

Black Workers' Charter



Racism exists in all aspects of the lives of Black and Asian people in the UK. The recent global movement around Black Lives Matter (BLM), sparked by the brutal murder of George Floyd, revealed the depth of anger against it.

In the UK, numerous mass protests saw thousands and thousands of mainly working-class young people, from all backgrounds, coming onto the streets to demand justice for black people brutally murdered by the police, and to express opposition to racism. Globally, the BLM protests are the most recent ground-shaking anti-racist movement. There have been many previous waves of anti-racist struggle, including the tremendous civil rights movement of the 1950s, 60s and early 70s, which impacted the lives of black people worldwide.

Such powerful movements led to legal improvements, such as the Race Relations Act of 1968 in Britain. This was meant to stop wage inequality, and other racist discrimination. But racism still exists and affects our lives.

The Black and Asian population in Britain have been disproportionately affected by the economic crisis of 2007-08. And figures already suggest that Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups are going to be hit harder by the current economic crisis. Whether it is unemployment, lack of housing, or poverty, Black people have been at the forefront in suffering attacks on their jobs and living conditions, as well as discrimination at the hands of the police and legal system.

- ◆ Black people are nine times more likely to be stopped and searched by police in England and Wales than white people (Statistics released by the Home Office, 2020)
- ◆ The prosecution and sentencing rate for Black people is three times higher (Equality & Human Rights Commission, 2016)
- ◆ The unemployment rate for BAME groups is 6.3%, versus 3.6% for people from a white background (Unemployment by Ethnic Background Report, 2020)
- ◆ Black school leavers with A-levels are on average paid 14.3% less than their white peers (Equality & Human Rights Commission, 2016)
- ◆ On average, Black workers with degrees earn 23.1% less than white workers (Equality & Human Rights Commission, 2016)
- ◆ Black people were more than four times as likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act as white people, in the year up to March 2019 (Ethnicity Facts & Figures by gov.uk, 2018)

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Race and class inequality



Covid-19 has further exposed the class and race inequality that exists within capitalism. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) found that Black men are 4.2 times more likely to die of the disease than white men. The equivalent figure for Bangladeshi and Pakistani men was 3.6, and for Indian men 2.4, with similar proportions for women. At the same time BAME groups have suffered greater repression during the pandemic, being almost 50% more likely to be arrested under coronavirus laws than white people.

The disproportionate effects of the pandemic on BAME people are not accidental. A third of all working-age people from a Black African background are employed in key worker roles. In the NHS, for example, around 40% of doctors and 20% of nurses are from a BAME background. These essential workers have been working throughout the peaks of the pandemic providing vital services. Key workers in Britain have been let down by the Tory government and the capitalist system that failed to provide them adequate and sufficient support, pay or PPE.

In addition the most deprived areas have twice the coronavirus death rate of the least deprived. Low pay, overcrowded accommodation and cuts to services are all factors. As the pandemic has developed, the key factors that have emerged as responsible for inequalities in death rates are inequalities in society as a whole.

- 45% of children from BAME groups are living in poverty, compared with 26% of children in white British families (Department for Work & Pensions, 2019)

- BAME families are between two and three times more likely to be in persistent poverty (Social Metrics Commission, 2020).

- In 2019 Black people were 56% more likely than the national average to be in the 'persistent low income' category. Asian people were twice as likely. And a higher proportion of BAME workers are in what gets called 'low-skilled' jobs than the average.

The tragedy of Grenfell saw BAME communities disproportionately affected by continuous government neglect. Years of being ignored, sidelined and left behind saw working-class families killed

- 44% of Black African and 40% of Black Caribbean households rent social housing (Ethnicity Facts & Figures by gov.uk, 2018)

- Homelessness among BAME households rose 48% in five years from 2012-17 (Shelter, 2017)

- Surveys found that 33% of private landlords were less likely to rent to someone that did not hold a British passport (Shelter, 2016)

Build a mass movement to end Racism



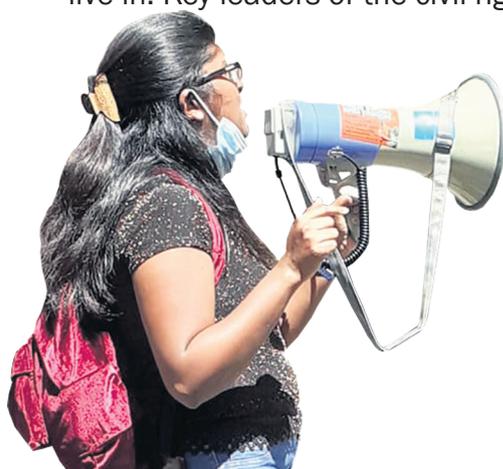
Racism and the injustice of discrimination taking place in all aspects of our lives need to be opposed. This means fighting for all the reforms and changes needed to improve the conditions facing black, Asian and other minorities.

To fight for a society free from racism means challenging the very core of the system that we live in. Key leaders of the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Huey P Newton, all travelled down the road towards believing that the fight against racism and for black liberation could

not be achieved under capitalism. They all drew the conclusion that "you can't have capitalism without racism". The Socialist Party agrees.

Capitalism is a system based on the exploitation of workers in order to maximise the profits of a few. Today, a tiny group of people, in Britain and worldwide, own and control industry, science and technology, and harness them in order to make vast fortunes.

