

England



Panther

The socialist voice of the black & asian community

Price 20p

Summer 1992 Special Supplement

Solidarity price £1

NO JUSTICE



The country which is trying to impose its new world order is itself in complete disorder. It's fake democracy, it's bigotry and it's instability exposed for all the world to see.

By Colin De Freitas

A police mob which mercilessly beat a black man, Rodney King, in a way which can only be described as an attempted lynching, were let off scott free by a jury which did not have a single black person on it.

This verdict is but one example of the blatant disregard for black peoples rights in the USA. The rage which was unleashed on America's cities is the response of blacks who have been literally kicked for too long.

If a jury could sit and watch a defenseless man receive 59 blows from four policemen with metal truncheons, hit twice with a stun gun, and then hear them describe it as "monkey slapping time" and still deliver a not guilty verdict then it is clear that black people have no chance in America's courts.

LA police chief Daryl Gates has the gall to describe the disturbances as "a bunch of hooligans who have gone out and looted and burned". But it is he and his men who are the real hooligans.

Last year LA police shot 27 year old Daryl Stephen 28 times. He was unarmed and was not suspected of any crime.

Sheriff's officers in LA shot a mentally disturbed man nine times in the back while he lay on the pavement.

And within months of Gates appointment an unarmed black woman was shot 12 times by officers

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NO PEACE!

Editorial statement

Panther is no longer just a newspaper. Last November we held a national meeting of supporters and decided there was a need for a serious black and Asian organisation to fight racism and raise political awareness. To explain where we are coming from, and what our aims are, we are reprinting part of the document which was presented to our first national meeting.

If you agree with what we are saying, if you want to know more, if you are serious about the black struggle, then contact us.



"We do not fight exploitative capitalism with black capitalism. We fight capitalism with basic socialism."

— **The Black Panthers USA.**

"You can't have capitalism without racism."

— **Malcolm X.**

"Maybe America must move toward democratic socialism."

— **Martin Luther King.**



In the last few years we have been presented with the illusion that black people are doing well in Britain and America.

Under the guise of positive images, we are shown successful black athletes, the newscasters and TV presenters, businessmen, and MPs. Alongside this, thousands of documents have been written on meaningless equal opportunities programmes.

But hard stubborn facts show that for the vast majority of black people nothing fundamentally has changed. If anything, our situation has worsened.

The Facts

4.4% of the population in Britain is black.

1. The unemployment rate amongst blacks is twice that of whites. (3 times higher for those under 25).
2. According to the employment institute, racial discrimination in the British job market remains unchanged since the mid 70's.
3. While only 17% of the population in London, black people are 36% of those on low paid training schemes.
4. Black people are 5 times more likely than whites to get a prison sentence when convicted.
5. Black people are 20% of the remand population (38% in London).
6. There were 70,000 racial attacks in 1989.
7. Afro-Caribbeans are the highest under achievers in British schools.
8. Only 0.5% of black people get to university or polytechnic compared to 4% of whites.
9. One in twelve of black 16 to 25 year olds are homeless, for example, 62% of the 'non-priority' homeless applicants in Hackney were black.

10. Black men have a life expectancy 7 years lower than that of white men.

11. Black people are 17 times more likely to be diagnosed as having paranoid schizophrenia.

12. 25% of the mental health population in London is black.

13. 60% of black people who are in mental homes have been admitted by force compared to 20% of whites.

These figures show that the few black high-flyers who were promoted after the upheavals of 1961 have become removed from the reality of life for black people in Britain.

They have borrowed the worst strategies which emerged from the civil rights movement in America: black tokenism and practices which in essence amount to a policy of 'liberation one at a time'.

These strategies didn't come from black people. They were, in the main, devised by white, middle-class American sociologists, sponsored by the establishment to take the heat out of black struggle.

In America, the richest country in the world, this approach has failed to solve any one of the problems facing Afro-Americans.

African-Americans:

The Facts.

12% of the population in the USA are black.

