

why
we need
a race-
class
politics

CONTENTS

- The race for votes
3
- Recreating the 'colour bar'
Travellers hounded
4-5
- The politics of equal opportunities
No to Victorian sweatshops
Stop victimising union members
6-8
- Sheffield unites with Calcutta
workers
9
- France: a fundamental racism
10
- Stop the repatriations
11

CAMPAIGNS & REPORTS

- Build on the hunger strikes
The common 'enemy'
12
- Miscarriages of justice
Refugee murdered
13
- Around the courts
Germany: migrants fight back
Kick racism out of football
14
- 'Sus' is back
Fear of a black 'underclass'
15
- Calendar: race & resistance
16



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EDITORIAL

In this edition of CARF we look at the growth of a brutal racism which manifests itself not only in violent racist attacks but in crude attempts to keep black people out of housing and jobs. The return of the 'colour bar' in housing, the attempts by white workers and employers alike to force black people out of the labour market, accord, in so many ways, with the populist 'Rights for Whites' message of the BNP. If the articles in this issue of CARF bear out Sivanandan's argument that 'There are two racisms in Britain today, stratified along class lines: the racism that affects middle-class blacks and the racism that affects the working-class and workless blacks', they also point to the need for the anti-racist movement to chart a new path with a race-class politics as sign-post and guide.

To date, no national anti-racist organisation has forged a politics that speaks to the concerns of inner-city communities devastated by 15 years of Tory rule. They have either focused exclusively on a symptom of British racism (the BNP) or, if on British racism, failed to make a distinction between the two racisms and worked on the premise that British racism can be legislated away through anti-discriminatory laws or measures like the Racial Harassment Bill.

But while the latter strategy may speak to the concerns of middle-class black individuals, it does nothing to challenge the structured racism that condemns a whole section of black people to unemployment, low paid service sector jobs and 'sweated' factory work. It is black people who are over-represented amongst the poor, the homeless, the low-paid and unemployed. It is poor black people who are affected by the racism that kills, whether it is directly on the streets, or indirectly through industrial accidents and diseases, a failing National Health Service and the cumulative effects of a new market-led racism which proclaims the return of Social Darwinism and the survival of the fittest.

The worst racism, that is, is inextricably intertwined with poverty. Poverty is structured in the market. Equal opportunity policies and individual legal redress do not challenge existing social provision – or rather the lack of it – in housing, jobs, welfare, etc. (Where there is no profit there is no provision.) They do not make for greater social equality, a larger economic cake. They merely re-arrange the status quo so that it can stay in place, divide the existing cake less unequally among those who have it so that those who haven't any can fight over what they haven't got.

If we are to wrest the initiative from the BNP, as well as the local anti-immigrant and anti-refugee lobbies growing up independently of the nazis, then we must move the terrain of our struggle from equal opportunities and legal remedies to the more material issues of housing, schooling, jobs, the quality of life and equality for all. The fight against racism is also a fight against poverty. ■

RECENT FAR-RIGHT ELECTION RESULTS IN EUROPE

AUSTRIA Freedom Party (FPÖ) increases vote in provincial elections in Tyrol, Salzburg and Carinthia by an average of 2.5% on 1989. In southern state of Carinthia, FPÖ gains 33% of vote.

FRANCE In local council elections in March, Front National wins 9.78% of poll.

GERMANY In local elections in March in Schleswig-Holstein, the Republikaner and Deutsche Liga fare badly, but this is not seen as indicative of wider trends.

ITALY In March, Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* sweeps to power on the base of 5 million neo-fascist votes. The National Alliance (formerly MSI) more than doubles its share of the vote, from 5.4% to 13.5%. The Northern League's vote falls from 8.7% to 8.4%.

NETHERLANDS Centrum Partij '86 and Centrum Demokraten take 86 seats (out of 10,014) in local council elections in March, a 15-seat gain on 1990.

ROMANIA Two parties, the Party of Romanian National Unity and the Greater Romania Party, are brought into Romania's new coalition government in March.

