

# CARF

CAMPAIGN AGAINST  
RACISM & FASCISM

No.1 february/march 1991  
50p

# Alert!

new  
wave of  
**anti-arab  
racism**

## CONTENTS

3

### TOWER HAMLETS FOCUS

The Framing of the Asian Community  
Racial Attacks Outlined  
East End Fascism

5

Small is Beautiful?

6

From terrorist to  
barbarian: the faces of anti-Arab  
racism  
Black war resistance

9

### CAMPAIGNS AND REPORTS

Tottenham Three Case Cracks  
Cardiff Three  
Chapeltown Defence Campaign  
Cowley: SUS is back  
Remember Tasleem  
Children attacked  
Newham: Self-defence  
No Entry

## CARF

Campaign Against Racism and Fascism  
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**CARF welcomes readers' campaign news. Send reports together with illustrations to us. Remember to give a name and address for readers to contact you at. But if CARF is to be representative of the campaigns going on up and down the country, we urgently need to increase the Bulletin's size and circulation. And we can only do this with your financial support.**

# CARF is back

With this issue we are once more launching CARF, as a separate and independent magazine. For 11 years we had served the anti-racist and anti-fascist cause as a part of *Searchlight*. But fundamental differences of approach between *Searchlight* and ourselves have compelled us, albeit reluctantly, to break with the journal. It is that break, however, because it was made on the basis of both principle and a careful analysis of the developments of racism and fascism in the world today, that gives us an opportunity to develop a more vigorous and responsive anti-racist forum to coordinate and service the various anti-racist initiatives that are taking place up and down the country. The issues which led to the break were outlined in a letter which we asked *Searchlight* to publish last October. But as this letter - which was written with the precise purpose of avoiding misunderstanding or acrimony in the movement - has failed to appear, we publish it below:

9.10.90

Dear *Searchlight*,

As you know, we have had differences for some time now over our working relationship, our perspectives and our editorial control. Of course, we have managed to thrash out many of these differences in the past and carried on. But now we realise that our differences are not so much mechanical ones, susceptible to logistical resolution, as ones that arise from our essentially different understanding of the events unfolding in the world today. Since its inception in 1977, CARF has maintained that there is an organic link between racism and fascism and stressed the importance of fighting both. From our earliest debates with the Anti Nazi League we emphasised the need to expose and combat the contemporary, popular anti-black racism on which fascism had raised its head again. It was not enough to situate fascism historically, ideologically linked to anti-Semitism and the holocaust, and take up the refrain of 'Never Again'. Something was happening again - if differently - and we needed to see it in a contemporary perspective (relieved of our own racist blinkers), if we were to fight it correctly. We broke with the ANL, because it fought fascism and only incidentally racism. We could not accept a position which effectively subsumed the fight against racism to the fight against fascism.

Without going into too much detail, we feel that it is over exactly the same issue that our difference with you now arises. We feel that the fight against fascism today has to involve both the fight against anti-Semitism and the fight against anti-black racism. (You will notice that it is just that type of analysis over which we have had our differences.)

While not detracting one iota from your fight against anti-Semitism, we also believe that the fight against anti-black racism, and particularly anti-Arab racism, claims as much attention as the fight against anti-Semitism. We see these as two prongs in the same fight - prongs which have to be twinned to formulate correct strategies today. Whereas you seem increasingly committed to a one-pronged approach. You interpret the fight against racism and fascism as the fight against anti-Semitism in the first instance. Moreover, your one-dimensional view then subsumes all other forms of racism to that experience. And Jewish groups, instead of allying with black groups to defeat a common enemy, end up making enemies of their allies. In the international context, this has also meant, on occasion, that Third World peoples' national aspirations (including those of the Palestinians) are interpreted as inimical to Jewish interests and therefore anti-Semitic.

We find that, as events are unfolding across Europe and the Middle East, our differences of perspective are becoming so accentuated and CARF's priorities so down-played in your pages - to the extent of riding rough-shod over our views, and our claims to space and autonomy - that it is no longer possible to maintain our link through contributing a monthly section to *Searchlight*. Though we recognise with reluctance that our paths now formally have to part, we hope there may be ways of working together in the future.

Yours sincerely

The CARF Collective

The time is right, we believe, for a new independent magazine devoted to the fight against racism, fascism and imperialism. For although there are many local committees and organisations fighting racism and fascism both here and in Europe, the scale of racism and its effects on black people, migrants and refugees is being ignored in the national media, in the trades union movement and on the left as a whole. But we need your help - in distributing CARF, in getting subscribers, in finding supporters, and, above all, in sending us reports from your areas and campaigns.

# TOWER HAMLETS FOCUS:

## The Framing of the Asian Community

The media in Britain seldom investigate racism. They do like, however, to sniff out a good 'race' story - and the more sensational the better. The stabbing of a white youth, John Stoner, by Bengalis in Tower Hamlets in February 1990 provided them with the

opportunity to descend on London's East End. But the way they have framed their investigations into the Asian community has only served to reinforce the 'Rights for

Whites' message of the British National Party (BNP).

### REDISCOVERING BRICK LANE

Reporters in their droves, voyeurs anxious for a glimpse of Asian life, flocked to Brick Lane. Racism, as a subject of investigation, was out, but Asian criminality, gang warfare and vigilante groups were in. *The Independent* colour supplement (3.8.90) reported: 'There is a new generation of East Enders, angry and often lawless, who are now claiming the streets for themselves. And it is the turn of the white community to feel threatened.' The liberal 'quality press' was just as guilty. 'Two tribes' by Robert Crampton (*New Statesman* 11.5.90) could have been written by a student, still wet behind the ears with trendy, sociology theory. Eager to find evidence of competing sub-cultures in the inner city, Crampton compared the 'white' tribes to the 'brown-skinned' tribes and concluded that the 'brown-skinned' Asians were assimilating into 'the culture of the streets'.

