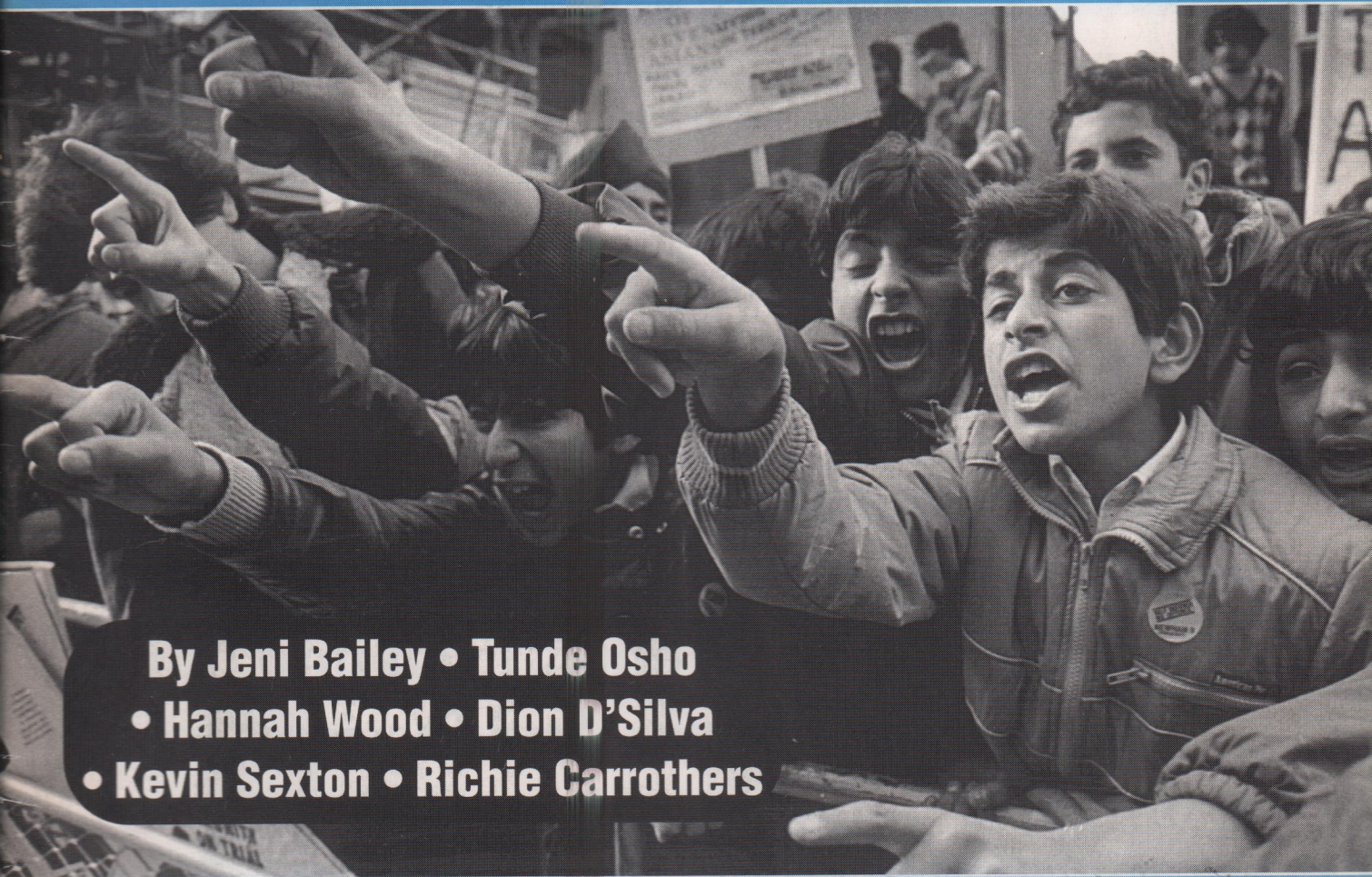


HOW TO BEAT THE RACISTS



By Jeni Bailey • Tunde Osho
• Hannah Wood • Dion D'Silva
• Kevin Sexton • Richie Carrothers

**A Youth Fightback/Socialist
Organiser pamphlet**

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“We have to take strong measures against the abstract ‘anti-fascist’ mode of thinking that finds entry even into our own ranks at times. ‘Anti-fascism’ is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skullduggery. In the name of ‘anti-fascism’ they instituted class collaboration with the Radicals.”

Trotsky — 1936

By Dion D'Silva, Richie Carrothers, Tunde Osho, Kevin Sexton, Jeni Bailey and Hannah Wood



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This issue edited by John O'Mahony, Mark Osborn and Mark Sandell

Join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty!

**Write for information to AWL,
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA**

Purge the poison of racism!

The racists say we are being 'flooded out' by immigrants.

We could say: more people leave Britain each year than enter it — which is true. Or: there were only 24,600 claims for asylum rights last year and that the ratio of claims to members of the population is over 1 to 2,000 people — also true.

And these arguments *are* used by many anti-racist campaigns. We can see the point. British people *should* know that British immigration laws *are* drenched with racism — directly, explicitly attempting to keep out black Africans, West Indians and those from India and Pakistan.

And that these laws are also some of the most severe in the world: families are separated and 'primary' immigration (that is, immigration by those who are not joining immediate family in Britain) was ended by legislation in 1971.

Black workers at work

A Labour Research Department report in 1986 showed that of 26 local authorities with a higher than average black population *only five employed a proportion of black workers equivalent to the proportion of black people in the local population.*

Workers from the black communities are expected to work for less money than whites. The TUC quote a 1982 survey which suggests that African-Caribbean and Asian men on average earn 15% lower than white men.

Proportionately more black women than white work full time, so their earnings can be reported as greater per week, but not per hour.

Black and white men work roughly the same hours, but black workers are far more likely to work shifts. The TUC suggest that one in six white workers do shifts compared to one in three black workers.

But migration across the European Community is now unrestricted. No one thinks *this* immigration policy is a problem. That is because these immigrants are mainly *white* and that the 'problem of immigration' is code for a 'problem' with black people.

What if there were millions more immigrants — stripped of the coding, millions more black people — coming to Britain? Would there be a problem for you? What if the ratio of refugees to the general population was not 1 to 318, as it is in Britain, but one in nine as in Malawi or one in three as in Jordan? What if there was a big net inflow of people into Britain?

One continually recurring idea is that Britain is "full up". Clearly conditions in many inner city areas *are* intolerable. But overcrowded housing and unemployment and a deteriorating National Health Service are the result not of immigration but of Tory rule — that is, rule by a capitalist government pledged to protect profits at the expense of the poor. That government must be replaced by a workers' government which will solve the housing crisis by renovating or building homes for all.

Does more immigration mean unemployment for you?

First, let's get the record straight. During the post-war boom in the 1950s the British capitalists, who were short of labour, ran recruiting campaigns in African and the West Indies. Black workers came to work in Britain's low paid basic industries.

When the economic boom slowed

down, the door was closed by immigration laws. Black people were no longer welcomed by the British bosses. Black people, perversely, began to be blamed for a crisis emerging in the capitalist system — a crisis which they had nothing to do with and no control at all over!

Recently, the government has forced pit closures. Timex and Leyland-DAF have announced redundancies. Who is to blame? Black people? That's ridiculous! Blame the Tories and their friends — they and their system cause unemployment!

Rather than turn inwards and fight each other, workers should look to a workers' solution, a united solution to this crisis.

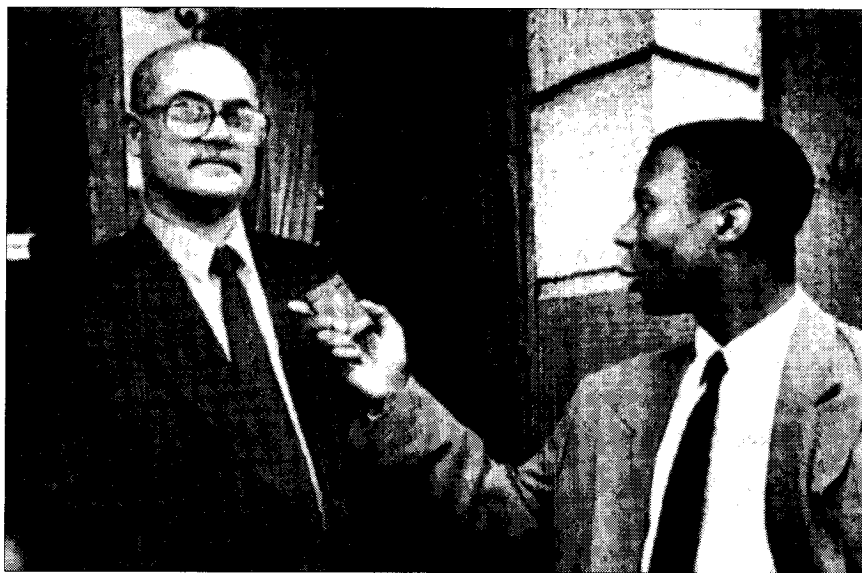
Unemployment could be solved by cutting the working week, with no loss of pay, so that all workers, black and white have work. Who will pay? Make the capitalists pay!

The top 5% of the population own 37% of the wealth while the bottom 50% own only 8% of the wealth. Make the capitalists, not other workers, pay.

The answer to housing shortages is to renovate or build more homes! There are about a quarter of a million unemployed building workers.

Fight for toleration and united action! Workers of different cultures and backgrounds can and must get along. If we are divided, only the bosses will benefit. If the labour movement works to unionise immigrant workers, to win a cut in the working week, and to fight the ruling capitalist class, then we will all benefit.

Workers of the world unite!



Derek Beakon, BNP candidate in Tower Hamlets. The racists succeed because the labour movement is weak and right-wing led

Why anti-racists must turn to the labour movement

Fascist organisations now have mass support in France and Germany. Though still weak, fascism, is a growing force in Britain too.

Everywhere, fascism feeds off racism and builds its strength on agitation against 'immigrants'. (And, frequently now, against 'Jews' and 'Zionists').

Dark-skinned immigrants and their descendants have become 'fortress Europe's' universal scapegoat as it festers behind high walls of *de facto* racist legislation against unwanted immigrants.

Where a state defines immigrants — black immigrants — as undesirable, and as a 'problem' to be dealt with by exclusion, then' inescapably, it is also defining and stigmatising its own black residents and their children and grandchildren. Then the fascists follow in the track cut by official state racism. They spell out the same message — in the statistics of jobs and housing, and in the language of hate-filled demagogic scapegoating. They incite the white working-class victims of the capitalist system against its darker-coloured working-class victims. They demand 'action'. Their thugs take action — against dark-skinned men and women on our city streets.

Capitalism has produced mass unemployment, mass homelessness and mass poverty. Immigrants, who, like the Bengali people of London's East End, may be culturally very different, make easy targets. In East London the Liberal Democratic Party which controls Tower Hamlets council is the leading force for racist demagoguery. The immigrants are used as both an explanation for social problems and as a target for the feelings of desperate workers who see society rotting all around them.

Why do the racists succeed? Because the labour movement is weak and right-wing led. Because it does not put up an adequate fight against the Tory government. Because it does not denounce and fight the unemployment, the bad housing, the destruction of the National Health Service and the thousand other social atrocities which the workers in Britain are subjected to every day of their lives.

The labour movement neither fights on immediate issues — the destruction of the health service, for example — nor does it offer a socialist alternative to capitalism.

The Labour Party's own record on race is a very bad one.

Nevertheless, no force other than

the labour movement can — under left-wing influence — offer workers a vision of a better society, and become strong enough to fight for such a society. There is no other force that can wipe out the seed of racism and fascism.

One of two things. *Either*, fascism is now a freakish, marginal growth. *Or*, it is a force with the potential to grow and, maybe, do to the labour movement what fascism did in the '20s and '30s in Italy and Germany.

If it is just a matter of a few freaks and lunatics, then fascism can indeed be fought by poster parades, liberal speeches against 'racism', and a bit of rough-housing with fascist thugs here and there.

But if the new fascism grows organically out of the rottenness spreading through capitalist society, with deep and strong social roots, then the only serious "anti-fascism" is the struggle for socialism — the struggle to overthrow a capitalism which is once again spawning mass fascism.

The signs point to the second alter-

Housing in Tower Hamlets

The British National Party won a council seat because they convinced a lot of whites that Asian workers get better housing in Tower Hamlets than whites do. Not true!

Since April 1993, only 25 of the 135 families housed on the Isle of Dogs have been Asian. Nearly 80% of the 3,632 council properties have white tenants. 78% of the 828 housing association homes have white tenants.

Black and Asian people make up less than 25% of the Island's total population of 18,551. Black people are not favoured: they are discriminated against. They get less than their fair share. The answer for one group of workers to the housing problem is to build homes for everyone — not to turn against another part of the working class. In the long run that is suicide.

native: fascism is now a more serious threat than at any time for half a century.