RUSSIA Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party now largest party in state Duma.

SLOVAKIA Slovak National Party enters coalition government formed in March.

The race for votes

'Rights for Whites' isn't just a BNP slogan. In the run-up to the May local elections, the grassroots of the political parties were playing to the BNP tune.

There was no question of Tower Hamlets Lib Dems honouring a call to all the political parties by the CRE not to play the race card. Ashdown's Liberals were caught with their pants down once again when support for campaigners opposed to the building of a Muslim community centre in Bethnal Green was exposed.

The anti-Muslim lobby

Muslims in Bethnal Green never asked for planning permission to build a mosque: they merely wanted a meeting-place. But in January, 400 locals attended a public meeting to oppose planning permission for a 'mosque', warning of the noise resulting from 'endless prayer'. Not to be outdone, a BNP leaflet threatened that, if the 'plans' went ahead, they would pull the building down brick by brick. Then, in February, came the vicious assault on Mukhtar Ahmed.

As local activist Kumar Murshid points out, it was the Lib Dems who turned the question of the 'mosque' into an election issue. 'The Lib Dems were not interested in the facts. Just think if this were an application to turn a pub into a church hall.'

Back to 'culture-swamping'

The Lib Dems were not the only ones to make an issue out of the threat to the British way of life posed by Asian culture and religion. Roman Scuplak and John Mugglestone are both Conservative councillors for Leicester's Humberstone ward. When Labour approved the building of two temples and a mosque, they resigned, forcing a by-election where they stood again. Leicester Inter Racial Solidarity Group claims that 'the decision to resign was part of a well-orchestrated campaign. Humberstone Tories have for months been whipping up racism in the area through their local "In Touch" bulletin and a petition against the proposed places of worship.'

More Tory basics

Other Tory wards have also gone back to basics. The 'In Touch' newsletter of

Tories in Southcliff (near Clacton) condemns the Tower Hamlets Lib Dems, but then says: 'The Conservative way is the better way... Suspension of immigration along with a scheme of repatriation has been official Conservative policy since 1965.'

residence qualifications. All this makes it even more vital that anti-fascists prioritise housing, both to undermine the fascists' electoral base and to ensure no Labour capitulation to racism. NMP has leafleted the estates urging people not to vote BNP and pointing out that

We're delighted to stop Muslims turning this pub into a mosque, say Lib Dems



ACCUSED: Councillor Jeremy Shaw



ACCUSED: Councillor Betty Wright

Dear Mr.

MR. "THE FLAMINGO"

You recently signed a petition objecting to the planning application to turn "the Flamingo" into a Masjid.

We are delighted to let you know that we have rejected this application. It was turned down by the Bethnal Green Planning sub-Committee last week.

Yours sincerely,

JEREMY A. SHAW (Councillor)

BETTY WRIGHT (Councillor)

The letter that sparked a new race row in East London and (right) the bar Muslims wanted as a mosque. They planned to pay £90,000 for it if the scheme got the go-ahead



STORM: Paddy Ashdown



Daily Mirror 1.4.94

Five Conservatives in Newham, east London are standing in the May elections as 'Conservatives Against Labour's Unfair Ethnic Policies'. Presenting themselves as the third way between the anti-black racism of the BNP and the anti-white racism of Labour, they describe Labour's housing policies as a form of 'ethnic cleansing'. Michael Portillo, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, has gone on record defending the Newham Tories against allegations of racism. He has not yet, however, added his name to a statement put out by the Newham Monitoring Project, calling on political parties not to use racism for electoral gain

Prioritising housing

NMP's Unmesh Desai believes that the BNP's 'Rights for Whites' message is shaping not just race but the political agenda as a whole. 'On the one hand we have Tories. But the Labour party, as we saw previously in Tower Hamlets, is also running scared on housing.' Other sources fear that council housing departments will bow to pressure and reintroduce racist

the right to housing is based on need not ethnicity.