### THE VOICE OF THE 'WHITE TRIBE'

Meanwhile, the media were busy searching for the genuine voice of

the 'white tribe', untainted by the extremism of the BNP. A common or garden racist would suit them fine, but if he said he was not a racist but just resentful of all the privileges the Bengalis were getting, all the better. As George Happe, the

foster-grandfather of John Stoner, had the backing of the local white Anglican Bishop, he could be called forth as the white tribe's expert witness on 'race-relations'.

*If they don't like  
what's going on,  
there's the next boat  
leaving from  
Southampton.*

GEORGE HAPPE

George was giving interviews by the plenty. But his television debut as the race expert for BBC2's 'There ain't no black in the Union Jack', a liberal multi-cultural slot, provided him with his greatest opportunity.

For the interviewer didn't attempt to pin him down; his views went unchallenged, giving them the air of respectability. The programme opened up with Happe's definition of the problems facing the East End - which he compared to a 'melting pot...'

But don't fill the pot up too much, it'll boil over.' This is his coded way of saying there are too many blacks, what we need is immigration control. The programme then moved on to ascertain George's view on education. 'Now these Bengali kids go to our school. Instead of them learning the cockney ways, or the English way, they're trying to teach our kids their ways ... They don't do the run-away Ginger bread man, They do the run-

away chappati.' (George obviously reads the *Sun*. Any chance of the Beeb checking this story out? No.) Next, his views on local authority policies were ascertained. The 'newcomers, the strangers, are taking more out of the pot than they've ever put in'. (To be fair, the programme-makers did do a bit of investigation and found that contrary to George's view, Tower Hamlets has discriminated against Bengalis. Three cheers for the Beeb.) But George isn't really a racist, because he doesn't mind the Asians and the blacks, as long as they're like him, as long as they're cockney, as long as they remember that 'this is England, this is London. If you come here have the good manners to live like us.' The programme did finish with a denunciation of the British National Party, with a vivid film of a BNP rally. But the BNP and its views had nothing to do with

George Happe.

George, we were told, had done 'so much to distance himself' from the BNP.

Someone's been pulling the wool over the Beeb's eyes (and the good Bishop's, for that matter). On 24 November Happe spoke at a British

National Party 'Rights for Whites' rally. Although he said he didn't agree with all the BNP's views (answers to those disagreed with can be sent to CARF on a very small postcard), he thanked it for all the support it had given his campaign.

*'Everyone's trying to make out the little Bangladeshi's are friendly but they're animals, they're pigs.'*

TONY HAPPE, JOHN STONER'S FOSTER-FATHER



George Happe



*The stabbing of John Stoner was covered extensively in local and national media. Less well-documented, however, has been the persistent racial harassment throughout 1990, particularly on the Isle of Dogs, against the Bangladeshi and other black communities. Below are just a few of the cases.*

**JANUARY:** Tenants living in Connett House, Bethnal Green, say racial harassment has reached crisis proportions. Flats have been set on fire by lighted cigarettes pushed through the letterbox (*East London Advertiser* 19.1.90).

**MARCH:** Vacant property on the Millwall and West Ferry estate offered to a Bengali family is daubed with racist graffiti on doors and windows ... A group of white youths harass Bengali families on the Samusa estate. In one incident matches are found on the door of a family with young children (Isle of Dogs Incident Panel).

**APRIL:** Three Asian families living on the Robin Hood Gardens estate have their property attacked. In one incident, 'Paki' is painted in red on the windows (Isle of Dogs Incident Panel) ... Six white youths attack 21-year-old Viresh Patel on the No 8 bus at the Bethnal Green end of Roman Road. His face is slashed with a Stanley knife and needs 19 stitches. (*East London Advertiser* 20.4.90)

**SEPTEMBER:** 18-year-old Mohammed Ahmed suffers severe facial injuries and is nearly blinded by a gang of five white youths who beat him on his way home from Island Gardens station. A meeting is called in the area to discuss racial violence in Cubitt Town. All of the 30 Bengali families living on the Cubitt Town estate say they have suffered racial harassment ... White youths from George Green School throw burning cigarettes in the face of Mr S. Ahammad as he is making his way to Island Garden station (*Monthly Moon*, Newsletter of the Isle of Dogs Bangladeshi Association).

**OCTOBER:** A mobile burger bar belonging to a Bangladeshi is smashed up. The police believe the BNP, which had been meeting above the Bow Bells pub, was responsible. (*East London Advertiser* 12.10.90)

**NOVEMBER:** A home-made explosive device is thrown at the Whitechapel building where Anti-Fascist Action are meeting.

**DECEMBER:** 15-year-old Jamma Hassan, a refugee from Somalia, suffered a fractured skull after being attacked by two white men on the Teviot estate, who beat him unconscious with a baseball bat. The right-hand side of Jamma's face is now paralysed. (*Voice* 4.12.90)

### STOP PRESS

On Tuesday 22 January, three young Bangladeshi youths were returning after lunch to the Poplar site of Tower Hamlets College of Further Education when they were shot at by a group of white youths. Two of the Asian youths suffered wounds to the legs from an air pistol. One is badly hurt.

*Tower Hamlets, particularly Bethnal Green, has been an area of great significance to post-war fascism.*

### THEN...

At the turn of the century, branches of the British Brothers League were established in Bethnal Green, and in the 1930s Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) was active. By the mid-1930s, the BUF claimed 4,000 members in Bethnal Green, and in 1937, polled some 3,000 votes in Bethnal Green South West and Shoreditch. Although the BUF was severely routed in the 1936 Battle of Cable Street, the East End proved significant to Mosley's later attempts to revive British fascism under the banner of the Union Movement.

