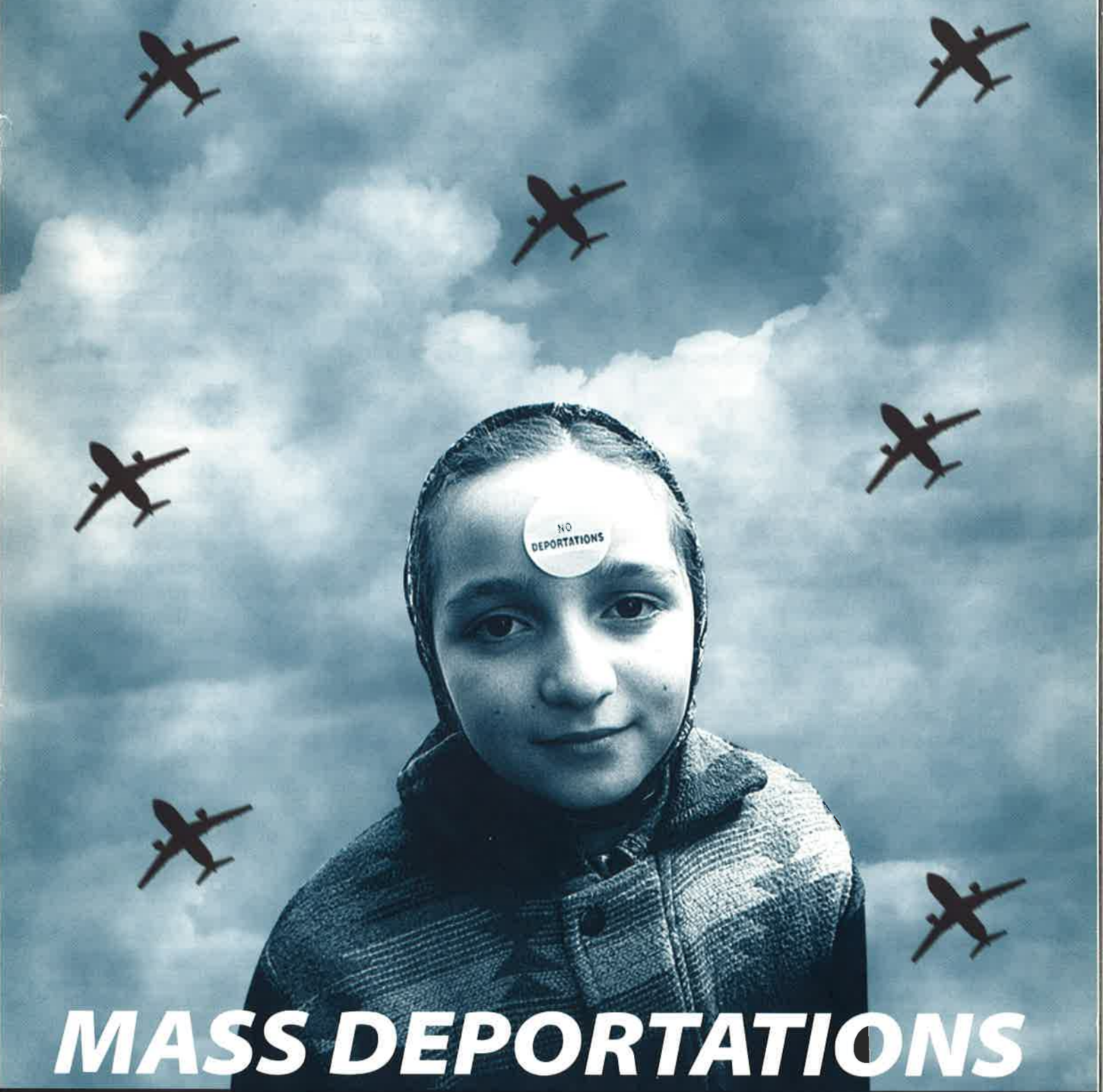


carf57

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACISM & FASCISM • AUG/SEPT 2000 • 80p



MASS DEPORTATIONS

BRITAIN'S STATE-SPONSORED XENOPHOBIA

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What the *Sun* and *Mail* say today, the focus groups echo tomorrow and the government puts into action the day after. Asylum is one of the two issues on which the government is seen as 'soft'. In response, the government is embarking on the largest expansion of detentions and deportations of refugees ever. New specialist police forces are being trained to perform 'forced removals', new contracts are being signed with US security firms and new detention centres are being built. Britain is following the 'German model'.

Those who seek refuge in this country will now face a police state within a state – a parallel society where detention without trial, dispersal without choice and fear of attack are the norm. A whole new layer of state violence is being put in place which, in turn, will reinforce the popular xenophobia of the tabloid press. As with the deaths of black people in police custody, the brutality surrounding forced deportations is unchecked. While New Labour measures the gains in popularity ratings, we will be counting the human cost.

Now is the time to turn our slogan – 'defend asylum-seekers' – into practical support for those bearing the brunt of the new state brutality. Groups of campaigners around the country are learning how to prevent deportations through civil disobedience. Others are working out ways to set up partnering arrangements with asylum-seekers to bypass the government's humiliating voucher scheme. The supermarkets, airlines and security firms are being told that their continuing collusion in these practices will lead to their brand names being irretrievably tarnished.

But if the movement against the government's asylum system is to grow, campaigners will need to ensure that the voices of refugees themselves are heard. For those voices tell of the devastation inflicted on their countries by corporate greed, the plundering of natural resources and debt-induced war. In the final analysis, our fight today is for asylum-seekers and therefore against globalisation. ■

Campaign Against Racism and Fascism

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UK Civil Rights Caravan

CARF, together with the National Civil Rights Movement, is organising a speaking and campaigning tour to bring together black families, asylum-seekers and those working to defend their rights. The tour will visit 16 towns and cities in England during September and October, culminating in a national demonstration against racism in London on 14 October. For more information, contact CARF.

how to stop a deportation

Civil disobedience tactics used by protesters at Heathrow and Gatwick Airports have shown that deportations can be stopped by direct action.

On the morning of 18 July, passengers flying on the BA902 flight from Heathrow to Frankfurt were in for a surprise. They were met at the check-in not only by smiling stewardesses but also by chanting, banners and leaflets informing them that their flight was going to carry a 23-year-old Zairean man, Salim Rambo, who was to be forcibly deported to Germany.

The demonstration was organised by CAGE, a group of anti-prison activists, who had made contact with Salim during the demonstration outside Harmondsworth detention centre the weekend before. CAGE was prepared to go all the way to prevent Salim's deportation. Members had made sure that one of them had a ticket and was thus a legitimate passenger on the plane. This meant they were able to mobilise support on the plane and managed to encourage other passengers to resist Salim's deportation. Passengers were refusing to take their seats and in the end the plane was delayed for two hours and some passengers were even held by airport police. A spokesperson from

CAGE told CARF: 'It is nice to see that people are standing up to deportations... literally!' And the goal had been achieved. Salim was taken off the plane; his deportation was prevented.

Following the success of CAGE's intervention, another group, this time in Bristol, got together to prevent the deportation of their friend Amanj Gafor, a 34-year-old Iraqi-Kurdish asylum-seeker. CARF met up with activists from Bristol Defend Asylum-Seekers Campaign (BDASC) and Kebele Kultur Project at Gatwick airport in the early hours of 21 July.

The activists kept a low profile for the first half-hour, quietly distributing leaflets which informed passengers about the involvement of British Airways in the planned deportation of Amanj to Munich on flight BA4715 and the plight of asylum-seekers in Britain.

Passengers join protest

Many passengers were surprised about such early morning activism and read the leaflet with bemusement. Others came up to the group of activists next to the check-in to ask for more information. By now we had started to hold up banners and posters that read 'stop deportations' and 'BA is profiting from deportations.' 'Stop the deportation of Amanj now,' we chanted.