With all the parties influenced by 'Rights for Whites', the BNP has been able to run a pretty low-key campaign, with around thirty candidates, primarily in London, the West Midlands, Rochdale and Halifax. Not exactly breaking its back to get out literature, the BNP has been relying on a compliant media to take its message to the electorate. Manpower and financial resources will be ploughed into Tyndall's election bid in June in Dagenham. Meanwhile, if an attack by fifteen white men on a BNP posse in east London's Canning Town is anything to go by, it would seem that the BNP are not as popular with East End locals - notoriously jealous of outside firms moving into their patch - as Del-Boy Beackon would have us believe. ■





Guardian/Graham Turner

Recreating the 'colour bar'

The struggles that black people fought in the 1950s and '60s over housing will need to be fought all over again. CARF reports.

The government recently announced proposals to reduce the rights of homeless people to housing, and to transfer the burden of housing them as far as possible to the private sector. Its argument is that homeless people are jumping the housing queue: 'Ministers see no good reason why [the] homeless should have priority in the allocation of housing for life.'

The black homeless

Black people are four times as likely to be homeless as white people. In some inner-city boroughs, like Tower Hamlets, black families make up over 70 per cent of those who are homeless. One reason is that certain groups of immigrants (such as Bangladeshis from Sylhet) came to Britain later and, because of low wages, took longer to establish themselves here and have funds enough to pay for their families' fares to Britain. In addition, councils like Tower Hamlets would not accept these families on the waiting list for housing until they had arrived in Britain (unlike white tenants, who got extra points for family separation). Thus they have had to find accommodation with private landlords, where they are

vulnerable to harassment and eviction. In addition, they may have larger than average families and housing with enough bedrooms is scarce. Thus they can find themselves homeless.

Under the new proposals, people will be housed only if they are in an immediate crisis with absolutely no alternative accommodation. People in hostels, or sleeping on friends' floors, will not qualify. Even then, the duty to house will be only temporary, while alternative accommodation is found, preferably in the private sector. Such a policy will condemn homeless people to second-class treatment in a succession of temporary housing, probably entailing a return to the large-scale use of profiteering bed-and-breakfast hotels.

The 'Rights for Whites' campaigns, it seems, have won. Such campaigns, in areas like Tower Hamlets and also northern cities such as Sheffield, have been based around the idea that 'local people' (ie, whites) whose relatives have been on housing waiting lists for years are being discriminated against in housing allocation because the 'homeless' (ie, blacks) get priority.

Some politicians have pandered to these racist views. Tower Hamlets, for

example, brought in a kind of counter-policy to homelessness, called 'Sons and Daughters' whereby relatives of existing white tenants would also get priority treatment. In effect, it was a residence qualification by another name and was a coded form of racism.

Targeting new 'immigrants'

Among the homeless, the proposals target immigrants in particular: 'The government does not consider it necessary for emergency assistance to be available to persons from abroad who entered the UK on the understanding that they would have no recourse to public funds.'

Anti-racists have always argued that health care, welfare benefits and housing should be available on the basis of need and not immigration status. But the battle against passport controls in housing provision was lost last year, when Tower Hamlets established the right of local authorities to investigate the immigration status of homeless housing applicants and refuse housing to those believed to be illegal.

Now, the government's proposals aim to exclude from emergency housing provision relatives of legally

settled people who entered Britain on the basis that they would not have 'recourse to public funds'.

This group is soon to have its entitlement to housing benefit removed – even though the head of such a family would usually have lived here for years, working and paying tax and national insurance. The proposals exclude these families from any, even emergency, housing provision. In effect, even if such a family had their house burned down in a racist arson attack, the local authority would have no duty to house them, even temporarily.

Race and politics in housing

Since the late 1970s, the Tories have denied that it is the role of local authorities to provide housing, and the number of new council houses being built has slumped dramatically. This has gone hand in hand with the sale of council housing. The result, in the 1990s, is a dire shortage of decent, affordable housing.