As Leon Trotsky once said: "Anti-fascism is nothing, an empty concept, used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery." And not only Stalinist skulduggery!

We repeat: the only serious serious anti-fascism now is that which organises the workers to fight back against

tracism and fascism while immersing itself in the fight to renew the labour movement. Unless the labour movement is won to our idea we cannot hope to win against fascism.

That is why serious anti-racists must turn to the labour movement — Labour Party and trade unions alike — and help the left transform it once more into a force for human solidarity and social progress.

A programme to beat racism

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty organises socialists to fight for working class solutions to the crisis. If we do not, then black people, Jews and foreigners will be scapegoated; the working class will be split along ethnic lines; and we will all lose — black and white.

Socialists must be part of the basic organisations of the working class, the trade unions and the Labour Party and help to turn them outwards to campaign on the estates and streets.

- A decent home for everyone! Build more homes that people can afford. Demand government money to enable local councils to undertake a crash programme of compulsory purchase of empty properties, renovation, and house-building, to create new homes at affordable rents.

- Jobs for all! Cut the work week to 35 hours; create useful new jobs by restoring and expanding public services; provide training and re-training at union rates of pay. To pay for this: tax the rich, cut arms spending, take control of the big banks and financial institutions.

- Restore the Health Service and other public services.
- Jobs, training or education for all youth, with union rates of pay or an adequate grant.
- Make the police accountable to elected local committees. Defend civil liberties: fight to replace the existing bureaucratic, hierarchical capitalist state by a regime based on accountability and workers' control.
- Scrap the immigration laws! No more deportations!

- Fight for real equality in employment and housing. Council-house allocation by need, not by race under disguise of a "sons and daughters" policy. Special training programmes to ensure real equality in employment for ethnic minorities.

- Equality in the labour movement. No toleration for racist prejudice: special campaigns to recruit and integrate ethnic minority workers.

- Labour movement support for black communities' self-defence; united black and white workers' defence squads to beat back the fascists.

The labour movement must stand up and fight! That is the only way to beat the Tories, the capitalists and the racists. Help us fight in the labour movement for their ideas. Join the AWL

Workers can unite, workers do unite

Even in the midst of bitter industrial struggles, it is not uncommon to hear white trade unionists expressing racist views. In the 1970s the National Front could boast a number of shop stewards among its membership — including in the British Leyland Longbridge plant, the largest and arguably best organised factory in Britain.

Nevertheless, trade unions are vitally important in the fight against racism and fascism. Trade union campaigns and industrial struggles that emphasise the common class interests of all workers can at least begin to break down prejudice.

The great miners' strike of 1984-5 was a classic example. The mining industry and mining communities are almost exclusively white. Some NUM activists, from South Wales, in particular, had by their own admission never met a black person socially before 1984. Inevitably, many NUM militants had backward views about race, and some were downright racist.

The strike changed attitudes fundamentally. Flying pickets found themselves in towns and cities with large black populations and they found that black people were often their strongest supporters. It became widely known among NUM activists that "black" and "Asian" inner-city areas were the best places to hold street collections; black shop stewards were often the best contacts in industry; Sikh, Hindu and Muslim mosques and temples were far more likely to give support than white churches.



The Grunwick strike in 1977, by Asian workers against an Asian boss, won wide support from white workers. Riot police were sent in to break up the picket lines

In mid-1985, some months after the end of the strike, I ran into a group of NUM members from South Wales, all dressed in their best suits, at the entrance of a Sikh temple in Birmingham. They had come to pay their last respects to the temple's head priest, who had given them support during the strike, and whose funeral was that day. Some of those same miners had habitually used terms like "wog" and "paki" twelve months before.

Something very similar happened in the firefighters' union, the FBU, as a

result of their first national strike in 1977-8. Although the union was led by left-wingers in and around the Communist party, its rank and file was traditionally quite reactionary. Almost exclusively male and white, the fire service was an extreme example of "craft unionism" at its worst. Many firemen (and they were all men) came into the service from the police, the army and the navy. Jobs were not advertised and family "dynasties" were commonplace.

In this atmosphere "soft" racism was the norm, and organised fascists were

White workers lose out from racism

Racist discrimination means worse wages and conditions for black workers. Because it weakens and divides the working class, it usually means worse conditions for white workers too.

The American writer, Victor Perlo quotes a study which showed that in the US, white workers were worse off where racism was stronger, in the South.

“Despite the continued gross discrimination against black skilled craftsmen in the North, the ‘privileged’ southern whites earned 4 per cent less than they did. Southern male white operatives averaged... 18 percent less than northern black male operatives. And Southern white service workers earned... 14 percent less than northern black male workers.”

Another American writer, Al Szymanski, found:

1. The higher black earnings relative to white, the higher white earnings relative to other whites.
2. The greater the discrimination against Third World people (mainly blacks, but also Hispanics), the higher the inequality among whites.

able to operate fairly openly. According to one FBU activist, “the strike changed all that: our members were brought into contact with the wider labour movement for the first time and we found that black people were very often our strongest supporters.

“Black stewards at places like Lucas were at the forefront of organising collections and meetings for us. Sikh temples gave us support while the ‘white’ churches turned us away.

“It didn’t do away with racism overnight, but it made people think and forced the racists at least to keep their heads down.

“The process was helped by the fact that after the strike the service opened up considerably and many

more black people started joining. One of the obvious reasons why racists and NF supporters had been able to flourish was that there were virtually no black people in the service. If it hadn’t been for the strike, the fire service would have continued as before”.

Bill Morris, General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, is the most prominent black trade union official in Britain. His decisive victory in the 1991 election for General Secretary represented a huge step forward for anti-racism and for common decency in British society.

Morris had fought his way through the hierarchy of the TGWU, starting off as a shop steward in the West Midlands motor industry in the 1950s and ‘60s. It can’t have been easy for him, representing mainly white workers in an industry where racism was rife. By all accounts, his rise in the union was entirely due to the respect he won, even from racists, as a competent, dedicated and fairly militant steward.

When Morris became a leading union official, for years he was the victim of a vicious whispering campaign from the union’s shadowy but influential right wing. The gist of it was: “Bill’s a nice enough bloke, but he’s not really very bright, is he? He’s not up to the job. He’s only got where he is because he’s black”.

During the contest for General Secretary in 1991, the anti-Morris campaign got nastier. An unofficial leaflet circulated in Midlands engineering factories, carrying the slogan, “Don’t let the coon call the tune”. Morris’s opponent, George Wright, went on record condemning this filth; but, given the extensive contact he and his supporters had with the national press, he might have been a little more up-front about disowning his racist supporters.

Morris emphasised workers’ unity across race divisions. A defeat for him would have been pretty conclusive proof that racism remained potent in British trade unionism. He won decisively.

Racist attacks

According to government figures (vast understatements of the reality) the numbers of reported racist attacks in England and Wales were: 4,383 in 1988, 5,044 in 1989, 6,359 in 1990, 7,882 in 1991 and 7,793 in 1992.

The election of one General Secretary does not eradicate racism in the trade union movement, any more than the election of a number of black mayors and judges has mended the position of most US blacks. But it does show that a programme of basic workers’ unity has a resonance in the British working class.

Racism is not invincible. Class unity can prevail against it.

It was particularly pleasing that the TGWU should be the first British union to elect a black leader. Back in 1968, TGWU dockers in London marched in support of Enoch Powell’s “Rivers of Blood” speech. Those people — or their sons and daughters — voted for Bill Morris in 1991 because they liked his platform and didn’t particularly care whether he was black, white, or sky-blue pink. There is hope.

Jim Denham



The election of Bill Morris as leader of Britain’s trade union, the TGWU, proves that the racists within the labour movement can be beaten. In the election the right wing ran an underground whispering campaign of racist abuse against him: “Don’t let the coon call the tune”. Nevertheless, Bill Morris won.

Self-defence is no offence

The best way to 'reason' with the thug who comes after you with a knife or a broken bottle in his hand is — as Leon Trotsky once put it — to "acquaint his head with the pavement". There is no guarantee that bouncing fascist heads off pavements will make them see sense or turn them into decent human beings *but there is no other way to 'reason' with them.* And it is better for fascist heads to learn the hard "lesson of the pavement" than that the heads of innocent black people, Jews or trade unionists should.

The right to self-defence is basic. That means that we have the right to stop fascists from beating and killing *by any means necessary.* It also means that we have the right to go on the offensive, to seek them out, when that makes sense.

Against this, the argument "leave it to the police" is sheer nonsense. To put it at its weakest: the police are not reliable.

It is a *matter of fact* that the police *do not* stop racist attacks; nor are they successful in catching those who carry out racist attacks.

**"The argument
'leave it to the police'
is sheer nonsense."**

It is a simple *matter of fact* that there is widespread racism in the police force itself — virulent, active, persecuting racism. A large proportion of racist attacks on young black people are carried out by police officers who pick on them, harry them, and beat them in the streets *because they like*



In 1936 Britain's would-be Hitler, Oswald Mosley declared that he would lead his black-shirted fascist thugs on a march through the East End of London where thousands of Jews lived. At Cable Street, the Jews and the Irish of Limehouse barricaded the road to prevent the Blackshirts marching. The police protected the Blackshirts and beat up and arrested the anti-fascists. That was the famous battle of Cable Street. Photo is of the 1986 memorial march (Jez Coulson)

picking on black people.

Blair Peach, a white London school-teacher was killed on an anti-racist demonstration in 1979 — not by a fascist, but by a policeman who hit him on the head with an illegally weighted

truncheon. Though many serving police officers *must* know the identity of that racist murderer, he was never caught.

The police *also* defend the racists and fascists. The police are no reli-

able defence against racists and fascists.

In such conditions what should anti-racists in the labour movement do? Ideally we should set up trade union defence squads, made up of both black and white anti-racists. Essentially such defence squads would be *flying pickets against racism*. Such pickets — now outlawed by the Tories in industrial disputes — were a powerful weapon in the great strikes of the 1970s. That would be the answer to

Self-defence is no offence. The greatest crime would be peacefully to let the fascists grow and develop

racism of a healthy labour movement determined to stop its enemies dividing it in order to rule it.

The truth is that the labour movement lacks self-confidence now. It lives in a country where the trade union movement is *only half-legal*, hemmed around with anti-union laws which are the worst in Europe.

That means that the socialist left should argue within the labour movement for such defence squads, patiently explaining why it is in the interest of white as well as black workers to smash the racists and to unite black and white workers against them.

It means that *now* practical, immediate defence work against racists and fascists in places like Brick Lane has to be the work of militants from those communities directly threatened by the fascists and of individual socialists and trade unionists.

Self-defence is no offence. The greatest crime would be peacefully to let the fascists grow and develop.

The battle for Lewisham



In 1977 the fascist National Front tried to march through Lewisham, where many black people live. The left organised a counter-demonstration. In the middle '70s fascist marches and left-wing counter-demonstrations were frequent occurrences. Lewisham was different. What made it different was the local black youth, in large numbers and without any prior organisation, erupted against both the fascists and the police. Hurling stones and bottles — some of them, petrol bombs — large numbers of black youth joined the left-wing forces trying to break the police lines through which the fascists were marching. The police found themselves

under attack from the black youth they had been harassing and bullying in the streets of Lewisham. For the first time in Britain the police appeared on the streets in full riot gear — plastic shields, helmets with visors and so on. Police were unhorsed from their motor cycles, which were then set on fire.

The fascists got the roughest ride they had had for a long time. So did the police.

The SWP and its ANL, which was then being formed claimed the credit for "The Battle of Lewisham", but that was just "smart politics". The Battle of Lewisham was the work of local black youth.

What is fascism?

ANSWERS FOR YOUTH

In order to beat the fascists we need to understand what they are — what fascism has been, and what it is now.

The first fascist regime came to power in Italy in October 1922 under Benito Mussolini.

A more virulent form followed in Germany — Adolf Hitler's National Socialists (Nazis for short). Hitler ruled from 1933 until the defeat of Germany at the end of the Second World War.

The Nazis were extreme nationalists, racists and anti-semites. They were to be responsible for the murder of many millions of Jews, gypsies and socialists who were gassed in the death camps.

How could such people come to power in one of the most advanced countries of Europe? And what distinguishes fascism from other right-wing regimes? Take the example of the German Nazis.

1. By 1932 the Nazis polled nearly 14 million votes, somewhat more than the combined total for the two German workers' parties — the Social Democrats (reformist, right-wing socialists similar to the British Labour Party) and the Communist Party.

The Nazis were not just vote-gatherers. There were also 400,000 members of the Nazis' paramilitary wing, the SA. This is what distinguishes fascism from, for example, a right-wing mili-



The generals eventually backed Hitler but only as a last resort

tary government. *A fascist movement is a mass movement of people who accept its ideas and are willing to fight for them.*

2. Hitler came to power in 1933 with the backing of the big German capitalists. But the bosses had thought long and hard before giving the Nazis their full backing.