The British Airways floor manager quickly intervened. We were told to leave. We refused. The police stepped in and threatened us with arrest. By now the plane was taxiing, just ten minutes away from take-off. An activist on board rang to let us know that Amanj was not actually on the flight. His deportation had been put on hold – probably a consequence of the publicity and support his case received.

Deportations can be stopped

Salim's and Amanj's cases do not happen in a vacuum. With the government stepping up deportations (8,000 asylum-seekers were deported last year and the figures for next year are expected to reach about 30,000) more and more asylum-seekers will face forcible deportation. The actions at Heathrow and Gatwick have shown that direct intervention can raise public consciousness as well as encouraging civil disobedience. Deportations can be stopped.

CAGE is currently in the process of setting up a website that will give people a 'step-by-step guide' to preventing deportations. There are also informative websites from anti-deportation campaigns in Europe that give new ideas on how campaigns could be run here (see CARF55).

CAGE www.veggies.org.uk/cage **European Anti-Deportation Alliance** www.deportation-alliance.com
Bristol Defend Asylum-Seekers Campaign
BDASC@hotmail.com **Kebele Project**
kebele@marsnbard.com **NCADC** www.ncadc.demon.co.uk

Harmondsworth

On 15 July, around 100 demonstrators picketed Harmondsworth detention centre near Heathrow. Protesters climbed on top of the fence surrounding the detention centre and made contact with the refugees inside.



Gatwick

On 21 July, protesters successfully blocked the deportation of Iraqi Kurd Amanj Gafor at Gatwick Airport's North Terminal.



deportations: more violence, more deaths

Large-scale, mass deportations that have taken place in other European countries have not been countenanced here before. But that is about to change. With Jack Straw drawing up plans for up to 30,000 deportations per year, CARF looks at what that could mean.

In 1993, the police's notorious specialist deportation unit, SO(13), was disbanded following public outcry at its involvement in the death of Joy Gardner. Now the Home Secretary has formed a new special squad of immigration officers, equipped with handcuffs and body armour, to find and deport those who have overstayed or entered illegally. It will initially carry out its work in east London, where a large number of 'illegal immigrants' are thought to reside. The metropolitan police, which did not want its officers involved in removals, has helped train the new squad. Whereas previously immigration officers were accompanied by

police, now immigration staff, who have new powers under the Immigration and Asylum Act to detain suspects, can act alone.

In June, Straw announced that any of the 4,500 Kosovans who had been allowed temporary admission during the war but had not voluntarily returned or claimed asylum or a longer stay (as 1,932 have done) would now be liable to deportation. And 25,000 Kosovar Albanians who fled ethnic cleansing before the NATO air strikes, will also be deported – 'enforced removal will be carried out if necessary', confirmed immigration minister Barbara Roche. At the same time Straw was negotiating with the Chinese government to provide travel documents for rejected would-be refugees who have destroyed

documents en route to Britain. He wants to deport the 400 Chinese asylum-seekers who arrive in Britain each month.

No responsibility?

Involuntary deportation means forcible deportation. Forcible deportation means immobilising and muting the deportee. Methods are dangerous, officers are reckless, techniques are improvised and people end up bruised, beaten, asphyxiated – and dead. In the last two years at least four people have died as a result of restraint techniques used during attempted deportations from other European countries (see *CARF* 50). Five people are known to have died in the UK since 1993, either fleeing or in the custody of officials attempting a deportation (see right).

The Joy Gardner case, where those involved got off scot free and an inquest was never completed, is not the exception but the rule. Not one officer has been punished for a deportation death in Europe. And years after the death, inquiries are yet to yield a report. In Belgium, where manslaughter charges were investigated, no action was taken against the two gendarmes who were involved in smothering Semira Adamu with a cushion in September 1998; the judicial investigation has been delayed. In Germany, Nigerian Kola Bankole died at Frankfurt airport in 1994 after being restrained with a hand-made cosh and over-sedated by injection; a doctor was reprimanded but the officers



Lufthansa shareholders' meeting faces deportation challenge

On 15 June, activists from the German 'deportation.class' campaign as well as from the Organisation of Critical Shareholders protested at the annual general meeting of Lufthansa, demanding that the company end all forcible deportations on its aircraft. The 'no one is illegal' network started its Lufthansa campaign a year ago and has since gained tremendous media attention in Germany.

At the shareholders' meeting, discussion was dominated by the deportation question and other human rights issues. The day began with activists dressed as air hostesses greeting shareholders as they arrived, with information on Lufthansa's involvement in thousands of deportations every

year. Members of the 'no one is illegal' network reconstructed a forcible deportation, resembling that of Aamir Ageeb (see main article).

Around 30 activists then took part in the meeting, unrolling a banner commemorating the deaths of Aamir Ageeb and Kola Bankole, who died at the hands of immigration officers on Lufthansa flights. Some activists had conveniently bought Lufthansa shares some months ago and were able to make ten-minute speeches arguing that Lufthansa end its involvement in deportations, in order to avoid an image problem which could cause a drop in share values. Although a motion to this effect was, unsurprisingly, rejected, the debate did establish the fact that, since the Tokyo

Agreement of 1963, the captain of a flight is alone legally responsible for the safety of passengers (including deportees) on board a flight.

The Lufthansa campaign has been successful in putting the company in the spotlight as well as in creating obstacles for the German government's campaign to reassure its 'deportation agents' that they are relieved of all responsibilities. The majority of shareholders were markedly irritated by the fact that most of the meeting was dominated by the question of deportation and other social issues; when contributions did not tackle the question of deportation, they exposed Lufthansa's involvement in forced labour during the Nazi regime or its bad environmental record. ■

were not disciplined. And since the death in May 1999 at Frankfurt airport of Aamir Mohammed Ageeb, shackled by hands and feet, with a motorbike helmet forced on to his head to get him on to a flight to Cairo, no official information has been forthcoming. He is thought to have suffocated on the helmet straps. Khaled Abu Zarifeh, a Palestinian, his mouth taped, suffocated in a wheelchair in Zurich airport's lift in March 1999. The three officers involved are still on duty. Amnesty International has criticised the lengthy failure to publish the judicial inquiry report. In May 1999 Nigerian Marcus Omofuma, in chains with his mouth taped, died while being deported from Vienna to Sofia. Only after a public outcry were three officers suspended, but

none has since been disciplined or prosecuted. The Inquiry has not reported; medical investigations are dragging on. The authorities cannot even decide which department is responsible for dealing with a complaint brought by a lawyer that the mouth-taping was illegal.

No lessons learnt

What is worrying is that after the initial outrage at each death, it so quickly goes back to deportation business as usual. In Belgium the Interior Minister resigned and deportations were suspended after Semira's death. But soon they were on again and 74 Roma were deported in October 1999, 14 Nigerians in November and 45 Albanians in

February 2000. And violence has been alleged by Matthew Sellu, a Sierra Leonean, who was apparently placed on a stretcher on a plane ride to Dakar, Senegal, where he was dumped bleeding and penniless in the airport.

Amnesty International has criticised Switzerland for the fact that dangerous methods of deportation continued to be used after Abu Zarifeh's death, with the use of mouth taping, deprivation of food and water and access to a lavatory (incontinence pads are offered instead). In Germany a ban

on forced removals after Ageeb's death was lifted after a month. Two months later a Kurdish deportee brought legal proceedings against border guards alleging bruising by four officers, and an Algerian asylum-seeker was shot in the leg when he resisted deportation.

New techniques

A death does not teach a political or moral lesson. It merely necessitates new tactics and techniques. In Belgium, where the cushion technique was suspended, they have introduced a new restraint method described by Amnesty as akin to 'hog-tying'. Padded gloves are used to cover the mouths of deportees who are placed face down with hands and ankles bound together from behind. In Switzerland, where Swiss Air refused to take deportees who, because they previously resisted deportation, are handcuffed, helmeted and tied to seats, private companies are now being used. The rubber helmets, similar to those used in boxing, have a chin cup which forces the jaws together while a cover with an aperture for a breathing tube is placed across the mouth.

