



AFTER SOLINGEN **What price** **citizenship?**

SPECIAL FOCUS ON BLACK PRISONERS
Black Panther interview • Freedom fast

plus: Churchill, the press and the BNP

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EDITORIAL

Deny them the oxygen of publicity

Once again the voice of the racist lobby is becoming more vociferous – in the local Tory wards and on the fraying edges of the Conservative party, in white residents' associations and on council estates, in the provincial press and on radio. And the right-wing dogs are baying again – finding legitimacy now in sections of the national media which either turn a tired old anti-immigrant diatribe of a tired old unlegitimated Churchill into a brave stand against the new invaders or, in the interests of a dubious balance, give a platform to those who deny equality to others.

Paradoxically, a greater awareness amongst journalists of racial harassment does not increase their sensitiveness to the issue. In fact, the reverse. They irresponsibly invite to studio debates those whose philosophy inspires the violence – justifying the invitations in the name of 'equality of opportunity'. Thus, ITV's 'Whale On' debate on racial harassment (28.5.93) included Patrick Harrington, ex-National Front, on the platform, and a motley crew of fascists in the studio audience. And, also in May, BBC Scotland's 'Axiom' programme invited the BNP to take part in a studio debate.

The question then arises: when the media allow a bunch of racists to pose as the voice of legitimate political parties and 'white' opinion, does the anti-racist movement serve its cause by agreeing to debate with them?

And there is another danger. In June, a BBC1 'Heart of the Matter' programme, in focusing on freedom of speech for fascists, gave a platform to BNP deputy leader Richard Edmonds and national organiser David Bruce, and effectively shifted the debate away from the right of communities to live free from racial attack, to the right of fascists to promote the creed which provokes the attacks, under cover of freedom of speech.

As CARF asked in 1978 – another period when the fascists were attempting to use the media to propagate their views – 'Should a free press be free of social responsibility? What is this freedom of speech which exhorts to kill and encourages to harass? Of what use is it, if it takes precedence over the first freedom – the freedom to life?' ■

Self-defence is no offence

Bradford 12, Newham 7, Newham 8. These were all campaigns fought in the 1980s around the principle that 'Self-defence is no offence'. Now, in the 1990s, the importance of the fight for self-defence has been shown, yet again, with the acquittal of the Drummond Street Four. They were cleared of charges of grievous bodily harm and violent disorder on 14 June. The charges arose after Bengalis in north London fought back against an attack by a gang of racists armed with knuckle dusters and hammers last April (see CARF No 14).

The original jury was dismissed after the first day of the trial on grounds of race bias, and grievous bodily harm charges against two of the four were dropped during the course of the trial. The Crown Prosecution Service proceeded with the case, despite admitting that the racists came 'looking for trouble with the Asian community' and instigated the fight.

Though relieved at the acquittal, which was achieved after a vigorous local campaign and pickets of the court, the four are still angry that charges were dropped last November against members of the white gang who attacked them.

Fighting the Churchill factor

Clamping down on fascist groups isn't the only way of getting rid of racial violence. CARF argues that there are other forces creating and fomenting popular racism – preparing the ground for groups like the BNP.

Most Tory ministers were quick to distance themselves from Winston Churchill's Bolton speech in May, claiming that his views were by no means representative of the party as a whole. But despite attempts to isolate him, Churchill is not the lone voice Conservative Party Central Office would have us believe. And Churchill himself, like Enoch Powell before him, knows full well that there is a racist constituency out there, both inside and outside the Tory party, receptive to his views.

John Major and his cabinet, despite being architects of the Asylum Bill, are careful not to make overt appeals to the racist and nationalist instincts of this constituency. The Tory Right is feeling betrayed and flexing its muscles – as witnessed by Teddy Taylor's Campaign for a British Referendum, stirrings in the Monday Club, the formation of the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus, and the present

rumblings of discontent about Major's leadership itself.

Electioneering and race

In the shires, as the campaign last year in Cheltenham to oust black candidate John Taylor showed, grassroots Tories do not want central office's view on race relations imposed upon them.

More recently, the local elections in May showed how some Tory party wards feel about 'race' issues. The Humberstone Conservative broadsheet, issued in support of Leicester candidate David Parsons, included a diatribe and petition against the building of temples and mosques in the area. In east London, as part of its election campaign in Customhouse and Silvertown, a Newham South Conservative Association leaflet, headlined 'Ethnic cleansing in south Newham', accused Labour's housing policy of bias towards ethnic minorities.

One explanation put forward for Churchill's intervention on immigration is that Boundary Commission changes could transform Churchill's Manchester Davyhulme constituency from a safe Tory seat into a marginal one, and that his pronouncements were made with a view to impressing right-wing selection committees elsewhere.

Media support

Tory party central office may have wanted Churchill silenced, but for the *Mail*, the *Star* and the *Express* – who represent Thatcher and Powell's Conservatism – Churchill is as true an English hero as his grandfather before him. Writing in the *Daily Express*, under the headline 'Churchill deserves a tolerant hearing', Kilroy-Silk declared that the reaction to Churchill's 'perfectly reasonable questions' demonstrated our 'lack of confidence in the maturity and tolerance of our democracy'. Ronald Spark in the *Mail on Sunday* went back to the old Powellite arguments about the 'conspiracy of silence on racial problems' and the courage of Mr Churchill in breaking the 'race taboo'. Brian Hitchin for the *Daily Star* chastised 'the hypocrisy machine' that 'shoved Winston Churchill through the mincer' for having 'the courage to say the unsayable'.

But what these papers really admired in Churchill's outburst was his description of the 'relentless flow' of Muslims that he was fighting on our beaches – those people who are changing the well-known Christian character of our inner cities. Kilroy-Silk knows what is at stake: 'British soldiers fighting in the Gulf to liberate Kuwait were not allowed to hold Christian services ... for fear of offending Muslims. Why can't we say that while we have no wish to tell others how to lead their lives, we do not wish to be told how to live ours?'

Other journalists, too, made it clear that they just could not come to terms with those 'immigrants' who would not become English. The *Mail* even got an Asian journalist, Mihir Bose, to say it for them. He wrote of the growing belief that some Asians wanted a

ROGUES GALLERY



Enoch Powell



Robert Relf



Rosina McDonnell



Brian Mangle



Winston Churchill

version of their own Muslim republic and that this type of attitude has 'done immeasurably more damage' than Churchill's.

ETHNIC CLEANSING IN SOUTH NEWHAM

WHAT DOES THE LABOUR PLAN MEAN FOR OUR AREA?

* CHILDREN OF "WHITE UK" TENANTS IN OUR AREA WILL FIND IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO GET A PLACE OF THEIR OWN LOCALLY.

* THE LABOUR PARTY THINKS THAT WHITE HOUSEHOLDS SHOULD GET FEVER OF THE BEST PROPERTIES IN THIS AREA, AND THAT WHITE HOUSEHOLDS SHOULD WAIT LONGER TO GIVE PRIORITY TO ASIAN HOUSEHOLDS FOR BETTER QUALITY PROPERTY.

In a nutshell, then, bad race relations are created by those who don't want to assimilate into the British way of life. Wicked British racism isn't to blame, but 'immigrants' who want to retain their culture and lifestyle are. And, in this, Churchill's views, fleshed out even further by the press, accord with the racist campaigners who are terrorising black families.

'Rights for Whites'

Racist attacks on council estates up and down the country are becoming more violent – and more orchestrated. A 'Rights for Whites' scenario is in danger of developing, even before the intervention of fascist groups. In June, Clive Forbes, an African-Caribbean man from the Wyrley Birch estate in Erdington, Birmingham, was forced to leap 25 feet from the window of his house after racists attempted to force their way into his home. Subsequently, the racists beat him so badly that he suffered a blood clot in his brain and is now in a critical condition.

A community worker told CARF of the situation on estates in the Maxwelltown scheme in the Hilltown area of Dundee, where black families, mainly Pakistani, are being subjected to what can only be described as a concerted, paramilitary-style campaign of terror. 'The gangs have look-outs

stationed on top of the housing blocks', CARF was told. 'From here, they coordinate attacks and warn off attackers if the police are seen. Some of them have air rifles. They even all wear the same gear, making it more difficult to identify them individually.' It seems that no one – not the police, nor the local authority – is willing to stop the violence. Dundee Council's housing director won't even acknowledge racial harassment as different from anti-social behaviour per se, and will not consider evicting racist tenants.

