

# REVOLUTION

# Victory to the Hunger Strikers!

They fled torture and oppression to come to Britain. In this "safe haven" they are flung into prison without being charged with any crime. They are detained without a time limit, some for years. Their prison conditions are worse than those of convicted criminals.

The 180 detainees in Rochester prison have tried every other means available to get justice and fair treatment. Last May a peaceful protest was viciously attacked by riot police. The prison authorities and the Home Office have blocked information coming out of the prison to stop the detainees publicising their plight.

The hunger strikes began on 6 January. Up to 17 detainees have refused solids and on 26 January six refused fluids too. The Home Office is even refusing to confirm the medical condition of the strikers, their names and the exact numbers taking part. But the condition of the protesters is critical. There are even reports that the heating has been switched off in the strikers' wing of the prison.

If any of the hunger strikers die it is the Tory government that is responsible. **We must not let it happen.** Anti-racist organisations, trade unions, Labour, socialist and youth groups around the country need to rally now in a mass movement in solidarity with the hunger strikers and against the brutal racism of Britain's asylum and immigration laws.

- Free the detainees!
- Close Rochester, Campsfield and all immigration detention centres.
- Stop all deportations! Trade unions should refuse to implement racist laws.
- Demand that an incoming Labour government free all asylum seekers in British jails and abolish the Tories' racist Asylum and Immigration Act.
- Open the borders - scrap all immigration controls!

# The roots of racism

## RACIST BRITAIN: THE FACTS

**John Major says he is opposed to "any barrier built on race". But just look at the facts:**

### JOBS

Black people are twice as likely to be unemployed than white people. One in ten young men are unemployed - but for young black men the figure is one in five.

### STATUS

Black workers have far less chance of being promoted. On London Underground one in three of the workers is black, but an incredible 97% of managers are white. White workers are twice as likely to get promoted.

### HOUSING

In Tower Hamlets, East London, the Nazi BNP won votes by claiming that black people get better housing than whites. The opposite is true. 25% of all people in Tower Hamlets are black, but 80% of council houses in the borough are occupied by whites. Black people are given the worst accommodation.

### PAY

The trade unions have exposed the fact that on average black workers get paid 15% less than white workers.

### COURTS

The courts and the judges are far more likely to send black people to prison. Ethnic minorities are only around 5% of the whole population. But 16% of all male prisoners are black. For women it is even worse. 28% of female prisoners are black.

### IMMIGRATION

The government keeps making it

harder for black people to get into Britain. But there have been no limits on the number of white immigrants from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Black people trying to get in have been herded into terrible prisons like the Campsfield Detention centre, where they are denied basic human rights. But the rich can come and go as they please - if you have £150,000 the Tories will let you live here regardless of race, creed or colour.

### VIOLENCE

In 1988 there were an estimated 4,000 racist attacks on black people. By 1993 there were 140,000! Discrimination against black people creates the idea that blacks are "aliens", encouraging cowardly racist thugs like the gangs that killed black teenager Stephen Lawrence and put Asian schoolboy Quddus Ali on a life support machine. These attackers were never brought to justice by the police.

### POLICE

The police are worse than useless at 'protecting' black people. They are racist killers themselves. When a special police squad came to deport Joy Gardner in 1993, they tied 7 feet of tape round her mouth, suffocating her to death. Her family are still fighting for justice. And only last month police in South London killed Brian Douglas after stopping him on the street for "routine" questioning. They smashed his skull with their new US-style truncheons.

These facts speak for themselves. John Major is a bloody liar. Britain is a racist society - racist to the core. ■

**W**hat causes racism? REVOLUTION does not believe that racism is just part of human nature. If that were true, there would be no point in fighting back against all the injustice that racism causes. Instead we believe that racism is part and parcel of the capitalist profit system.

Britain once ruled over a vast and powerful Empire, spanning the globe. Britain conquered large parts of Africa and the whole of India.

The rich businessmen that rule Britain made millions and millions of pounds from these colonies. They stole food, minerals and precious stones. They enslaved millions of Africans and transported them to America and the West Indies in the slave trade. They forced millions of Africans and Indians to work for very low wages, and they made enormous profits as a result.

When the victims of this system fought back, the British army crushed them using the best weapons technology could create. For years they steadfastly refused to meet the demands of the colonial peoples for independence. At Amritsar in India in 1919, the British Army shot down hundreds of Indian men, women and children in a bloody massacre.

At home the British ruling class tried to present themselves as democrats and "good Christians". But in the Empire the people were denied any rights at all.

To justify this, the capitalists developed the ideas of modern racism.