Deportation deaths are like deaths in custody. Techniques of restraint which would not generally be approved are used on black people. A wall of secrecy immediately goes up; those responsible for deaths are rarely identified and never punished. ■

■ **JOY GARDNER** died after police and immigration officers arrived at her home early on the morning of 8 July 1993 to deport her. In front of her young son, they held her down to stop her struggling and placed a body belt around her waist, bound her wrists to handcuffs attached to the belt and tied her thighs and ankles with leather belts. They then wrapped 13 feet of tape around her mouth to stop her screaming. Joy died after suffering brain damage that had been caused by a lack of oxygen. The tape gag was the principal cause of death. Three police officers stood trial for the manslaughter of Joy but were acquitted. Local MP Barbara Roche supported Joy's family campaign by asking questions in parliament about her death.

■ **DOROTHY NWOKEDI**, a 31-year-old Nigerian asylum-seeker, and her four-year-old daughter were taken on 9 July 1993 by a private security firm from her north London home to Gatwick Airport for deportation. On the flight, escorts from the private security firm handcuffed her and wrapped broad adhesive tape around her legs and ankles. She was prescribed valium without a prior medical check. During the struggle to restrain her, Dorothy suffered physical distress and was injured.

■ **MEYA MANGETE**, 24, a Zairean asylum-seeker, was escorted by private security guards from Dorchester prison to Heathrow Airport to be deported on 3 August 1993. At the airport, Meya became frightened and was beaten by the guards, resulting in injuries to his face, neck and chest.

■ **RUKHSANA FAQIR**, a 23-year-old Pakistani woman from Walsall, was allegedly slapped in the face, dragged down stairs and thrown onto a settee during a deportation attempt on 15 August 1993.

■ **KWANELE SIZIBA**, 27, fell 150 feet to her death in Islington, north London, attempting to flee what she believed were immigration officials on 17 April 1994.

■ **JOSEPH NNALUE**, 31, died after falling from the balcony of a flat in Stockwell on 23 October 1994. Police and immigration officials were calling at his flat at the time.

■ **NOORJAHAN BEGUM**, 35, died on 15 March 1996 after falling from the balcony of an East London flat where she was living. Two immigration officials were calling at the flat at the time.

■ **HERBERT GABBIDON**, 68, died on 10 January 1997 while in the custody of Walsall police who were deporting him back to Jamaica.

■ **JOSEF SCUKA**, Czech Roma, attempted to commit suicide by cutting his wrists and taking an overdose of angina medicine in Haslar detention centre on 31 March 2000, the day of his proposed deportation.

We list right some of the known cases of deportees dying or suffering brutality as a result of forced deportations or the fear of deportation from the UK in the last 8 years.

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lords rule against roma

House of Lords decision may pave way for mass deportation of Roma to eastern Europe.

Roma families seeking asylum in Britain who have fled from skinhead and police persecution in eastern Europe were devastated by the judgment of the House of Lords in July telling them that what they face at home is not persecution and that they can safely go back there.

The test case involved a family from Slovakia. Mr Horvath lived with his wife, five-year-old son, his mother, four brothers, two sisters, a brother-in-law and two disabled children of his sister in a house in a village in eastern Slovakia. His father was killed in a racist attack during the Communist era. He and his family could not get work. After the fall of Communism and the split of Czechoslovakia, he said, 'the skinheads came in'. They came to the village about four nights a week, and the Roma families – a tenth of the village's

population – were all at risk of attack. Things got so bad that he and his brothers dug a shelter in the back garden, and often slept there at night. The skinheads would always break the windows, and seven or eight times they came into the house and destroyed every stick of furniture, while the family was in hiding. The family reported all the attacks to the nearest police station (there wasn't one in the village) but the police never carried out proper investigations.

When they tried to enrol their son at the local nursery school, the teacher made it clear he would be unwelcome. A young friend of theirs was killed, a month after the racist murder of another Gypsy man and his son; they fled.

For the House of Lords, however, endemic racism, marginalisation, the constant risk of skinhead violence and police failure to protect did not add up to refugee status for the Horvaths or for Roma in their situation. The persecution the family feared did not come from the state: it was not jack-booted Nazis banging down the door. And the Slovak state had in place a criminal justice system which was capable of preventing, deterring and punishing the crimes suffered by the family. It was willing and able to protect them. 'Inefficiency and incompetence is not the same as unwillingness. There may be various sound reasons why criminals may not be brought to justice. The corruption, sympathy or weakness of some individuals in the system of justice does not mean that the state is unwilling to afford protection' to the victims.

Sounds familiar? The arguments of the Lords about the Slovakian criminal justice system bear an uncanny resemblance to the 'rotten apples', 'no such thing as institutional racism' arguments about the British police which it has taken four decades to win. Meanwhile, the Roma are expected to return to fight their own battles at home.

Many are refusing. A national demonstration has been organised in Newcastle for 30 September, where Roma groups will demand the protection and assistance of the British government and people in acknowledging and fighting the ingrained racism which condemns them to life on the margins wherever they go. ■

Neville Elder



newcastle protests

Demonstrate

Asylum rights are human rights

National demonstration, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Saturday 30 September:

■ Assemble 11am, Newcastle Quayside

For further information contact North East Campaign for Asylum Rights, PO Box 787, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE99 1DJ.

The protests at Angel Heights hostel which led to the arrest of the seven Iraqi and Iranian Kurds in May have galvanised the refugee and anti-racist movements in Newcastle. On Friday 23 June over 80 people, most of them Roma asylum-seekers, gathered at Newcastle's monument for a vigil for the 58 Chinese who had been found dead at Dover. Three weeks later a picket of Kwiksave in Benwell, Newcastle by around 50 people, mainly asylum-seekers, attracted a lot of support. A petition called for the end of the voucher system and a letter to the manager sought the store's non-compliance with the voucher scheme or at least defiance of the 'no change for vouchers' diktat of the Home Office. The campaign group has made contact with the shop-workers' union, USDAW, pointing out that

the action is not an attack on its members and calling on the union to condemn the scheme and ask its members not to cooperate with it. Another picket took place on 22 July at Tesco. A public meeting on 26 July was held to organise for the national demonstration in support of the Roma scheduled for 30 September.

Meanwhile, the Angel Heights seven themselves are awaiting trial on charges of violent disorder. Following the climb-down of Kent Borough Council on their rehousing, they are accommodated in Camrex House, Sunderland, and need support in their campaign for decent living conditions there. ■

North East Campaign for Asylum Rights, PO Box 787, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE99 1DJ

the asylum system: who profits?

While asylum-seekers live on £25 vouchers and £10 cash per week, private individuals and corporations are lining their pockets.

Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, etc.

Private landlords take £150 per person per week to house asylum-seekers in semi-derelict tower blocks and other dilapidated accommodation.

Wackenhut

The Florida-based security firm Wackenhut – self-proclaimed 'global leader in privatized corrections' – has won a contract to transport immigration detainees, provide security at holding areas in ports and airports and manage the Manchester Detention Centre for the Immigration Service. Jack Straw has also issued the company a contract to build and run a private prison at Marchington.

The security firm already runs Tinsley House Detention Centre, near Gatwick Airport, and private prisons, such as Doncaster prison, for the Home Office where profits are maximised through low wages and understaffing. In 1999 there were around 80 attempted suicides or self-mutilations in Doncaster. The national average for a prison in that year was four attempts.

In the US, Wackenhut runs 42 prisons and has faced a number of lawsuits for abuses against prisoners. Last year asylum-seekers at a Wackenhut-run private detention centre in New York went on hunger strike to protest at conditions. By 2001, Wackenhut expects its immigration detention population in the US will be 24,000 people, representing a revenue of \$500 million for the corporation.

