

# COUNTER INFORMATION

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## HANDSWORTH EXPLODES



Handsworth, Birmingham exploded on 10th and 11th September when thousands of people drove off the police and liberated goods from shops.

Contrary to the lies of the gutter press and the police this was NOT an inter-racial conflict. Local people stressed that blacks, whites and people of Asian origin were all involved in battling with the police and looting.

Young Asians in the Lozells Road Asian Resource Centre told a Guardian reporter that young Asians and blacks shared the experience of unemployment and harassment by the police. There was almost no difference between the unemployment figures for the 2 groups. Only a minority of Asians were shopkeepers, and most Asians in the area were working class.

Asian shopkeepers themselves denied there was any anti-Asian feeling involved, one said "There was no rivalry between communities. They just wanted to steal what we had and it did not matter who owned the shop." (Guardian 12/9/85)

The truth is that the Handsworth riot, like the 1981 riots, was a rebellion against the police, poverty, the authorities and this whole rotten system we live under.

One of the sparks for the rioting was the police assaulting and racially abusing an Asian man and a black woman. A lawyer present stated that the "outraged citizens intervened to try to show the officers their actions were inflammatory."

This was no isolated incident. A black youth said "We know the police have a job to do, but they don't care how they do it.

They beat people up, they kick people, they brutalise people."

As those arrested in the riots come to court, another repressive wing of the state swings into action. On Sept. 11th a young white man with no previous convictions was sentenced to 28 days in jail on minor charges. Other defendants and spectators immediately launched vigorous protests, and the court sitting was suspended as fighting between people and police broke out in the court building.

### ROOKERS' RAVINGS

Police brutality and vicious court sentences are of no concern to Jeff Rooker, "left" Labour M.P. for the area. He showed his true colours when interviewed on the BBC breakfast TV programme. He shrieked that the criminal rioters must be stamped out, that heavier policing must take

place immediately, and that the only motive of the rioters was crime and vandalism.

We can only hope that Rooker gets the same treatment that was meted out to Home Secretary Hurd on his visit to Handsworth. Hurd's PR tour ended in a humiliating disaster as locals hounded him out of the area. With missiles raining down he had to flee, abandoning his car and escaping in a police van.

It is true of course that not all aspects of the riot were as positive as the attack on Hurd. In particular the accidental deaths of 2 Asian men in the Post Office. But even here the gutter press spread lies that the men had been attacked. In fact the police clearly stated, after post mortems, that the dead men had NOT been assaulted, they had died from inhaling smoke.

The deaths were partly a result of the apparent police policy of containing the riot within Handsworth, to protect major shopping centres in the city centre. Despite hoax calls to divert the police and entrap them, the riot didn't really break out of Handsworth.

A major aim of future riots must be to spread beyond the working class areas, so that the big shops and businesses and rich areas suffer the burning and destruction. The rioters in South Africa recently showed the way when they broke out of their own area and attacked a rich suburb.

## AND NOT ONLY HANDSWORTH

**HANDSWORTH IS not the only place in Britain where significant clashes between people and police have taken place recently.**

Those other clashes were virtually ignored, as has frequently been the case since 1981. Censorship, this is what happens all the time!

At the Durham Miners Gala in July miners clashed with police after the cops had arrested a pitman.

On 27th July, 200 battled the police in Wombwell, S. Yorks., after an attempted arrest for bricking a police car.

Liverpool 8 saw two episodes of resistance to the police in late July. Then on August 30th 50-150 people demonstrated outside a Toxteth police station where a black youth was being questioned during a murder

enquiry. Police reported damage to cop cars and station. And, as rioting swept Handsworth, reports say that in the early hours of Sept. 11th, 50 black and white youths stoned a police car in Toxteth.

Other recent people vs. police clashes include:

A fairground in the mining town of Knottingley, Yorkshire on 13th July; in St Peters Port shopping centre, Guernsey on 17th August; outside the Mayflower Club, Bradford in July; in Bristol, also in July; and in Birmingham, soon after police shot dead a 5 year old child.

And not only in Britain... Rioting rocked Dublin on June 30th. Thousands of people leaving a concert drove back police and liberated goods from shops.

The resistance to police

oppression and liberation of capitalist property involved in these incidents and in Handsworth is extremely positive - and must be distinguished from robberies or assaults against working class people, which we totally oppose.