The Tories simply refuse to contemplate the obvious solution of making more housing available. And so, there is competition. The racist exploitation of that competition, and of its effect on white working-class voters, by the ruling Lib Dems and by Labour councillors (see *CARF* No 17) led to the BNP's victory in the Isle of Dogs by-election in September 1993. It did not stop there. James Hunt, the Labour candidate who resigned and is standing as an independent in the May local election, stands by his assertion that the Island is being 'swamped' by Bangladeshis who are being housed in homes which Islanders (ie whites) ought to have. Thanks to politicians such as Hunt, not only do black people not get housed – or, at best, get sub-standard housing – but also they get the blame for the housing shortage.

To the private sector

The government proposes that local authorities farm out their homeless to the private sector. The use of the private rented sector has already allowed 'pioneering' councils such as Tower Hamlets and Westminster to decant black and refugee homeless families out of their boroughs, leading to accusations of 'ethnic cleansing' and gerrymandering (see *CARF* No 19).

For the homeless, however, the private sector means exorbitant rents and substandard accommodation: 20

per cent of accommodation in the private rented sector is unfit for human habitation. There is also no security of tenure: the most recent government survey, in 1990, found that almost 10 per cent of private tenants were harassed or illegally evicted by landlords. Private sector rents are exorbitant. And, for black families, the private sector means discrimination.

Back to the 'colour bar'

In the *London Programme*, 'Colour Bar', televised in March 1994, accommodation agencies were shown routinely barring black people from tenancies. Staff at Beavers, in north-west London, had a coded question on their cards indicating whether a landlord would accept black people or not, and another, Hartwoods, said that 2–3 per cent of landlords specified 'No blacks' – and that was 'no problem'. One agent said quite openly: 'We don't deal with Somalis, Nigerians or Algerians.'



The black researcher on the programme was offered one-third fewer tenancies than the white one, and was also told that rooms were taken which were subsequently offered to the white researcher.

It is to such racism that the government wants to consign the homeless. Not only is it more difficult for black people to get tenancies, but once in, they are more likely to be harassed or illegally evicted. And black women, single parents in particular, are, according to the Campaign for Bedsit Rights, the most vulnerable.

Preparing the ground

The backdrop to the new proposals on the homeless was the vilification of single mothers at the Tory party conference last October. However, it

was the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act, with its evisceration of the rights of refugees, which was the precursor to this. The equation, prevalent in the tabloids, of black immigrants with queue jumpers and scroungers led to the BNP victory in the Isle of Dogs. It also informs the government's proposals.

In a brutal twist of logic, the homeless have become the least deserving of a home, and the black, immigrant and refugee homeless the least deserving of all. Isolated and outcast, they are relegated to the status of non-persons. With housing officers' duties being limited to passport checks, refugees are policed out of the safety net and into the arms of the Home Office. ■

Travellers hounded

Travellers face wholesale criminalisation and cultural extinction under new laws going through parliament. Clauses 45 to 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill give police and local councils more powers to move travellers on, by creating a new offence of criminal trespass for failure to obey a police direction to leave land where more than six vehicles are parked and where there is damage or threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour. It also allows local authorities to seize and impound travellers' vehicles and, most significantly, repeals the Caravan Sites Act, which imposed a legal duty on councils to provide sites for travellers.

The Caravan Sites Act was passed in 1960 to compensate Gypsies for the wholesale removal of their traditional stopping places. Since then, many councils have refused and many more have simply not bothered to provide sites. In a number of fierce legal battles in the 1970s and 1980s, Gypsies won rights not to be evicted by councils which failed to provide sites for them. If the Bill becomes law, there will be nowhere legal for Gypsies to live in their caravans.

Even Gypsies who buy land are more often than not refused planning permission to park their caravan on it, which makes the government's suggestion that more travellers buy their own plots cynical and dishonest. The only alternative is houses, abhorrent to travellers and a further burden on local authorities. ■

The politics of equal opportunities

In this second feature on building anti-racism in the trade union movement, CARF asks: is it time for a radical overhaul of equal opportunities policies and a move towards collective action against workplace racism?