In 1930 only a small handful of industrialists actively supported Hitler. *The base of the Nazi party rested on the middle classes and sections of the unemployed — people who were being ruined by the onset of the third major economic crisis since the end of World War One.*

3. The German workers' movement was powerful but *the politics of the Social Democrats, the real leaders of the mass of the workers, were not up to the job of solving the crisis in the interests of the working class.* They dithered and provided no answers.

The middle classes — the petty offi-

cial, the small shop owner or trader — and the unemployed would have followed the lead of the workers if they had been able to believe that the Social Democrats could solve inflation and unemployment. Instead they looked elsewhere — to the Nazis.

Nazi anti-semitism and hatred of foreigners became popular because the reformist 'socialism' simply had no programme for dealing with the economic crisis. They too stood for the existing capitalist system, reformed a little bit here and there. Because the *socialist* alternative to capitalism, to slump and to poverty had no place in the politics of the main working-class party, the *nationalist, fascist, racist* 'alternative' attracted the support of desperate people.

4. Like Mussolini before him, Hitler mixed anti-socialism with demagogy about the corruption of big business. He appealed to the anxiety of the

Trotsky on fascism

Demonstrations are not enough

"To bar the road to fascism, to bar it once and for all, it does not suffice that workers oppose it physically at

demonstrations; it does not suffice to denounce its infamies in Germany and Italy. Today we defend ourselves against the rise of reaction, but... to be efficacious this resistance must transform itself into a struggle for power."

(Leon Trotsky, *Conversation with a Dissident from Saint-Denis, Writings 1933-4, p.292*)

middle class who feared socialist confiscation of their property even as they were being bankrupted by the banks and pushed out of business by the big firms.

But *Hitler's actual role was to smash the labour movement to bits*, and so solve the crisis in the interests of capitalism. The bosses backed Hitler because they concluded that it was necessary to use the most violent measures to defeat the working class.

5. Why did the capitalists hesitate?

Fascism is an extreme solution to the capitalists' problems and it is one over which the capitalists have not got direct control. Once Hitler's police state had control he also controlled the capitalists.

Hitler smashed the German workers at the price of driving Germany head-long towards a world war which was an eventual disaster for many of the capitalists.

What lessons can we draw from Germany?

1. The workers' movement must provide answers to the crisis. Labour is still the mass political wing of the British labour movement and we must be part of it and fight to turn it towards campaigning around *socialist* answers.

Our anti-fascism must include cam-



Oswald Mosley led a fascist movement in Britain in the 1930s

paigning for a Labour government.

2. Germany shows that you can not trust right-wing "democratic" politicians to help fight fascism. From 1930 to 1932 they gave active support to a right-wing government under Brüning, but Brüning simply prepared the way for the Nazis.

Organisations like the Anti-Nazi League are wrong to put Tory politicians on their platforms. The presence of Tories limits what anti-fascists can say about how to fight fascism.

3. At different times the German Communists tried to compete against the Nazis by using anti-semitism and by appeals to nationalism. Leaders made speeches against 'Jewish bankers'. In the early '30s, they made concessions to Nazi politics by talking of the need for a "people's national revolution" against foreign oppression. By doing so they merely fertilised the ground for the mass growth of fascism.

The nationalism (and sometimes

Trotsky on fascism

"Hatred and despair against the proletariat"

"The magnates of finance capital are unable by their force alone to cope with the proletariat. They need the support of the petty bourgeoisie. For this purpose it must be whipped up, put on its feet, mobilised, armed. But this method has its dangers. While it makes use of fascism, the bourgeoisie nevertheless fears it.

"Under the conditions of capitalist disintegration and of the impasse in the economic situation, the petty bourgeoisie strives, seeks, attempts to tear itself loose from the fetters of the old masters and rulers of society. It is quite capable of linking up its fate with that of the proletariat.

"For that, only one thing is needed: the petty bourgeoisie must acquire faith in the ability of the proletariat to lead society onto a new road. The proletariat can inspire this

faith only by its strength, by the firmness of its actions, by a skilful offensive against the enemy, by the success of its revolutionary policy.

"But, woe if the revolutionary party does not measure up to the height of the situation!

"If the revolutionary party, in spite of a class struggle becoming incessantly more accentuated, proves time and again to be incapable of uniting the working class about it, if it vacillates, becomes confused, contradicts itself, then the petty bourgeoisie loses patience and begins to look upon the revolutionary workers as those responsible for its own misery.

"All the bourgeois parties, including the social democracy, turn its thoughts in this very direction. When the social crisis takes on an intolerable acuteness, a particular party appears on the scene with the direct aim of agitating the petty bourgeoisie to a white heat and of directing its hatred and its despair against the proletariat."

(Leon Trotsky, *The Only Road for Germany*, September 1932)

anti-immigrant racism) of the French Communist Party in the 1970s and '80s had exactly the same consequence. It fertilised the ground for the growth of Le Pen's *Front National*.

In a similar way the little-Britain, anti-Europe nationalism of the British labour movement helped the growth of the National Front during the 1970s. We need internationalism. We need a movement which will, for instance, campaign against all immigration laws, thus challenging the root racism of British society — institutional racism.

4. We must rely on the strength of the labour movement, our own strength. The German Social Democrats looked to the police to stop the Nazis, and for the state to ban them. The police were eventually merged with the fascist paramilitary organisations, and our movement went down to defeat without a shot being fired by the workers' organisations!

A state ban against the fascists for a short period in 1932 allowed the Nazis to present themselves as the persecuted and did little to damage them. After the ban was lifted they rioted against the workers' movement, killing dozens.

We must be prepared to defend our-

Trotsky on fascism

For the workers' united front!

"No matter how true it is that the social democracy by its whole policy prepared the blossoming of fascism, it is no less true that fascism comes forward as a deadly threat primarily to that same social democracy, all of whose magnificence is inextricably bound with parliamentary-democratic-pacifist forms and methods of government..."

"The policy of a united front of the workers against fascism flows from this situation. It opens up tremendous possibility to the Communist Party..."

Trotsky on fascism

No to state bans!

"The struggle against fascism, the defence of the positions the working class has won within the framework of degenerating democracy, can become a powerful reality since it gives the working class the opportunity to prepare itself for the sharpest struggles and partially to arm itself... to mobilise the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie on the side of the revolution, to create a workers' militia, etc. Anyone who does not take advantage of this situation, who calls on the 'state' i.e. the class enemy, to 'act', in effect sells

selves.

5. The crazy politics of the Communist Party helped the Social Democrats to keep their hold over the workers' movement. They had a 'theory' which labelled the Social Democrats as "social fascists" — a type of Nazi. What this meant was that they were unable to distinguish between the reformist socialists and the fascists!

Today in Britain a main feature of

"The social crisis will inevitably produce deep cleavages within the social democracy. The radicalisation of the masses will affect the social democrats. We will inevitably have to make agreements with the various social-democratic organisations and factions against fascism, putting definite conditions in this connection to the leaders, before the eyes of the masses... We must return from the empty official phrase about the united front to the policy of the united front as it was formulated by Lenin and always applied by the Bolsheviks in 1917."

(Leon Trotsky,

The Turn in the Communist International and the German Situation, 1930)

the proletariat's hide to the Bonapartist reaction.

"Therefore, we must vote against all measures that strengthen the capitalist-Bonapartist state, even those measures which may for the moment cause temporary unpleasantness for the fascists."

"We have to take strong measures against the abstract 'anti-fascist' mode of thinking that finds entry even into our own ranks at times. 'Anti-fascism' is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery."

(Leon Trotsky, *Bourgeois Democracy and the Fight Against Fascism, Writings 1935-6, p.242. 'Bonapartist' here means dictatorial, authoritarian*)

the far left is that it is sectarian towards the Labour Party and does not do serious work in the unions. It leaves the right wing unchallenged, sometimes justifying itself by calling Labour a "racist party" — in other words, not being able to distinguish Labour from a racist party like the BNP.

In conclusion

History never repeats itself exactly. Yet we are in the middle of a mass growth of European fascism — in Germany and France and eastern Europe. It is likely that fascism will grow in Britain too. All the conditions exist: mass unemployment; easily-scapegoated minority groups in society; an inadequate labour movement; sectarian-minded, ultra-left 'revolutionaries' who make much noise, but who offer young people no perspective of changing the labour movement and therefore offer them no prospect of a real solution.

British fascism is still weak, but it can grow very fast if we let it. Hitler got only two-and-a-half of every hundred votes in the 1928 election...

If we do not learn the lessons of the past, we may well find ourselves reliving the nightmares of the past.

Time is short!

The roots of racism

Modern anti-black British racism has relatively recent roots, in the history of slavery and colonialism.

Racism did not start as a divide-and-rule trick imposed by the ruling class. The racist practice of slavery and colonialism came first; racist ideas came later.

When the slave trade started in the 16th century the British capitalists took slaves and sold them like cattle, bullied them and beat them. Then, they began thinking of them as sub-human.

That is the natural way of things for slave owners. When Britain conquered territories and peoples and assumed the right to rule and make decisions for them, *then* British people began to believe those peoples were inferior.

The roots of modern racism can be traced back to the planter class of slave owners. Although fear and suspicion of the stranger and the outsider had existed before, it had not been fear on the basis of skin colour.

In the ancient world there were many societies based on slavery. But there was no idea comparable to 'race'.

The ancient Egyptians looked down on the black peoples to their south, but they were just as scornful of other, lighter-skinned, neighbours. Egyptian artists caricatured the captives taken in war — but the peculiar dress of the Libyans or Hebrews was held up for ridicule as much as the features of the black southerners.

In Greek society the slaves were frequently of the same colour as their owners. There were many white slaves

from the north and the east.

In Rome any citizen might become a slave and any slave a citizen. Slaves came from every province and every skin colour — so did the Emperors, of whom some were black.

There is nothing 'natural' about anti-black racism in the psychological-biological make-up of whites. This can be seen today by watching the way young children of different skin colours play together quite happily.

Racism was a product of the beginnings of capitalism. As Karl Marx summed it up: "the discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins... The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder flowed back to the mother-country and were turned into capital". Pre-feudal slavery was wedded to the most modern merchant capitalism in a drive which helped produce the capital for the future industrial revolutions.

Tens of millions of African slaves were taken across the Atlantic. The population of Africa remained stagnant in the period 1650 to 1850, while that of Europe nearly doubled.

The slaves were part of the 'triangular trade'. Boats took slaves to the plantations, brought sugar back to Europe, and then took manufactured goods to Africa.

In the beginning there were Indian slaves and white indentured labourers

too as well as Africans. Black slaves were taken from Africa as a simple commercial decision: it was cheaper than going elsewhere. The reasons were economic, not racist.

Racist ideas squared an ideological circle for the capitalists. Their anti-feudal revolutions took place under the banner of liberty. Yet there was no liberty for the slaves.

Paradoxically, it was *because* capitalism had developed the ideas of universal human rights and equality — the same ideas that would later inspire the revolts of the colonial and enslaved peoples — that it also developed the ideologies of racism. Previous societies had had slavery and conquest — but their rulers had no need for general theories of racial superiority to justify the slavery and conquest.

The poor had no rights, whatever their skin colour and whatever their ethnic origin. There was no need for special theories to cancel the human rights of a special category of poor people.

Under the pressure of economic compulsion — the economic need for slavery — writers and thinkers developed the gut reactions of the planters into fleshed-out theories.

Those theories are as recent as the eighteenth century. Black people were called sub-human, allowing the bourgeoisie to have their 'liberty' and their slaves too.

Pseudo-science said black peoples were inferior — because of head shape, or some other rubbish.

Some of the ideas that were developed were perversions of real facts.

Take the racist view that black people are 'lazy'.

In fact the slaves were not lazy, they were just *rebellious*.

In modern capitalist society the basic form of revolt is the workers' strike; the basic form of revolt in Stalinist society, where unions were forbidden, was absenteeism and, perhaps, throwing a spanner into the nearest machine. The equivalent on the plantation was: I am damned if I am going to work hard.

The slaves were not 'lazy', they were fighting back! But, perversely, their struggle was turned back on them.

Colonialism and the slave trade also wrecked societies and civilisations. Much of the African past was destroyed.

Colonial intervention in India reduced a fabulous treasure-house, the world's leading industrial nation, to backward poverty. Europe reduced Africa and India to poverty; and then built a whole racist ideology that the peoples of Africa and Asia were *naturally* 'backward'. In Ireland the British state brutalised the people and then blamed them for their own condition. They were described as "unstable, childish, violent, lazy, feckless, feminine and primitive".

But it is not true that only white men made slaves. The black Iraqis on your television screen during the Gulf war were brought there by Arab slave traders. The Arab trade in African slaves started earlier and finished later than the European trade, and probably enslaved more people. The history is not a simple black-versus-white one; in fact the African trade depended on the co-operation of many African chiefs who benefited from it.

At the same time, there was opposition to slavery, in the name of human equality, from white radicals. In Britain, for instance, during the American Civil War, the workers were solid for the Union despite their government siding with the slave-owning South and despite the unemployment caused by the Northern blockade of the South and the consequent lack of cotton for the Lancashire mills.