Meanwhile, in Sheffield, after two years of concerted harassment against Somali refugee families, the local council has issued an eviction order against 39-year-old unemployed Brian Mangle. But local papers have rounded on the council, and rallied in favour of Mangle. They have gone to interview him, told readers about his disabled wife, and have even found a black man to say that he is not a racist and friends to explain that this was just a neighbours' dispute and there are often brawls, so why all the fuss?

Now, Mangle's supporters have joined forces with another white Sheffield protest group – the East End Action Group. This is composed of white residents of Darnall who are protesting that their children can't get houses in the area whilst Asians can. A development by the Asian Housing Association, visible for all to see for over two years, has suddenly become a bone of contention.

Ammunition for the BNP

Mangle is part of a long line of infamous race martyrs created by the press – ranging from Robert Relf, jailed in 1976 for refusing to remove the sign which had stood outside his house for two years, stating it would only be sold to an English family, to Rosina McDonnell, whom television and local press portrayed as having taken a

historic stand in order to preserve a neighbourhood from an alien invasion when Newham Council evicted her for racial harassment.

The creation of such race martyrs plays straight into the hands of the BNP. It feeds it with the campaigning ammunition needed for its 'Rights for Whites' campaigns. It identifies those localities in which white communities will be receptive to the BNP's message.

The BNP is presently highlighting the question of whites as victims of racial harassment, presenting a barrage of twisted evidence in *British Nationalist*. Furthermore, it has staged campaigns, such as in Walsall around the killing of Paul Carter, against so-called racism by blacks against whites.

SAVE HALIFAX! JOIN OUR BATTLE

THE WHITE COMMUNITY IN HALIFAX IS UNDER ATTACK. LARGE AND HIGHLY ORGANISED GANGS OF ASIANS ROAM THE STREETS CARRYING OUT RANDOM AND VICIOUS RACIST ATTACKS UPON INNOCENT WHITE PEOPLE. THESE GANGS ARE TRYING TO TURN THE VICTORIA ROAD AND GIBBER STREET DISTRICTS INTO NO-GO AREAS FOR WHITES. MEANWHILE THE POLICE AND THE COUNCIL DO NOTHING. HALIFAX USED TO BE A DECENT PLACE TO LIVE - BUT NOW THE WHITE COMMUNITY IS UNDER SIEGE. WE HAVE BECOME SECOND CLASS CITIZENS

BNP leaflet

And, in accordance with Churchill's warning of 'a relentless flow' of immigrants, the BNP has attempted to mobilise white residents against, for instance, Asian centres and meeting places. In Halifax, it has campaigned against the opening of an Asian women's refuge in the Claremont area of Calderdale. In Stoke, it sought to take over a racist white tenants' association which is petitioning the council against the presence of an Asian religious centre in the area. CARF is presently investigating claims that the BNP has organised training camps and has an HQ in Dundee.

Our job as anti-racists is not merely to campaign against the BNP, but to stop the groundswell of popular racism on which it builds. The important thing to remember is that the BNP is seeking to channel a racism that already exists; it does not conjure these resentments out of thin air. Our job as anti-racists is to stop popular racist campaigns before they develop into fully-fledged Nazi ones. At a local level, we need to campaign against newspapers like the *Sheffield Star*, which are creating race martyrs. Nationally, we must hammer home the fact that the racist statements of politicians like Winston Churchill, who are then turned into popular heroes by the press, give legitimacy to and encourage the racist thugs on the streets. ■

WHITES UNDER SIEGE AS RACE-WAR CONTINUES

RAMADAN MOB IN BLACKPOOL

BLACKPOOL folk are having second thoughts about their traditional hospitality to some of the visitors their famous seaside town is getting nowadays.

Among these are the moslem



Campaign for citizenship rights

In the wake of the murders in Solingen, German-born Turks are demanding the right to be recognised as German citizens. In Belgium, too, second- and third-generation 'immigrants' are amongst those calling for an end to the racist citizenship laws there. And in France there has been massive anger at the proposed restrictions on citizenship rights.

CARF adds its voice to the growing campaign across Europe.

Why is it so important to campaign for citizenship rights? For white Europeans, with British or EC passports, it is easy to take the security and freedom that citizenship brings for granted. They can be complacent, for instance, about the right to move freely across Europe, to enjoy health and social provision and to have friends and families to visit.

But for Europe's 16 million settled non-citizens, European harmonisation is bringing in its wake insecurity, repression, fear. Harmonisation means that while routes to citizenship are rapidly narrowing, the erosion of rights and harsh measures of control are accelerating at an alarming pace.

Given this scenario, a pan-European movement to secure citizenship rights is as fundamental today as was the struggle of the labour movement in the nineteenth century to establish the right to organise in trades unions. Where once a strong labour movement was the prerequisite for all other social and political rights—for example, the right to combine against exploitation, the right to withhold labour—a movement for citizenship rights today is fundamental if black people are to fight back against the rising tide of racism and fascism without fear of expulsion. As European governments argue that they need to reduce numbers of 'immigrants' in order to improve race relations, CARF argues that, if they

are sincere about seeking 'racial harmony', then they should give 'immigrants' a stake in society, by giving them citizenship.

Routes to citizenship blocked

There have been two main routes to citizenship in Europe: by birth in the territory (*ius soli*, or right of soil); and by descent from a citizen (*ius sanguinis*, or right of blood). The first route is inclusive: anyone born in the territory, of whatever race, qualifies.

The second route is patently racist. When citizenship is based on biology, when it is awarded only to those in whose veins runs the 'right blood', when, as in Germany, the third generation are still foreigners, states are reiterating the ideology of the Third Reich.

Today, in Belgium, as well as Germany, such a connection between blood and citizenship is the norm. A second- or third-generation Turkish youth born in Germany, or Moroccan youth born in Belgium, is still Turkish or Moroccan and not German or Belgian. The settlement in Germany within the last four years of hundreds of thousands of third-generation 'ethnic Germans' from eastern Europe or Russia has revealed the disgraceful contrast between the rights flowing from blood and the rightlessness flowing from birth in Germany.

Restrictions

France: Interior minister Pasqua aims to change nationality laws so that the children of immigrants born in France will have to apply for citizenship between the ages of 16 and 21. More power to mayors to check up on 'bogus marriages', and more police identity checks are also planned.

Belgium: police get more powers to carry out identity checks for illegal immigrants in 22 districts of Brussels.

Italy: Government plans to make it easier to expel non-EC immigrants accused of criminal offences. If effected, they could be deported even before they stand trial.

Non-citizen by birth

The route to citizenship by birth on the territory has been gradually narrowing throughout the post-war period, as former British, Dutch and French territories, through which colonial subjects were citizens of the colonial power, achieved independence, and the former colonial citizens lost their citizenship.

Citizenship by birth in Britain was removed in 1981, except for those who had a British or settled parent. Non-British children born in Britain require 'leave to enter', according to the immigration rules, and only become entitled



DPA/Jansen

After the murders in Solingen, what price citizenship?

to citizenship if they spend their first 10 years here.

Now, in France, after years of anti-Arab and anti-immigrant agitation by the Right, the government intends to go down the British road, by removing the automatic right to citizenship of French-born children of foreign parents. Under proposals debated in May by the national assembly, these children will have to apply for citizenship between the ages of 16 and 21, and may have to swear an oath of allegiance. Those who have served a term of more than six months' imprisonment are likely to be ineligible.

Naturalisation = assimilation

The other avenue to citizenship in all European countries is naturalisation. But this is discretionary. In Germany, the absurd lengths to which applicants must go to prove that they are sufficiently 'assimilated into German culture' to merit its citizenship was demonstrated recently in the case of a Czech art director of a German-language newspaper. She was made to do a spelling test and to recite the third verse of the German national anthem, and was asked questions such as, 'Who takes over from the German chancellor when he goes on holiday?'