Fascism in those pre-war days had been based on anti-Semitism. But in the 1950s and '60s, as Britain turned to its ex-colonies for cheap labour, a vociferous anti-immigrant lobby was to build up in Tower Hamlets, particularly around Cable Street - which had, since the turn of the century, included a small number of black seamen. Again the fascists moved in. On 29 May 1958, the East London branch of John Bean's National Labour Party was formed. It merged with the White Defence League to form the British National Party, launched symbolically in a pub in Cheshire Street, Bethnal Green, in 1960. By the 1970s, however, the BNP had disbanded. In 1978, the National Front set up its headquarters in Shoreditch. This followed its good results in local and general elections. In 1974, it had fielded its first candidates, and by September 1978, it scored its best results: Millwall (21.1%), St James ward (19.1%). However, by 1982, the National Front's fortunes had waned. The Liberals are the main beneficiaries of their decline.

### NOW...

Ironically, in 1991, it is the new BNP which is likely to benefit from loss of support for the Liberals. The

backbone of Tower Hamlets BNP is formed from old NF stalwarts. The branch was formed in 1982 and amongst its leading lights is ex-NF Vic Clarke who, in July 1981, stood as the NF candidate for Weavers ward where he polled 12% of the vote. David Ettridge, who stood for the BNP in May 1990, is another ex-NF candidate.

Indeed, the names of several prominent ex-NF families crop up time and time again in the lists of the new BNP. There is the Buttery family (Albert, James and Steven), who in May 1978 all contested elections for the NF; the Osbornes, whose supposed address of 46 Duval House is given out on all election literature; the Clarkes and the Clapps (Susan and Reginald) are also old NF stalwarts. Reginald Clapp was the BNP's election agent in the recent local elections, whilst Susan stood as the NF candidate in the May 1982 St Peters ward local elections.

One prominent BNP member is Stephen Smith, considered by the BNP leadership a good speaker and an excellent prospect for the future. A certain Stephen Smith was previously NF organiser for Rochdale and the north-west of England. Smith was prosecuted for incitement to racial hatred in 1979 and was a prominent Young National Front member, founding the NF drum corps in Manchester. Since leaving the NF, he has been busy writing to ex-colleagues persuading them to defect to the BNP.

The BNP's recent success in Tower Hamlets is built around a direct appeal to white racism. Eddy Butlar, who in 1989 attempted to organise a racist campaign on the Isle of Dogs to stop a Bengali family being moved into a council house, is the local organiser. As a regular contributor to *Spearhead*, Butlar sees himself as the leading BNP strategist of the future. He is currently trying to persuade the party to make a return to electoral politics.

# Small is beautiful?

*There is a growing network of Third Position fascists across Europe. Describing themselves as 'political soldiers', and opposing 'both capitalism and communism', they argue for Third Position politics on a range of subjects, including ethnic separatism. Below, we publish an irreverent view of the International Third Way conference held in London last October.*

Some 50 white males made their way from Victoria station to the Bonnington hotel. Herded by stewards, they took nearly two hours to pack a small conference room where, at 1pm, a 'black separatist' and an 'Orthodox rabbi' were scheduled to extol the virtues of 'ethnic separatism and repatriation'. The portly Rabbi Mayer Schiller wrapped in chassidic garb, and the chubby Mr Osiris Akkabalala, attired in African batik, had been transported all the way from the US for the occasion. Flanked by Patrick Harrington and Graham Williamson in their best funeral suits, they sat patiently, sizing up the assembly. A plump, cheerful master of ceremonies introduced the first speaker, one Konrad Logghe, who, aside from being a representative of a sister movement in Belgium, is also a student of comparative religion. He droned on for some 45 minutes about what he thought are the tenets of Judaism, compared Judaism with Taoism and rendered the audience very drowsy indeed.

The next speaker was Rabbi Schiller. Nobody's fool, and a stickler for exactitude, the Rabbi first corrected the advertised title of his lecture: it is not about 'The contradiction between Third Way nationalism and anti-Semitism', but rather, 'the possible contradiction between Third Way Nationalism and Anti-Semitism.' Having sorted this out, he wasted no time in waking up the audience by conjuring a picture of world decadence epitomised by the 'multi-racial' Coca Cola advertisement 'I'd like to hear the world sing in perfect

harmony'. A football aficionado and a skilful orator, the Rabbi lamented the passing away of virtues associated with the good old days when, as in Liverpool, back-row soccer fans could pass their children over the heads of the crowd and deposit them safely with the bobbies at the edge of the playing field. Unthinkable now with the decline of respect for police and figures of authority, he mused.

Having peacocked his expertise in the science of Millwall and Tottenham, the Rabbi poised himself to score his penalty point. It is a mistake to feel threatened by Orthodox Jews, he asserted. Not only are Orthodox Jews against all Reform, theirs is an uncompromising loyalty to any regime which shelters them. 'The Talmud pledges the Jew to be loyal to the country of which he is a citizen, to love it as his Fatherland.'

The audience seemed duly receptive and the Rabbi delivered the decisive goal. True, he said, there are pernicious forms of nationalism, but Third Way nationalism should not be tarred with the same brush. Third Way nationalism respects the desire for ethnic separatism - which, of course, is the desire of adherents of true Judaism. A roar of approval accompanied the learned Rabbi. It was half-time and the spectators were allowed a short break. The next guest speaker was a Florida radio DJ, the honourable Osiris Akkabalala (formerly Jack Mitchel) of the International Pan African Congress. The movement may call itself the Third Way but, the truth be said, it is the first way because, as every simpleton knows, things turn a full circle every 2666 years. Having assessed his listeners' intellectual capacity, Mr Akkabalala, armed with a cooking metaphor, launched an attack on both leftists and right-wingers bent on integration. 'When Succotash, a native american vegetable dish, is properly cooked, that is: Al dente, one can easily discern its constituent vegeta-