In the heyday of the British Empire, racism and nationalism penetrated every part of intellectual life.

They had the effect of pinning the workers to the bosses in the mistaken belief that they had more in common with Queen Victoria than with the Indian poor. Frederick Engels wrote to Karl Kautsky in 1882: "You ask what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeois think. There is no workers' party here, you see, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies".

Many labour movement leaders

**“There is nothing
‘natural’ about anti-
black racism in the
psychological-
biological make-up
of whites.”**

campaigns to restrict the entry of Jews fleeing Eastern European pogroms at the end of the last century. The first modern immigration act was passed against the Jews — the Aliens Act of 1905.

Immigration laws have been one of the major mechanisms of state racism over the last 30 years. After the Second World War, capitalism expanded, and the British bosses toured Africa, the Caribbean and India looking for workers to work in British industry.

As the boom slowed the racist right mobilised. It was led by Winston Churchill, the supposedly great leader of British democracy in World War 2 and grandfather of the current racist bigot. In 1955 Churchill proposed "Keep Britain White" as a Tory election slogan. The Metropolitan

Police described "coloured people" as "work-shy and content to live on National Assistance and immoral earnings."

Black workers found 'colour bars' in clubs and housing. Black community organisations began life as self-help groups in response to this racism.

Racist attacks became more common, and in 1958 there was a riot led by organised racists in Notting Hill, West London. The Immigration Act of April 1962 began the current process of formal racism — laws which discriminate against black people. Immigration Acts of 1968 and 1971 completed the process, barring almost all immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean and India except those joining close family here.

In addition to legislation there have been assaults from the right: "If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour" was a Tory election slogan in 1964. Thatcher said that "this country might be swamped by people from a different culture" before her election victory in 1979, taking some of the political ground from under the fascist National Front who, during the 1970s, organised some thousands of white British people.

On the street the police have posed a constant threat to black people. A Policy Institute report from 1983 shows that in the Metropolitan Police racism is "expected, accepted and even fashionable". Racist stereotypes have moved on to target black youth as drug dealers and criminals. Take the *Evening Standard's* coverage of the recent Operation Bumblebee police "crackdown on crime". The *Standard's* reporter went with police on a raid: the young woman "claimed she was 18" and her partner's wall was "covered in Bob Marley posters". Got the message?

But the story of racism is also the story of struggle and resistance. In the last 30 years the battle to confront all forms of racism has broadened out.

The fight against racism must be bound up with the struggle to replace capitalism with democratic, working-class socialism. As Malcolm X said: "you can't have capitalism without

Where does anti-semitism come from?

Anti-semitism or anti-Jewish prejudice is an ancient form of racism. Unlike modern anti-black racism, whose roots lie in the trade in slaves and the rise of capitalist colonialism, going back perhaps 400 years, anti-semitism dates back to conflicts inside the Roman Empire.

In AD 313 the Emperor Constantine Great gave Christianity supremacy inside the Empire. The Christians used their power to persecute their Jewish rival. The Jews were blamed for what was for Christians the worst crime in history: “the Jews killed Christ”.

The Christians wanted a clear line of demarcation between the Jews and those they might ‘seduce’ into their faith. On this basis the Jews were excluded from many jobs, driven into ghettos, made to wear special clothes to distinguish them. The Jews began to fill the jobs which others did not want. They filled particular economic roles in medieval societies. For example, the job of money-lender, considered disgusting but also necessary for the functioning of the economy, was allowed to the Jews. The money lender *is* a disgusting figure to the peasant who has borrowed in order to live and must pay back what he got

and a lot extra in interest. And so the Jews, forced into a particular role, reinforced the prejudice against them. That is often the lot of the oppressed. In a similar way black slaves were denied schooling and then were blamed for their ignorance.

“Anti-semitism filtered into the workers’ and socialist movements.”

In many countries in Europe the Jews met terrible fates. In Germany 146 Jewish communities were wiped out during the year 1298 after the Jews of one town were accused of a “ritual murder”.

The Jews were expelled from various countries — England in 1290, France in 1306 (and then again more com-

pletely in 1394), from Spain in 1492, Portugal in 1497, Naples in 1540, Vienna in 1690, and Bohemia in 1745.

The French revolution of the late 18th century ushered in the ideas of the rising capitalist class — democratic ideas of liberty and equality. At its high point the French revolution freed both the black slaves in French colonies and the Jews from the laws which discriminated against them. Jews in Western Europe emerged from the ghettos, as citizens. The Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia remained downtrodden.

After 1881, in Russia, a country with a massive peasantry under economic pressure from the coming of capitalism, a new wave of terrible massacres took place — ‘pogroms’ devastated 160 Jewish communities in that year. The Jews were particularly vulnerable in Tsarist Russia. There were 600 laws against them. They were forced into a particular area — the Pale.

After the 1880s a new response emerged, that of the Zionists, separatists who wanted a Jewish state for the Jewish people where they would be safe against the anti-semites. Jewish socialists like Leon Trotsky opposed the Zionists, arguing that Jew and

non-Jew should unite in the workers' movement, oppose the Tsar and fight for socialism and equality for all. The Russian revolution of 1917 won equality under the law for the Jews. The Bolsheviks, the party of Lenin and Trotsky, fought to make formal equality a living reality.

In the late 19th century, traditional Christian anti-semitism began to be bound up with the rabid nationalism which was generated as the European powers expanded — and murdered — their way across the globe.

Anti-semitism filtered into the workers' and socialist movements. 'Jewish bankers' were blamed for a crisis which was the fault of the capitalists as a whole. This was rightly described by the leading socialists as "the socialism of idiots".

Of course, Jews were mostly poor. And it was the poor Jewish workers, fleeing the pogroms in Eastern Europe, who were the first victims of British immigration laws. The first immigration law was not directed against black people: the Aliens Act of 1905 aimed to keep Jews out of Britain. Shamefully, it was supported by some in the labour movement.

Amid the crisis and chaos of post-World War One Europe, a new threat emerged. In Germany the Nazis led by Hitler developed a vitriolic anti-semitism. Nazi anti-semitism was so contradictory and downright mad that they blamed the Jews both Bolshevik-Communism and capitalism.

The defeat of the European labour movements of the 1930s led directly to the victory of the fascist barbarians and the greatest crime ever committed: the genocide of 6,000,000 Jews — an attempt to exterminate a whole people.

After the Holocaust the Zionists grew to become a majority amongst the Jewish people, stimulated by continuing anti-semitism in Europe. For example, Jewish Holocaust survivors returning to Poland in 1946, to their former homes, were met with further massacres. Anti-semitism continues to this day as a powerful force in Poland.

On the left there is a powerful



Prisoner hangs off the barbed wire at the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz, having attempted to escape. The Nazis scapegoated the Jews for the evils of capitalism.

mutant strand of 'left' anti-semitism which treats Israel as a peculiarly bad state and which would deny the Israeli Jewish people the same rights as other such peoples — the right to a state. These pretend-left politics combine traditional ideas with the "anti-imperialism of idiots" and a type of 'anti-Zionism' which originated in Stalin's USSR.

There is also a noticeable strand of anti-semitism in the black movement.

For example, Louis Farrakhan has said that his organisation, the Nation of Islam, is attacked by the media because Jews "control the mass media, newspapers, the radio".

Believing it is reasonable to use the word 'Zionist' to cover up anti-semitism, Farrakhan peddles the craziest

of crazy conspiracy theories, one which is also popular on the pretend-left — the theory that 'the Zionists' made a deal with Adolf Hitler" to massacre their own people!

So, anti-semitism continues as a dangerous, powerful force even amongst radicals and socialists. We must confront it and fight it wherever we find it.

The 'socialists' who excuse the anti-semitism of people like Farrakhan on the grounds that "the racism of the oppressed is not the same as the racism of the oppressor" not only patronise black people but also betray the anti-racist cause they want to serve. All racism — including black anti-semitism — is poison. It must be fought and wiped out.

The police: armed, da

The police are the biggest racist gang in Britain. That is the first thing to grasp if you want to understand the nature of racism in Britain.

The police *say* that they prowl the streets mainly to stop crime. But it is not true! Anyone who reports a robbery to the police can tell that. No, they are on our streets as the defenders of dog-eat-dog capitalism. That means they are defenders of racism. It is no accident that so many police officers are themselves virulent and active racists.

Crime has soared, but the police have done their main job — smashing picket lines, battering demonstrations and invading inner-city areas to crush riots.

The police work every day in our communities, but they are hostile to our communities. They are soaked in the most backward racist ideas.

It is this gang's job to act as the agents of the ruling class. Their job is to implement racist laws.

They are trained to believe in all the racist filth the bosses and the governments pump out. The police are not just the 'physical force' experts of the rulers: they exist also to stand up for their ideas and defend the 'morals' the ruling class wants us all to abide by.

The police are one of the most bigoted groups in society, but they have the power to harass, frame and even kill — and with near-immunity. The police thug who killed Blair Peach on an anti-racist demo in Southall in 1979 has never been caught: other police officers shielded him!

When the police are looking for someone to stick a crime on, their

racism ensures that it is black youth who are most often targeted.

The police systematically use violence, on the streets and in the cells. The police constantly stop, question or 'move along' black youth — but they do nothing about racist crimes.

When a 17 year old Asian youth, Quaddus Ali, was being kicked into a coma by a racist white gang, a policeman responded to a request for help from one of Quaddus's friends by telling him it was his problem, and that he — the policeman — was busy!

In the wake of this attack in September 1993 police flooded into the area. During a vigil outside the

hospital where Quaddus lay in a coma, several police beat and arrested a teenage Asian boy. They then provoked a fight with hundreds of Asian youth on the vigil.

It's not a question of a few mad or bad coppers — it is the nature of the whole gang. The whole police force is rotten — their ideas, their

methods, their way of seeing and feeling the world. The very reason they exist pits this gang against working-class communities and makes them murderously hostile to all black communities.

Many strikers and protesters have learned why black youth hate the police only when they themselves have been attacked. It is a lesson the whole labour movement must learn — quickly. When Labour MPs call for more police, bigger truncheons and a general crackdown on 'crime', they are siding with a racist gang against our own people.

To win socialism we must defeat the



bosses. To do that we must oppose, fight and, one day, break this well-paid, well-armed and much pampered gang of ruling-class police thugs.

Here and now, we must side with those at the sharp end of police racism and do all we can to curb and weaken the power of the police. We must defend those they attack.

The police are Britain's biggest and most powerful racist gang. Any fight against racism has to include a fight against police power and police violence, and against the legal system's maltreatment of black people.

The cases highlighted on these pages are only the tip of the iceberg of racism in the British legal system.

dangerous and racist



The M25 Three

**“I’m no angel! I’m
just an innocent man
fighting for justice!”**

Raphael Rowe

On the night of 15 December 1988, three unmasked men carried out a series of violent attacks just off the M25. They committed a murder on one of those attacks.

The victims, who were attacked separately, all reported that the gang consisted of two white men and one black man. Yet, in March 1990, three black men, Raphael Rowe, Michael Davis and Randolph Johnson, were sentenced to life imprisonment for those attacks!

In June 1993, their appeal was rejected in a highly contradictory Appeal Court ruling.

In the original trial, three white prosecution witnesses were found to have some of the stolen property in their possession, and their finger prints were found on the stolen car. They were not put on trial: their evidence helped convict the three young, black men!

The whole case has the stink about it of a police investigation that deliberately targeted innocent, young, black men for this much-publicised crime.

The three men are still in jail. That is British justice for black people in the 1990s.

The campaign to free the M25 Three is continuing. You can contact them by writing to: [address please].

More cases, on the next page

Youth for Justice

Youth for Justice is a campaign started by *Youth Fightback*, the youth organisation of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. Youth for Justice demands:

- The right to live free from police harassment.
- An end to prosecutions based solely on confessions.
- An independent and elected police complaints body. (*Complaints against the police are currently dealt with by a powerless complaints authority who rely on... the police*).
- Elected bodies to control the police, with power over operational policy and budgets. (*Police Authorities have little power are only partly elected, and can be ignored by the police. In London there is no police authority*).
- Abolish the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- Disband the Special Branch and special immigration police. (*The Special Branch are the British political police*).

Contact us for a speaker or for more information about our campaign:
Youth Fightback, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

The victory of the Cardiff Three

The Appeal Court victory of the Cardiff Three against the racist police and courts that locked them up for a crime they did not commit was a direct result of a national campaign.

Yusef Abdullahi spoke at a meeting in Brixton after his Appeal Court victory: [Excerpts]

"I was released a few weeks ago after serving nearly five years in jail for murder. In February 1988 a young woman had been killed in Cardiff. I had been picked up by the

police and asked to help with their enquiries. After three weeks the police had a positive identification of a white man, seen outside the woman's flat, his arm covered in blood. The television programme *Crimewatch* said that the police were looking for a white man.