Racial harassment is usually associated with violent attacks at the home or on the streets. All too often neglected is workplace harassment. In March, CARF reported on attempts by railway workers at Old Oak Common in west London to turn the depot into a 'white stronghold'. This disturbing case is only the tip of the iceberg.

■ Lawyers for T&K Home Improvements, Northamptonshire, told an industrial tribunal that a 'robust male atmosphere' was responsible for supervisors giving a racist form to black job applicants which asked them to tick their hobbies from 'mugging, prostitution, pimping, occasional riots'.

■ A Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in Berkshire cites the case of a railway worker banned from overtime and subjected to a campaign of racist abuse from fellow workers.

■ 19-year-old Isaac Baptiste took the Post Office to an industrial tribunal after suffering a campaign of racial abuse at St Johns Wood depot in London.

■ After a car and bus cleaner at a

Hackney council transport depot complained about racist behaviour, he was offered a lower paid job as a road sweeper.

■ A confidential Home Office report claims endemic racial and sexual harassment in the Fire Brigade. In one incident, an Afro-Caribbean recruit was nearly drowned when put under a water tower.

'Colour bar'

What all these cases show is the lengths to which white workers will go to force black workers out. Employers do it too, but more surreptitiously. Some 30 years after the first exposés of Britain's 'colour bar', the *London Programme* carried out its own investigation. Posing as a client looking for waitressing staff, a researcher phoned 20 agencies, 13 of which went along with the instruction for 'whites only' staff. A black and a white trainee journalist posed as applicants for jobs in the service and building sector. In 43

per cent of places applied to with a job vacancy, the white applicant was interviewed while the black applicant was immediately turned away.

Structured racism

Anti-discrimination legislation and equal opportunities policies are failing to protect black workers. British Rail, the Fire Brigade, the Post Office all have impeccable equal opportunities policies on paper, but that's where they remain. The need for new strategies is reinforced by the evidence of mounting racism in all aspects of work – from recruitment to redundancies, from differentials in pay and entitlements, to appraisals for promotion and criteria for the sack.

■ The TUC says that blacks are seven times more likely to lose their jobs than whites

■ Medical Practitioners Union research shows that black doctors are six times more



NO TO VICTORIAN SWEATSHOPS

The TUC demonstration against racism narrowly missed passing Well Street, on the border of Hackney and Tower Hamlets, where the ugliness of small clusters of dilapidated factories is punctuated only by the glamour of the bosses' Mercedes parked outside. Steam pours relentlessly out of waste pipes. The lower windows of the buildings are covered with protective grids, while numerous panels in upper windows are broken, providing the only means of ventilation in cramped rooms where pressers and sewers are stooped over ancient machinery.

Exploiting immigrants and refugees

These sweatshops are typical of the 600 or so small textile workshops, dotted across north-east London. Their workers, mainly Turkish immigrants, who came in the 1960s, and Kurdish asylum-seekers form one of the few UK workforces (alongside Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) which still has the necessary sewing skills to carry out this kind of work.

But at Well Street there are signs of dissent. Machine workers, sewers and finishers have distributed a leaflet across the borough. 'Work

conditions in textiles are becoming more and more unbearable', they say. 'The only solution to our common problems is to unify our power which comes from production and to strive together.'

Unionising the workforce

Less than half a mile from the designer restaurants and trendy craft shops of Stoke Newington's fashionable Church Street, Tekin Kartal has arrived to open the 'Day-Mer Turkish and Kurdish Community Solidarity Centre'. Tekin would like to see the Well Street workers unionised, but, a garment worker himself, he has had his own experiences of the British trade union movement.