bles: string beans and green corn. When overcooked, it is just mushy soup.' The same is true about people, he concluded. Integration is synonymous with overcooking, nothing good can come out of it. With both stooges back in their seats, the conference went about the business of collecting money. 'We are a poor organisation', declared Graham Williamson. The plump master of ceremonies started the bidding: who would match the donation of £600 we have just received? No one did. - £500? £450? the reverse auction continued until, at £150, Graham Williamson set an example to show that his money is where his mouth is. Each donor was introduced and applauded. Now depleted, everyone was ready for Patrick Harrington's impromptu 90-minutes talk about 'Belief and Action'. Now Patrick is a seasoned trouper. Don't be deterred that we are a small organisation, he pleaded. So, too, were the Bolsheviks. And remember Marx sitting alone in the British Library? Even Jesus had only 12 or 13 disciples, depending on your outlook. Harrington was particularly vocal on the environment. 'Using lead-free petrol is not enough. We must do more to demonstrate how green we are.' Good results, too, can come from small beginnings. Last May, Graham Williamson scored some 940 votes in a local council election. 'We knew people are concerned with lawlessness. So what did we do? We laid our hands on about a thousand of these [he waves a Metropolitan police crime prevention booklet in the air] and distributed them as a part of our election campaign, adding our 'Distributed by the Third Way' rubber stamp.' 'The prejudiced call us fascists', concluded our Patrick. 'Do not be disheartened. Take our publications to the leaders of your communities, to the leaders of the Jewish and black communities. If we were fascists, would Rabbi Schiller and Mr Akkabalala be here?'

# From terrorist to barbarian: the face of anti-Arab racism

*Anti-Arab racism has been given a new lease of life by the events in the Middle East. CARF, which began to research its effects and roots long before the Gulf crisis began, wrote this article before the onset of the war. Now, for the anti-racist, anti-fascist movement to understand what anti-Arab racism means is even more urgent.*

So serious are the incidents of anti-Arab racism in the United States that an emergency phone-line has been set up to help the victims. Since the beginning of the Gulf crisis, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee has been documenting serious incidents of threats and violence against Arab Americans. According to our CARF correspondent, scores of racist attacks and incidents of harassment have been reported in Dearborn, a Detroit suburb where America's largest Arab community of 250,000 live. In Toledo, Ohio, a Palestinian was beaten up by members of a known racist organisation. Detroit resident Robert Haddoni escaped with his life when his home was attacked by a petrol bomb. In Boston, at least one Syrian shopkeeper was forced to sell his business after a campaign of death-threat phone calls. People are harassed in shops and on the streets of the US just because they are overheard speaking in Arabic. Osama Siblani, the director of *Sada al-Watan*, the largest weekly for America's Arab community, states that the Gulf crisis has 'brought back to the surface all the stereotypes and bigotry of this nation. As soon as there is a problem, it doesn't take long for the Arab to become public enemy number one.' Ironically, reports show that the American public is not affected by the literal facts about which side they are supposed to be on as a nation. Saudis and Kuwaitis are suffering as much abuse as any one else regarded as 'Arab'.

Such events in the US are relatively recent and relate directly to its

international actions. But right across the 'Western world' we have been witnessing a massive rise of racist attacks against Arab peoples over the last few years - and for reasons which have less to do with foreign policy decisions.

**EUROPE'S ARAB "UNDER-CLASS"** In Germany, France, Belgium and, increasingly, Italy, it is the Arab peoples - particularly those of North Africa - who are being imported (even if illegally) to do the dirty work. The 'under-class' of Western Europe is seen as dark (if not black), foreign and Arab. And every racist stereotype about their cultures, habits, criminality, breeding and so on is attached to them. Even those peoples like Turks or Iranians who are not Arab (but are Muslim) become equated with and hated like all those other alien hordes - or 'barbarians', as Belgium's Interior Minister termed them.

The PFN, a Belgian far-right political party, was not prosecuted for distributing racist leaflets in the 1987 elections saying 'Halt the Barbarians' and including cartoons of Arabs. A Brussels mayor banned evening gatherings after 10pm during Ramadan and allowed a council information brochure to depict North Africans as terrorists and drug dealers. Other local councils have refused to enter certain foreigners on an aliens register, thereby preventing them from living in the area. Police, who regard North Africans as responsible for crime, have stood passively by as skinheads have disfigured North African youths with swastikas. In Denmark, a hostel for Iranian, Sri Lankan and Lebanese refugees was attacked in 1986. In the 1988 elections, the *Fremskridt*, which promised to expel all Muslims and refugees, got 9% of the vote. Since then, local Christian groups have protested openly against 'Khomeinization'.

Over the last four years in France, at

least 19 North Africans have been killed in racist attacks. With the rise of the Front National, racist behaviour is presented as defending Christianity against an encroaching Islam. Whilst skinheads habitually attack black people on the streets, local authorities mirror this at an institutional level. Thus, a mosque was bulldozed 'by mistake' in August 1989 at Charvieu-Chavagneux.

## THE RUSHDIE AFFAIR

In the wake of the 'Rushdie affair', mosques and religious leaders all over Europe were attacked. In fact, as shown above, racism and acts of discrimination are now being 'excused' on the grounds of preserving indigenous culture and religion. Thus, as a Moroccan worker in Holland told CARF: 'In the 1970s Philips (of Eindhoven) couldn't get enough of us. We were given time off to pray in the factories, time off at Ramadan. Now, suddenly, Islam is a terrible threat. Newspapers write that Amsterdam is now a Muslim city, that we have taken over. You see, Philips have taken all the years of work from our parents and now can use machinery instead, so they want to send us back.'

The telescoping of Arab into Muslim came to the fore with the rise of Islamic militancy in the Middle East, especially in Iran, and the 'Rushdie affair'. Since then, and particularly in the United Kingdom, all Asians have been seen as 'Pakis' and 'Pakis' used as a synonym for mad Muslims. And legitimacy has been given to this racism by the ignorant pontifications of 'intellectuals' like Conor Cruise O'Brien, who wrote in the *Times* that 'Arab and Muslim society is sick' (May 1989), and Fay Weldon, who, in her pamphlet *Sacred Cows*, attacked multiculturalism as leading to racism and excused Paki-bashing as 'NF gangs' inability to distinguish between culture clash - which she sees as natural - and skin colour.

