up in the Prime Ministers office. It studies the conditions of women in Jamaica putting forward changes in the law which would remove legislative discrimination; attempts to influence other minis-



tries and the private sector to cease discrimination against women, for instance by introducing maternity leave schemes; and runs its own schemes for instance skill training courses and courses for pregnant schoolgirls.

The C.W.P. is a well organised and active committee of women which is concerned with specific problems affecting women. They research or campaign on issues such as maternity leave and child care facilities. They see womens political struggle for liberation as an integral part of the national movement for social advance.

Their agenda includes participation in the world Youth Festival in Cuba this summer. It also includes the building of international links, and they have so far established contact with the Brixton Black Womens Group and with CLS.

## CAUSE FOR CONCERN

As we put this issue together, the report by the Black Peoples Progressive Association and the Redbridge CRC, has just appeared. The report "Cause for Concern", underlines the ways in which children of Caribbean origin are handicapped in their school achievements by many factors which have their roots in racism and the history of British colonial oppression in the Caribbean. The poor self-image of the children, which lowers their motivation, reflects the image of themselves which British society presents. Their

language is treated as a debased or inadequate form of Standard English, instead of the full language in its own right which linguists recognise it to be.

In the early '70's there was publicity around the disproportionately high number of West Indian children in schools for the "educationally subnormal" and the lower bands of "normal" schools. The same factors implicated then still have their grim effects in 1978. The factors of poor self-image and of language - to take just two examples - were pointed

But now the West Indian child has less chance of finding a job at the end of his/her schooling; more chance of being picked up on sus charges. What the report calls "the emotional pressures of a racist society" remain. And no matter how hard educational reforms try to combat these effects, there is no way of wiping racism out of the school system without wiping it out of the society which supports that system. out by Bernard Coard in his pamphlet "How The West Indian Child is made Educationally Subnormal Within the British School System"

# CLS IN ACTION CLS IN ACTION CLS IN ACTION

YOU DESERVE A BREAK!

You have worked for it  
Or your parents or ...  
Anyway, CLS is having a

S O C I A L !

8pm on May 19th at  
138 Southgate Road,  
London N1 (Buses: 38, 73,  
76, 141, 171, 277)

MOUTH-WATERING FOOD!

There is one thing the  
fascists and nazi  
remnants hate --  
people laughing ...  
having fun or

DRINKS TO MAKE YOU LAUGH!!

The capitalists love a  
little fun -- as long as  
they plan it for us,  
especially if there is a  
bit of profit

BUT WE WILL HAVE MUSIC  
TO MAKE YOU DANCE!!!

We are particularly keen  
to have as many trade  
union members and officials  
as possible with us on the  
19th ... to discuss some  
of the issues raised in  
this No. of Cutlass and  
other matters

BRING A £ AS SUBSCRIPTION

We have just organised a  
fighting fund to which end  
this social is partially  
aimed

SO COME EAT, DRINK, LAUGH,  
DANCE AND ORGANISE WITH  
CLS. MAY 19th



## LITERATURE

Struggles of the Jamaican People, by Trevor Munroe and Don Rebotham of the W.L.L., was sold out entirely within months of its publication last year. C.L.S. is reprinting this important book in solidarity with the W.L.L. and copies will become available toward the end of May, price £1 p&p 20p.

The Cuban Way by Richard Hart is an eyewitness account of Cuba by the well-known Jamaican author and historian, based on his visit last year. It contains first hand, information and observations on every aspect of life in the first socialist country of the Caribbean, illustrated with photographs. Price 75p p&p 20p.

New arrivals: we now have copies of The Marxist Left in Jamaica, 1940 to 1950 by Trevor Munroe, president of the W.L.L. - price £1.25 p&p 20p; Richard Hart's Black Jamaicans Struggle Against Sla-

very - price £1.25 p&p 20p; A new publication on Puerto Rico, tells the story that the U.S. history books leave out - Puerto Rico, the Flame of Resistance, price £1.70 incl. p&p; Puerto Rico, a People Challenging Colonialism, gives a detailed and well-documented account with many illustrations - price £1.70 incl. p&p.

Periodicals: Struggle (13p) and Socialism (42p) from the Workers Liberation League of Jamaica; Mass Line from the Youth Force for National Liberation and The Fighter from the Communist Party of Jamaica (both 13p). Freedom from YULIMO in St. Vincent (Youlon) costs 27p, and their 2nd Annual Convention report containing a detailed social and political analysis, costs 32p. From Guyana, Revolution, the paper of the Working People's Vanguard Party, costs 17p. All prices include p&p.