To explain why the British and European colonialists had the "right" to trade in slaves as if they were cattle, and to kill them like animals, the colonialists had to pretend that black people were not really human.

Theories started to appear suggesting that black people were really closer to apes than humans. These lies became very deep-rooted; we still hear echoes of these sick ideas in racist taunts in the playground and the classroom today.

Books claiming to be "scientific" appeared in the 1800s trying to "prove" that black people were inferior.

This was the same as the books circulated by the Nazis which argued that Jews were "subhuman". The same arguments appear today in the writings of US psychologists who claim that black people are "naturally" less intelligent.

It is all lies. It is nothing more than an excuse for oppression and mass murder.

# racism what it is and how to fight it

The British Empire came to an end in the years after the Second World War. Today - with a handful of exceptions - Britain does not rule over its old colonies directly. But Britain, along with France, America and other prosperous advanced countries, still has the main say in the

running of the former colonies.

Big western companies decide what is produced and where. They force whole countries to produce things for the West, not for themselves. The former colonies have to pay off massive debts to the Western banks, which keeps them stuck in

terrible poverty.

The 'advanced' countries are still imperialists, exploiting the Third World and keeping millions below the poverty line. The former colonies are independent in nothing more than name: they are semi-colonies.

And how do the imperialists explain away the terrible poverty and suffering that their system causes? Through racism, of course.

They blame it all on the people of Africa and India themselves, for their "backwardness", "laziness", "corruption" and so on. And when people try to escape from this awful situation and come to the West, they keep them out with racist laws.

That is why we say that capitalism created racism, and keeps it going today. Racism is the capitalists' excuse for hundreds of years of crimes against black people. ■



## Divide and rule...

**T**here is another reason why the capitalists spread racist ideas: to keep the working class divided.

It's simple if you think about it. The capitalists have to blame somebody for all the problems their system creates. So they blame the victims. Black people become the scapegoats for the ills of capitalism.

These ideas can take a hold because many white workers want to keep themselves 'one step above' their black brothers and sisters.

Slightly higher wages, slightly better chances of getting a job or promotion, slightly better housing - all these things - according to racist ideas - need to be 'defended' against the claims of black people.

But the cost of defending the racist system is high for white workers too. Racist ideas weaken the struggles of all workers, including whites.

One report from American experts proved that where black workers suffer discrimination or lower wages than whites, the bosses will use this to push down all wages. In areas where there is less discrimination, wages of all workers will tend to be higher. Unity is strength.

Some black activists believe that white workers are so corrupted by racism that there is no chance of a united fight against the system. Instead they argue for

a separate black struggle against racism.

This is understandable given the long history of racism in Britain, and the racist actions of the Labour Party. In government in the past Labour has brought in racist immigration controls, and today Tony Blair supports increased powers for the racist police. But separatism is no answer to this.

Black people make up at most 6% of the population. This is just not enough to overthrow the root cause of racism - the capitalist system and the state that defends it. But the working class as a whole - black and white - makes up the overwhelming majority of the population. United in struggle, the working class could bring the whole racist system crashing down.

And workers can unite.

During the Great Miners' Strike of 1984, many miners who had previously been very racist discovered that black workers were among their most determined supporters.

The money collected in support of the miners in black communities was enormous. The miners suffered under extreme violence from the police throughout the strike, and this caused them to see police harassment of black youth in a different light.

As one miner told black delegates to

the miners' support committee in Birmingham: "Now we know what you have had to put up with. You have supported us. In the future we must support you."

Unity of black and white workers will not happen automatically - it will have to be fought for. One way of fighting for it is black self-organisation within the workers' movement - like the black workers caucuses and conferences in the unions. But neither Labour nor black separatism has the answers that can unite black and white workers.

Instead we have to build up a revolutionary youth movement and a new revolutionary working class party, to unite black and white workers in the fight for:

\*An end to all discrimination in housing, education and jobs.

\*Organised self-defence against police, racist and fascist attacks.

\*The abolition of all immigration controls, an end to all deportations of black people and the closure of the Campsfield Detention centre.

\*Cancel the Debts of the Third World countries to Western banks.

\*For a united working class fight against the system that causes racism: the capitalist profit system.

Join REVOLUTION in the fight against racism and capitalism! ■

# REVOLUTION

the fighting paper for working class youth  
BCM 7750, WC1N 3XX  
0171 357 0388

**A voice of uncompromising opposition to the capitalist system  
and its market madness, millionaires, moral hypocrisy and  
militarism.**

**Get the next 6 issues for just  
50p.**



- No thank you, it sounds like a very unpleasant publication.
- Yes, please brainwash me with godless communist propaganda.

Name

-----

Address

-----

-----

-----

Telephone

-----