1. 59% of the urban underclass are black.
2. The average white household is 32 times more wealthy than the average black household.
3. One in three of the black population is living below the official poverty line. For whites, it is one in ten. This gap is wider than it was in the 1860's.
4. The average black income is now 57.1% of the average white income. This is lower than at any time since the 1970's.
5. By 1999, 50% of all black children will be living in poverty compared to 15% of white children.
6. A black baby is twice as likely to die within a year of birth than a white baby.
7. The average life expectancy of a black person is seven years lower than a white person. This gap is widening.
8. Half of all black 17-year-olds are illiterate.
9. Since 1976, the percentage of black high school graduates going to college fell from 34% to 26%.
10. There are more black men in prison than the 435,000 in college.
11. Young black men are 46% of the prison population. In Washington it is 92%.
12. Murder is the biggest killer of black men in the USA.
13. 23% of black men between 20-29 are either on probation, bail or in jail.

Now we are being told that apartheid is over in South Africa. They couldn't wait. With just a few cosmetic changes, plans are hurriedly being made to welcome South Africa back into the international community. They have been promised a seat at the United Nations and sanctions are being lifted.

Meanwhile our brothers and sisters are being gunned down in the streets. Rubbing their hands in glee at the so-called 'black on black' violence, the regime has used the reactionary Inkatha movement to orchestrate some of the most vicious attacks yet on South Africa's black movement. Apartheid remains intact.

For the Panther, it is not just a matter of telling the truth. Promoting the idea that we are moving up and that our problems are being solved is dangerous. It could lull a layer of black people into a false sense of security for which we will pay a heavy price in the future.

Across Europe we are witnessing the biggest rise in Fascist activity since the Second World War. In France, the semi-fascist party Front National, has grown from an insignificant group into a party which has an MP in the French assembly (parliament) and averages between 10 and 15% of the vote. They have led mass demonstrations and organised a campaign of terror against the Arab and North African communities.

The problems of mass unemployment associated with the reunification of Germany has led to an alarming rise in organised attacks by rac-



Panther Programme

We believe that racism is endemic in this society. This discrimination and prejudice results in black and asian people receiving the roughest justice, the least opportunities and the lowest living standards of any group of people in this country.

Panther aims to build a powerful and democratic black and asian organisation:

1. To fight racism and advance the black struggle.
2. To raise the consciousness of black people as to their history and struggles.
3. To campaign on the day to day issues of police harassment, immigration, racist attacks, education, housing and employment.
4. To fight against the particular oppression of black and asian women. Women should not be tied to the home or bear sole responsibility for housework and child rearing but should be free to play an equal role in the struggle for our rights and the development of society.
5. To fight on these issues in the community but also at work and in colleges and schools.
6. Support our brothers and sisters all over the world who are struggling against racial oppression and imperialism.

Our main demands are:

1. We want proper jobs. End the concentration of black people in low paid menial work. No more racism in hiring, training and promotion.
2. We want decent homes. Pull down the slums. For a massive house-building programme in the inner cities.
3. No more substandard education for black children. For an education system which ends the practice of low expectation and encourages higher achievements of black children. Reverse the cuts. Build more schools in the community.
4. Abolish all racist laws. Scrap the nationality and immigration acts. No more deportations.
5. End police harassment. Stop the criminalisation of black youths by the police and courts. Disband the special police units. For a completely independent complaints procedure. The police must be democratically accountable to the communities which they serve.

We believe that the black struggle is part of the wider movement for change within society and that our liberation is tied up with changing the whole society. Panther stands for the breaking of the stranglehold of the rich minority over society and to construct a democratic socialist society run by workers and youth. Panther members must realise that the struggle for our liberation is a serious matter. It requires an active contribution to the development of the organisation, its campaigns, finances and publication.



Panther

● The socialist voice of the black & asian community

Price 30p

Summer 1992 Issue No 5

Solidarity price £1

LOS ANGELES



IT COULD HAPPEN HERE!

A partially disabled black pensioner is dragged out of his car by police in Moss Side and beaten 'Rodney King style'. Another squad of police arrive and join in the assault on Mr. Bygraves. Police drop charges.

A black woman in her 50s is stripped-searched on the street by Merseyside police. Later she is taken home and beaten. No charges.

Shaun Morgan a 32-year-old black man is arrested on a drunk and disorderly charge by Manchester police. He is given a vicious and violent beating by the police which results in a ripped bladder. Police drop charges.

19-year-old Michael McSharry is involved in a row with some white youth. After shouting 'get the nigger' the police beat him. His head is smashed into the van and then kicked all the way to the station. He is forced to sign a confession to carrying a firearm but the police do not press charges.

OSD (Operational support Division) officers cruise round Liverpool 8 shouting from their vans: 'We are out nigger hunting.'