"But ten months later the police arrested eight black men from the Tiger Bay area of Cardiff.

"The police hounded us despite the fact that there was no forensic evidence to connect us to the mur-

der.

"Our trial was a show trial. The trial lasted seven months, the longest murder trial in legal history.

"Before I got to prison I believed I was the only innocent person in jail. Then I discovered many other innocent prisoners.

"When, eventually, I was released, I was just thrown out onto the street. No compensation.

"The only support and help I have had is from people like you. Without you I would still be in jail."

Hackney coppers are bent

"There are police officers upon whom suspicion has fallen as to their reliability in any evidence they may have given court".

Who said that? Kenneth Aylett, lawyer for the State at the Court of Appeal hearing for Ida Oderinde, Dennis Tulloch, Everard Brown and Rennie Kingsley. They had their convictions for drugs offences quashed by the Court of Appeal after the state agreed that evidence given by officers from Stoke Newington police station in Hackney, East London was "unsafe and unreliable".

Hackney Community Defence Association (HCDA) believe that there are now up to 25 officers under investigation by Scotland Yard. HCDA believe that there are serious questions to be asked about at least 13 officers.

So far eight officers have been transferred, five have been suspended, one officer, Gerrard Carroll, shot himself dead, and PC Roy Lewandowski is serving 18 months for theft.

The Court of Appeal quashed the convictions of two men for



Denis Tulloch, Rennie Kingsley and Ida Oderinde after their successful Appeal

manslaughter on the grounds that Lewandowski had planted evidence on them, which had been stolen from the house of a dead man!

HCDA knows of 76 cases, between December 1988 and the present day, involving allegations of corruption against Stoke Newington police.

Of these cases 64 people have been charged with criminal offenses. In 17 of these cases no evidence was offered by the Crown Prosecution Service and

17 people have been acquitted.

Of the other cases, four are waiting appeal, seven have been referred to the Court of Appeal. HCDA believes that a further eight cases need further investigation.

HCDA estimates that 90% of those involved in these cases are black people. Many of the cases involve allegations of police officers planting drugs.

HCDA knows of four elements to police involvement in organised

The case of Joy Gardner

Scrap all immigration laws!



On 28 July 1993 up to twenty police and immigration officials forced their way into Joy Gardner's house and killed her in front of her five year old son.

Following their standard 'restraining' procedure, they bound her legs, handcuffed her arms and stuffed a gag into her mouth. She suffocated.

Was this woman a dangerous criminal? What crime had she committed? Joy's 'crime' was that she — a Jamaican-born woman — was living in Britain!

Her son was born in Britain, and her family had lived thirty years here. Joy herself had married a British husband — but after her marriage broke up, Joy lost her legal

right to remain here. Progressively she lost all her human rights, and finally she lost her life at the hands of the British state's licensed thugs.

She had not been told that she was going to be deported!

Her real crime in the eyes of the immigration officials, the police and the British law was that she was black.

Joy Gardner's case was news because they killed her. But what they did to Joy — handcuffing, trussing-up, gagging — the racist police and immigration officials regularly do to unwanted immigrants.

The immigration police should be abolished, and so should the immigration laws!

crime:

- seizure of drugs and money from dealers stopped on the streets and then released without trial;
- supplying drugs to street dealers;
- running protection from a prostitution racket;
- planting drugs and fabricating evidence against people who get in

their way.

There had been a long history of police violence and racism in Hackney.

Colin Roach died in the foyer of Stoke Newington police station on 12 January 1983.

On 8 January 1987 Trevor Monerville had to have emergency

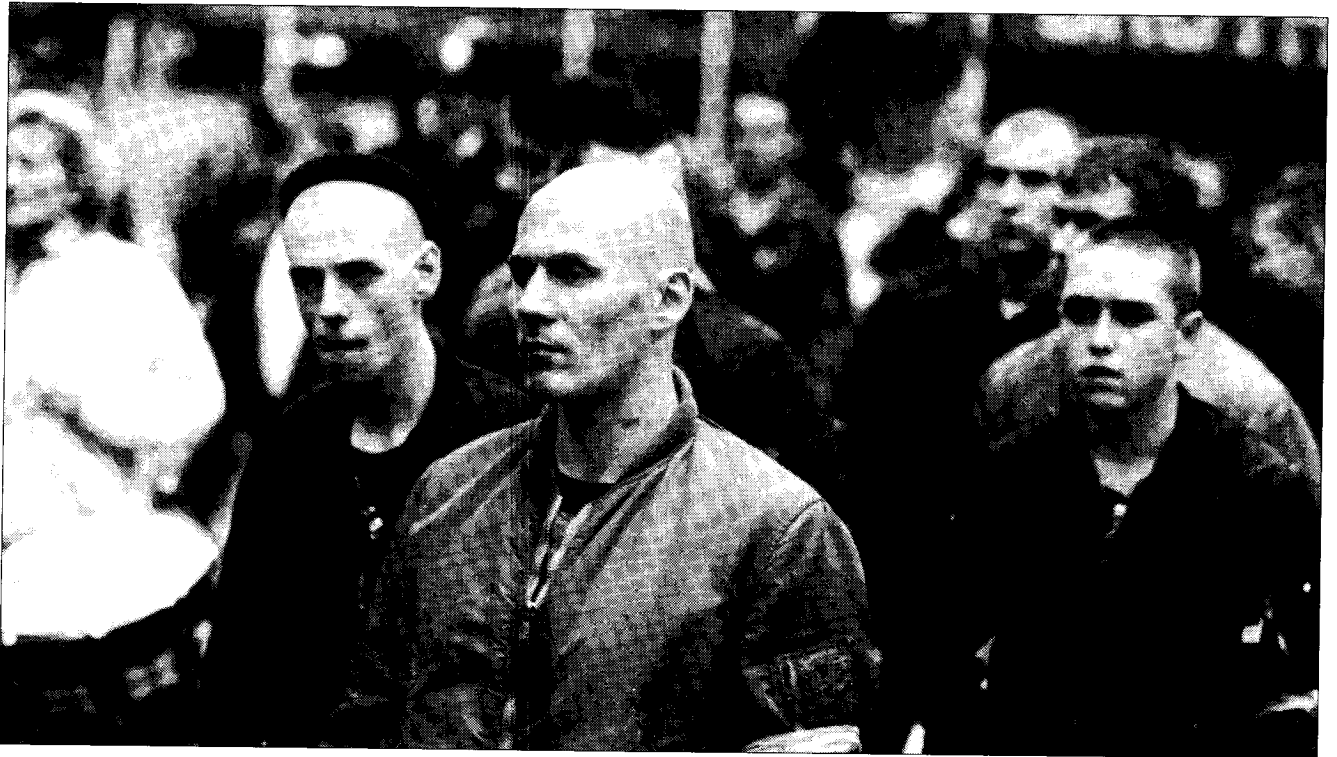
brain surgery after spending one week in Stoke Newington Station.

On 25 June 1987, Tunay Hassan died in custody in nearby Dalston police station.

Aseta Sims died in Stoke Newington police station in 1971.

It's time for the violence, framings and racism to stop!

Unite the campaigns, turn to the labour movement!



Unity can beat these Nazis. Photo: John Harris

There should be one united anti-racist/anti-fascist organisation. The existence of the Anti-Nazi League, Youth Against Racism in Europe, the Anti-Racist Alliance, Anti-Fascist Action, etc., etc., is not just silly, it is dangerous.

Each campaign has its own agenda. Much of the energy of each campaign is used up in organisational competition with the other campaigns.

Last year three separate marches were organised in South East London to protest at the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence! One very big

march would have been much better.

This sort of stupidity will keep the anti-racist movement weak. It will put off people who might otherwise get involved. It is a gift for those in the labour movement who want an excuse to do nothing.

The fascists, the police and the Tory racists must be loving it.

This idiocy is a direct and inescapable result of having different competing anti-racist campaigns.

The sad fact is that each of the campaigns has a hidden agenda underneath its supposed principles.

The Anti-Nazi League aims to build a liberal consensus against 'Nazis', within which the Socialist Workers' Party can recruit members. It is run entirely by the SWP in the narrowly conceived interests of that party.

The Youth against Racism in Europe campaign is designed to build 'Militant Labour'.

The Anti-Racist Alliance 'principle' of a 'black leadership' is simply a cover to allow certain careerists to appoint themselves as leaders.

Youth Fightback and *Socialist Organiser* wants to see one anti-racist campaign

that works in the trade unions, the Labour Party and in the black communities to build a movement that opposes all racism:

- immigration laws
- police racism
- racist attacks.

We need a movement able to physically prevent fascist groups from organising their thug squads.

It should unite white and black workers in the fight for full employment and decent housing for all — thus cutting the ground from under the feet of the racist agitators.

It must be capable of posing alternatives to racist and fascist propaganda which lyingly blames the black community for unemployment and lack of proper housing.

“We need a mass campaign against racism, and to get it the small and divided movements that now exist must unite.”

We need a mass campaign against racism, and to get it the small and divided movements that now exist must unite. There will be many different ideas of the way forward but these could be discussed rationally in a democratic and united movement.

The lunatic logic of different anti-racist campaigns is horribly visible now — in senseless competition that hinders the fight against racism and fascism. Unity is better, and if we are to smash fascism we must create maximum unity. There is no good reason why there should not be one united anti-racist and anti-fascist campaign.

An open democratic unity conference must be called immediately at which can be set up one united campaign. There is no other way! Stop the squabbling! Start a united fight-back — now!

Anti-Racist Alliance

Reject divisive ‘principles’!

The Anti-Racist Alliance presents itself as a very broad movement — so broad that it says it will work with Tories and Liberals, and does. In that sense, it is ‘broader’ even than the ANL. What distinguishes ARA above all, however, is its ‘principle’ that the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement must be led by black people, and by black people only.

Now of course black people should be in the leadership of such a campaign. But so should white people.

An anti-racist campaign must talk to white workers who are to one degree or another likely to be tainted with racial prejudice: the ‘principle’ of an exclusively black-led movement might imply an unwillingness to deal with such people unless and until they give up the attitudes the campaign exists to win them from!

If only for practical reasons, the anti-racist movement should itself embody the principle of racial unity to fight racism.

But there are more issues involved here than the practicalities of work to eradicate racism in a largely white labour movement.

ARA’s ‘principle’ is in principle wrong! It should be unacceptable to socialists and democrats alike. The politically raw young black person who responds to the white racism of the society around her with an instinctive counter-racism deserves sympathy, patience and understanding. The clique of journalists and others in the leadership of ARA are

a different matter altogether. They should know better than to preach racial exclusiveness — black or white.

A career-boosting posture by middle-class black people — these ideas can easily link up with the gut ‘counter-racist’ attitudes of some young black people. These ideas — worked out, self-righteous ideas as distinct from gut response to white racism — can poison these young people and make it impossible for them to become part of the labour movement. In fact ARA’s ‘principle’ means no more now than rejection of the ANL — which is an SWP front organisation completely controlled by that organisation.

But an anti-racist ‘alliance’ that demands of the broad anti-racist campaign we are trying to build, that it must begin by acknowledging ‘black leadership’ (in fact, their own) can only be a force for disruption. It cuts against anti-racist work in the labour movement.

ARA has the backing of two factions, Socialist Action (a very tiny splinter from the former International Marxist Group) and the ex-Stalinists of the *Morning Star*. The *Star* gives ARA some resonance in the trade unions. Trade unionists — black and white together — should reject ARA’s ‘principle’.

Young black people who are serious about fighting racism will reject ARA’s divisive ‘principle’ and continue to fight for a united black-white anti-racist campaign.

Anti-Nazi League

Carnival or campaign

Everybody knows that the Anti-Nazi League is run by an ultra-left sect, the Socialist Workers' Party, and entirely controlled by it.

The ANL of the late '70s was also controlled by the SWP. Nevertheless, it was a much broader affair than the reborn ANL is.

SWP control means that the ANL exists first to serve the SWP and act as a source of recruits. It exists secondly — a poor second, sometimes — to fight racism and fascism. The ANL will fight racism and fascism only in so far as doing that serves the first principle of its existence — self-promotion.

It will only fight racism and fascism in ways that do not cut across SWP plans. ANL anti-racist activity is conceived of exclusively as demonstrations and ritual confrontations — and not at all as an activity that also tries to rouse the labour movement to fight the conditions that breed racism.

Energy has been diverted into counter-productive stunts like banning the film 'Romper Stomper' and getting David Irving's books removed from libraries.

Using the broadest and vaguest idea of anti-racism, the SWP is willing to unite with Tory and Liberal scumbags who make noise against "Nazis" but will do nothing against the conditions — in East London for example — that allow the Nazis to gain support.

An anti-racist campaign organised like this can have only a very limited usefulness (except for the SWP). It can sometimes play a very harmful role.

The old ANL did a great deal of damage to black-white relations precisely because its prime concern was not fighting racism and fascism, but

building the SWP. It is a story that should not be forgotten.