Campaigners in Switzerland told CARF that those wishing to be naturalised are visited at their home by an inspector who must appraise the applicant's assimilation into the Swiss way of life. It is a normal practice, it would seem, for the inspector to look through the applicant's wardrobe and

drawers, to see whether clothing has been folded in an orderly fashion.

Now, throughout Europe, particularly in Austria and Germany, there are calls to tighten up on criteria for naturalisation. In Denmark, it was proposed that all those committing offences should be excluded, including those guilty of non-payment of parking fines.

The erosion of rights and further controls

The situation of Europe's non-citizens is already precarious. In Germany, non-citizens can lose residence rights if they lose their job, become homeless, get into trouble with the police or are involved in political movements. Those born in Europe are not exempt. French- and Belgian-born north Africans who have committed criminal offences have been deported to countries with which they have no connection. And after disturbances in Paris following the police shooting of Makone M'Bowle, French interior minister Charles Pasqua announced that, in future, 'foreigners arrested on demonstrations will be subject to expulsion orders'.

Thus, insecure as the present situation may be, it is set to get worse. At present, most 'settled' non-citizens (with long-term residence permits) get access to social and welfare provision. But this is increasingly under threat from governments across Europe. Family reunion rights for non-citizens are being made subject to more and more restrictions, mainly to prevent 'recourse to public funds' by their 'immigrant' populations.

These governments are also bringing in new measures to expel immigrants. The task of the secret expulsion committee of the Ad Hoc Group on Immigration, whose recommendations were endorsed by the EC's meeting of immigration ministers in Copenhagen in June, is to devise more prompt and efficient ways to expel those deemed no longer to merit permission to stay. Those admitted as workers and now unemployed, those working without permission, those admitted as wives who have fled violent husbands, and those whose expulsion is deemed necessary in the public interest, will now find themselves at risk of speedy deportation.

Join CARF's campaign for citizenship rights in Europe. ■

After Solingen



The tragic deaths of five Turks in the Solingen fire of 29 May has been followed by another wave of racist fire attacks and neo-nazi criminal activity in Germany. As we go to press, we have learnt that two German women died in Berlin following a firebomb attack on a Kurdish restaurant. They lived upstairs and could not escape.

But the Solingen murders have also provoked resistance, anger and solidarity. Hours after the murderous attack, 3,000 people marched in Solingen. One week later, a national mobilisation of 20,000 people took place in the town—with other solidarity demonstrations across Germany.

The numbers could have been even more. Press scaremongering, opposition to the demonstration by the German trade union federation DGB, and violent spoiling tactics in Solingen in the aftermath of the murders by the far-right Turkish Grey Wolves, kept some away. Police attacks on demonstrators, and further Grey Wolves activity, allowed the national media to divert attention away from the issues of far-right violence and state racism.

Four German youths have subsequently been arrested in connection with the murder. Although one of those arrested is believed to be connected with the fascist DVU, the police and the press are attempting to portray the arson as a crazy, opportunist attack. But there is considerable circumstantial evidence of other possible far-right involvement in the murders—especially since Solingen has had a small nucleus of far-right activists for years.

The attack took place two days before the anniversary of the execution of nazi mass murderer Adolph Eichmann, who was born in Solingen. Anti-racists also have information that a group of 20-30 neo-nazi skins were seen at a local petrol station one hour prior to the attack. ■

Fight back

Germany: After Solingen, government forced to consider dual citizenship for Turkish community... Guestworkers from Angola, Mozambique and Vietnam win some concessions on government deportation plans. Those in the country since June 1990, who can prove employment, will be issued with stay permits.

Belgium: 630,000 Belgians have signed the Objectiv petition for citizenship rights. Campaigners say that debate in Germany on dual citizenship has given a boost to anti-racist demands.

France: 20,000 anti-racists march in Paris to protest against Pasqua's new nationality and immigration proposals and for citizenship rights.

Roma on the march

In 1989, something important happened in the history of European Roma. Families from different tribes gathered to defend themselves against the threat of a new expulsion from a country in which they had attempted to settle – in this case the former West Germany. They had originally fled from Poland, the former Yugoslavia and Romania due to the increasing discrimination following the disintegration of communist rule.

What started in 1989 as a struggle of the Roma in Germany for their right to live where they want and for the application of the European Parliament recommendations concerning the protection of Romani culture and language, is still alive in 1993. Four years later, the Romani refugees are still fighting back.

Sunday, 16 May 1993: Led by the Roma National Congress (RNC) and their chairman, Rudko Kawczynski, more than 300 Roma families (most of them from Macedonia and Montenegro) gathered in Hamburg to protest against the racist German refugee policy. Their main demands to the German government: the recognition of all Roma as an ethnic and cultural minority threatened by pogroms all over Eastern Europe; the right to stay for all Romani refugees from the former Yugoslavia; a stop to all financial programmes funded by the German government to set up 'East European townships' for Romani families; the ratification of UN resolution 62, 'Protection of the Roma'.

Britta Grell, of the Berlin-based Anti-Racist Initiative, reports on the Roma march for freedom in Germany.

Germany is the only western European country that still refuses to sign the resolution.

Together with 200 German and Turkish supporters, the Romani refugees marched 12 kilometres from Hamburg to the former nazi concentration camp, Neuengamme. Neuengamme is the site from where, 53 years ago, more than 2,500 Roma and Sinti living in Hamburg were deported to Poland, where almost all of them died in the nazi gas chambers. Neuengamme is also the site where several hundred Roma set up a refugee camp in 1989 in memory of their murdered ancestors and in protest against racist discrimination by the German government today.

In 1989, after occupying the Neuengamme concentration camp for a month, the refugees were violently driven out by the police. In 1993, the police's tactics hadn't changed – only this time the regional government had taken 'precautionary measures'. A court verdict had stated that the Senate of Hamburg could prohibit any action 'that would offend against the use of the former concentration camp as a memorial and a "green area"'. Hence, by trying to set up another refugee camp at Neuengamme, the RNC

would be committing a crime – 'breach of the peace'. To implement the 'peace', the Hamburg Senate spared neither trouble nor expense. On Sunday, the day of the Roma demonstration, the memorial was closed to all visitors and the whole area was completely sealed off. Survivors of the Holocaust and their descendants were kept from entering the grounds by about 1,400 police officers, whilst troops of uniformed descendants of the nazis desecrated the site by playing frisbee on the graves of Holocaust victims. Then, when the Roma tried to break through the first barriers, they were beaten by the police.

After two weeks of protest and a hunger strike by Rudko Kawczynski, the Senate of Hamburg finally decided to let the Roma have a commemoration and a press conference on the disputed site. The authorities in Hamburg promised to suspend deportations until a solution is found by the ministry of the Interior. But after all the broken promises in the past the Roma will not just go back to the state refugee camps and hostels.

Towards the end of May, the German government announced that the Roma could not stay at Neuengamme. So the Roma moved their protest to the UNHCR in Bonn, where they demanded the application of the Geneva Convention, which states that refugee passports should be issued to all stateless Roma. On the way to Bonn, the Roma stopped at Solingen to show solidarity with the Turkish community.

In Bonn, the German office of the UNHCR seemed reluctant to take up their plight, claiming they had no power. But the Roma were undeterred, and set up a camp outside.

Representatives of the RNC were also sent to the UNHCR office in Geneva and to the Human Rights Commission in Strasbourg.

The RNC also announced a blockade at the German-Polish border, to protest the German-Polish agreement whereby Germany pays Poland DM120 million to take back the Roma refugees. ■

The RNC desperately needs international support, both financial and political. In July they hope to send a delegation to the UK, and CARF and the NMP will be helping to organise a press conference.



Medico Bildienst Berlin/Wolfgang Heinze

The CARF interview

US Black Panther Geronimo ji-jaga Pratt, is in his 23rd year of imprisonment. CARF supporter Heike Kleffner asked him about his years in prison and his views on the black movement.*

HK: *How did you join the Black Panther Party?*

GP: I am from a small town in Louisiana and I grew up in a segregated situation. On the one hand, it was very racist – I grew up witnessing the lynchings of the Ku Klux Klan. On the other hand, the community was full of integrity and dignity and its own pride. I joined the army and ended up in Vietnam. This was in the 1960s, when a lot of changes were taking place in the country. That change was interpreted by us down South in a different way from that of Martin Luther King and Civil Rights. There it was constant warfare, we were raised on the self-defence principle.