Globally eight people own as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity - the greatest polarisation between rich and poor in human history. In Britain, the majority of us have faced endless austerity, while a tiny handful are raking it in. For example, the CEOs of the 100 biggest stock-market-listed companies collect an obscene 73 times the average wage of their workers.



The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed who runs society, who the essential and key workers are. It is not the CEOs, but the workers in transport, healthcare, schools, retail, hospitality, etc. It is the vast majority of us.

Black, Asian, Ethnic minority, women and young people are disproportionately concentrated in low-paid jobs, and are exploited further by the capitalist system. We need to build a mass movement that unites the working class around a common programme.

Capitalism offers no hope of a decent future for the 99%. It is an unequal, oppressive and discriminatory system, and divides us on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, etc. It survives by keeping us divided.

As socialists, we say that it is the working class that is the force in society that can get rid of capitalism. Class exploitation unites workers of all backgrounds. Together we have the power to fundamentally change this rotten system. We, as the working class, have enormous potential power through our ability to withdraw our labour and stop the flow of profits to the bosses.

Covid-19 pandemic has brought misery for the working class, but it has also revealed our collective strength. It is essential to link the fight against racism, and other forms of oppression, to the fight against class exploitation and capitalism.

It is only through this that we can fundamentally change society - socialist change - free of all exploitation, oppression and discrimination.



Black Workers Charter

The Black and Asian group of the Socialist Party is producing a Black Workers' Charter to start a discussion about the demands needed to fight for the rights of Black and Asian people, and what programme is needed to end racial discrimination.

Help us to build a mass movement to smash racism. Appeal for support for the charter in your workplaces, youth organisations and amongst the wider working class.

Covid-19 crisis and the death of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority people. We demand:

- Hold the government accountable for preventable deaths related to coronavirus
- A community and workers led inquiry into the mishandling of the Covid-19 crisis and the PPE shortages
- No workers should be punished for the Covid-19 pandemic. No cuts and job losses. For mass investment into jobs, homes and services for all
- Take the wealth of the 1% - introduce a 50% levy on the hoarded wealth of big business

In workplaces

- We demand that the trade union movement fights against the racism which remains endemic in our workplaces
- Job security - no forced redundancies. Trade union action to fight any job losses and cuts in the workforce
- End the race pay gap. A Trades Union Congress (TUC) study found that black workers with the same qualifications as other workers are more likely to be employed at lower rates of pay. For an equal rate of pay for the job
- Fair reporting systems, free from judgement. Any type of racial abuse, verbal or physical, needs to be reported and acted on by management immediately. All incidents must be recorded, and

the log of incidents to be reviewed by elected shop stewards and the trade unions. Regular public data must be made available showing the number of staff experiencing grievances, or facing disciplinary by ethnicity

- All workforces to organise anti-racism training for all staff, and mandatory 'unconscious bias' training for managers - overseen by elected shop stewards and trade unions
- Ensure election of equality officers in trade union branches
- Trade union oversight over the recruitment and promotion process
- Defend the right to protest. Scrap the anti-trade union laws and the anti-democratic legislation

Democratic control of the police

- End stop and search. Democratic control of policing by trade unions and communities
- End police brutality. Demilitarisation of the police - stop the use of horses, tear gas and rubber bullets. Abolish the Territorial Support Group (TSG) and all similar paramilitary units
- Independent workers' and community inquiries into police violence
- Oppose privatisation and selling of prisons. Instead they should be controlled democratically by workers and communities

In Healthcare

- Reverse all privatisation. Scrap the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and cancel all PFI debts
- Massive investment into our NHS - for a fully funded National Health Service and care system, free at the point of use
- Scrap prescription charges in England, and all dental and health charges
- Stop double taxing migrants - no to the NHS surcharge
- More mental health support and refugee centres
- Nationalise the private healthcare sector, care homes, the medical supply industry and the pharmaceutical companies - integrate them into the NHS

In Immigration

- End the hostile environment - end all racist immigration laws. For community and trade union oversight of border controls
- Justice for the Windrush generation - immediate compensation for all the victims
- Grant all refugees and asylum seekers the right to work
- No deportation
- Close down all detention centres - these are run by profit-driven companies that further exploit detainees and use them for cheap labour
- Right to asylum - including the right of families to be reunited

In Schools

- Parent, teacher and student democratic control of the curriculum
- Teach history and gains from the struggle. Include in the curriculum working-class struggle, black history and trade unions' record and achievements in fighting racism
- Oppose 'Prevent' training and application
- Free school meals and travel

For young people

- Free education for all - scrap tuition fees, and write off all student debt
- A future for young people - establish safe youth centres and invest in their future
- End low pay - scrap zero-hour contracts, and end the super-exploitation of the gig economy.
- Immediate increase in the minimum wage to at least a real living wage of £15 an hour

Housing, services and resources

- Oppose cuts and privatisation. Many reports reveal black and Asian people are disproportionately impacted by cuts to jobs, healthcare and other vital services
- End enforced poverty - for the right to decent benefits, no to sanctions, pensions for all
- No imprisonment for crimes of poverty. Safe communities for all. Mass investment in jobs and training
- More funding into youth services, and vital services including social care, education, and the NHS
- Grenfell never again - remove all unsafe cladding now. A community, trade union-led inquiry and action to make homes safe for all
- Cap private rents, for a mass programme of building council houses, no to evictions

Fight for Socialism

- We can't control what we don't own. A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people

No trust in capitalist politicians. Join the fight to build a mass democratic workers' party to represent our interests and fight for these demands