These are a few recent examples of police violence against the black community. Yet we are being told that what happened in LA couldn't happen here.

By Desmond Calvin

The jails are becoming home to more black youngsters as everyday the police brutality is being supported by gross miscarriages of justice in the courts. (Black people are eight times more likely to receive a prison sentence when convicted than whites.)

The British establishment has matched the barefaced injustice of the Rodney King verdict in America by refusing to prosecute the officers in the West Midlands serious crime squad.

This despite the fact that the police's own inquiry had discovered scores of frame ups, persistent and malicious harassment of individuals and fraud. £4 million was spent on this inquiry and not one of the 226 officers are to be charged.

But they have destroyed the lives of many Robert Haughton, the latest black man to be freed from prison because of the frame-up, said: 'They took away my 20's. These are meant to be the best years of your life and they just took them away.'

Here too they ignore video evidence. An attack on 60-year-old Padmanabhan Govindan was clearly shown on his shop's video yet the police have charged him with assault. And the decision was backed by the Police Complaints Authority.

So it is the height of hypocrisy for the media and the British authorities to look at the Rodney King verdict as peculiar to the USA. Black people get no justice here either!

Like the blacks in LA we too are at the bottom of the heap in this society. There is a lot of frustration on the streets which could explode at any moment. What happened in LA could happen here. But Panther says, don't just use your energy and talent and get organised.

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Autumn 1992 Issue No 6

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The fall of the eighties is over. Black and Asian people are waking up in a growing mood of black consciousness. All around us we see Malcolm X t-shirts and caps, African badges, political music, posters and literature.

Only cynics and doubters could believe that this is just a fashion. Black people are searching for answers, a way forward in the midst of our many problems.

And in a history that is littered with betrayal, black youth in particular are looking back to uncompromising leaders like Malcolm X.

This popular awareness which has caught the black community is very important. It comes at a very critical time. We are living through the longest recession since the second world war. Over 29,000 people are being added to the dole queues every month. Record numbers of businesses are going bust.

The problems with the pound's exchange rate were not just some abnormal happening, but an indication of the fundamental weakness of the British economy and the world's financial markets.

This is not an irrelevance for black people. We are going to continue to bear the brunt of the crisis.

A special cabinet committee has been set up to massively cut public spending. They are planning to hit child benefits, pensions and income support. They also intend to slash the wages and number of workers in the public sector.

Our communities are very vulnerable to these attacks. A high proportion of our wage earners work in the public sector: in transport, the post office, hospitals and in local government. The few of us who have managed to get an education often work in schools, which are also being attacked.

Already the black unemployment rate is twice that of whites. This will get worse. After 25 years of race legislation there has been no significant improvement in the living standards of black people. In fact our problems have actually worsened.

The economic chaos also increases the likelihood that we will once again be scapegoated for the result-

ing social problems. This makes the continual brutalising by the police and the attacks on our families by racist elements, easier for society to swallow.

Already, year by year, the number of racial attacks are increasing. This year one London borough reported an increase of 56% in these attacks. The fascist groups are beginning to get a higher profile as they score a series of electoral successes in Europe.

Moreover there has been a general increase in ethnic conflicts throughout Europe.

These are all warning signs of what could face the black population in this country. Therefore we must prepare.

This new rising consciousness must not go to waste. It must have a purpose to it. We have to harness this consciousness and give it an organised expression.

Many people are at present reading Malcolm X and putting their interpretations on what he was and stood for. Whether he was a Muslim, a black nationalist, or had socialist sympathies later in his life.

Of course, we have to see the evolution of the man and his ideas. But one thing is certain. Whatever position he adopted he did so from a revolutionary standpoint. He and the Black Panthers always tried to turn their words into deeds by trying to organise black people.

Now with Africa facing its biggest ever crisis, India and Pakistan facing break up and disintegration and with the downward spiral in the Caribbean economies, there has never been a time where the need for us to organise was so urgent.

Panther's aim is to build a powerful and democratic black organisation, capable of fighting on behalf of black people in this country, whilst building links in Africa, on the Indian subcontinent and in the Caribbean.

We want a new system. A system which ends the exploitation by the rich minority. A system which will use all our resources and talents and put it at the disposal of a truly just, socialist society.

We must seize our own time and carry forward the legacy of Malcolm X and the Panthers to achieve our liberation.



SEIZE THE TIME!

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