Politicians, too, were not slow to use



the Rushdie affair to vent their feelings about preserving our way of life, our values of freedom and liberalism against the alien, uncivilised, uncultured, misogynist beings we live among in a multi-cultural society. And, as the pressure on immigrants to conform and assimilate was articulated in the 'higher echelons', it got translated in the 'lower echelons' into cruder language.

In the Darnall area of Sheffield, Muslim homes and a mosque were attacked in the wake of the 'Rushdie affair'. In London, the Regents Park mosque was firebombed. More recently, the Saddam Hussein mosque in Birmingham was damaged. And in Muslim areas all over the country, racist gangs have rampaged - attacking people, houses and cars, chanting 'Rushdie, Rushdie' as the new term of abuse. In Scotland, where racist attacks have increased most rapidly in the last few years, Somalian Ahmed Abukar Shek was stabbed to death on 15 January 1989. Six months later, Oldham's black community was stunned by the shooting down of 14-year-old Tahir Akram from a car full of white youths joy-riding through the Asian area of Glodwick. The Arab community in Britain, which is relatively small and heterogeneous in character, has not been noted for its cohesion, nor for its interest in domestic affairs. But recognising that anti-Arabism was on the increase, the Arab Club of Britain organised in October 1990 their first conference to discuss issues confronting the Arab community here. The need to research the contours of anti-Arabism in the West and to confront the media portrayal of Arab peoples was recognised as a priority.

**THE ARAB WORLD AND THE WEST** Anti-Arabism/anti-Islam, though of more recent origin than anti-Semitism, is as pervasive and ingrained in Western Christian culture. And just as contradictory stereotypes are held simultaneously about the Jew so, too, they are held about the Arab. For as the Jew is both the ruthless capitalist and the agitating worker, the Arab is, at one and the same time, the idle rich and the filthy, backward, heathen street-sweeper. When the West chooses, Arabs are stereotyped as the rich

play-boys of the world with race-horses, castles in Scotland and chainstores. On the other hand, they are also portrayed as the prototypes of alien-ness, the carriers of a backward culture with the capacity to envelop and transform a more civilised one. And any nationalist Arab leader, whether progressive or reactionary, is portrayed as mad, tyrannical, and terrorist.

Anti-Arabism like anti-Semitism has religious roots, but it was also associated with territorial expansion. From 632 AD Islam began to conquer parts of the Christian Byzantine Empire. By 732 it had already spread West into North Africa, Spain and Southern France - though it was defeated at the Battle of Tours. Islam was to expand at the expense of 'Christendom' well into the sixteenth century. Because at the time of Islamic conquests the West was relatively under-developed, Islam did present a genuine threat to the Christian powers. For it has to be remembered that when Europe confronted other countries of the Third World, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries - the hey-day of its colonial expansionist phase - it was from a position of economic and technological strength. When Europe had confronted the Islamic world, it had been from a position of equality or even weakness.

Just as the vanilla *kipferl* (a crescent shaped biscuit) still celebrates for the Austrians the defeat of the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna in 1683, so too our stereotypes of the savage in flowing robes, our Lawrence of Arabia narratives and our films about the crusades keep alive for the next generation the 'traditional' fear of the Arabs.

And more recent events have added the terrorist, the oil sheikh and the mad mullah to the anti-Arab lexicon in the West. When, in the early 1970s, the oil-rich countries refused to accept the usual unequal 'colonial' trading terms for their one commodity - oil - a new spectre was created of the scheming Arab holding the West to ransom. The power of the 'Arab world' was deeply resented in the West. But the poverty and powerlessness of Arab/Muslim peoples was also being resented. For, from the poorer areas around the Mediterranean came Europe's sub-proletariat - to build

"The Arab, when stereotyped, is often amorphous. He is rarely defined too specifically with regard to nationality. He is a part of a semantic field that encompasses hareem, barbarism and fanaticism. The Arab is always very different than the stereotype of the Egyptian, the Moroccan, or the Yemeni. These national images have their own specific connotations. They are more concrete and more positive than the image of the word Arab. This word has literally become the equivalent of the term 'Nigger'." Karim Alrawi (*GLC Conference on Anti-Arab racism, 1984*)

its roads and clean its factories, to provide domestic help and to man and woman the service industries. If 'blackness' was the rallying point for racism in those countries like Britain which had had colonies and used their ex-colonials' labour, in much of Europe 'Islam' became the rallying point for racial hatred. But by far the most significant and far-reaching modern event was the 1917 Balfour declaration and the setting up of Israel in 1948 as a land for Jews alone. Since in Zionism 'race', religion and the state are all symbiotic, any opposition to Israel can be seen as opposition to the religion and to the 'race'. Supporters of Israel fail to distinguish between attacks on Israeli policies - which dispossess another Arab people - and racial hatred of Jews per se. As many scholars have pointed out, anti-Semitism was unknown in the Arab world until the Zionist project got underway.

#### LESSONS FOR THE MOVEMENT

What has compounded this problem in Europe has been developments within the anti-fascist movement

itself. In many countries, there is a tendency to tackle contemporary problems in terms of the past. Thus, a fascist/racist threat is interpreted as a repeat of the anti-Semitism of the 1930s. In France, for example, events like the desecration of Jewish graves at Carpentras quite rightly incur the anger of all just people and bring them on to the streets in their thousands. But the murders of North Africans have not provoked the same anger, the same calls for justice. The interpreters and leaders of anti-fascist movements are often stuck in old formulations about the nature of the fascist threat, decrying old-style nazi parties without seeing the growth of new forms of racism on their own doorsteps.