Sodexho Pass

Sodexho is the French company responsible for implementing the asylum voucher scheme. The company has already implemented a similar scheme in Germany. The revenue generated from distributing and administering the 50p, £1 and £5 tokens has not been publicly revealed. Sodexho also has a contract in the UK to maintain 104 police stations, a sports centre and a shooting range for the Devonshire and Cornwall Constabulary.

The Sodexho group is also the leading investor in the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), a major US private prison operator which runs two British private jails. CCA has been at the forefront of the expansion of the for-profit prison industry, which, according to campaigners in the US, is an industry characterised by 'greed, inhumanity and incompetence'.

'Our mission is to create and offer services that contribute to a more pleasant way of life for people wherever and whenever they come together' – Pierre Bellon, Chairman and CEO of Sodexho Alliance.

Supermarkets

Supermarket, such as Sainsbury's have told shop workers that vouchers can only be used on 'stated' items – e.g. grocery items, toiletries, nappies. Tokens cannot be exchanged for cash and no change can be given.

Lord Sainsbury, who has already been made a peer and a minister in the Labour government, donated £2m to the Labour Party last year.

The supermarkets also benefit from the exploitation of cheap undocumented workers in the food processing and agricultural industries which supply the supermarket chains.

Group 4

Group 4 runs Campsfield House and the newly opened Oakington detention centres. The treatment of detainees at Campsfield has been documented in a number of damning reports. During the trial of the Campsfield Nine, who were accused of riot and violent disorder in 1998, Group 4 employees' evidence was discredited. The trial exposed the crude racism operating in Campsfield and the dangers of running the centre for private profit.

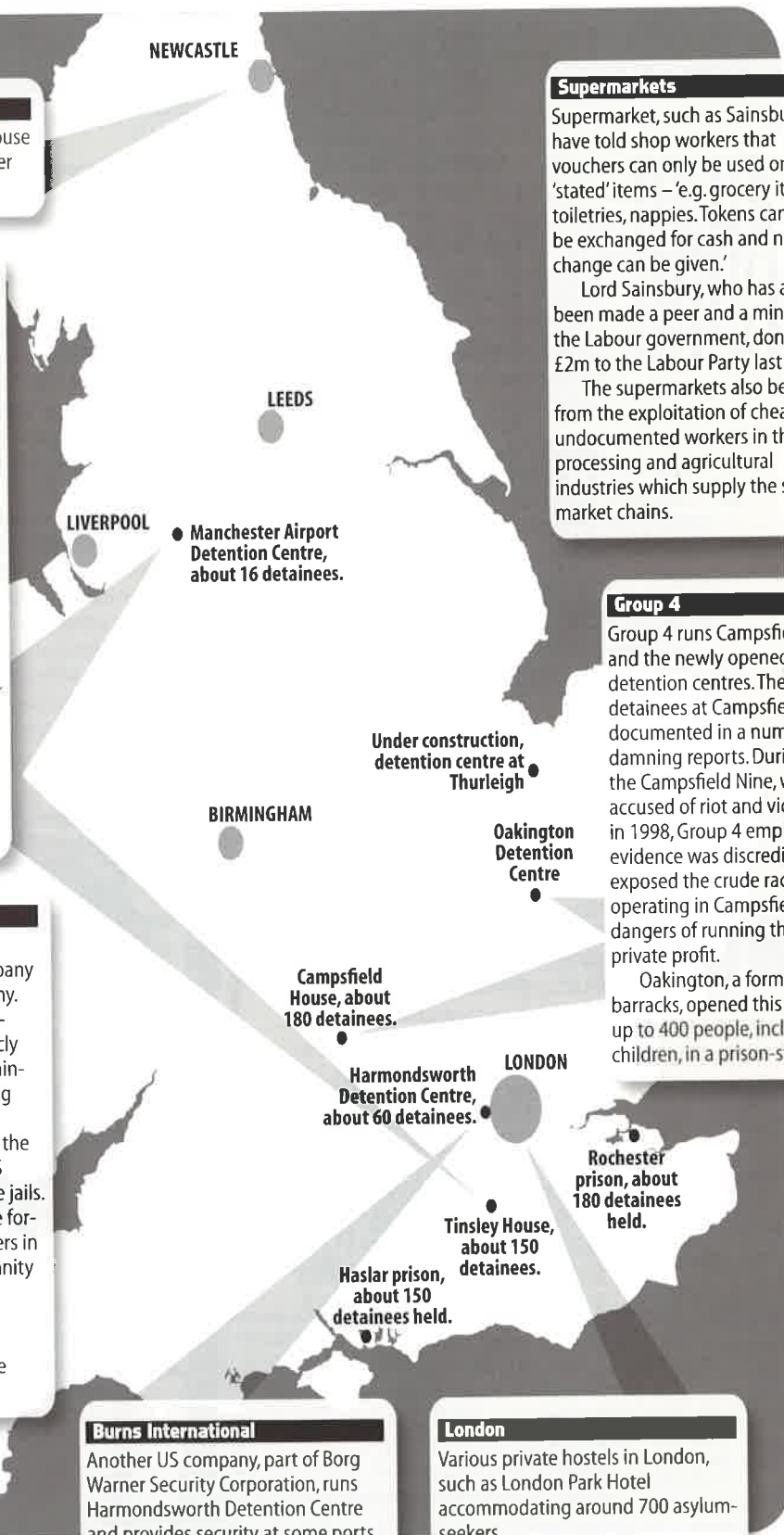
Oakington, a former army barracks, opened this year to hold up to 400 people, including children, in a prison-style complex.

Burns International

Another US company, part of Borg Warner Security Corporation, runs Harmondsworth Detention Centre and provides security at some ports and courts.

London

Various private hostels in London, such as London Park Hotel accommodating around 700 asylum-seekers.



a day in the life

Around the country, thousands of asylum-seekers have been dumped by local authorities into the hands of private hostel-owners whose only concern is to make a fast buck out of other people's misery.



For the hundreds of asylum-seekers who live there, the dingy, red brick building in south London is the closest thing they have to a home. There are families there with small children but most residents are young men from Kosovo, Iraq, Iran, China, Eritrea, etc. Room sizes vary but most rooms accommodate between four and five people.

'HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO A PRISON? WHEN YOU GO TO THE HOSTEL YOU FEEL LIKE GOING INTO A PRISON OR LIKE BEING AT A MILITARY INTERNMENT CAMP. I KNOW THAT THE HOSTEL IS NOT A PRISON BUT LIVING THERE MAKES YOU THINK YOU ARE IN ONE.'

Your day starts with the 'sign in'. Between seven and ten in the morning everybody waits in long queues at reception to register. No-one can afford to miss a day or to be five minutes late for fear of being kicked out. After 'sign in' there is breakfast. As you enter the dining room you show your ID card; security guards make sure that you do not take a second helping.

'THE FOOD THEY GIVE US MAKES US ILL. IT IS JUST BREAD AND BUTTER WITH MILK. EVERY MORNING WE GET THE SAME: BREAD, BUTTER AND MILK. I USED TO GO TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES, BUT I LEFT BECAUSE I COULD NOT SURVIVE ON THIS FOOD FOR THE WHOLE DAY.'

Many of the residents are Muslims and do not eat pork. Despite various complaints to the management, the meals predominantly consist of pork and rice. There are two meals a day, but the quality of the food is so poor as

to have led to malnutrition, illness and serious weight loss among many residents. Some, who went to see a doctor, were told to 'eat more' and to 'change their diet', advice it is difficult to follow in their circumstances. N, a 20-year-old from Kosovo, was told by a doctor that he has diabetes, but to follow an appropriate diet takes money he does not have.

E, a 19-year-old from Kosovo who used to cook in his home country, offered to help out in the kitchen. He was kicked out after a few days, because he tried to introduce things like 'soup' or 'a little bit of salt' to spice up the daily diet. Any sort of suggestions or criticisms are immediately dismissed by the management and the usual answer to questions is just to 'get out'.