When I got out of the US army, I enrolled at UCLA and was befriended by a brother who was the Deputy Defence Minister of the Southern California chapter of the Panthers, Bunchy Carter. When he was killed in January 1968, he left a recording which said that if anything happened to him, he would recommend that I take his place. So, when you say 'joining the BPP', there was never really a formal joining. It was a coming together of different forces under the BPP banner. Later, I assumed the role of Minister of Defence because Huey [Newton] was incarcerated.

HK: *When did you first learn about COINTELPRO [the FBI's domestic counter-intelligence programme]?*

GP: We began to feel its effects from the start. But it became more intense at the end of 1968 and beginning of 1969, shortly after J Edgar Hoover issued his infamous proclamation that we were the greatest threat to their national security. For example, I was shot at in my bed, four days after the assassination of Fred Hampton in 1969; a few months earlier, I had been shot at in the streets by three whites in a car.

HK: *Can you describe how you ended up in prison?*

GP: I was arrested on 8 December 1970, in Dallas, on a warrant run out of what's known as the shoot-out in Los Angeles in 1969. I was extradited back to California a couple of months later. I was indicted for quite a few things



and one of them was murder. At the time, I thought it was just another charge that they threw in to maintain a no-bail situation. Eventually, it became more obvious to us that this was something they were really going to press charges over.

HK: *How do you perceive the support for yourself and other prisoners-of-war from the Black Liberation movement?*

GP: There is a conscious and systematic attempt on the part of the government to oppose any support that may be developing for us. The solution, I think, has to be based not on a 'Free Geronimo' campaign, but on our national efforts for liberation – that says we are soldiers who fought for the liberation of our nation and our nation fights for the liberation of us. It was a political situation that landed me in here, and it will be a political situation that releases me.

In the process of building a national movement will come support for Mumia Abu-Jamal* and all other political prisoners and prisoners-of-war. One of the things that the white superstructure is afraid of is the coming together of various national forces such as the Native movement, the Chicano movement, the white North American anti-imperialist movement, which are all based on the same principles of independence.

HK: *Do Black elected officials support the demand of freedom for Black political prisoners?*

GP: They like to individualise prisoners because, by and large, they buy into the system's propaganda, that there are no political prisoners. You have to understand in the New Afrikan nation you have a class situation. The black bourgeoisie (which Malcolm X would have called the house Negroes as opposed to the field Negroes) might take an Angela Davis because it is fashionable, but they turned away from Rouchel Magee, who was actually shot and almost killed. It is a matter of us trying to educate them so they can base their decisions on principles as opposed to personalities.

HK: *What do you think about the explosion of the prison population in the last 20 years?*

GP: After the government had systematically eliminated the progressive leadership of the BPP or driven it underground, throughout the Black and other oppressed communities, the role models for the upcoming generations became the pimps, the drug dealers, etc. Gangs were being formed with a gangster mentality, as opposed to the revolutionary mentality we had given them. This is what the government wanted to happen, why people like me are kept in prison. They don't want me out there struggling to bring home the truth to those youngsters. Because those youngsters have a lot of respect for us because we haven't betrayed anything.

We have the biggest prison population anywhere in the world. Of course, there is racism involved. Here, in California, you have a lot of Mexicano and Brown people being railroaded into prison. What you see is them trying to get Mexicans and Blacks against each other. It is being manipulated from above to keep the death factor high. The best way is to get them to kill each other off. We are being presented again with the situation which George Jackson and others struggled against. Our task is to get the prisoners together across racial lines. ■

* The full text of this interview and that with Mumia Abu-Jamal (on death row) is in *Face & Class*, 'Black America: the street and the campus', Summer 1993.

Prisoners fast for freedom

Campaigning groups and families picketed the Home Office in May to protest against racism in the law and to demand justice for innocent prisoners. Simultaneously, 58 hostages to British justice in eight different prisons undertook a three-day hunger strike to draw attention to their wrongful convictions. Because of media silence on the event, CARF asked some of the prisoners to describe what happened.

Raphael Rowe, one of the 'M25 Three' (see CARF Nos 13 & 14), serving time in Gartree, wrote to the prison governor along with nine other prisoners: 'Our Fast for Freedom is not about prison conditions, it is a clear message to the Home Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, that we support the mass demonstration taking place on our behalf outside the Home Office on 5 May.'

M25

As we go to press, we are still awaiting judgment in the M25 appeal which was heard in June.

Winston Silcott also took part. 'On the third day my tongue feels furry and dry, but my spirit is strong as I know within my heart that what I am doing is right', Winston told CARF. 'Self defence is supposed to be no offence. Believe me, if a white person was in my present situation, he or she would have been made a national hero for defending their life. To prove one's innocence from inside these walls of the penal hell hole is an uphill struggle. The elements are against women, men, the young, especially black people, who have been framed up or wrongly incarcerated by the British Criminal (in)justice system.'

Satpal Ram, serving a life sentence for defending himself against a racist attack (see CARF No 8), was victimised



by prison authorities for planning participation in the hunger strike. He was identified as a ring-leader at Long Lartin, and, he alleges, placed in a segregation unit, strip-searched, brutalised, racially abused and subsequently transferred to Whitemoor. Despite this, he still participated in the hunger strike with three others in Whitemoor and received support from many more: 'We are in prison because of police frame-ups, dubious evidence, and a racist and corrupt judicial system.'

Michael Callender

An application for Michael Callender's leave to appeal is being heard as CARF goes to press. Michael, serving life for murder (see CARF No 14), was convicted even though the prosecution accepted he had not committed the crime. Michael was pronounced guilty of involvement in a 'joint enterprise' as he must have known that a murder was about to happen.

Michael Callender Campaign 081-883 6434.

Trevor Henry

Trevor Henry, convicted in 1991 after a South London woman had acid thrown in her face (see CARF No 11), has been granted leave to appeal. Trevor, who is serving a 10-year sentence in Belmarsh High Security Prison, was convicted of conspiracy after the charge was changed from grievous bodily harm halfway through the investigation in order to secure a conviction. The appeal is expected to be held in September.

Contact Lewisham Action on Policing on 081-692 1308 for details.

Satpal wrote to CARF the day before the release of the Taylor sisters (who also took part in the hunger strike) by the appeal court which strongly criticised the role that the media had played in gaining their convictions. He wrote: 'The media showed no interest in our action. We believe the Home Office put a 'D' notice on it to stop the embarrassment it would cause them. It shows that the media actively participate in miscarriages of justice. They are quick to play judge, jury and executioner in getting people convicted, but they are not interested in assisting to get the innocent out of prison. British justice is a sham.'

Write to: Winston Silcott (B74053) HMP Swaleside, Brabazon Road, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4DZ and Satpal Ram (E94164) HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambridgeshire PE15 0PR.

Ivan Fergus

CARF is delighted to report victory for the Justice for Ivan Fergus Campaign (first covered in CARF No 9). Ivan was cleared at the Court of Appeal in June. He had served six months of a 15-month youth custody sentence after being found guilty of assault with intent to rob, on the basis of questionable identification evidence. Appeal judge Steyn said that the case against Ivan was a 'wholly false one and he is entirely innocent'. The Fergus family will now fight on to ensure that Ivan receives compensation for the ordeal he suffered at the hands of British justice.



Photos: Darren Jakobsen

Inside Europe's lock-ups

A regular report on the protests of refugees in detention

Britain

The Haslar 10: Ten asylum-seekers were transferred from Haslar detention centre to ordinary prisons after protesting about their long imprisonment. The men, all Zaireans, had been on hunger strike in March after several months' detention. Then, in April, with one of them beginning to talk of suicide, they wrote to the Home Office requesting their release. The next day they were summoned, handcuffed and dispersed among four prisons in southern England.

The men, and the Stop the Detentions Action Group, which has been supporting them, are angry at their treatment. Instead of a humane response to their non-violent protest, they were threatened with deportation and treated as criminals. Nine of them are still in prison, locked in cells for 20 or more hours a day.

