British ruling class pushes racist offensive

Fascists assault Bengalis in London

By BRIAN BECKER

JUNE 20—In the latest of an increasing number of right-wing, racist attacks that have occurred in Great Britain, a group of 150 fascist youth carried out a vicious mob assault on June 11 in the oppressed Bengali community in East London.

Shouting racist epithets and armed with pipes, chains, bottles, and rocks, the fascist band smashed windows, hurled chunks of concrete, and beat any Bengali residents who happened to be in their path.

The so-called neutral police were nowhere to be found while these storm troopers rampaged through the neighborhood. The police arrived only when a spontaneously formed self-defense group of community people came out into the streets, confronted the racists, and caused them to disperse. The cops arrested a handful of racists, releasing all but three of them in a few hours. The police authorities asserted that the attack was not a "premeditated racial assault" and charged the three fascists only with "threatening behavior."

This latest racist attack was organized and carried out by the National Front, a well-financed fascist organization led by John Tyndall, who succinctly revealed the character of his organization in his widely published article, entitled, "Why I am a Nazi." The National Front has been organizing around the so-called immigration issue with the aim of placing the blame for the acute capitalist economic crisis in Britain on the Asian, African, and Caribbean immigrant population.

RULING CLASS PUSHES RACIST OFFENSIVE

At a time when unemployment in Britain is at its highest peak since the end of World War II, British big business is working overtime to try to prevent a unified struggle of the workers. The main weapon in the bosses' arsenal is to undermine class solidarity by whipping up racism. In the U.S. they use the term "anti-busing" and in Britain it's called "immigration."

But in both cases these are only code words designed to mask the real issue—**racism**.

While the fascist National Front has been calling for the wholesale deportation of all Black and Asian immigrants from Britain, the Conservative Party (the traditional party of British big business) has adopted an almost identical program as the extreme right. Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Party candidate for Prime Minister, has made "immigration" the main issue in the campaign to unseat the current Labor Party government.

The proclamations of Thatcher rival those of the National Front in their blatant racism. Virtually calling for a step-up in the racist offensive, she recently told a television interviewer, "People are really afraid that this country might be swamped by people with a different culture,"(!) and called for an "end to immigration."

Most recently, the Conservative Party-controlled London City Hall has proposed its own apartheid-style solution to the continuing racist attacks against minority people. The proposal calls for the forced relocation of all Asian people living in the East End of London into segregated public housing developments.

The outraged Bengali community immediately denounced this so-called solution. Speaking for the community, Golam Mustafa, a neighborhood leader, told the London newspapers, "We are strongly opposed to any idea that we should be made to live in a ghetto of the City Council's making. How would a ghetto stop the stone-throwing, the attacks, and insults? Would the white hooligans, a tiny minority, stop picking on us just because we moved house?"

In another revealing example of how the ruling class is egging on the racist campaign, David Duke, the "Grand Wizard" of the Ku Klux Klan, successfully entered Britain on March 2. Even though Duke was officially banned from entering the country, he was able to "sneak in" and before being deported was able to participate in several cross-burnings, appear on radio and television programs, and pose in front of Parliament in Klan robes. Duke obviously couldn't have stayed in Britain five minutes without the active complicity of the British ruling class.

Behind the scum who carry out the fascist attacks against the immigrant population stand the "respectable" bankers, industrialists, and corporation heads who are desperately seeking to divert the growing class struggle in Britain.

But the movement of the workers and oppressed people, who represent the majority sentiment, can defeat the racist offensive. A dramatic example of the effectiveness of the anti-racist force was shown last Aug. 15 when 1,000 supporters of the National Front attempted to demonstrate in a multi-national community. Even though 4,000 cops tried to protect them, the fascist demonstration was smashed by 3,000 angry anti-racists. This—a militant anti-racist counter-offensive—one that builds labor solidarity in the struggle, is the only way to defeat the divide-and-conquer tactics of the bosses.

—Guild strike

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have brother against brother." This change in tune by La Chance, who on the first day of the strike personally led some drivers through the picket lines, was a result of the near total support which the drivers' ranks gave to the Guild.

LABOR SOLIDARITY PROVES EFFECTIVE

Thus, the struggle of the workers forced The News to suspend publication for the first time during the 5-day strike. A threat by The Times and The Post to shut down in support of The News failed to materialize and The News management threw in the towel shortly thereafter. By Saturday afternoon the new agreement was ratified by the Guild membership.

Pressure was brought to bear, however, on the Guild to accept The News' offer from labor's own corner in a rather high-handed manner. George McDonald, president of the Allied Printing Trades Council "took the unusual step," according to New York Times reporter Robert McFadden, "of publicly endorsing a Daily News settlement offer before it was even taken under consideration by the full Guild negotiating committee." Implicit in McDonald's statement was the threat of withdrawal of support by the council. This was the threat, rather than that of the Times and Post to shut down the entire industry, that compelled the Guild membership to vote for the settlement.