And, because there is an endemic anti-Arabism in European culture and a confusion via Zionism between Israel and Jew, it is very easy for anti-Arabism to enter the anti-racist movement itself. This happens in a covert way when anti-racist groups in France stress the humanity of France's Judeo-Christian tradition or the superiority of its secular one.

But it is even more obvious when anti-fascists are unable to evaluate Arab nationalism as anything but a threat to Jewish people.

In the final analysis, the anti-racist anti-fascist movement can only be strengthened when all groups - Black, Arab, Muslim, Jew - facing institutional discrimination or fascist attack come together in the fight for a common justice. While acknowledging the specificity of each group's history of oppression, and respecting each group's tradition of fighting, we must continue to stress the common features of our cause.

**SOURCES** Paper delivered by John Gee to Arab Communities in Britain Conference, October 1990. *A brief history of blasphemy: liberalism, censorship and 'The Satanic Verses'*, Richard Webster (Orwell Press, Suffolk, 1990); *European Parliament Report on Racism and Xenophobia*; 'Fay Weldon: radical heretic or social puritan?', Liz Fekete, *Race & Class* (Vol 31, no 2, 1989); *Letter to Christendom*, Rana Kabbani (Virago, London, 1989); *Liberation*; *Palestine Solidarity* (Sept-Dec 1984).

**STOP PRESS** On 17 January, Abbas Cheblak, organiser of the October conference on Arab communities in Britain, was detained along with six other Palestinians and 60 Iraqis in Pentonville Prison on the grounds of being a security risk.

## Black War Resistance

*Have we in Britain been informed about the real levels of opposition to the Gulf War in the US?*

What is uniting opposition, especially in the black and Hispanic communities, according to Manhattan lawyer Ron Kuby who specialises in helping service personnel who are seeking conscientious objector status, is 'the poverty draft'. He told a CARF correspondent that official figures of army personnel refusing to serve in the Gulf are 'just lies'. More and more black personnel are refusing to fight. One typical conscientious objector is Ronald Jean Baptiste, part of a US Air Force reserve unit attached to Maguire Air Force Base, New Jersey. He faces a

maximum sentence of 4½ years in jail if he is court martialled for refusing to be part of the US Desert Storm. Brooklyn-born Baptiste is of Haitian parentage. First his mother was refused entry to the US and was held in a US immigration prison camp. However, his commitment to the USA was finally broken when his attempt to donate blood to the services blood bank was refused on the grounds that all Haitians are potential HIV carriers. Ron Kuby believes that the US government and military have been determined to avoid a Vietnam anti-war movement by keeping middle-class college kids out of the Gulf conflict. Hence a totally voluntary army and not a

drafter force like Vietnam's is being deployed. Proof that a form of 'poverty draft' is in operation is that the vast majority of the personnel in the Gulf are drawn from the poor, black, Latino and white American working classes. *Before the war started it was estimated that 90% of the 20,000 US troop casualties expected within the first 2 weeks would be black and Latino. Some 48% of all women personnel in the Gulf are black. Black people constitute 12.4% of the American population but about 20% of the US 2 million service personnel.*

According to a Vietnam veteran, Job Mzshariki, co-founder of Black Veterans for Social Justice, 'Many reservists are refusing to go to the Gulf in groups of three, five or ten. Basically, if they die in this war their women and children will suffer terrible economic hardship'.



# Tottenham Three Case Cracks

On the afternoon of 4 December last year, staff at the Houses of Parliament published a written answer by the Home Secretary to a question put down by a Tory MP. The subject was the conviction of Mark Braithwaite, Engin Raghip and Winston Silcott for the killing of PC Keith Blakelock during the 1985 disturbances on Broadwater Farm. In fact, the question was merely a device to enable the Home Secretary to announce his decision to refer Engin Raghip - alone of the three - back to the Court of Appeal. Making the announcement through the backdoor successfully muted public debate.

Even so, the decision represents a victory, as it is the first official acknowledgement that any of the convictions are unsound.

**FRESH EVIDENCE** Home Secretary Kenneth Baker said that he was referring Engin's case back to the Appeal Court so that it could consider 'fresh material': namely, psychological evidence about his state of mind under interrogation.



Sharon Raghip

Psychologist Eric Ward, who examined Engin before the trial, reported that he was psychologically normal, and so never gave evidence. Mr Ward now admits that he was mistaken. Yet the material that Mr Baker is referring back to the Appeal Court only confirms evidence which

it refused to consider in 1988, when it turned down the men's applications for leave to appeal.

Meanwhile, the Home Secretary has his own problems. When he made the announcement about Engin, he already knew that Mark Braithwaite's lawyers would also be submitting 'new' evidence

about his state of mind under interrogation within the week. Mark is a claustrophobe. Ever since his arrest and questioning, he has complained that it was his fear of being placed in a cell which caused him to tell self-incriminating lies to the police. His symptoms in custody were so severe that at one point he was taken to hospital. The records of that hospital visit and of a recent examination in prison by a leading

expert are now with the Home Office awaiting Mr Baker's decision. Winston Silcott's situation, by comparison, is difficult. It is impossible to show that his confession is the result of oppression, because he never made any statement to the police. The 'record' of the interview in which he allegedly 'adopted a guilty posture' was never signed. The reason he was convicted had nothing to do with evidence. There never was any. Winston was jailed by the racism of the courts and the prejudices of the English popular imagination. The case against him would have taken less than 10 minutes to present had he been tried on his own.

The Appeal Court may refuse Engin's appeal. It would not be the first time. The Home Secretary may refuse to re-open Mark's case, and that would not be the first time either. Whatever happens, the families will go on fighting: 'This is a campaign for three innocent men, and it is going on, I am going on, until all three of them are out of prison', says Sharon Raghip.

