



# Hackney Solidarity

Hackney  
TUC  
meeting:  
13 April  
2004

## How to fight the fascists

For years, Britain's fascists were a marginal, street-fighting rump. Now suited and booted, they present themselves as 'respectable politicians', their racist and reactionary views feeding off the betrayals of Blair's Government.

They now stand a serious chance of winning seats from the votes of disillusioned working-class people.

When the fascists traded in thuggery, the answer was to mobilise the labour movement and local communities against that thuggery. Now they are swimming with the tide of the Express, the Sun, the Mail and the rest of racist press, the answers have to be different.

### WHAT SHOULD OUR ANSWER BE?

Simply saying that the BNP are fascists, that they are racist, and that racism is wrong, is not enough. What will isolate the racists, what will swing around those who look to the illusory answers of the BNP, is a different kind of struggle.

The fascists win where voters see them more often than they see the labour movement and the socialists. The sad truth is that while the BNP has been putting in the work in local communities, our side has neglected this.

The fascists pretend to care about communities left to rot by local councils and national government. When the BNP tells people that immigrants and lefties are to blame, we need to knock on the same doors explaining that there is plenty enough wealth in society to provide a decent standard of living for everyone: it is the rich parasites who are hoarding it, not ethnic minorities. *Where the BNP gives racist answers, we have to give working-class answers.*

We have to build campaigns in the communities where the fascists seek a toe-hold - for better housing for all, better schools for all and decent jobs for all. Only when we win those arguments by building campaigns that offer real hope will the fascists be driven back into their sewers.

### NO-ONE IS ILLEGAL

The BNP is buoyed up by the anti-immigrant poison of Blunkett and Howard. BNP leader Nick Griffin has acknowledged the debt that his party owes to the mainstream anti-asylum-seeker consensus.

We have to confront this head-on. *Racism lies behind every paragraph of immigration law.* Fighting against it is essential to fighting the fascists: the issues can not be separated.

As trade unionists, we have a responsibility towards migrant



**Cable Street 1936:  
When workers beat the fascists  
For a 12-page article about this, send £1 to  
Workers' Liberty (address overleaf).**

workers. The appalling conditions they work under are coming under public scrutiny. When the press and politicians say the solution is to kick them out or stop them coming, our answer should instead be to make their jobs legal, with decent pay and safety standards. We should help them get unionised.

### VOTE FOR ANYONE BUT THE BNP? No.

The Tory Party has no place in the kind of campaign we need. It may look superficially 'broad' to include Tories in a campaign against the fascists. But in fact, it would be counter-productive - it would alienate the working-class victims of the Tories. People who consider voting BNP have given up on establishment politics, because it has given them nothing but grief. Is our job to persuade them to return to the fold of political respectability? No, it is to offer them a better form of rebellion: fighting for their communities and their class effectively, as part of a multi-racial working-class movement.

Do we want people to vote for 'anyone but the BNP'? No. We will not beat the fascists by helping the Conservative Party to turn out its voters! That would simply re-sow the seeds from which the BNP grows.

Yes, we want unity against the fascists. Unity of the working class in all its diversity, unity of the labour movement both inside and outside the Labour Party. Not unity with parties who serve the capitalist class and who want to keep the respectable racist votes for themselves.

**The campaign against fascism can be nothing but the campaign to build a fighting and campaigning labour movement. Without that focus of genuine hope, the politics of poison and hate will grow.**

Hackney Council has once again betrayed the residents of Marcon Court.

First, it left the estate to rot for twenty years. Then it promised Major Repairs, only to confess that this was a lie. Now, it says that nothing will be done for *at least three years*.

The Council's political leaders and senior managers would not allow their homes to be treated like this. But then, senior Council managers don't live on Hackney Council estates.

**Why is this happening?** Because the Council does not care about working-class communities. The Council lurches from crisis to crisis, caused by Government underfunding and the Council's policy of privatising services or giving them to 'arms-length' administrators.

Even though local working-class people have not caused the crisis, the Council makes us pay for it – through cuts in services, ever-higher Council Tax, and letting our estates degenerate. The private companies still make their profits, and Max Caller still gets his £150,000 salary, but we get ... treated with contempt.

**What should we do about it?** The community needs to fight back. The Tenants & Residents' Association is putting up a good fight for the future of the estate, and the local Workers' Liberty branch is doing our bit to help the TRA with its campaign.

**We also need a political response.** Working-class people need our own voice and our own independent representatives in politics. The Labour Party was set up to provide that voice. But these days, most Labour Councillors are more interested in sucking up to business and claiming ample expenses.

Genuine socialists support communities fighting for a better deal. We try to work out why this situation exists and what the political solution is. That's what Workers' Liberty does. If you are interested in finding out more, or if you want to help with the campaign to save Marcon Court, then contact us.

## Hackney Council betrays residents (again)

## Ideas for Freedom 2004

*a weekend of socialist debate*

3-4 July,  
London

Discussions include: Alex Gordon (RMT) and Billy Hayes (CWU) in a forum on working-class political representation and the way forward for trade unionists - Abdullah Muhsin from the Iraqi trade union federation IFTU on the emerging Iraqi trade union movement - the 'pro-tyrant left' - What next for Iraq? - the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the responses of the Israeli left - the situation in Kosova - socialists and the Muslim communities in Britain - the banning of the veil in French schools - how the left can campaign for secular principles - the crisis in Haiti and the fall of the Aristide regime - Free Trade and Fair Trade - the ideas of Toni Negri.

Creche, food, and music from Robb Johnson

Contact us for details and tickets

## workers' liberty london forum

Wednesday 21 April, 7.30pm, Room 2A, University of London Union, Malet St, WC1 - *all welcome*

## Capitalism, socialism and Islam

A discussion with speakers from:

- Muslim group *Just Peace*; and
- *Workers' Liberty*

## What's on our web page:

[www.workersliberty.org/haringeyhackney](http://www.workersliberty.org/haringeyhackney)

On our web page, you can see details of local campaigning events, and also articles on:

- the failure to clear up nine months after **the Gibbons fire**;
- our recent discussion on the history of **Islamism in Egypt**;

- the **Clissold leisure centre scandal** and the campaigns to re-open local swimming pools;
- the threatened closure of **Hackney post offices**.

You can post comments on any of the articles, and post news, reports and articles yourself.

You can link to the rest of the Workers' Liberty web site, with hundreds of articles about political issues and Marxist ideas.

## hackney solidarity



... is produced by the local branch of the **Alliance for Workers' Liberty**, a Marxist group campaigning as part of the trade unions, community groups and labour movement.

Politics is dominated by the interests of big business: we want a political voice for working-class people.

We want to replace capitalism with socialism - a society where the collective ownership of the productive wealth allows democracy, social provision for

need, sustainable development, individual freedom, and equality.

Please get in touch to find out more about the issues we have covered in this newsletter, if you would like to receive this newsletter regularly, or if you would like to come to any of our meetings and events.

### You can contact us:

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