'PEOPLE FROM KOSOVO AND OTHER COUNTRIES WHO HAVE COME HERE ARE NOT STUPID. A LITTLE BIT TRAUMATISED THEY MAY BE, BUT NOT STUPID AND CERTAINLY NOT CRAZY. HOW CAN YOU BE FRIENDLY WITH SOMEONE IF YOUR FIRST WORDS ARE ALWAYS "GET OUT"? HOW CAN YOU BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND OUR SITUATION IF ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY IS "GET OUT"? THERE ARE SO MANY QUESTIONS I WOULD LIKE TO ASK, BUT THIS IS CERTAINLY ONE I WANT TO GET ANSWERED.'

The day passes slowly. Some of the residents have been lucky enough to join an English class, a few miles walk from the hostel. Some work



Platform Illegale Vluchtelingen, Amsterdam

illegally to get some extra money to buy cigarettes, a bus ticket and some proper food. Some just lie on their beds all day listening to the radio. There are no recreational facilities and no visitors. Thoughts turn to the past and to the future, the more to forget the present.

'IT IS JUST ANOTHER DAY AND IF WE DID NOT HAVE OUR MEMORIES AND OUR DREAMS, HOW COULD WE MENTALLY SURVIVE?'

Many residents have bites, rashes and sores on their arms and legs as a result of dirty rooms and bed bugs. The rooms are rarely cleaned and if cleaners come they clean the floors with the same towels people use in their daily hygiene. A new towel is given every two or three weeks. The showers work only two or three times a week, a mystery nobody seems able to explain.

Many people complain about the huge number of break-ins that happen on a regular basis. The police were called on a few occasions but they have done nothing. Residents do not like to call the police because they fear that any contact with them might lead to their deportation. They are all angry about the string of burglaries because they all have so little anyway and, if that is taken

Following the changes in the Immigration and Asylum Act, all asylum-seekers who claim asylum at their port of entry are sent to the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS) which assesses their need for support. Depending on its decision, applicants will either be left to look for support for themselves or are sent to one of the agents to which NASS has subcontracted the task of providing accommodation and food – either private contractors or local authorities. However, most asylum-seekers do not apply at the port of entry. Local authorities deal with these applications and they decide whether to disperse the asylum-seeker to another area or accommodate them within their own borough. Some asylum-seekers get £10 cash and £25 vouchers per week from the local authority out of which they are meant to feed and clothe themselves. Others get nothing but the food and accommodation that are provided within a hostel – while the hostel-owner pockets the money allocated by the local authority for this provision.

Dispersal and the subcontracting system have therefore opened up a market for the exploitation of asylum-seekers by private businessmen and companies offering accommodation. Many struggling hoteliers have been able



Basics

'I came to London in December 1996. It was very difficult to find house and food. Now I live in Bayswater. There are two of us in my hotel. The hotel is old; the building leans to one side. Water leaks from the ceiling. The rain comes in. The toilets are no good. It is possible there will be accidents... I am hungry on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday... January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August I had no money... Now I get a little money. I don't have enough for the bus... I am hungry while walking.'

Ernesto from Ecuador

Extracted from *Karibu*, an anthology of writing by asylum-seekers. Available from WEA Looking Glass Writers, c/o Paul Choocha, 4 Luke Street, London EC2A 4XA.



'HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO A PRISON?'

away too, they do not know how to survive another day. Yet they are aware that the situation they have been put in pushes many people into crime, even if it just means taking someone's money to be able to buy a travel card to see a solicitor.

'I WENT TO THE HOME OFFICE WHERE MY FINGERPRINTS WERE TAKEN. AFTERWARDS I WAS ASKED TO LEAVE AND I WENT TO THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND THEY SENT ME HERE. I WAS ONLY SUPPOSED TO STAY HERE FOR TWO OR THREE WEEKS BUT I ENDED UP STAYING FOR MORE THAN A YEAR.'

to move into this business, making easy money out of repurposing disused and dilapidated former hotels. As the recent protest at Angel Heights hostel in Newcastle highlighted (see p6), asylum-seekers are suffering horrendous living conditions in a climate of racism, abuse and ignorance.

'IT IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO ME THAT A SERVICE THAT IS SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE FOR ASYLUM-SEEKERS HAS NEVER MADE THE EFFORT TO SEND SOMEBODY TO US TO ASK WHAT OUR NEEDS ARE OR WHAT THE PROBLEMS ARE OR AT LEAST ASK US FOR OUR OPINION.' ■

CARF spoke to asylum-seekers resident at a hostel in south London. We were prevented from entering the hostel to inspect conditions for ourselves. The hostel has not been named for legal reasons.

Refugees from globalism

Do anti-racists need new perspectives in the present fight for asylum rights? CARF asked writer and activist A. Sivanandan for an overview and analysis.

The distinction between political refugees and economic migrants is a bogus one – susceptible to different interpretations by different interests at different times. The West is quite happy to take in economic migrants if they are businessmen (with the requisite £250,000), professionals, or technologically-skilled people, preferably ready-made. It welcomes the computer wizards of 'silicon valley' of Bangalore but does not want the persecuted peoples of Sri Lanka or the Punjab. And it is these it terms economic migrants – with all its connotations of scrounging and begging.

From industrial to global capitalism

The West does not need, as it did in the immediate post-war era, a pool of unskilled labour on its doorstep. As economies move from the era of industrial capitalism into the era of global capitalism, businesses move their plants to other countries in

search of the cheapest possible unskilled labour. But where they do need unskilled labour domestically – in the seasonal agricultural sector and the fluid service sector – they still require such labour to be temporary and cheap. And the rightless and the illegals fit the bill nicely.

Ironically, it is also globalism, with its demand for free markets and unfettered conditions of trade, which is eroding the distinction all over the world between the economic and the political realm. The nation state, particularly in the Third World and the Eastern Bloc, is the agent of global capital. It is capital which decides what to produce where, what to grow where, and how. And, through its aid and development agencies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and international trade agreements (such as GATT and NAFTA) and institutions like the WTO, it holds the poorer regimes in hock, and then insists that they accept austerity measures,

through so-called Structural Adjustment Programmes that dictate drastic cuts in public spending, to pull them back from bankruptcy. The result is massive pauperisation, the erosion of educational, social and welfare provisions, the end of training and enterprise. There simply is no indigenous growth possible any longer, there is no future to look forward to which is not tied up with foreign powers and foreign capital. Hence resistance to economic immiseration is inseparable from resistance to political persecution. The economic migrant is also the political refugee.

That's a totally different world order from the one in which the politically persecuted refugee was defined in the UN Convention of 1951. Then, the political refugee was being defined in terms of the shame created by the annihilation of Europe's Jews and the fear engendered by Communist totalitarianism. But, already, a new category of political refugee was emerging in the newly independent states of the ex-colonies.



**WE JUDGE OUR
DUTIES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES TO
OTHERS NOT BY WHAT
IS OWED TO THEM BUT
BY WHAT IT COSTS US.**

Colonialism and refugees

During the colonial period, Britain had collapsed diverse tribes, nationalities, ethnic groups and other geographical entities into unitary states for the purposes of easier administration and economic exploitation. In the first flush of Independence, these countries, ruled by progressive nationalist governments, attempted economic policies which they hoped would give them a measure of self-sufficiency and instituted educational and training schemes which would further their national aspirations. But as the West's neo-colonial project began to displace indigenous economic development, the nationalism which had cohered the state from Independence began to give way to ethnic and communal divisions. And governments turned to using the trappings of democracy, especially the voting system, to establish authoritarian, majoritarian states – which systematically discriminated against and persecuted minority groups such as Ibos in Nigeria, Tamils in Ceylon and Asians in Kenya and Uganda.