The **Tottenham Three Families Campaign** are asking all its supporters to write letters to the authorities and the men in prison, to organise support groups and to affiliate to the Tottenham Three Families Campaign, 247a West Green Road, London N15 5ED, Tel 081-809 6483

## STOP POLICE CRIMINALISATION

# Cardiff Three

The brutal murder of a prostitute in the Butetown area of Cardiff two years ago has led to one of the longest running murder cases in British legal history and has exposed blatant police malpractice and media racism. The murder of Lynette White, aged 20, on Valentine's Day in 1988 was horrific. She had been stabbed over 50 times and her throat slashed. At first, police responded to witness reports of a white man covered in blood seen in the area of the murder. The police spent the next nine months searching for a blond man who matched

the description. But they ended up charging five black men with the murder. After a record length trial, three of the defendants, Yusuf Abdullah (29), Tony Paris (31) and Steven Miller (24) were convicted of Ms White's murder. The police had no forensic evidence to link any of the three to blood and saliva samples found at the scene of the crime. Yusuf Abdullah argued in court that he was on a ship in Barry - almost 8 miles away - at the time of the murder. His story was corroborated in court by 13 witnesses. During the trial, Steven Miller, who also

happened to be Ms White's boyfriend, retracted a confession he had made previously to the police. Miller has an IQ of 75 and, according to doctors, the mental age of an 11-year-old. The sensationalism generated by the Welsh press about the murder trial and its defendants, who were portrayed as residents of a 'no-go' area and dangerous criminals, has been decried by Cardiff's black community as flagrant racism. The police's method of investigation has also come under fire. Yet, despite the dubious nature of the Lynette White murder trial, three men, remain in jail for life.

Campaign for the Cardiff Three: Contact Malik and Rashid Youssef (convicted man's brothers), 56 Alice Street, Butetown, Cardiff (0222-462821)

# Chapeltown Defence Campaign

On Bonfire night last year two policemen were attacked and severely injured by a group of black youths in Chapeltown, Leeds. In the following weeks, Chapeltown's black residents, their clubs and meeting places were subjected to a policing operation similar in style to that inflicted on Broadwater Farm residents in the aftermath of PC Blakelock's death. The Hayfield pub and the Mandela Centre, in particular, were targeted. The local Community Affairs Inspector publicly accused youth workers at the Centre of failing to co-operate with police, and other officers claimed that the Centre sheltered the youths responsible. In fact, Chapeltown youth workers were commended recently by a Leeds judge for stopping and containing serious disturbances in the summer of 1987, and each year

the Centre has hosted the official, publicly funded firework display which has helped to keep the area peaceful on Bonfire night. But it was the dawn raids on the homes of black families that caused most concern. In the days and weeks following the attack, hundreds of black youths were rounded up in a series of raids that were carried out without search warrants and included much damage to property. During police interviews, some youths were threatened with a charge of attempted murder if they didn't 'co-operate'. Solicitors who advised juvenile clients of their right to remain silent were severely rebuked and treated as if they were accessories to violent crime. These tactics resulted in the police completely losing the support they may have initially had in the black community for their investigation.

Black youth workers, solicitors and others, concerned about the ferocity of the police response, attended a Police Forum meeting on 28 November to put some of their complaints and to ask for an end to the heavy policing. Divisional Chief Superintendent Stoneley dismissed the stories as 'anti-police prejudice'. The following day, two people were dragged out of their car, arrested and beaten for allegedly making a two-finger gesture to police. In response to these attacks on the community, the Chapeltown Defence Association was launched. A protest march on 8 December called for the end to such heavy policing. Since then, policing in the area has become less oppressive, but the Association continues to monitor police activity.

For further information contact: Chapeltown Defence Campaign, c/o Palace Youth Project, 90-92 Shepherds Lane, Leeds L7.

## STOP POLICE CRIMINALISATION

# Cowley: SUS is back

The Cowley Asian Youth Association has been formed as a result of persistent police harassment in the Cowley Road area of Oxford. According to the new Youth Association, whom CARF interviewed, this is the first time that Asian youth have tried to organise against racism in Cowley. In March 1990, the youths got so fed up with being persistently stopped and searched on the streets that they decided to keep records. Within one week, Mukhtar recorded being stopped by the police no less than 30 times. Problems also arise because police do nothing about racist activity - leaving the Asian youths to defend themselves. White youths from Abingdon deliberately provoke trouble by descending on the Cowley Road, calling the Asians 'Pakis' and other names. Tension is

particularly high when Oxford play at home. There was crowd trouble at a fairly recent Bristol City v Oxford fixture, but when the police saw Hussein and a friend eating a pizza, they smacked Hussein and accused him of starting the trouble. The police justify their actions by claiming that the youths are carrying drugs. Hussein was stopped for this reason and his car searched thoroughly (he was even accused of having two bodies in the boot). But according to Mukhtar: 'The police know where the drugs are, they know the pubs where the dealing goes on and who's behind it, but they don't do anything about it. Instead, the police are concentrating on the Asians and other black youth.' The youths compiled a report which a delegation presented to the

Thames Valley Police Liaison Consultative Group. They have also been able to air their grievances on the local radio. Policing seems to have eased up in the Cowley Road area - but it remains to be seen whether this will continue to be the case. SUS is back!

For further information contact the Cowley Asian Youth Association, c/o TVEI Centre, Cricket Road, Oxford.

## The Migrant and Refugee Manifesto

Refugee Forum and Migrant Rights Network

Price £2.00 plus 40pence p&p

Orders to Refugee Forum,

54 Tavistock Place, London WC1

*The manifesto is the voice of Britain's organised migrant and refugee communities.*

# Remember Tasleem



Mark Salmon

At 5pm, on 6 December 1989, 11-year-old Tasleem Akhtar was brutally murdered, only a few yards from her home in Esme Road, Sparkhill. A 16-year-old white youth - who pleaded guilty to Tasleem's murder and has been given a life-sentence - is widely believed to have been responsible for attacking other Asian children in the area. Yet the police, and judge, prosecution and defence lawyers in the case all went

to great lengths to deny that it was a racist murder.