One of the Haslar 10 told CARF his story: 'As a senior civil servant in Zaire, and a member of the opposition UDPS, I chaired an inquiry into inter-tribal violence. I found that President Mobutu was behind a large number of killings. I wrote a report... Ten soldiers came to my home early one morning and took me to prison. I had no trial, no judicial process. I was suspended by my feet, beaten, whipped... finally my injuries were so bad, they had to take me to the military hospital. My relatives secured bail for me, with a large bribe. I escaped through Tanzania. I have heard that my wife was raped by three soldiers and that she is pregnant. I've written

her more than 20 letters, but haven't had a reply... The first night I arrived here, in January, they made me sleep on the seats at the airport. Then I was sent to Harmondsworth, then Haslar. I was on hunger strike for 10 days until I fainted and was sent to hospital. Now I'm here in prison, in Surrey. I share a cell with a youngster who tried to kill himself. I have seen nothing of this country in five months except prisons, and the motorway, when they drive us from one to the other.'

Pentonville: Eight Algerian men, one of whom had gone on hunger strike, celebrated their release at the end of May after three months in prison. A 100-strong picket was organised in support of the men on 28 May, and that same day the Home Office announced it was releasing them.

The men had been detained and tortured before escaping to Britain on false documents. They were arrested in Edgware mosque in London in February, and sent to Pentonville and Wormwood Scrubs. They complained of inhuman and racist treatment, in particular at Pentonville – the prison where Omasase Lumumba died and Gulf war detainees reported barbaric conditions.

Winson Green: 22 Indian asylum-seekers went on hunger strike at Winson Green prison, Birmingham, on 12 May, complaining that they were not criminals and should not be treated as such. They called off the strike to allow the Home Office time to respond to their demands, but when no response was forthcoming, 17 of the men

resumed the hunger strike on 24 May. A spokesperson for the men said: 'Some of these men have given detailed accounts of being tortured whilst in India. It is completely inappropriate and inhumane to detain them.'

Oxford: Detainee support groups met at the beginning of June to discuss the imminent opening of Britain's biggest immigration detention centre, at Kidlington, near Oxford. It has places for 200 people.

Stop the Detentions Action Group, 18 Spillman's Road, Rodborough, Stroud, Glos, tel: 0453-764559. Migrant Support Unit, 6-20 John's Mews, London WC1N 2XN, tel: 071-916 1646.

Independent Immigration Support Agency, 14 Bell Barn Shopping Centre, Cregoe Street, Birmingham B15 2DZ, tel: 021-622 7353.

Holland

In May, 15 asylum-seekers from Palestine and Lebanon went on hunger strike at the controversial asylum prison, the Grenshospitium. One of the hunger-strikers was put in isolation for a day after the authorities claimed he injured himself with a sharp weapon. A fire broke out the day after the strike began, and 25 asylum-seekers were transferred to another prison. Meanwhile, the independent Refugee Work group of the Autonoom Centrum issued a report condemning the regime of the asylum prison and the violations of human rights there. The authorities' response was to dismiss the group as a bunch of trouble-makers. ■

Construction of Lies, Werkgroep Vluchtelingen, Autonoom Centrum, Kinkerstraat 48 Huis, 1053 DX Amsterdam.

Stop the detentions

Over 10,000 black people are detained without trial every year in Britain, from a couple of hours to over 18 months. Yet their situation is rarely publicised. Two new books draw attention to this scandal. *Britain's forgotten prisoners* sets out numbers and nationalities detained, conditions of detention, detainees' legal and welfare needs, and organisations involved in assisting them. It is a useful resource for those seeking practical information. *Detained without trial* ranges from a detailed examination of the legal powers behind detention to a history of detainees' protests, testimonies of detained asylum-seekers and accounts of deaths in detention.

Britain's forgotten prisoners: meeting the needs of Immigration Act detainees, Detention Advice Service, 2 Prince of Wales Road, London NW5 3LG, £2.50. *Detained without trial: a survey of Immigration Act detention*, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, 115 Old Street, London EC1V 9JR, £4.99.



Pickets outside Pentonville prison

Jon Walter

Immigration appeals: a colonial outpost?

Now that the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Bill has gone through Parliament, rejected asylum-seekers will soon be able to bring an appeal to an independent adjudicator. What are their chances? Judging from immigration appeals, says an immigration lawyer who works with CARF, the odds are heavily stacked against them.

The old immigration appeals building in the detention compound at Harmondsworth was out on the rural fringes of Heathrow – virtually impossible to get to by public transport. Observers got the feeling that the adjudicators based there considered themselves in some colonial outpost. One was legendary for asking clients' legal representatives what their own immigration status was.

A new immigration appeals building, still within easy reach of Heathrow at Feltham, has now been opened to replace Harmondsworth. But the HQ of immigration appeals is Thanet House, entered through a nondescript doorway in the Strand.

No to passport checks

The campaign against passport checks in housing received a severe setback in May. The Department of the Environment decided not to appeal against the Court of Appeal's ruling that housing authorities should refuse housing to 'illegal immigrants' and report them to the Home Office (see *CARF* No 14). But Tower Hamlets Homeless Families Campaign is coordinating efforts to challenge the decision and its pernicious effects.

It is, however, an uphill struggle. Housing officers in Tower Hamlets, which has always regarded itself as an arm of the Home Office, are already frightening claimants for housing into withdrawing their applications by telling them they will be reported to the Home Office. Other authorities, however, are unwilling to implement any passport-checking policy, and the campaign is seeking to enlist the support of local government unions.

In May, Tower Hamlets launched another attack on the mainly Asian homeless families it is supposed to house, by offering the choice: either accept private rented housing outside the borough, or no housing at all. The Commission for Racial Equality is investigating.

Tower Hamlets Homeless Families Campaign, Brady Centre, Hanbury Street, London E1, tel: 071-377 1308.

There is no legal aid for immigration appeals, so there are a lot of shark 'immigration consultants' around in smart suits, along with a small number of committed law centre workers and lawyers doing 'freebies'. The place is full of people from all non-European corners of the globe, but mostly from Africa and the Indian sub-continent, who are fearful for their future. Many of those whose appeals are being heard are not there: they have not been allowed into Britain, and their appeal against that decision has to take place in their absence. The adjudicators, who hear the appeals, are a mixed bunch of embittered ex-colonial administrators, minor aristocracy and 'committee women', a couple of token ethnics and some smart new, legally-qualified appointees. Hundreds of appeals are heard every week; very few succeed.

Walk into any of the eight hearing rooms and you will catch the flavour of the place. In one room, a Home Office civil servant is questioning a young British Indian whose wife has been refused permission to join him; the Home Office believes that her 'primary purpose' in marrying him was to come to Britain. 'And why on earth', the official sneers, 'should this young woman have fallen in love with you?' (This is a very common tactic; most British Asian women wanting their husbands to join them here have had to face a Home Office official telling them that they have been duped by their husband, who is using them as a passport to settlement. Indeed, this is the presumption in such cases.)

In another room, an adjudicator is hearing the case of a West African accountancy student, refused permission to stay to finish his studies after eight years here. 'These West Africans', he complains. 'They all come here to study accountancy, and none of them are any good at it. Why do they come?'

Another adjudicator listens to the story of a Somali orphan, aged 15 when he applied to join his sister here, now 18 and still waiting. Meanwhile, his home in Mogadishu has been destroyed, he has been shot twice while



Mark Salmon

Mamta Chopra (pictured above with Sally Morton, who is also fighting a deportation order) lost her appeal against the Home Office's refusal to let her stay in Britain following the breakdown of her violent marriage (see *CARF* No 9), but the campaign is continuing to press for her to stay, and is pursuing a further appeal.