The news clamp down and the new police riot technology and organisation developed since 1981 have failed to prevent violent mass resistance to the authorities. The miners strike showed that many in the mining communities have learnt from '81. Resistance continues in the streets and will play its part in eventually making the whole world a no-go area for all exploiters and their uniformed thugs.

(Info: War News, Black Flag, various newspapers)



Counter Information is put together from news, information and personal accounts of resistance to this rotten system. At present it is put together by people in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Grangemouth. We would like to encourage the widest possible distribution and participation in the project, and regular communication between people with a revolutionary desire to get rid of all that impoverishes our daily lives.

The more material we receive, the more able we will be to produce the broadsheet regularly and ensure its distribution as widely as possible. Donations towards costs are much needed and very welcome. We encourage all those who want information and/or bundles of the broadsheet to distribute to contact us.

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CANDLEMAKER ROW, EDINBURGH. 16/9/85

# Resistance blow to Apartheid



IT HASN'T gone unnoticed in the media recently that the South African Government is having a spot of bother keeping large sections of its population in check.

Yet their cynical portrayal of the 'chaos' of black resistance appears very hollow in relation to the effectiveness of these struggles against White rule and murder.

One has come to expect the likes of the BBC, national media and their bed fellows in Government and the echelons of industry and finance to give voice to the 'need' for moderation, restraint, compromise and reform when their system is being attacked by concerted and determined action from all sides.

We rejoice in the fact that the

South African economy is taking a nose dive as the capitalist economic system is the basis for apartheid. However, to expect or call for sanctions as the means to end apartheid is rather paltry. The people, such as Reagan, with the power to do such things will only do so in order to give credibility to their shabby 'democratic' image, not because they want to end apartheid.

In a similar vein the calls from 'concerned' people for Botha and his government to have talks with moderate or recognised Black leaders such as Bishop Tutu, Chief Buthelezi, Boesak and even as a last resort to release Nelson Mandela, would just be a call for some sort of face saving solution to the economic crisis, likely only to be considered to help save the

Rand, NOT the blacks and their working class fellows in that country.

In this light we get the nauseating sight of heads of South African commerce preparing to talk to the A.N.C. and at the same time the sacking of 5000 miners for going on strike.

There can be no doubt that resistance has dramatically increased in the last year, some suggestions are that this is because of A.N.C. agitation, yet A.N.C. officials recognise that they have a limited role in the escalation of violence in the townships. It is clear from the resistance; from school children stoning police right through to the attacks on white suburbs and the riots that occur after the funerals of the State-murdered

Blacks, that there is a predominance of self organisation and self determination to end apartheid and perhaps less self assuredly capitalism itself.

It is realistic to say that the people who are fighting and dying in South Africa have recognised that the only solution to end their oppression is revolution, inevitably violent where hopefully the likes of Botha, his supporters and the forces of compromise will die together.

One can only hope that the majority of ordinary people in this country and throughout the world will give support to this goal and maybe then see the mirror of the conditions of the Blacks in their own lives and, likewise, do the necessary.

## BOLIVIA

Workers say NO!

Co-ordinated protests by the 800,000 strong Bolivian Workers Centre have led to strikes amongst miners, factory workers and public sector workers. The 'social democratic' Government's solution to an inflation rate that has risen beyond 2,200% is to freeze wages for 4 months and increase prices 10 fold. Workers have an impressive tradition of resistance in this land-locked country and will not stand idly by and wilt under the dictates of the International Monetary Fund.

## STEEL STRIKE IN U.S.A.

A strike has been raging in the steel towns of Pennsylvania since July 21st when the Wheeling - Pittsburgh Firm tried to impose a reduction in hourly wage rates and fringe benefits.

Like the industry in Britain and Europe in general, the steel communities have been steadily destroyed as successive redundancies have been negotiated to 'slim down' the steel producing capacity. The workers that remain are determined that 'enough is enough'.

In the tradition of American labour relations, gun battles and violent confrontations are anticipated as the lock-outs continue and State troopers are expected to be called in to disperse the mass pickets and encourage a return to work by force. Other firms are now following suit and there is every sign that other steel workers' responses will be as resolute and uncompromising.