The ANL held very successful rock concerts, to which 50, 60 and 80 thousand young people came. Such a concert was the big ANL event in October 1978.

Then the National Front which was still very powerful announced that it would 'march' on the Bengali community in Brick Lane, in East London during the time set for the carnival. Despite appeals from many individuals and groups — including people living in the area where the fascists planned to march — the SWP/ANL leaders refused to alter their plans.

The rock carnival with big name bands would draw vast crowds of youth — potential SWPers! That was the name of the game the SWP-ANL leaders were playing. Defending

Brick Lane could not be allowed to interfere with that!

The Anti-Nazi League revealed itself as a campaign run by people not primarily concerned with its supposed goals at all, but with the 'hidden agenda' of the SWP.

The carnival went ahead and the fascists marched on Brick Lane, to be met by local people and leftists called to the defence of Brick Lane by *Socialist Organiser* and others.

Large numbers of black activists were thereby alienated from and poisoned against the 'white left' by the SWP-ANL performance here. The ANL went into a decline and was soon wound up. The SWP turned to something else. The new ANL should be trusted as far as those responsible for the grim fiasco of the old ANL deserve to be trusted. They are the same people.

Beating the fascists

The fascists must be stopped physically from assaulting and terrorising black people. But that alone will not defeat racism. The biggest and most effective racists in our society are not the sick citizens of the fascist fringe groups, but such bodies as the police, the immigration officials and the mainstream political parties.

Hitting members of the BNP will not beat them.

For that reason, physical combat against the hard-core fascists must be kept in proportion. It is a defensive tool, not a goal, and still less a self-sufficient programme against racism and fascism.

It may appear to be a sufficient programme, but that is an illusion.

It may appear to be an attractive

activity because the other sort of anti-racist and anti-fascist work — involving a turn to the labour movement — is so complicated and difficult and unspectacular. It may seem better to get a few tough comrades and find a tangible enemy. All of this is illusion: the decisive fight against racism and fascism is the fight to make the labour movement into a force opposing racism and fascism and transforming the capitalist society which breeds racism and fascism into a different society — socialism.

Fight the fascists in defence of their targeted victims — but reject the illusion that it is enough. It is no more than a necessary holding operation.

Black separatism — is it the answer?

An open letter to black youth

By Jeni Bailey

Many young black people are hostile to the “white left”, and are turning away from the labour movement towards politics based on the “self-reliance of the black communities”.

The question is: can such politics deal with racism or with the many other problems — housing, unemployment and so on — which face working-class black people?

I want to argue that the black community can not, on its own, beat bad housing, unemployment and a brutal police force — after all, British black people amount to only 5%, or one in twenty, of the population.

Take the question of racist policing. It is obviously true that black youth get more trouble than any other group from the police. But white working class youth also have problems with the police. We have a common problem and face common enemies. Here is one basis for black-white unity.

Questions of policing are dealt with at the level of local and national politics. Local street scuffles, even big ones, cannot solve the problems. So any black activist must answer the questions: how should the black communities engage in national politics? and how do we win *majorities* at the level of national politics?

The only conceivable answer right now is, as part of the working-class movement, whose political wing is the Labour Party, to help Labour beat the Tories.

Beyond that I want to argue that it is possible to unite black and white workers in a revolutionary struggle against both racism and capitalism.

I think we can deal with both at once. I think it is possible to win white workers to our side for one simple reason: even if they do not even realise it yet, it is in their interests to be anti-racist.

The rise of British black nationalism

Of course it is difficult right now to see that the British working class is capable of making a revolution. In the early seventies it was, by contrast, easy to believe in the possibility of working-class revolution in Britain — when we drove the Tories from office in 1974, for example. The Tories and the capitalists have fought the labour movement and have beaten it down. The reason for that is that our own leaders betrayed us.

The class struggle is now at a low ebb — but it will revive. The working-class movement has not been destroyed. If capitalism continues,

there is a working class, there is a class struggle over wages and conditions. The labour movement will revive. That will make revolution seem less unimaginable again.

In any case it is necessary! Nothing less will solve our problems.

Therefore, we socialists try to convince others that they, like us, should work for socialism and prepare for it now.

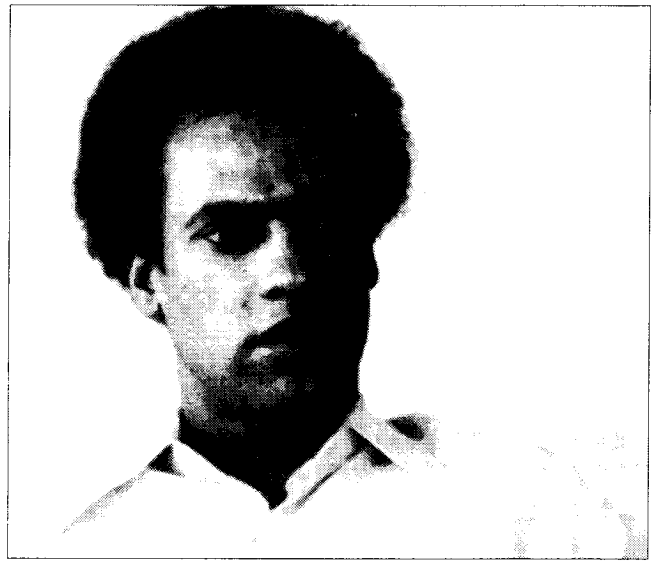
Nevertheless, that is in the future. It is natural that youth will look for plausible immediate answers to our problems now. Thus, black people are attracted to ‘answers’ offered by the rising black British middle class,



Malcolm X. The politics of the Nation of Islam meant acceptance of black ghettoisation



There is a tradition of black nationalist ambivalence to the racist right. In the 1920s Marcus Garvey met the Ku Klux Klan. Here leading American Nazi of the 1960s, Lincoln Rockwell (centre) sits in a Black Muslim meeting.



Huey Newton of the Black Panthers

although these answers can have no meaning for the vast majority of black working-class British people!

Many middle-class black people are articulate and concerned about racism, but they have economic interests very different from the interests of, for example, unemployed black youth. Money in their pockets gives them a certain protection from the racist excesses of the police and the experience of life at the sharp end of poverty and racism. A black professional class might preach demagogic race pride but what they are mainly concerned with is extending the black middle class and their own stake in the existing system.

And yet some black youth do take a lead from this layer. Why?

Part of the reason is that the labour movement hardly seems to offer an alternative way forward. The current Labour and union leaders are right-wing bureaucrats who do not organise and fight. It is hardly surprising that youth, not only black youth but white youth too, think the labour movement has nothing to offer.

Thus many youth look to "the community" — something which offers a sense of belonging and a sense of pride.

The trouble is that it is a consolation prize.

How to win — lessons from the US

There is an example from America which illustrates the point. There have always been two traditions amongst black Americans fighting

“A black professional class might preach demagogic race pride but what they are mainly concerned with is extending the black middle class and their stake in the existing system.”

racism.

In the anti-slavery movement before the civil war (1861-65) you found people like Frederick Douglass who wanted the fulfilment of the 'Great American Tradition' of equality for all

— full equality, equal black-white citizenship in a common society.

And then there were black nationalists. The most extreme of them saw only one solution to American racism — leaving America for somewhere else, preferably in Africa. When the anti-slavery movement made gains the Douglass wing was strengthened; when there were setbacks the nationalist wing gained ground. *The nationalists were strengthened by defeats.*

Unable to see a real way forward in the real world in which they lived, they retreated into consoling fantasies. But they had to continue living in a racist society.

During the twentieth century there have been two main upswings for the black nationalists: the Garvey movement after World War One, and the nationalist wing of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s — the Black Panther-Malcolm X tradition. (That is, Malcolm X in his last two years. The Nation of Islam, whose politics meant black acceptance of black ghettoisation, stood outside the Civil Rights movement).

In many respects these were positive movements. But it is also important to see how they were shaped *negatively*. In Garvey's case the negative shaping came from the racism of the trade unions as they were then, and from

the weakness — organisational and political — of the US left. For Garvey and American black people in the early 1920s, allies were hard to find.

The revolutionary nationalist current of the 1960s was influenced by Mao Tse Tung, the Vietnamese Stalinists and anyone else who said they were against the US government — but it was also influenced by the lack of a politically strong American workers' movement. In fact, while black radicalism grew, the majority of the US workers — the whites — were passively or even actively hostile. There was a natural tendency towards black self-reliance. They were right to rely on themselves, right not to wait for the whites. United black-white working class action would have been better. *The lack of it set terrible limits to what militant black people could do on their own.*

In both cases — Garvey and the '60s nationalists — their political programme was unclear. Garvey admired both Mussolini and Lenin. His 'back to Africa' scheme was not a serious project. The nationalists of the 1960s knew what they hated, but not exactly what they were for. For instance, consider the slogan 'black power' — what does it actually mean? How do black people — who are in the minority — get 'power'? What sort of power? Power to do what? Power for whom? Power over whom?

Pro-capitalist black power supporters had a scheme which made sense: 'power' for them meant building up black businesses. During his 1968 election campaign even Richard Nixon came out for this "Black Power", by which he meant black capitalism.

“Only a black person experiences being attacked by racists. But people of other races can understand it — and agree with us on a common programme to put a stop to it.”

The problem is that this option is not open to the vast majority of black people: how will I benefit by being exploited by a black capitalist rather than a white one?

In America, revolutionary nationalists had to answer this question: how do you make a revolution based on a community which is only just over

10% of the population? One answer was to make 'alliances' with other communities and radicals. And so they produced a left shadow of traditional Democratic Party politics.

The Democratic Party has used ethnic groups as the building bricks of a corrupt political system. Ethnic groups — Italians, Irish, African-Americans — fight each other or combine for the 'pork barrel' of state handouts, contracts, jobs.

This system of politics serves the bosses — of all the ethnic groups — because it does not clearly recognise class as the key, unifying factor in modern society and politics.

What we need

I assert that it is necessary and possible to build a socialist organisation based on the working class, black and white together! The big majority of working people are capable of thinking about, and then fighting for, anti-racist working class politics. We must help them do it.

In particular, black youth need to be part of a socialist movement and help the process of drawing up a balance sheet of past anti-racist struggles.

To simply hold up WEB DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X as holy pictures — as some do — and worship them uncritically is to do them a disservice. They all thought politics was important: they fought each other politically. The writings and histories of all these people are available for us to read. I see no reason why people today, white as well as black, cannot have a role in evaluating the ideas of these men.

Only a black person experiences being jeered at or attacked by racists. But people of other races can understand it — and agree with us on a common programme to put a stop to it. To deny this is to deny the very possibility of human solidarity. It is deeply reactionary. It is irredeemably pessimistic: it implies that black people, where we are not the majority, will forever be condemned to live in physical and mental ghettos.

I reject that idea. Black people must



Asian textile workers. If black workers want to win they must fight alongside white workers

not accept ghettoisation, but fight, as many great black fighters of the past fought, for full black-white equality as equal citizens.

This is the core of the case for a united socialist movement.

The meaning of 'black'

One result of the fight against racism in US conditions is the importation of ideas into Britain which have no grip on British reality. Britain never has experienced — and does not now experience — the sort of racism which slavery generated, and which still exists in the USA. Britain's equivalent of Deep South US racism existed mainly in Britain's overseas colonies.

One US import is the use of the word 'black' as a political tag — it comes with associated ideas like 'black people unite'. The problem in Britain is that the word 'black' is used to cover many different communities, with different backgrounds, cultures and problems. As the post-war immigrant communities settle and begin to feel more confident we see the



White workers must not leave black people to fight alone

growth of not one black identity but of many, based on the middle classes of the various communities. I say that for black workers there is another and important identity: their working-class identity.

These black communities are not coming together, and will not come together. For instance, a bourgeoisie is obviously growing in the ex-African-Asian community. There is no way

this group will unite with working-class Bangladeshis from the East End — they will follow their class and increasingly tend to vote Tory.

The problem

Back to the main problem: the British black communities are 5% of the population. How can we beat racism on our own? We can't!

We must ask ourselves: who has an interest in fighting racism? Do the white workers? Yes, objectively, even if some of them do not yet realise it.

Take an example: a central London post office where a third of the workers are white, a third Asian and a third African-Caribbean.

If the white workers want better wages they need a strong union, and so need black and white unity. If they are racist there is no way they will build the unity necessary to beat management.

In other words white workers have a real stake in opposing racism. Socialists point it out to them. We should say to white racist workers: your racism cuts the throat of black workers just before you stab yourself in the chest — come off it!

Our programme is for equality for all workers — legal equality and real equality.

This is the basis for a united black and white workers' movement fighting against racism and for socialism.

Unemployment and black workers

According to the February 1993 *Employment Gazette*, the unemployment rates in black communities was about double that of white workers (13% against 7%) for the three year period 1989-91.

It is highest for people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, next highest for Afro-Caribbeans, and for people of Indian origin it is about the same as for white people.

In the year following spring 1990, white unemployment rose by 1.5% while the rate amongst black workers (all communities) rose by 4%. In each case the rise was greater for men than for women.