The attempt by The Daily News to destroy the Newspaper Guild has its roots in the nationwide conspiracy of the newspaper monopolies to drive the unions out of the industry. This in turn is only part of the general anti-labor offensive which the corporations have been gearing up for several years. The National Association of Manufacturers, for example, has proclaimed as its goal: "to make unions unnecessary."

The union-busting offensive of the bosses **can** be stopped. The Guild strike proves it. Not only can it be stopped, but it must and **will** be stopped. As the Guild strike shows, a combination of labor solidarity and militant rank-and-file participation is the formula for success.

—Gays fight

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lesbians and gay men, who have also been facing reactionary attacks on their rights and their lives.

FASCIST RESURGENCE IN EUROPE

As in the U.S., the capitalist countries of Europe face a deepening economic crisis and like U.S. workers, European workers have become increasingly militant in their demands for jobs and higher wages.

Big business fears the rising anger of the workers. It tries to dissipate this anger by covertly appealing to the prejudices instilled in working people by centuries of class society, seeking to use the most oppressed as scapegoats for the suffering that all working people feel as the capitalist economic crisis deepens. But this has provoked a militant response from progressives that far overshadows the mobilizations of the right wing.

In the U.S., the ruling class is fostering division by encouraging the mobilization of the Nazis and the Klan, by supporting the racist Bakke decision, and in general, by giving free publicity in the bourgeois media to all campaigns against the oppressed, including those against lesbians and gay men. In Europe, similar support is given to right-wing movements, which in many instances are taking an overtly fascist turn.

In West Germany, some former Nazi officials now openly wear their World War II medals, and anti-Semitism is on the rise. In Italy and France, fascist gangs have mounted violent attacks on pro-labor and progressive forces. In England, the racist National Front has been carrying out an "anti-immigration" campaign directed at Black workers from the West Indies and Asian workers from India and Pakistan.

Lesbians and gay men have also been targets of fascist attacks. Recently a Paris gay film festival was attacked by fascist thugs. English gays have reported an increase of anti-gay violence in the wake of the prosecution of the editor of a leading English gay newspaper on contrived charges of "blasphemy." The racist National Front also calls for the liquidation of lesbians and gay men.

GROWING ANTI-FASCIST MOVEMENT

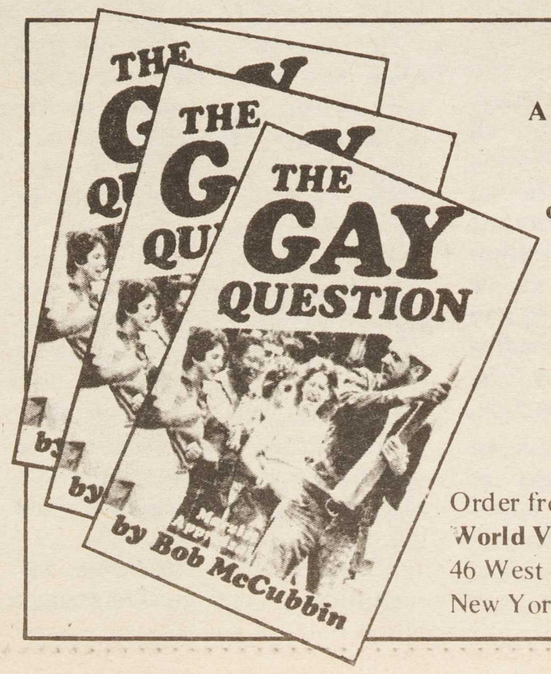
European and English lesbians and gay men have strongly responded to these attacks by joining the growing anti-fascist movement. On April 22, in Cologne, West Germany, 15,000 protesters from West Germany, France, and Poland held an anti-Nazi demonstration.

On April 30, a gay contingent was part of a march of 80,000 in London against the National Front. The coalition of organizations in the Anti-Nazi League, which organized the march, includes CHE, Britain's largest gay organization.

By these actions, lesbians and gay men are responding not only to the specific attacks against them as gays, but to the threat that the resurgence of fascism holds for them as workers, as nationally oppressed people, as immigrants, as women. Their participation helps to create the working-class unity which can defeat the fascist threat.

It is this kind of unity which is being sought and which must be increasingly sought by lesbians and gay men in this country. In the fight for civil rights, it must be recognized that the opponents of these rights are the same right-wing, racist forces whose goal is the theft of every right won by working and oppressed people.

The past year has seen increasing participation by lesbians and gay men in the struggle against the Bakke decision, against apartheid in South Africa, and against the Nazis and the Klan. It is this struggle which must and will be deepened.



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