At first, these politically persecuted refugees were economically

'invisible'. In the immediate post-war period of the 1950s and 1960s, when Britain needed all the labour it could lay its hands on, it made no distinction between economic migrants and political refugees. It did not matter that the Punjabis were fleeing the political fall-out of Partition, what mattered was that the factories of Southall needed their labour. Political refugees and economic migrants were all the same: they were labour.

But, as Britain began to need less and less labour and its doors began to close, the claims of the persecuted came to be measured against the yardstick of economic pragmatism. The 'Kenyan Asian' episode of 1968, when Asians with British passports expelled by Kenya were refused automatic right of entry to Britain, indeed showed up the racism of Britain's immigration controls. But it was also the first clear indicator of Britain putting its economic interests before those of the politically persecuted – even when they were its own citizens. The definition, in other words, of political refugee and economic migrant became interchangeable. So that, just four years later, British Asians from Uganda were deemed acceptable as political refugees not only because Amin gave Britain little choice, but also because they, unlike the Kenyan Asians, belonged by and large to the entrepreneurial class

BY ANY YARDSTICK – ETHNIC, RACIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL – THE ROMA ARE A PERSECUTED GROUP LIKE THE JEWS WERE EARLIER.

and could contribute to Britain's coffers. 'British', 'alien', 'political', 'economic', 'bogus', 'bona fide' – governments choose their terminology as suits their larger economic, political or ideological purpose.

Roma – the outcasts of Europe

Nothing makes this clearer than the contemporary example of the Roma from eastern Europe. In many ways, their experience in the countries of the former Soviet empire half a century ago parallels that of the minority groups displaced from newly independent states of the British empire. During the Communist era of centralisation, minority cultures and ethnic differences were suppressed. The Roma, although not allowed cultural expression and freedom of movement were, at least, part of the citizenry – an underclass maybe, but still part of a system. With the collapse of Communism, however, they became outcasts – without employment, without access to full

continued overleaf

Refugees queue for food in Kukes, northern Albania





Online discussion forum

CARF readers can discuss A. Sivanandan's article 'Refugees from globalism' on the Institute of Race Relations website at: www.carf.demon.co.uk/refugees

rights, discriminated against by state agencies and persecuted by untamed populist racial terror. By any yardstick – ethnic, racial, economic, political – the Roma are a persecuted group like the Jews were earlier. And yet, when they seek refuge in western Europe, we reject them for the same reason that caused them to flee their country in the first place – that their culture and philosophy put them outside the pale of western European society. Once the underclass of Communist totalitarianism, they are today the outcasts of western democracy.

Life or livelihood?

Equally, the refugees who come from the Balkans are those, who have been displaced from their homes by Star Wars, waged ostensibly to save them from genocide, but in the event – because of the refusal to put troops on the ground – leading to the indiscriminate devastation of their country and, therefore, their displacement. The choice for those who face genocide appears to be either life or livelihood, but not both. And if they manage to get away with their lives and come over here, they are denied a livelihood, denied the dignity of work, and are stigmatised as beggars and scroungers, marked out this time not by the colour of their skin but by the worth of their vouchers.

IT'S A TOTALLY DIFFERENT WORLD ORDER FROM THE ONE IN WHICH THE POLITICALLY PERSECUTED REFUGEE WAS DEFINED IN THE UN CONVENTION OF 1951.

As global capitalism spreads like an oil slick all over the world and Cold War ideological rivalries collapse, nation states in both the former 'black' colonies of the Third World and the former 'red' colonies of the eastern bloc are beginning to break up. While giant corporations, richer than whole continents and more powerful than nation states, try to cohere the world economically, more and more people are being displaced from their countries and their homes. Some countries are being economically devastated, in others there is genocide; some countries have old-style communal wars, in others new racisms are being unleashed. Political and economic categories have collapsed into each other, culture is becoming homogenised the world over and, increasingly, the values we live by are the values of the market place.

Globalisation reduces all human activity to the binary of buying and selling, and commercialises human relationships. So that we judge our duties and responsibilities to others not by what is owed to them, but by

what it costs us. Even the wars we enter to preserve civilisation from descending into barbarism are depersonalised wars which do not involve us personally. We do not put our lives on the line for the values we hold. So that the victims of war are not – even as an extension of the values we fought for – any longer our concern.

For asylum-seekers, against globalism

Globalisation fragments our consciousness and casts us into individual, single issue struggles which might bring about piecemeal reform, but not radical change. That is why it is essential that we see how each struggle – whether against institutional racism, asylum laws, arms sales or unequal trade agreements – connects with the other within the overall campaign against globalism. So that even when we agree with the free marketeers that asylum-seekers should be allowed to work, we do so not because a free labour market is an imperative of globalism, but because it is globalism that deprived them of their livelihoods in the first place. Our fight should be for the asylum-seekers and therefore against globalism.

By the same token, any human rights convention that does not guarantee asylum-seekers the right to a livelihood is irrelevant to the condition of our times. ■

THE CHOICE FOR THOSE WHO FACE GENOCIDE APPEARS TO BE EITHER LIFE OR LIVELIHOOD, BUT NOT BOTH.

Remember the Dover 58

When 58 dead bodies are discovered on British soil we would normally expect the media to reflect a mood of collective mourning. We would expect public figures to visit the scene, to be seen consoling relatives. We would expect a prolonged period of reflection in which pundits and commentators would counsel precautions to prevent future repeats of the tragedy. Yet when the 58 dead are Chinese migrants suffocated to death in a lorry, normal expectations are turned on their head. For a few days, politicians took the opportunity to say 'let that be a lesson to others' while newspapers ran exposés of the secret world of 'snakehead'

people-smugglers. Then nothing. The 58 were unidentified, nameless and forgotten.

Only two of the 58 have so far been positively identified. Chinese nationals in the UK are frightened and suspicious of the police and the Home Office, which refuse to grant immunity to friends and relatives who wish to come forward but are worried that they will be questioned about their own immigration status. The Central London Law Centre in Soho and the Monitoring Group have offered to act as intermediaries and provide an opportunity for the identification process to take place (using photographs) separately from the

criminal investigation. Although the offer was described as 'reasonable and friendly' by the Home Office, it has so far been refused. Instead Kent police want to use DNA-matching of relatives in China in order to identify the victims, a more time-consuming and costly approach.

Jabez Lam of the Monitoring Group, who accompanied a relative of one of the deceased to Dover for an identification, spoke of the 58 young faces he saw: 'On every single face – four women and the rest men – clearly visible are the scars of a troublesome and torturous journey, the gaunt face of death and the attempted last gasp for air.' ■

Support the families

Community organisations have now established a committee to make the identification process as easy as possible for the families involved, to give families assistance with their funeral arrangements, and to arrange burials for unidentified victims.

Central London Law Centre, 19 Whitcombe Street, London WC2 / Monitoring Group, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA.

racist murders

WALES

Murder in south Wales

Once again, Wales is the scene of a racist murder (See CARF56). On 15 June, two months after Santokh Sandhu was murdered in Port Talbot, 48-year-old Indonesian Jan Marthin Pasalbessi was racially attacked outside the hospital where his 14-year-old step-daughter was being treated for injuries sustained after an attack on her. Christina Pasalbessi, who is white, had been attacked outside her home in Newport by a white gang who were abusing her black father. Her father had taken her to Royal Gwent Hospital for treatment to facial injuries. They were waiting in the

casualty department when they were spotted by one of the gang who had earlier assaulted Christina. The gang threatened and abused Jan, who tried to escape, but the gang threw him onto the road outside the hospital and punched and kicked him as he lay on the ground. He died the next day. Police revealed that the family had previously suffered racial abuse on the Duffryn estate and had been forced to move house. Four people, including a 19-year-old woman, were helping police with their inquiries. ☹

SHIRES RACISM

Murder number two

Yet another racist murder, this time in rural Wiltshire. 34-year-old Glynne Agard was on a night out with his brother Stephen and friend Gary Belgrave on 18 June when they were attacked outside the Reflections night-club in Westbury, Wiltshire. The men, all from Reading, were attacked by a gang of eight in the car park as they were leaving the club. Glynne died at the scene from head injuries and his brother and friend were both taken to hospital suffering head and chest injuries. The men had been abused inside and outside the club.