In 1989-91, unemployment rates were highest amongst 16 to 24 year

olds with no qualifications. Amongst young men in this group 22% were white and 34% black people. In this age range unemployment rates of black people was at least double that of whites with comparable qualifications (9% against 18% for men, and 7% against 17% for young women).

In London, nearly 16% of those considered "economically active" by the government are workers from the black communities. 45% of unemployed black workers (65,000 of 146,000) live in London.

Unemployment of black workers is worst in the West Midlands where 17% are unemployed, compared to 7% of white workers.



Congolese rubber workers had their hands amputated for not harvesting enough rubber

How Europe underdeveloped Africa

When Africa was not 'backward'

In the Middle Ages Ethiopia was not underdeveloped. Walter Rodney — a black Marxist historian assassinated in 1980 as he tried to build a working-class party in his native Guyana — wrote: “The kings distinguished themselves by building several churches cut out of solid rock. The architectural achievements attest to the level of skill reached by Ethiopians as well as the capacity of the state to mobilise labour on a huge scale.

“Fine illuminated books and manu-

scripts became a prominent element of Amharic culture. Equally fine garments and jewellery were produced for the ruling class and for the church... Craft skills were developed in a number of spheres”.

Other countries which are today stricken by poverty — Egypt, for example — were once the world’s greatest centres of civilisation.

When Portugal first established itself as a colonial power in what is now famine-stricken Mozambique, the local Arab-African city states there, with their “fine stone houses and the air of elegance in the local courts and

markets” were “a world comparable, if not superior, in material culture to Portugal”

The European powers had certain advantages over the peoples of Africa and Asia — a more dynamic economic system, more centralised state power, and better military technology — that enabled them to make their conquests. But overall there was no great superiority.

Francis Quesnay, a Frenchman, wrote of China in 1767: “No one can deny that this state is the most beautiful in the world, the most densely populated, and the most flourishing

kingdom known". Scientific discoveries in China reached a remarkable level.

In Zimbabwe, when the 19th century white colonists found the ruined buildings after which the country is now named, they assumed that they must have been built by previous white invaders. They could not believe that black Africans were capable of such achievements.

When Britain first took control of India, in the 18th century, the country was thought of not as a sea of poverty, but as a fabulous treasure house in the Orient. The ordinary people were somewhat poorer than in Britain, but by a factor of perhaps 2:3 rather than the 1:10 or 1:20 of today. The luxury of the ruling class was probably greater than that of Europe's ruling classes.

The economics of colonialism were responsible for today's economic gap between the average living standard in Britain and in India. At independence in 1947, the conditions of the Indian peasantry were roughly the same as they had been 200 years earlier — maybe a little better, maybe a little worse.

The colonial era which had enriched thousands of British investors and administrators left the Indian peasants stuck in absolute poverty.

Underdevelopment is nothing to do with a lack of talent or energy by the people of the country. Like modern industrial development, it is the product of an economic system, capitalism.

Before the 18th century or thereabouts, economic differences between parts of the world were much smaller than today. Or, to be more accurate, they were differences of a different sort.

Some societies — ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, ancient China — reached a much higher level of culture than others. But this was a difference that mostly concerned the ruling classes.

The ruling classes might have literature, baths, roads, great temples and palaces, a varied and delicate diet, beautiful clothes and jewels — or not.



The legacy of hundreds of years of slave-trade and colonisation: Sudan today

Whatever happened in the wealthier spheres of society, the mass of the people did nothing more than scratch a bare living from the land.

Today we have the inverse situation. The wealthy have much the same technology, culture and luxury at their disposal in every country. But the standard of living of the working people ranges from the Western worker's material comfort and relatively easy access to culture, to the

African peasant's age-old poverty and illiteracy. A luxury hotel in Ethiopia provides the same service as a luxury hotel in New York. Even in Ethiopia — one of the world's half-dozen most underdeveloped countries — such industry as there is can use recognisably similar technologies to those in the advanced countries.

Capitalism has created — for the first time in history — the productive potential to free humanity from want.

It has created freely-moving international technology and wealth. In the richer capitalist countries, strong trade unions have won seriously improved living standards for many workers. Yet even in the US some two million people are destitute. And the average worker's wage in Indonesia, for example, has, on a generous estimate, one-tenth the buying power of a US wage. For millions of people in Africa, in India, and even in Latin America, life is as harsh and as precarious as it was 500 or 1,000 years ago, if not more so.

The story of development and underdevelopment is the story of how capitalism's drive to expand production has worked its way through unevenly, creating huge material advances in some areas while simultaneously it creates ruin elsewhere.

The white man as cannibal

The decisive turning point in creating the present pattern of the world came in the 16th century. A new economic system — capitalism, the system of wage labour and of continuous accumulation and reinvestment of profits — emerged decisively from the neo-feudal societies of Western Europe. As yet, it was not industrial capitalism. The Industrial Revolution and large-scale factory production were still in the future. But this earlier capitalism — commercial capitalism — had its own technological revolution, with printing, more developed firearms, and ocean navigation.

For centuries until then the central networks of trade had been the coastal shipping routes of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. But now the cities of the Arab world — until then the greatest on earth after China — and of Italy were eclipsed. As ships began sailing the open seas regularly and relatively easily the new centres of trade were the seafaring powers of the Atlantic — Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, England. They also established themselves in the Indian Ocean. Karl Marx summed this up as follows:

“The discovery of gold and silver in the Americas, the extirpation, enslave-

ment and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins, are all things which characterise

“The white slave-traders and slave-owners, adjusting the ideology of the ‘rights of man’ to fit in with their economic activity, declared that black people were naturally inferior.”

the dawn of the era of capitalist production [in the 16th century]... The colonies provided a market for the budding manufactures, and a vast increase in accumulation which was guaranteed by the mother country's monopoly of the market. The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder flowed back to the mother-country and were turned into capital there”

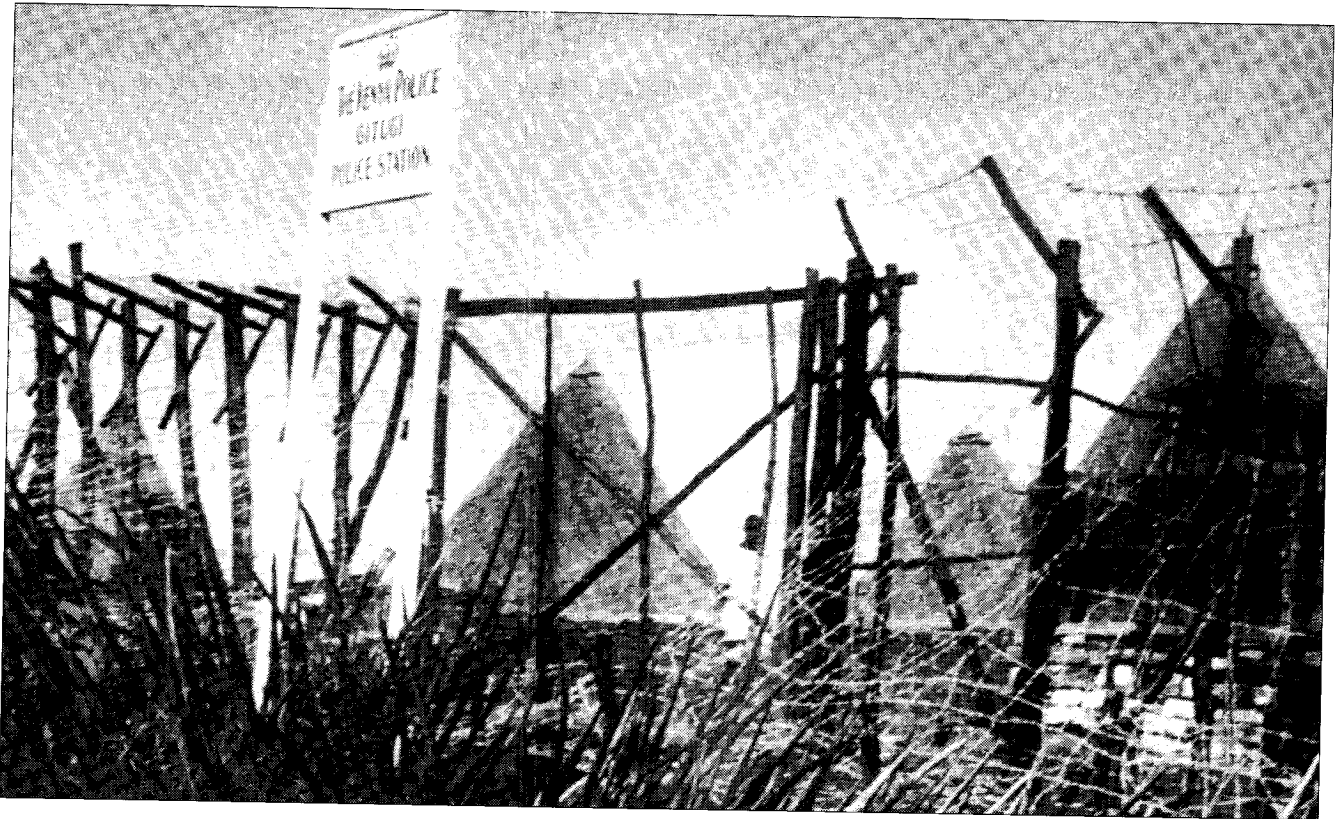
The rise of capitalist civilisation in Western Europe thus went together with the destruction of previous civilisations in other parts of the world. Black Africa's particular blight was the slave trade. “To discuss trade between Africans and Europeans in the four centuries before colonial rule [i.e. from the late 15th to the late 19th century] is virtually to discuss slave trade”, as Walter Rodney puts it. Millions of Africans were forced into the status of human cattle and shipped overseas. Probably more than ten million arrived alive in the Americas or Europe; maybe as many again died en route. The population of Africa stagnated from 1650 to 1850, while Europe's nearly tripled

and Asia's more than doubled. Africa had handicraft industries, and trade based on them. But the handicrafts could not compete. They were displaced by the new trade of human beings against European manufactured goods. The African peoples were split up into small warring groups and statelets as rival chiefs would make war on each other in order to capture prisoners for the slave trade. With the European traders, from their coastal forts and bases, also encouraging these wars and divisions, the African peoples had no chance of establishing relatively strong, large states such as had arisen in Europe.

The slave trade was also the underpinning of modern anti-black racism. Suspicion and fear of strangers dates back long before the 16th century, and anti-Jewish discrimination was already well established in Europe. Systematic, widespread prejudice and discrimination based on skin colour started with the slave trade (though it did not reach full pitch until the late 19th century). The white slave-traders and slave-owners, adjusting the ideology of the ‘rights of man’ to fit in with their economic activity, declared that black people were naturally primitive and inferior. Even worse, some black people were bludgeoned into accepting this, or half-accepting it. Racism itself, in turn, became something of an economic factor in the underdevelopment of black Africa.

The slave trade declined in the first half of the nineteenth century. A new chapter opened in Africa: in a sudden ‘scramble’ at the end of the 19th century, practically the whole continent was divided up as colonies for the European powers.

The economic system established under colonial rule had three main features: limited capitalist enterprise, cash-crop farming linked to European trading companies, and forced labour. Mines — gold and diamond in South Africa, copper in Zambia, etc. — and capitalist farms or estates (especially in the areas where many whites settled, like South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya) employed



Imperialist rule. A police station during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, 1952

wage-labour.

Railways and ports were also built. Rail networks were started in the 1880s and 1890s, and mostly completed by the early 1930s. Capital investment in black Africa was, however, much lower than elsewhere in the Third World. Up to 1930, for example, only 2% of British capitalism's overseas investment was in Africa, while 14% was in India, 43% in the rest of the Empire, and 22% in South America.

The wage labour was often casual labour, and the methods primitive. The great majority of the African population were still formally independent peasants. But they were driven increasingly from traditional subsistence farming (i.e. producing mainly for their own consumption) towards cash crops. "The African peasant", as Walter Rodney records, "went in for cash-crop farming for many reasons. A minority eagerly took up the opportunity to continue to acquire European goods... Many others... took to earning cash because they had

to pay various taxes in money or because they were forced to work.. Examples of Africans literally being forced to grow cash-crops by gun and whip were to be found in Tanganyika under German rule, in Portuguese colonies, and in French Equatorial Africa and the French Sudan in the 1930s... The laws and by-laws by which peasants in British East Africa were required to maintain minimum acreages of cash-crops like cotton and groundnuts were in effect forms of coercion by the colonial state, although they are not normally considered under the heading of 'forced labour'." Forced labour was also used to build railways, roads, and ports.

These elements were combined in different ways and in different proportions in different parts of the continent. But they meshed together in a single system — and one which had very little impetus towards raising productivity.