## PERU

Left government faces strike wave

Strikes in August by 30,000 bank workers led to militant picketing of the few remaining banks left open. Riot police backed up by water cannon, took up positions in the financial district of Lima, the country's capital.

Following on from a strike of postal workers, health workers, teachers and other public sector workers in July, the new government has been told that the economic crisis should not be passed on to them.

The Government is pledged to redistribute wealth and create full time employment amongst the 75% of Peruvians who only receive 19% of the national income. On the other hand loans are being denied by the I.M.F. and a bitter war is being fought against the Sendero Luminoso and other Maoist guerilla groups trying to seize power for themselves.

Peru is likely to develop as another Chile in the next few years and U.S. designs to destabilise the system will only be postponed if the Government controls workers' demands and imposes 'economic realism' in terms of consolidating the system of exploitation.

## CHILE

6th September: the largest street demonstrations since the coup gave rise to barricades and battles with the police.

SEPT. 30th  
SMASH SOUTH AFRICA  
BUSINESS DAY

Country-wide direct actions against firms and institutions profiting from exploitation in South Africa.

# OFF THE BUSES

**NO BUSES after 7 at night, no buses on a Sunday and a shoddy service all round. That's what to expect if the State-owned National Bus Service goes to the wall.**

The Government is pushing a new Transport Bill to make way for privately owned bus companies. This is meant to encourage competition with State or council subsidised buses.

These subsidised bus companies will be told to cut their workforce and the number of buses, putting more people on the dole. The privately owned buses which will take over the routes will not be subject to safety maintenance or other safety measures i.e. no

emergency exits fitted, dodgy breaks, more standing passengers, bad suspension etc.

Not only that, the bus routes will become like racing circuits with all the buses racing to pick up the passengers at the next stop, making the Grand Prix look like a Sunday drive!

And, obviously, if the new bus operators find that a route is not profitable they will simply stop using that particular route. The unprofitable routes are anything outside peak hours - which means that late night buses will be cut drastically as will Sunday services.

Since it is us working class people who use public transport, it will be us affected directly by this proposed Bill. low paid

workers outside 'normal hours' e.g. cleaners, waitresses, find it hard just now getting buses without further cuts to the services. It can be intimidating enough for women waiting in bus stations at night or walking home from the last bus stop.

At a recent T.G.W.U. meeting the National Bus Company (N.B.C.) workers voted by a 3-1 majority for possible industrial action in protest at a proposal to end national negotiations.

West Yorkshire bus services were disrupted on July 8th as workers held meetings to discuss possible future strike action. The N.B.C. management were not surprisingly trying to by-pass negotiations as they have now got their greedy eyes on the services that will be left vacant after the cut backs.

Nationally the bus services are being systematically reduced: **WALES** - the bus service will almost disappear, out of over 20 depots only 6 will retain any work and some of that will be negligible.

**CREWE** - will be cut back to only 9 buses with estimated minimum of 30% cut in jobs.

**CENTRAL SCOTLAND** - has held back announcing its major 'reconstruction' of the area's buses (this was after the local bus controllers in Central Region tried to increase bus fares because of a £50,000 lost contract to the N.C.B. after the miners strike. Bus drivers had refused to bus scabs or cross picket lines).

This is only the tip of the iceberg but we'll leave on a high note!

In Barcelona, Spain in April bus services to working class areas were threatened. Spontaneous actions broke out all over the city - starting from simple protests, to organising pickets, to hi-jacking buses. After 2 weeks 14 buses were under guard. When 500 riot police came to retrieve them they met fierce resistance from the locals. Then a truce was called. The situation was then resolved when bus conductors went on strike against lay-offs and cuts. Needless to say the suspended services were soon re-established!

## AUSTRALIA

The Courts have been used against building and meat trades workers' unions, as the Government seeks to outlaw militant picketing in these industries.

In Queensland State, the National Party Government has continued to impose its sackings of 1000 Electricity Industry workers and after 26 weeks the resistance of the workers has attracted massive sympathy of workers throughout the country. The equivalent of the British T.U.C., the A.C.T.U. has played the game of the Federal State the game of the Federal Labour Government and sought to undercut any co-ordinated strikes that aim to confront the draconian measures brought in by the authorities in Queens - Land.



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