Naheed Ejaz, declared an illegal immigrant with her children years after she and they became British citizens, takes her case to the High Court on 13 July. The campaign is calling a picket on the day: assemble at 9.30 outside the High Court, Strand, London.

scavenging for food, he has seen infant nephews and nieces die of starvation. 'But surely he doesn't qualify as a distressed relative', objects the adjudicator. 'After all, he's not living alone, as required by paragraph 56 of the rules, HC 251.*'

It is in this atmosphere, where racism is given free rein within the framework of rigidly applied and inhuman rules, that asylum-seekers will be expected to exercise the appeal rights given them by the Asylum Bill. And they will face even higher institutional obstacles. Those detained, whose claims are declared 'groundless' by the Home Office, will have two days to lodge their appeal, and it is expected to be heard five days later. This compares with two weeks to lodge a non-asylum appeal, and several months to prepare it. The time-limits make it virtually impossible for asylum-seekers to gather evidence of persecution to put before a sceptical tribunal.

As if these obstacles were not enough, the draft rules set out 'negative factors' to be held against the appellant: not applying immediately, not giving a full account immediately, possessing damaged or destroyed documents, making more than one application, engaging in political activity in Britain – any of these can be used to justify dismissing appeals.

The proceedings in these buildings, in which the lives of thousands of people a year hang on the result of the appeal process, are thus far removed from anything resembling justice. ■

* Happily the boy won his appeal.



From Grunwick to Burnsall

The Burnsall strikers – still fighting one year on!

Since 15 June 1992, 19 black workers, most of them Asian women, have been on strike for union recognition, equal pay and basic health and safety at work at Burnsall Limited, a metal finishing company in Smethwick, West Midlands. Like many other black workers across the country, workers at Burnsall's—whose address is 10 Downing Street—were facing working conditions which damaged their health, low wages, compulsory overtime (workers regularly work a seven-day, 65-hour week) and continual harassment by the management. In March 1992, 26 of the 29 employees joined the GMB and, after three months in which the management categorically refused to recognise the union, took the decision to go on strike.

Strikers attacked on picket line

Since the strike began, the strikers have faced a series of attacks by scabs, and continual harassment by the police. In a recent incident, on 25 May, the strikers were attacked on the picket line by three white scab workers from the factory armed with a knife, an iron bar and wooden staves. Kuldip Dhaliwal was stabbed in the hands while trying to ward off knife blows aimed at his throat, neck and chest. He had to undergo emergency surgery that night to save two of his severed fingers, and is likely to lose the use of his thumb and index finger.

The attack was clearly pre-planned—one of the attackers had only started work in the factory that same day, and had been threatening the strikers throughout the day. Despite this, on his release from hospital, the police arrested Kuldip at his home and

charged him under section 2 of the Public Order Act (violent disorder), which can carry a 10-year prison sentence. Another of the strikers, who was trying to prevent a member of the strikers' group from being assaulted with a weapon, and a member of the support group, who was himself attacked with an iron bar and suffered head injuries, have also been arrested and face the same charge.

The police have arrested two of the scab workers and it appears that one is being charged with wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and the other with violent disorder. All these cases will be coming to court on 15 July. In the meantime, on the first anniversary of the strike, demonstrators at the mass picket were arrested after the police blocked the road.

Despite these attempts to undermine their morale, the strikers are still confident and determined to continue until their demands are met.

This strike is the most recent in a series of struggles by black workers for trade union recognition, stretching back to the Grunwick's strike in the late 1970s. Such strikes have only been successful through the support of the community and mobilisation by black and anti-racist organisations. In the 1990s, with the ban on 'secondary picketing' and other anti-trade union legislation making it harder than ever to mobilise through traditional trade union structures, community action is vital. ■

For more information on how you can support the strike, contact Burnsall Strikers Support Committee (London), c/o Londec, Instrument House, 205-217 King's Cross Road, London WC1X 9DB, tel: 071-713 7907, or Burnsall Strikers Birmingham Strikers Support Group, c/o 346 Soho Road, Handsworth Birmingham B21 9SE, tel: 021-551 4679.

FASCIST ROUND-UP •

BNP HQ

It's taken the tragic murder of Steven Lawrence, it's taken the deployment of riot police to protect the fascists from angry black youth, it's taken over four years to shift Conservative-controlled Bexley council from its complacent attitude towards the BNP HQ in Welling. As we go to press, a report on the HQ is to be presented to the council's town planning sub-committee. This follows the appointment by the council of Lionel Reid QC to investigate whether the 'bookshop' breaches planning regulations and the wider implications of its presence in Bexley.

Whicker's world

Eddie Whicker, ex-National Front (NF) member and recently exposed as a leading figure in Combat 18 (C18), was arrested in June and charged with possessing firearms with intent to endanger life. He did not apply for bail.

His arrest followed a police raid on the Crown and Cushion pub in Perry Bar, Birmingham, where two men were detained in possession of seven semi-automatic handguns and 200 rounds of ammunition. One of the men is understood to be a Loyalist from Belfast, named McCrudden, and the other to have Italian connections. (If the Italian connection proves correct, the involvement of the fascist Armed Revolutionary Nuclei (NAR) must be suspected. Several of its members, wanted in connection with the Bologna station bombing of 1980 that killed 80 people, live in Britain.)



Whicker, who was picked up by police in south London the following day, is well known to anti-racists. In the April 1992 general election he stood as the NF candidate for Birmingham Hodge Hill.

Since then, he has been seen helping to steward BNP paper sales in Brick Lane, east London. It was perhaps inevitable that he would gravitate towards the increasingly violent BNP and, even more significantly, Combat 18.

In May, TV's 'World in Action' showed an exposé of C18, in which Whicker was shown to be a key figure. While its name is new, C18's membership is made up of familiar faces—many, like Ian Dell, associated with the BNP, as well as other groups, such as the League of St George. Recently, C18 has played a key role in stewarding a series of meetings by revisionist historian David Irving.

The 'World in Action' programme also claimed that C18 had extensive contacts with the Ulster Defence Association (UDA),

recently banned in the north of Ireland but still legal in England. While contacts between the far Right and Loyalists are well documented – a large number of Loyalists turned out to support a BNP attack on a Troops Out march in January, for instance – evidence of suspected gun-running activities has been harder to come by. Whicker's arrest seems to provide confirmation of right-wing links with Loyalist paramilitaries. It remains to be seen how extensive these contacts are, but it is worth noting that, since his arrest, several other key C18 activists have disappeared from their south London homes at extremely short notice.

Information on the destination of the guns is less clear cut. Bearing in mind the shipments of arms from South Africa to Loyalist paramilitaries, a key factor in the upsurge of sectarian Loyalist assassinations, it is difficult to see why the guns would be needed in the north of Ireland. One source has suggested that the UDA is not well pleased by the publicity surrounding both the BNP (following the tragic death of Stephen Lawrence in Eltham) and C18, and is attempting to distance itself from them. According to this source, a clique within the UDA, with close links to Whicker and his colleagues, is said to be unhappy about this and, cold-shouldered by the main grouping, has decided to set up shop independently. Alternatively, the weapons may have been destined for a Loyalist campaign in Britain involving both the UDA and, possibly, C18 and the BNP.

Loyalist/BNP links

Edinburgh council and local police joined forces to ban the annual James Connolly march in Edinburgh in June. Although the Edinburgh Loyalist Coalition had planned to oppose the demonstration, which took place despite the ban, this protest never emerged. Instead, a motley crew of loyalists, BNP and skinheads made an unsuccessful attempt to attack the march. Police made 23 arrests, including seven loyalist/BNP supporters.

The following Saturday, 18 June, a march organised by the Independent Orange Order took place. This organisation is so ultra that the other Orange lodges in Edinburgh have distanced themselves from

it. An anti-fascist mobilisation on the day caused severe problems for the 120-150 loyalists – some of whom sported Ulster Volunteer Force banners – and BNP members who turned out.

Courts

These days, a round-up on fascists reads more like a quick search through local court reports. Besides the Eddie Whicker case, four BNP members, including Warren Glass, Lee Munns and Mark Osbrey, are set to appear in a west London court in July, charged with public order offences following an attack on an anti-fascist meeting in April. A picket of the court is planned by the West London Alliance (Tel: 081-843 2333).

Another BNP member, Kirk Barber, has been found guilty of violent disorder and reckless driving. Three skinheads were also charged and await sentencing. Barber, a Hertfordshire court heard, was the driver of a van carrying skinheads who, in November 1991, attacked a group of Bengalis, beating them with baseball bats and bottles.