## THANK YOU PANAMA !

Now that the people of Panama have demonstrated that it is possible to win against the impudence of those in the USA who think they have some divine right to parts, or even all of other peoples' homeland, international solidarity must be stepped up on the side of the people of Belize against Anglo-American-Guatemalan ploys; on the side of Puerto Rican independentistas against the call of Yankee vanity for a 51st state of the USA in the Caribbean archipelago.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Bermuda *the Pitt Commission*  
Jamaica *Seaga and Bell's Campaign*  
St Vincent *Joshua's Sacking*  
Guyana *IMF inspired cutbacks*

## RACISM

Discussion led by Lionel Jeffrey

CLS MEETING MAY 7th  
11AM WEST INDIAN  
CENTRE, 1 COLLINGHAM  
GARDENS, LONDON S.W.5

# WHAT IS LORD PITT DOING IN BERMUDA ?

How would you like an assignment to Bermuda? Dr David Owen can fix it. He is the boss, because Bermuda is still a British colony; all 21 square miles of it. Neg pardon. Subtract 2½ square miles, leased by the United States for naval and military purposes. Probably another half a square mile or so, equally militarised by the Canadian government may be out-of-bounds.

Anyway, the good Lord of Hampstead is there now. He won't have to worry about things military. Bermuda is so breathtakingly beautiful that 18 square miles of it should be quite ample were Dr. Pitt in quest of fun. But he is not.

You may recall that last December the population of Bermuda erupted over the hanging of two citizens (burrows and Macklyn) resulting in the dispatch of a British peace-keeping contingent there. Of course, CLS protested to the British government for not having acted similarly in 1963 when Ian Smith committed a crime against the Crown on declaring his so-called UDI.

Now then. Britain has established a "Royal Commission into the 1977 Disturbances", and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Dr. David Owen has appointed as its chairman, Lord David Pitt. And the powers given to the Commission are, inter alia to:

- o Summon any person to attend to give evidence or to produce any article or document
- o Issue warrants of arrest to force the attendance of any person not complying with a summons



o hold "in camera" or exclude any person from the whole or part of the proceedings

o Enter and inspect any premises ... and so on

Very powerful, wouldn't you think? But wait, there is more. The Commission has the power to "Prohibit the publication or disclosure by any person attending before the Commission of all or part of the material received by the Commission"

Wonder what the House of Commons and newspaper people dealing with the Colonel B (probably B means Bermuda!) issue think of this heavy slice of power held by Lord Pitt against the press?

(from front page)

must renew our mandate, mindful that in the final quarter of our century the international vocation of solidarity is not to be seen in terms of disjointed acts of benevolence or compassion

More appropriately, it may be conceived as an assurance policy dutifully subscribed to by the main forces of revolutionary and liberating change, globally and fraternally and interacting. Those forces are the working class with its organised labour movement, the movement for national-social liberation, and living socialism, being the other side of the shield.

The assurance policy they provide needs to be strengthened relentlessly by their unity in order to

underwrite the confidence of any segment of the world's exploited and oppressed whose specific circumstances may at a given moment favour resolute confrontation with any anti-human condition in the course of the inevitable struggle with the socially obsolete rule of private capital over human affairs.

The complex context in which solidarity duties are discharged today can be demonstrated. For instance, isn't there a close unity of interest between, say, the consistent stance of Guyana and Jamaica in the non-aligned movement and some current problems of the working classes and other non-exploiting strata of western industrialised capitalist countries like Britain? The non-aligned movement is a powerful force aiding slowly but surely a process which objectively favoured converting to job opportunities and other social purposes the vast resources now locked in war aimed production, including arms manufacture, costing the world some \$250 billion dollars yearly. What a waste!

but we dare not attempt evaluation of the assurance premium paid in the act of solidarity; for some are paying with their lives. It is from such a life-giving standpoint that workers and other non-exploiting sections of the peoples of the world increasingly find the need for international solidarity against the common enemy -- world imperialism.

We therefore urge membership of CLS to forward the solidarity tasks outlined in our "Aims and Constitution". Please write to Secretary, CLS, 10 Leigh Road, London N5.