Shortly after the tragedy, Tasleem's family and friends set up the Tasleem Akhtar Memorial Committee to campaign for justice for Tasleem and her family, the rights of all children to live without fear and an end to racist attacks and murders. The Committee, which is supported by many organisations and individuals, has held pickets,

public meetings and a demonstration. At its insistence, the Council has closed off the alley where Tasleem was murdered and has promised to improve the street lighting in Esme Road and surrounding roads.

We are petitioning to change the name of Esme Road to Tasleem Road in memory of Tasleem. We will also be taking a case against the police.

**MEMORIAL FOR TASLEEM** On 6 December 1990, nearly 200 men, women and children from all communities gathered in Esme Road, in memory of Tasleem Akhtar. Mohammed Hanif, uncle of Tasleem and chair of the Committee, gave a short speech. Despite painful memories, he was able to tell of the positive work of the Committee. He also remember others who have been victims of racist murders. The Committee calls on all justice loving people from all communities to join us. All support and donations to our fighting fund are welcome.

Tasleem Akhtar Memorial Committee, PO Box 1854, Camp Hill, Birmingham B11 1NJ.

## Children Attacked

### A BLACK STUDENT SPEAKS

On 26 July 1989, 14-year-old Tahir Akram was brutally murdered in Oldham by a group of armed white youths. Tahir had just gone to post a letter for his father when the attack took place. From a passing vehicle he was cold-bloodedly shot in the neck and died before reaching hospital. Despite the fact that his attackers had previously shot and injured Vincent Grady, an African man, and Abdul Gafor Rajpoot, an Asian youth, both the local police and the press denied that the murder was racially motivated.

This was no isolated incident. Since Tahir's murder, there have been a spate of attacks in Oldham on school-

children. 15-year-old Nusser Rafiq narrowly escaped death after being purposely run over by a car mounting the pavement. The driver, described as a 'white man', yelled 'black bastard'. Just five months after Tahir's death, a daughter of our community, 11-year-old Tasleem Akhtar, was savagely murdered by a white youth in Birmingham. Up and down the country our children are being brutally attacked on their way to and from school and in the playgrounds. We cannot and will not forget the brutal murder of 13-year-old Ahmed Iqbal Ullah on 17 September 1980 in the grounds of Burnage High School in Manchester, and today Asian schoolchildren go

to school in Camden and Tower Hamlets in London each day with the fear of both verbal and physical attacks by racists. Because the police and the schools deny that these are actually racist attacks and racist murders, they are occurring with more ferocity and impunity.

As black students, we must organise our own defence against attacks on our people. We must unite and organise in our places of work, our youth clubs, within our schools and colleges, and within our communities. We will not tolerate the butchering of our communities, nor the response of the state and the police to attacks on us. But we will organise the **FIGHT BACK**.



# Newham: Self-defence

On Thursday, 21 February 1991, Mr Govindan, a 59-year-old Asian shopkeeper, stands trial for trying to defend himself and his family from racist neighbours. Mr Govindan was racially attacked inside his shop on 1 June 1990 by a neighbour whilst his wife attempted to hold three other attackers at bay outside the shop door. Their young daughter called the police, but when the police arrived they took the side of the white attackers. Mr Govindan is a frail, elderly man with a severe heart condition. His attackers were a group of well-built young white men.

The role of officers from Plaistow police station in this case has been deplorable. They ignored previous complaints of racial harassment reported by the Govindans and although it was the Govindans who phoned the police for protection, the police actually collaborated with the attackers, arrested and charged Mr Govindan and are using the attackers as witnesses against him. The police have also ignored the con-

tinual racist attacks against the Govindan family following the arrest.

Campaigning under the slogan 'Police harassment is a crime', Mr Govindan has received massive local backing. Supporters picketed the court when Mr. Govindan made his first court appearance last December. The case was adjourned after the main attacker, and chief police prosecution witness, failed to turn up, sending a message to the court that he was in hospital. However, Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) took a Panorama crew, which was filming the picket, to the attacker's shop. Far from being on his deathbed, he was serving his customers. When questioned by Panorama, he responded by attacking the camera man as he was filming.

NMP urges all CARF readers to attend the picket of Stratford Magistrates' Court, Great Eastern Road, E15 on Thursday, 21 February at 9am (nearest tube, Stratford, Central line).

For more information contact Barry, NMP, 328 Katherine Road, London E7 (Tel 081-555-8151)

## APPEAL

If CARF is to continue we urgently need your financial support, your help with distribution - and your subscriptions. Our special thanks to the London Alliance Against Racism and Fascism for their generous donation of £1000 towards this first issue. Help CARF continue - Give your money now.

## No Entry

The Caribbean Entry Refusals Action Group (CERAG) was established in August 1989 by immigration advisers and community workers concerned by the dramatic increase in the numbers of port refusals of visitors arriving from the Caribbean.

The treatment of Caribbean visitors is following a pattern similar to that experienced by people from the Indian subcontinent and West Africa. Increased refusals of visitors from these areas a few years ago led to the imposition of visa restrictions, and there is a fear that visas may also be imposed upon people from the Caribbean.

Britain seems to be coming into line with EC policy - restricting the entry of people from outside the European Community, whilst opening the

doors to anyone from a member state. This is affecting those Commonwealth citizens who are settled in the UK and who want to maintain family links with their country of origin. It is undermining the settlement of such people by restricting the entry of family members who may wish to visit them in the UK.

CERAG is attempting to publicise the issue and, with the help of public pressure, bring about changes in immigration law and practice relating to visitors. Two regional groups already exist, in London and the West Midlands.

CERAG welcomes the participation of anyone concerned by this issue. We can be contacted c/o JCWI, the Shape Centre, 300 Bradford Street, Birmingham B5 6HX. Two CERAG publications are available: Caribbean Visitor and a CERAG information sheet (for those considering inviting relatives to the UK).

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