Force was required to tear Africans away from their traditional livelihoods and create a labour force for capitalist

exploitation. But the forcible methods of the colonial regimes did not completely destroy the traditional structures of the African economy, nor were they intended to. Collaboration with tribal chiefs provided the Europeans with a cheap method of administration. And the continuation of some subsistence farming allowed them to pay extremely low wages and prices for cash-crops. Subsistence farming would keep the African workers alive, while wages or cash-crop sales enabled them to pay their taxes and debts and buy a few European goods. The companies which controlled trade in the cash crops, like Unilever, brought huge profits back to Europe. Capitalist profiteers geared themselves into pre-capitalist forms of exploitation; they grabbed the proceeds of the peasants' surplus labour, done under pre-capitalist conditions, and, by selling the goods in Europe, transformed them into capital. The Africans suffered the evils both of capitalism and of the pre-capitalist forms. They suffered the

ruthless pressures and insecurity of the capitalist market economy, transmitted through the trading companies; and the isolation, primitive conditions, static technology and traditional hierarchies of pre-capitalist societies.

The Europeans certainly did not bring capitalist civilisation to Africa. Hardly any schools or hospitals were built for the black population until after the Second World War.

In Nigeria in the 1930s, for example, there were 12 hospitals for 4,000 Europeans, and 52 hospitals for at least 40 million Africans. Literacy was higher in Nigeria than in other colonies, yet only 12% in 1952.

There was a flurry of 'development' spending after World War 2. Partly the colonial powers were responding to the fact that the old colonial economy was breaking down (under the impact of the drastic decline in primary-product prices in the 1930s) and something of a permanent wage-worker class had emerged. Also, they became convinced that independence was inevitable, and made efforts to create a reliable African middle class to which power could be transferred. But it was too little, too late, and not very useful anyway. After winning independence the new African states had a terrible heritage to overcome.

How Britain ruined India

When black Africa was put under colonial rule in the late 19th century it had already been shattered and devastated by four centuries of the slave trade. But the India conquered by the British from the mid-18th century was a great and splendid empire. European trading bases had existed in India since the early 16th century, but they had exported manufactured goods from India — for India "had an industrial sector producing luxury

goods which Europe could not match."

The Mughal Empire — the regime before the British conquest — had not been a progressive system. A tiny elite, mostly alien in origin (Persian or Afghan) and in religion (Muslim), lived in luxury through extremely heavy taxation of the peasants. But the British continued many of the evils of the old regime and added some new ones.

Under Mughal rule, all land had been owned by the Emperor. The peasants were guaranteed the hereditary use of their plots, but could not sell, buy or sub-let land. Members of the ruling class would be allocated districts where they held sway as tax-collectors for the Emperor: These positions were not hereditary. The British half-transformed this set-up. In Bengal and some other areas, the Mughal tax-collectors were given a status which was half landlord, half tax-collector. This landlord/tax-collector class rapidly expanded under British rule, generating a sub-class of middlemen. In southern India, where Mughal rule had decayed well before the British conquest, the British worked differently. There, the higher-caste peasants were given quasi-smallholder status, but with the colonial government as overlord.

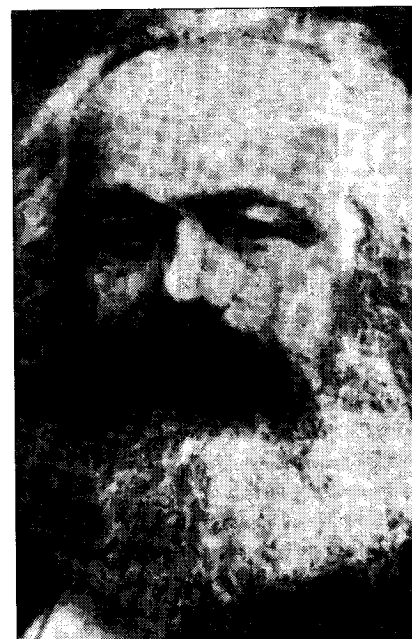
Karl Marx commented: "In Bengal we have a combination of English landlordism, of the Irish middlemen system, of the Austrian system, transforming the landlord into the tax-gatherer, and of the Asiatic system making the State the real landlord. In Madras and Bombay we have a French peasant proprietor who is at the same time a serf and a metayer [share-cropper] of the State. The drawbacks of all these various systems accumulate upon him [the peasant] without him enjoying any of their

"The companies which controlled the trade in the cash crops, like Unilever, brought huge profits back to Europe."

redeeming features". The peasants had no access to resources to improve their agriculture. And if by chance they should get access, the benefit of any improvement would immediately be confiscated by the landlord or middleman, who was a parasite interested only in luxury consumption rather than capitalist-type investment for expansion.

According to all modern research, Marx was mistaken in his belief that the British had also allowed the decay of irrigation works established under the Mughals. The Mughals' irrigation works were slight, and were in fact expanded in certain districts by the British. Overall, however, agricultural productivity increased barely at all, or maybe even decreased, during two centuries of British rule.

Above the relentless peasant poverty, the British replaced the Mughals as a ruling class. The British administrators retained the same vast luxury, display, and armies of servants. By the 1930s, about one-tenth of India's whole national income was flowing to Britain, and another slice was being consumed by the British administration in India itself. The maintenance, in modified form, of the old social structures in the countryside enabled



Karl Marx

cheaper and easier rule. Britain's land reform, wrote the Governor-General in 1829, "though a failure in many other respects, and in most important essentials, has this great advantage at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people". But there was after all a difference between Britain and the Mughals. The Mughals' wealth was used for luxury and display alone. The wealth of the British was *capital*. Sizeable amounts of capital were invested in India. A big railway-building programme was undertaken in the 1850s. In 1870, 21% of all Britain's overseas capital stock was in India.

Karl Marx wrote: "I know that the English millocracy intend to endow India with railways with the exclusive view of extracting at diminished expense the cotton and other raw materials for their manufactures. But... you cannot maintain a net of railways over an immense country without introducing all those industrial processes necessary to meet the immediate and current wants of railway locomotion... The railway system will therefore become, in India, truly

the forerunner of modern industry". Marx qualified this prediction: "All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of the productive powers, but on their appropriation by the people.

"Has the bourgeoisie ever effected a progress without dragging individuals and peoples through misery and degradation?"

But what they will not fail to do is lay down the material premises for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more? Has it ever effected a progress without dragging individuals and peoples through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation? The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among

them by the British bourgeoisie, till in Great Britain itself the new ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindus themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether".

In any case, the growth of factory production in India was very slow. There was a spurt of industrialisation around the First World War, and steel production was started then, much earlier than in most Third World countries. The Indian capitalist class by the time of independence was far stronger than any capitalist class in black Africa. But from the 1920s to independence in 1947 the industrial percentage of India's workforce actually declined. The stark poverty of the peasantry limited the home market. The British in India, and the Indian elite, preferred imported goods. And, perhaps crucially, Indian industry lacked the state protection and sponsorship which has been crucial to every infant industrial capitalism. Every industrial capitalist power since Britain has developed with tariffs guarding its infant industries and a large measure of state intervention. Even in Britain, state contracts during the Napoleonic Wars were a big factor in the Industrial Revolution. But the Indian capitalists did not have a state of their own. They were ruled by a British state, which would always help British capitalists first. For a short period after World War I, the British did adopt a policy of helping Indian industry. But it was quickly ditched, especially when the great world slump after 1929 left British industry clamouring for the Empire to be made its protected market.

The French writer Claude Levi-Strauss aptly describes India as the British left it: it was "as if history and economics had managed to establish, indeed superimpose, their most tragic phases of development on these wretched victims: the shortages and epidemics of medieval times, frenzied exploitation as in the early years of the industrial revolution, and the unemployment and speculation of modern capitalism".

Black workers and the unions

In 1991 73 unions representing nearly 8 million workers were affiliated to the TUC. Black people in work are as likely to be members of trade unions as white workers are, with densities of 32% and 33% respectively.

However, union densities differ widely according to community of origin. 46% of workers of West Indian or Guyanese ethnic origin in employment are members of a union (for women in this group the proportion is 48%). The figure for those in work of Indian or Pakistani origin was 33% and amongst those of Bangladeshi origin it falls to 25%.

According to the TUC, black workers are as likely to attend union meetings as whites, but they continue to be under-represented in union posts.

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Fascist poll victory sounds alarm



LABOUR MUST FIGHT

THE WINNING of a last government by-election in Essex by Tony Hancock in 1997 and Labour by the fascist British National Party in a defeat for the Labour Party greater by far than the loss of one county seat.
It is a tremendous moral defeat. Words of praise in a triumph of a great work of the left of the party which is still deeper than the leaders would like: the nation party of the British working class movement.
The victory of what is Labour's part in building the BNP was in 1997 and in one of the most important, across the Labour movement. The road to a certain growth of fascism result in Britain here, the same road that has appeared in France and Germany.
Continued on page 7

an bury the Nazis!

Students: fight racism!

Students, have a special place in the fight against racism and fascism, because students have a special place in society. I mean the main body of students in colleges and further education institutions as distinct from the thin layer of privileged middle class students.

Faced with Tory attacks on half a dozen fronts and facing poverty, harassment and homelessness, students experience the pressures that lead people to accept the scapegoating lies of vicious racists, and, sometimes, to vote for fascist organisations.

But students — except for the odd freak and crank here and there — know better than to accept such poisonous nonsense. Students are in a position to see through the lies of the Tories and of the more rabid racists. More easily than most people, students can gain an overall view of society. Students know that it is not “immigrants” who cause shortages and poverty in Britain. They know from history where the politics of the Nazi groups will lead if they are not stopped in time.

Students therefore must ask themselves what they — as a body — are going to do about the new upsurge of racism and fascism.

In Britain it is still small scale. But in Europe large-scale racism and fascism is once again a major force, and Britain is not an island politically.

Nazi groups are likely to grow in Britain in the period ahead.

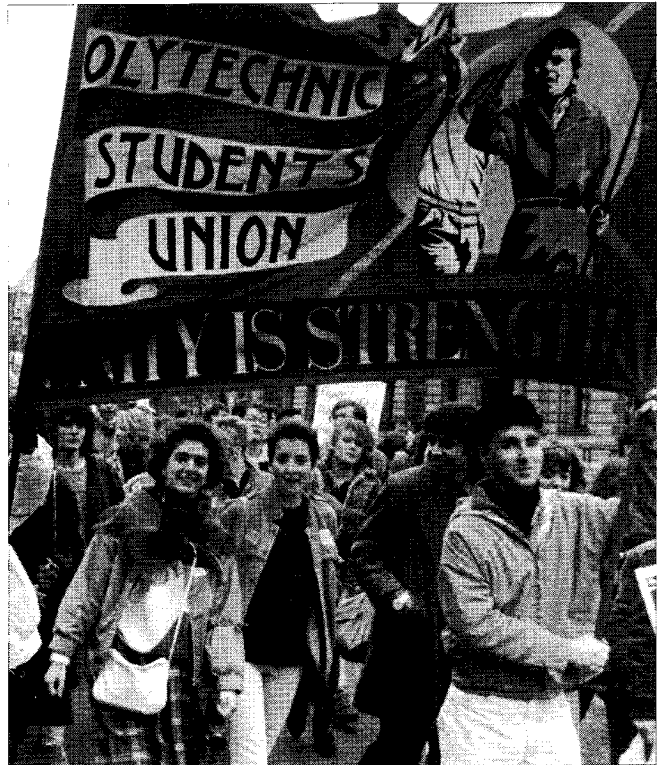
What should students do? They should do two things. They should turn “inwards” — and they should also turn “outwards”.

Students should join in anti-fascist activities outside the campus. Many do that now. But “fighting fascism” involves more than bashing skinheads, and more than marching through the streets — though both these activities are essential.

It is necessary also to fight the social conditions out of which racism and fascism grow. It is necessary for students to turn to the only force capable of winning such a fight — the organised labour movement.

14 years of Tory rule have made a jungle out of British society. It is out of this jungle that racism and fascism are now emerging. Only the labour movement — a revived, fighting labour movement, with its confidence and vigour restored — can offer hope of a viable alternative to what the Tories have made of Britain. Without such a fighting labour movement, many working class and other young people will opt for the poisonous “solution” offered by the racists and fascists.

Therefore students who want to fight racism must turn



to the labour movement!

Students must throw their weight into the fight to break the grip of the right wing whose control prevents the labour movement from vigorously opposing the Tories, and renders it incapable of offering young people an alternative to Tory, fascist and liberal racists.

Turning “inwards” means that students must fight to shake up our own organisation. It is late but still not too late to mount a fightback against the Tory assaults on student rights and student living standards. It is not too late to call the leaders of the NUS to order for their refund to fight the Tories and defend students.

The fight against racism needs to be made a major priority by the NUS. The NUS anti-racism committee is still far too weak. It needs more rank and file involvement. It needs to campaign vigorously amongst students to wipe out racist ideas. It needs to mobilise students on the streets against the fascists. It needs to turn anti-racist students towards the labour movement.

Richie Carrothers NUS NEC and NUS Anti-Racist Committee (In a personal capacity)