NF dead but still twitching

Alan Harrod Humphries is the NF candidate in a by-election in Walsall's Brownhills ward on 16 July. Meanwhile, as NF branches around the country sink without trace, a North West London branch has been formed, according to Ian Anderson, to link 'the Metropolitan line of the underground from Pinner to Amersham, including Northwood and Rickmansworth.'

Italian elections

The Italian mayoral/council elections in June left all the major northern cities of Italy (except Turin) in the control of the racist Northern League. Meanwhile, in the south, for the first time since 1945, the MSI gained control of nine small towns, with a further 16 small community councils effectively controlled by the far Right.

The Northern League's election campaign was thoroughly racist. League leader Umberto Bossi attacked his political opponents for wanting to turn Milan into an African city, claiming that immigrants brought AIDS to Italy. And when the League celebrated victory in Milan, black people were insulted in the street and taunted with cries of 'You'll be sent home next'.

It is widely believed that Bossi's planned public spending cuts will hit immigration 'welcome centres' and could possibly result in restrictions on the right of immigrants to health care. Though these elections only involved a quarter of the Italian electorate, the results bode ill for any general election later this year. ■

Racist murderer convicted

The conviction of Neils Michael Neilson, 28, for the murder of Aziz Miah, after a four-day trial in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in May, is a victory for the local black community, who fought from the start to ensure that this racist murder would not be swept under the carpet.

Mr Miah, 65, was attacked in August 1992 on his way to his local mosque in Elswick, west Newcastle (see *CARF* No 11). The ferocity of the attack was such that Mr Miah died three weeks later without ever regaining consciousness.

Neilson's defence was that he had drunk several pints of lager and could not remember any details of that evening.

In the face of attempts by the local council and the police to play down the racist motivation of the murder, the local black community formed the Mr Miah Justice Campaign, and organised a very successful demonstration. But the attempts to neutralise the campaign continued and pressure was put on Mr Miah's family to distance themselves from grassroots community support.

The achievement of the campaign was seen on the first day of the trial, when the prosecution accepted that the attack was racist. The importance of having members of the campaign in constant attendance at the trial was demonstrated when community members pointed out a mistranslation of a vital piece of evidence by the court interpreter.

In addition, the campaign's presence encouraged the judge to take a firm line with Neilson's family and friends, who filled the public gallery and made disparaging remarks about the prosecution witnesses. He warned them that he would deal severely with anyone found to be passing information to witnesses waiting outside the court.

The judge also issued a direct warning to Neilson's family not to prevent important witnesses – youths who had been with Neilson on the night of the murder – from coming to court. It turned out to be the evidence of these witnesses which played a crucial role in securing Neilson's conviction.

All in all, the trial and its outcome highlighted the importance of independent community-based campaigns. Local black organisations and anti-racist bodies are already engaged in a serious assessment of the involvement of establishment-controlled agencies, which are apparently created to assist black communities, but instead end up undermining independent community action. ■



Darren Jakobsen

Around the courts

Here we provide a glimpse into the legal world not generally offered in the press.
Contributions from readers are welcome.

■ It is as rare as it is heartening to see a spark of common sense illuminating the courts, particularly when it comes to cases concerning asylum-seekers. So this column is pleased to report that a campaign by the Home Office to criminalise asylum-seekers – by declaring those arriving without documents (the majority) to be illegal immigrants – has finally come to grief at the hands of the House of Lords.

At the hearing of the cases of **Naillie** and **Kanesrajah** in May, the law lords laughed in derision at the Home Office contention that anyone arriving at Heathrow or Dover without a passport is illegal. 'I forgot my passport once', declared one jovial lord. 'Does that make me an illegal immigrant?'

■ **Yosefali Serugo-Lugo**, a well-respected black barrister of many years' experience, was recently cleared by the Barristers' Disciplinary Tribunal of two charges of misconduct.

Mr Serugo-Lugo was charged after he had represented a Ugandan asylum-seeker in the Court of Appeal. Lord Justice Parker, one of the judges, alleged that he had been rather nasty about the Foreign Office's assessment of the situation in Uganda. Indeed he had. He even had the audacity to suggest that the FO's main concern was to maintain a good relationship with the Ugandan authorities.

Now the barristers' Code of Conduct states that a barrister's job is to 'fearlessly defend his client without fear or favour'. If

you wander into the Old Bailey any day of the week, you can witness barristers making all sorts of outrageous allegations against witnesses. Some of them even dare to suggest policemen tell lies. Only last year, a group of lawyers made outrageous allegations that the government helped arm Iraq. But for a barrister to suggest that the FO wanted to maintain good relations with a regime condemned by Amnesty International is going a bit too far for the likes of Lord Justice Parker. Or was the real problem a black man questioning the old colonial establishment?

■ **A Jamaican man, Mr P**, was recently convicted at Sheffield Crown Court of possessing cannabis with intent to supply it. The amount was small, and the main evidence was an 'admission' to dealing in drugs, remarkably obtained by the police without the use of thumbscrews. The police had asked Mr P what bags he used to deal cannabis in. His reply was, 'If I am dealing I would deal in them there' (pointing at a plastic sachet being held aloft by PC Plod). Mr P explained his answer was hypothetical. The judge, though, pointed to the use of 'am' as denoting the present rather than the conditional or hypothetical tense, and directed the jury accordingly. Mr P's conviction owes a lot to the judge's lack of understanding that not all her majesty's subjects speak the dialect emanating from Buckingham Palace. It is hoped that appeal court judges know different.



Mark Salmon

■ Shane Ward cleared

Charges against Shane Ward, the Birmingham black man who was arrested in March after protesting at a BNP paper sale (see *CARF* No 14), were thrown out of court on 17 June. The week before, 250 people had marched through Birmingham in his support. He is now considering an action against the police for wrongful arrest.

■ Anti-racist victimised

Anti-racist and head of Rochdale Racial Equality Council, Shahida Dolan, who was suspended and then sacked for daring to protest to the police about their appalling record on racial violence in the Rochdale area, has still not been reinstated. This, despite a successful appeal against her dismissal in April.

In July 1992, after months of police prevarication in the face of continued high levels of racist violence in the Rochdale area, Shahida led a deputation, which included the local mayor, to Rochdale police station to press for some action. However, the only action forthcoming from the police was a complaint to the executive of Rochdale REC, which promptly suspended Shahida, and then, some months later, sacked her.

This action is not only a personal attack on a prominent anti-racist – Shahida has been involved in campaigning against racism in the Rochdale area for more than 13 years – but a display of disdain by both the police and the local Racial Equality Council's executive for community concerns about racial violence.

Somalis fight Sheffield racism

Somali refugee families in Sheffield, who have suffered two years of racial harassment on the Manor housing estate, decided to force the authorities to do something. In April, after protests outside the housing office, the Somali residents staged a sit-in at the town hall and refused to leave until councillors spoke with them. Now there are promises to rehouse them and cases are being brought against their persecutors.

For the families there may be some respite, but the incident has been so mismanaged that the repercussions will be felt for months. A confidential report, leaked to the *Yorkshire Post*, reveals that some council staff are furious about the fact that racial incidents were not tackled earlier. Women and children were verbally abused on the streets, bricks were frequently thrown through windows, cars were smashed. Attacks had reached such a pitch on the

estate that 13 families had panic buttons installed which were connected directly to the police station. But that did not stop thugs breaking into one house and stealing the phone and button. Said Achmed Yassin, 'We have swapped one war-torn country for something worse – at least when we were there, we could see the weapons. Now we cannot.'

In the report, the police, the local housing office and senior housing officials are all criticised for not acting earlier and more decisively to stop the racial violence. And the report asks the obvious question, why were Somali refugees, who had fled from war and trauma, placed on this very white, very poor estate, with its reputation for high crime and violence? It goes on to question why no investment was made in the estate as the Somalis were moved in and why no work was done to deflect white resentment.

Racism in Spain

Fascists murdered anarchist and SHARP member Guillem Aguillo, in the L'Horta Nord province of Spain in April. Days after the murder, a right-wing supporters group at Valencia football club came to the ground waving a placard which read 'Guillem fuck yourself'. An English football supporter, presently in Spain, examines the extent of racism in Spanish football.