Police quickly made arrests and on 21 June two soldiers were

charged with Glynne's murder.

20-year-old Wayne King and 22-year-old David White, soldiers from the Green Howards based at Battlesbury barracks in Warminster, were charged with murder and two counts of GBH; 20-year-old Thomas Myers of County Durham was charged with two counts of GBH and one of using racially threatening and abusive language. A 17-year-old youth from Hartlepool was charged with two counts of GBH. The men were all remanded in custody. ☹

National Civil Rights Movement, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx, UB2 5AA. Tel: 020 8813 9734 Fax: 020 8813 9734

campaigns & reports

SCOTLAND

Chhokar family still fighting for justice



Surjit Chhokar

In July, the two men accused of the murder of Surjit Chhokar in Scotland appealed to the Privy Council of the House of Lords – the first time in Scottish law that a case has gone to appeal before a court in the UK.

Surjit was beaten and fatally stabbed in November 1998 by a group of men. One man has already stood trial, but only for assault. He blamed his two friends and avoided jail. The other two men now accused of Surjit's murder are appealing to the Privy Council that they will not receive a fair trial because of the publicity surrounding the case and that the charges should be dropped.

Please support the family in their call for a public inquiry. ☹

Chhokar Family Justice Campaign, c/o Scottish Fire Brigades Union, 4th Floor, 52 St. Enoch Square, Glasgow, G1 4AA. Tel: 07980 443 807

racist attack

DUBLIN

Stabbed for being married to a black woman



David Richardson

Bristol couple David and Laverne Richardson were on a visit to Dublin to celebrate their son Christian's birthday and their own wedding anniversary. On 11 June the family were leaving a restaurant when a gang of eight white men began abusing them. The abuse turned to violence as the gang threw beer cans and began following them. One of the gang grabbed Laverne's

handbag and, as David came to her aid, a struggle occurred and a member of the gang stabbed him. 46-year-old David, who is white, was stabbed six times in the chest and back. He lost 18 pints of blood and is still in a critical condition. Gardai arrested 20-year-old David Colclough, who was charged with assault and remanded in custody. ☹

But who creates the loner?

On 30 June, David Copeland got his just deserts – six life sentences for the murder and mayhem he had caused in London last year with his bombing spree of hate. He got his just deserts; the idea of diminished responsibility was thrown out. He was bad not mad.



David Copeland

For the first time in Britain a far-right fascist terrorist has got

prominent media coverage. Of course everyone condemns him – no one could do less. What is worrying, though, is the systematic way in which the media – probably primed by the police – have drawn Copeland as the man apart, the loner.

As media pundits speculate (misguidedly asking advice from members of his family) on what created this misfit – who never grew up, was easily led, could not come to terms with his sexuality – the idea that he was a product of a racist society is conveniently dodged. Copeland's hatred did not come out of the air any more than it came out of his DNA. He imbibed the racism of the very papers which now condemn him. His violence is only a nuance away from that of the gang which stabbed Stephen Lawrence to death. Society is responsible for creating Copeland.

And, more crucially, the idea to download from the internet information on bomb-making, did not come to Copeland in a dream. He was a member of the organised

extreme right in Britain. He was in the British National Party for months, taking part in a range of their activities, and no doubt read their literature, listened in his leisure time to the music and videos of the extremism they peddled. He had in January 1999 joined the National Socialist Movement, a tiny group dedicated to Nazism and terrorism.

And yet the police have consistently pushed the theme that this was someone acting alone, going out of their way to say during the investigation that there was no evidence that extremist groups were involved. Even when challenged on this by Panorama (transmitted on 1 July) Assistant Commissioner David Veness would only concede to 'linkages' to the far right which were 'not of long standing or particular depth'. It certainly looks as though the police are trying to cover their tracks (and backs). They did not have far-right extremist groups under surveillance, they did not have information on Copeland. That name was not provided by Special Branch, the anti-terrorist squad or MI5 but by the small, independent anti-fascist group *Searchlight*.

The loner 'theory' is not new. It is how the US authorities, too, have explained away their hate criminals. And if it provides comfort it is of a very cold kind. For, without tackling the Nazi groups which train haters into action and the institutions in society which educate them into racism, there will always be new Copelands in the making. ■

The bombings

■ **16/4/99** Bomb explodes in a busy Brixton market, injuring 40 people including a 23-month-old baby, who has a nail penetrate the outer layer of his brain.

■ **23/4/99** Bomb explodes on Brick Lane injuring only 10 people. Greater injuries were avoided after the quick action of a man who saw the unattended bag with the bomb in it and attempted to take it to safety. He placed the bag in his car and ten minutes later it exploded.

■ **30/4/99** Bomb explodes in the Admiral Duncan, a gay pub, in the centre of Soho, killing 27-year-old Andrea Dykes, who was pregnant, 32-year-old John Light and 31-year Nicholas Moore and injuring 79 others.

Aftermath of the Soho bomb



Robert Hamill murder

Robert Hamill, a Catholic man, died in April 1997 after being beaten to death by a gang of Loyalists, in Portadown, Northern Ireland, as members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary stood by (see CARF 50). In June this year, the coroner finally decided not to hold an inquest because, it was said, of concerns for the safety of witnesses. Without the evidence of these witnesses, he said, the inquest would receive an incomplete account of what happened, and so holding an inquest would add nothing to the evidence already in the public domain. The family is calling for an independent judicial inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Hamill's death. ■

Robert Hamill Campaign, BM Hamill Campaign, London WC1N 3XX. E-mail: hamillcampaign@hotmail.com

Kombra Divakaren murder

On 8 June two people were charged in relation to the death of 43-year-old Kombra Divakaren of Croydon who was murdered outside his shop in Queensway, on 23 May. 19-year-old Gary Lewis of Maida Vale and an unnamed 15-year-old girl were charged with his murder. ■

Tewodros Afework

Tewodros Afework, the Eritrean man viciously attacked in Kentish Town, London, in April (see CARF56) is still in hospital. He has now been transferred to a specialist neurological centre where he is receiving further treatment for his injuries.

Although he has regained consciousness, he is still unable to talk. Police as yet have made no arrests for the attack. ■

TMG, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx, UB2 5AA. Tel: 020 8843 2333 Fax: 020 8813 9734



Tewodros Afework

Christopher Alder inquest

As CARF goes to press, the inquest into the death of Christopher Alder continues in Hull – full report in the next issue. ■

M25 Three, innocent and free at last



Raphael Rowe and Michael Davis

In July, the M25 Three were finally freed after winning their appeal at the Court of Appeal. The judges ruled that there had been a 'profoundly disturbing' conspiracy between the police and a key witness-cum-informer. The men – Raphael Rowe, Randolph Johnson and Michael Davis – were convicted in 1989 and sentenced to life imprisonment for a string of robberies and the murder of hairdresser Peter Hurburgh in 1988 which took place around the M25 motorway.



Randolph Johnson leaving court

Earlier this year the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the men had been denied a fair trial because they did not have access to vital evidence. Access had been denied under a public interest

immunity certificate (Pii). This is applied when evidence is withheld to protect the interests of national security or diplomatic relations or to protect the integrity of communications with or within a public department. In this case the Pii was claimed by the police on the ground of protecting their witness whose 'evidence' as an informer was crucial to getting convictions in the case.

The men's victory was soured by the comment from one judge, Lord Justice Mantell: that they were being released on legal technicalities and that the judgment was 'not a finding of innocence, far from it'. However, the facts speak for themselves; the case was an obvious police fit-up of three innocent black men. ■

M25 Three Campaign, c/o 28 Grimsel Path, London SE5 0TB.