There is an almost total lack of black footballers in the Spanish league, first division. I can only think of two – Oceano, who plays for John Toshack's team Real Sociedad, and Wilfred, the Nigerian goalkeeper of Rayo Vallecano, the third team in Madrid. Now, perhaps this lack of black players is a manifestation of a more deeply felt racism in Spanish society as a whole, and there can be no doubt that black people find it much harder to be accepted here than in Britain.

This racism, however, does not come to the surface in mindless attacks like in Britain, but more in remarks which people don't seem to realise are bigoted and insulting. Examples overheard at San Maries, Athletic Bilbao's stadium – about Wilfred, 'Salta como un mono' ('He jumps like a monkey'), and about Oceano, 'La Real ha fichado a un puto negro' ('Real Sociedad have signed a fucking black guy').

Having said that, however, in other parts of Spain, such as Barcelona and Madrid, there has been a worrying increase in overtly racist attacks and fascist imagery in certain grounds. Although swastikas have recently been made illegal inside football stadiums, there are some groups, such as the Ultra Sur of Real Madrid, the Frente Atletico of Athletic Madrid and the Boixos Nois of Barcelona, who flirt with other fascist symbols.

A lot of these groups look up to what they see as the 'real hooligans' – the English – and sport Union Jacks as an expression of this. What they don't seem to realise is that they are looking up to a kind of supporter which was prominent 10-15 years ago, and that now the majority of fans on the terraces are fighting these attitudes.

Nevertheless, I wouldn't like to either over or under-emphasise the presence of these groups. They are normally small, albeit fanatical, groups of about 100 members, which, when you consider that the Bernabeu (Real Madrid) holds 90,000 people and that the Non Camp (Barcelona) holds 120,000, is not a large percentage.

PSI report irresponsible

Britain's Ethnic Minorities is a thoroughly irresponsible study. It sets out to examine the government's Labour Force Surveys for 1984 and 1990 on attainment in education, training and employment in terms of ethnic groups, and concludes that some groups – namely Indians, African Asians and the Chinese – are now doing well, whilst Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Afro-Caribbeans are still suffering from 'disadvantage'.

But nowhere does it look at racism as a determining factor. It does not ask, for example, what proportion of those harassed on the street, or stopped by the police, or forever unemployed, are black. It merely examines achievement via ethnicity and implies, therefore, that if some groups achieve and others do not, then the answer lies within the group rather than in society. If the same data had been used to ask 'why does racism affect some groups more than others?' a completely different picture would have emerged.

From our point of view, what does ethnicity mean on its own anyway, without class, without knowing what kind of society people came from, what skills they came with, how long they have been here and what they were initially brought here to do? For the colonial/racial division of labour has continued to affect different groups differentially.

The conclusions of this study, in the wrong hands, can be disastrous. Already Muslim groups are up in arms about the BBC 'Panorama' programme based on

this data, which appeared to imply that there is something inherent to Islam which keeps Pakistanis and Bangladeshis from achieving. But worse, it provides a valuable hostage to the government. Just when it is desperately trying to cut down public spending, ditch Section 11, abolish special funds for the inner-city etc, it has been handed the argument that disadvantage is on its way out anyway.

No doubt it will only be a matter of time before the New Right ideologues use it to argue that if some groups can achieve, then there is no racism in Britain and, as they said all along, those that don't achieve have only their cultures and genes to blame.

Britain's Ethnic Minorities by Trevor Jones, London Policy Studies Institute, £15.

Anti-fascist reading

There is always a need for materials on fascism which are written in a simple and accessible style. These two short pamphlets fall into this category. Whilst Ross Bradshaw, in *Germany calling*, attempts to give a national overview of the development of British fascism, Dave Turner approaches the subject from below, so to speak. In his local history of *Fascism and anti-fascism in the Medway towns 1927-1940*, Turner has done a sterling job in marshalling facts into an original account of fascism in Medway and of the previously undocumented levels of working-class resistance to it.

Germany Calling: a short history of British fascism by Ross Bradshaw, Mushroom Books, 10-12 Heathcote Street, Nottingham NG1 3AA, £1.00.

Fascism and anti-fascism in the Medway towns 1927-1940 by David Turner, Kent Anti-Fascist Action Committee, PO Box 88, Rochester, Kent ME1 1AU, £3.50.

UPDATE

Mike Smith • is seeking compensation for the injuries and harassment that he received at the hands of West Midlands police. Mike was acquitted last year of violent disorder and assaulting police officers after an incident in which he alleges he was racially abused and assaulted by police officers. He suffered a fractured spine during the incident. Mike has so far been denied legal aid to sue the police and has been advised that the total costs of his case could reach £15,000. The Mike Smith Defence Campaign is appealing for donations to help Mike continue his fight. Send money to the Mike Smith Defence Campaign, c/o 2 Clarence Road, Wolverhampton WV1 4HZ.



How does racism shape her life? Don't ask the PSI.

April

- 20 12 arrested after clashes between BNP and anti-fascists at Cotmanhay, Derbyshire, where BNP is standing in local election.
- 23 18-year-old Stephen Lawrence stabbed to death by gang of white youths at bus-stop in Eltham south-east London.
- 24 Colombian asylum-seeker refused entry to Britain on 'first safe country' grounds because his plane made emergency landing in Portugal on its way to London.
- 25 BNP 'Hang IRA' march in central London attracts under 200 supporters.
- 29 MPs to investigate international links of far-right groups as part of inquiry into rise in racial attacks.
- 30 At inquest of Leon Patterson, who died in Denton police station, near Stockport, where a verdict of unlawful killing was returned, Home Office toxicologist admits he faked scientific data.

May

- 4 Sikh police constable Joginder Singh Prem wins £25,000 damages against Nottinghamshire constabulary for racial discrimination and victimisation.
- 5 250 people picket Home Office demanding justice for innocent prisoners.
- 7 Police hold three youths over Stephen Lawrence's murder.

- 8 6,000 march through Bexley, south-east London, and attack BNP HQ in anger at Stephen Lawrence's murder.
- 10 Two 17-year-old Asians need hospital treatment after attack by skinhead with machete in Holloway, north London.
- 11 Police officer jailed for a year after viciously assaulting and falsely arresting a Rastafarian in Manchester.
- 13 Neo-Nazi given life for murder of Kosovan Albanian in Stuttgart hostel last July.
- 15 Racial attacks and Public Order Act prosecutions for racist material are continuing to rise sharply, says Home Office.
- 20 A Handsworth junior school closes for 2 days following demonstrations against the expulsion row concerning 10-year-old black pupil.
- 24 Court of Appeal quashes conviction of Cyrus Baptiste, who said Stoke Newington police planted drugs on him.
- 25 EC interior ministry officials agree crackdown on illegal immigrants.
- 26 German parliament tightens asylum laws ... CDU MP joins the Republicans, giving the party its first seat.
- 28 Textile firm ordered to pay £250,000 to 82 Asian workers after being found guilty of discriminating against them over pay and conditions.

- 29 Five Turks killed in neo-Nazi arson attack in Solingen.

June

- 1 French interior minister Charles Pasqua announces 'zero immigration' policy ... Turkish-owned factory in Grenoble destroyed by fire and daubed with swastikas.
- 2 EC interior and justice ministers agree to increased checks against 'illegal immigrants' and to drawing up of list of 'safe countries' to which asylum-seekers may be returned without further inquiry.
- 5 1,000 march through north London in protest at Winston Churchill's speech and in solidarity with Turkish Community after Solingen murders.
- 8 Turks attacked in four separate incidents in German towns.
- 9 Black policewoman sacked for not making enough arrests or stop and searches takes Metropolitan Police to an industrial tribunal for alleged racial discrimination and victimisation.
- 12 2,000 march in Thornton Heath to remember Ruhullah Aramesh, one year after his murder ... 100 anti-racists picket Winston Churchill's Manchester constituency surgery in protest at his anti-immigration speech.
- 15 Drummond Street Four acquitted.

You missed the lowdown on

- Racial harassment in Britain
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- Racism in the UK legal system
- Executive tax dodging
- Unions in South Africa
- Civil rights for disabled people
- The Tories' anti-union laws

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