Death in Holloway prison

Campaigners are asking why? Why did another black person have to die in custody? Why did a young black woman who was crying out for help have to die? On 18 June, 20-year-old Cheryl Hartman was found hanged in her cell at Holloway Prison. Cheryl, who had a history of mental illness, had asked the court where she was charged with affray, if she could go to prison so as to receive medical help. Cheryl was at first on remand at Holloway, and after her request she was given a nine month sentence.

Cheryl's family was extremely unhappy about the prison service's handling of her death. Cheryl's mother, Yvonne, was informed by telephone while she was at home alone. Other members of her family heard the news over the radio. ■

Inquest, Ground Floor, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London. N4 2PJ
Tel: 020 8802 7430 Fax: 020 8802 7450 e-mail: media@inquest.org.uk

Racism in prisons

Brixton prison is to become the first state prison to be privatised. The decision was announced soon after a surprise inspection by Sir David Ramsbotham who found that black prisoners were being singled out for extra punishment by guards. Warders locked up young black men in their cells for hours at a time. The prison was criticised last year as a 'failing institution' and threatened with privatisation. Premier Prisons and Securicor are thought to be interested in bidding to run the prison. ■

Key facts

- The M25 Three were convicted on the evidence of the three white men who had originally been arrested for the robberies, and who themselves did not have alibis.
- Norman Duncan, the chief witness for the prosecution, was also under suspicion for the robberies. He collected a £10,000 reward from the *Daily Mail* for his information. These details were hidden by the issue of a pii certificate which allowed the prosecution to hide the irregularities in his statement (which did not identify Randolph Johnson) and the fact that money had been paid for his information.
- Vital evidence, including descriptions of the attackers, was not even presented to the jury. Witness statements contained in police notebooks showed the attackers being variously described as two white men and a black man with light coloured skin and a white man with fair longish hair.
- There was no forensic evidence at all to link the three men to the crimes.



The Scrubs

Wormwood Scrubs, on the other hand has been saved, from closure and privatisation after further inspections of the jail indicated an improvement in conditions. The trials of some of the Wormwood Scrubs' prison officers accused of brutality and racism at the prison have begun and will last several weeks. ■

diary of race and resistance

JUNE-JULY 2000

RACIST VIOLENCE

4 JUN After receiving new evidence, Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force re-opens investigation into deaths in 1981 of 13 black party-goers in New Cross in 1981. Fire to be treated as arson rather than a racist attack

10 JUN Scottish police announce rise of 67 per cent in the number of racist incidents recorded in the year 1998-1999

13 JUN 48-year-old Indonesian, Jan Martin Pasalbessi, dies in hospital after suffering severe head injuries during racist attack in Newport, South Wales ■ 43-year-old Stephen Smith jailed for ten months after being caught on CCTV kicking and racially abusing Khateejah Mohammed in Norwich earlier this year

18 JUN 34-year-old Glynne Agard dies from head injuries after racist gang attack in Wiltshire

21 JUN Three soldiers charged with the racist murder of Glynne Agard who died after a racist attack in Wiltshire ■ Police make appeal on *Crimewatch* for anonymous letter-writer who claims to know who was responsible for deaths of Harold and Jason McGowan in Telford

23 JUN Fourth soldier, 22-year-old David White, charged with the murder of 34-year-old Glynne Agard

27 JUN 15-year-old boy detained and given training order after carrying out a one year campaign of racial harassment against 18-year-old Sayed Amin in Portsmouth

14 JUN 14-year-old Asian girl racially abused and attacked by white man while waiting for school bus in Edinburgh

13 JUL Former policeman Daniel Harris found guilty of assault and fined £400 after being caught on CCTV hitting a black man, Emmanuel Frimpong, who was handcuffed ■ Peterborough man, Haq Nawaz, bound over to keep peace for three months for locking up a 14-year-old boy in shop storeroom after gang of boys racially abused him and broke windows of his shop

22 JUL 16-year-old German exchange student beaten up by gang in Penzance, fuelling concerns in the area about xenophobic attacks

IMMIGRATION

6 JUN Home Office announces plans to increase expulsions from 12,000 to 57,000 by end of 2004 ■ Home Office is refusing Kosovan war evacuees asylum on grounds that there are no humanitarian grounds to extend stay ■ Home Office inspectors order owners of two tower blocks in Liverpool, used

to house asylum-seekers, to improve living conditions

17 JUN 58 Chinese stowaways found dead in back of lorry at Dover; two survivors of journey from Rotterdam taken to hospital suffering from dehydration and shock

20 JUN Chinese man and woman arrested in UK in connection with deaths of 58 stowaways

22 JUN Dutch lorry driver, 32-year-old Peter Wacker, charged with 58 counts of manslaughter

24 JUN Jack Straw reverses Home Office decision to deport two Colombian human rights activists and their family of five after *Independent on Sunday* publishes article on the family

30 JUN Seven Dutch men charged in Rotterdam with manslaughter of 58 Chinese stowaways

6 JUL House of Lords dismisses test case brought on behalf of Slovakian Roma Milan Horvath. His claim that the Slovak authorities offered insufficient protection from skinhead attacks was rejected

18 JUL Government sets target of 30,000 deportations per year and pledges an extra £400 million to reduce backlog of asylum applications

21 JUL Government is considering two tiered immigration system to take into account skills shortages with the possible introduction of a Canadian-style points system based on education and skills

24 JUL Tony Blair announces extra £600 million to clear back log of 104,000 asylum applications ■ Seven Romanian families dispersed by Hammersmith and Fulham council are to be rehoused in Buckinghamshire after suffering racial harassment on the Sighthill estate in Glasgow

25 JUL Immigration minister Barbara Roche announces plans to fast-track rich foreign entrepreneurs through immigration system

28 JUL Government drops proposals for immigration bonds after announcing 'technical problems'

29 JUL Ghanaian, Patience Sapani-Awnobi, deported by private charter despite recommendations that she be granted temporary leave to remain on compassionate grounds to care for her 17-year son who suffers from sickle cell anaemia

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

9 JUN 24-year-old Neil Acourt, one of the suspects in the murder of Stephen Lawrence,

charged with human trafficking offences

3 JUL Inquest starts into the death of Christopher Alder who died on 1 April 1998 in Queens Road police station, Hull

6 JUL Paul Boateng, prisons minister, announces proposal to privatise Brixton prison after further allegations of poor conditions and racist treatment

7 JUL Met police agree to hold inquiry into alleged harassment of 40-year-old Delroy Lindo, who has been wrongly charged 18 times in past four years

12 JUL Three black men serving 10-year sentences for an armed robbery in July 1995 have convictions quashed after allegations that corrupt flying squad officers planted evidence

17 JUL M25 Three, Raphael Rowe, Randolph Johnson and Michael Davis, freed from jail after Court of Appeal rules that there had been a 'profoundly disturbing' conspiracy between the police and a key informant

24 JUL Scotland Yard announces specialist unit of 160 officers as part of Operation Trident to target black gang-related murders

FASCISM

5 JUN Trial starts of David Copeland, accused of Brixton, Brick Lane and Soho bombings and murder of three people in Soho bomb, after insanity plea rejected

14 JUN 43-year-old Simon Sheppard of Hull jailed for nine months for publishing and possessing threatening, abusive or insulting leaflets with intent to stir up racial hatred after over 1,500 BNP leaflets found in his home

31 JUN Trial starts of Grimsby man, Cameron Dudley, accused of possession of firearm with intent to endanger life, who was arrested after US customs agents, pretending to be racist sympathisers, 'befriended' him over the internet

1 JUL David Copeland gets six life sentences for bombings in Brixton, Soho and Brick Lane ■ Scotland Yard announces special measures to monitor far-Right groups

6 JUL BNP polls 26 per cent of the vote in local election in North End, Bexleyheath, Labour wins with 44 per cent with the Conservatives in third place with only 23 per cent

NEW RESEARCH

19 JUL CRE report criticises Ofsted for failing to take race issues seriously

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