There were earlier attempts to unionise at another Hackney workplace, Bacton Fashions, which employed 90 workers, mostly Kurdish asylum-seekers on 'exceptional leave to remain'. The TGWU 1/1132 branch was formed in the mid-1980s and managed to recruit many garment workers across the borough into the union. But the TGWU pulled out after a picket was attacked by the Territorial Support Group and Tekin and three others were arrested and charged with riot and affray (the charges did not stand up in court).

For Mark Metcalf of the Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, Bacton could have been a turning

likely than their white counterparts to face allegations of misconduct

Individual black workers are being victimised. For instance:

■ A CAB took up the case of an Asian receptionist, sacked for not speaking English correctly and because 'her culture was different to British culture'. An Afro-Caribbean receptionist, on the other hand, was sacked because she spoke with too broad a Brummie accent.

■ A personnel manager revealed that the real reason why an Afro-Caribbean security guard, sacked for unsatisfactory appearance, was dismissed was because the police objected to a black security guard.

■ An Asian shop worker in Greater Manchester was refused holiday pay on the grounds that this was only paid to white workers.

■ The Banking Insurance and Finance Union has reported Barclays Bank to the CRE. They allege that black workers are being unfairly targeted for redundancies and that discrimination can be seen in performance appraisals. Two workers say they have been singled out because of previous complaints about racism.

'Equal opportunities' depoliticises

We need to go further than simply lambasting management. An over-

reliance on equal opportunities strategies imposed from above, tends to let the unions off the hook by implying that discrimination is an issue for management and not for workers. Racism should be an issue discussed and challenged by workers at their union meetings. Unions should commit themselves to direct campaigning work at the workplace, a strategy that is vital now to fight the crude BNP-style racism behind the attempts to harass black workers out of jobs.

In the 1970s, black workers took on racism as a political issue. But by the mid 1970s, the first wave of black industrial militancy had been superseded by industrial decline, massive job losses and government attacks on trade union organisation as a whole. Workers were no longer fighting en masse around issues of racial segregation or exploitation of whole workforces, but the race relations industry was promoting equal opportunities – with a focus on promotion, head counting and the setting up of race posts or advisory committees to draw up policies and guidelines, mostly as part of personnel and training programmes. As A. Sivanandan has argued, the focus was not on the

politics but the 'arithmetic' of equal opportunities.

This had a direct effect on the way unions took up the issue of racism, which was along the lines set by the race relations industry rather than that of the anti-racist or black struggle. They took their orientation from the 1976 Race Relations Act. Racism was a summation of a large number of cases of racial discrimination, and cases were to be dealt with through negotiation, and, if that fails, industrial tribunals.

Industrial tribunals individualise

But industrial tribunals, unless backed up by the wider political campaigning work we have seen at John Haggas (see p8), are a particularly weak tool when it comes to fighting workplace racism. And, as with equal opportunities, an over-reliance on industrial tribunals places the burden of fighting racism on the individual victim of discrimination rather than unions and workers as a whole.

If politics is about taking up cases and turning them into issues, industrial tribunals do the opposite. They take up cases only to depoliticise and

point in the struggle for unionisation, but, because of the attitude of the TGWU, it turned out to be the opposite. 'The branch had more than 600 members, but now the 1/1132 branch has fallen to pieces', he says. 'Under 40 members are all that remain.'

A key issue for both Mark and Tekin is how to break the isolation of the Turkish and Kurdish workers. Gaining local support from the major unions in Hackney, like Unison and the NUT, says Mark, is critical.

Who are the bosses?

Bacton's boss, Mustafa Dill, is typical of a Turkish (and most recently Kurdish) entrepreneurial class which runs the sweatshops. But it would be wrong to see this merely as a case of internal exploitation

within the Turkish and Kurdish communities. Factory owners are small fry in a capitalist chain where distribution, not production, dominates. Whereas you need little capital to set up a clothing factory (decaying buildings and ancient machinery can be got at a pittance), the real power behind the throne are the retailers and the chains of intermediaries who contract the work out.

'Most of the factories are making ladies' jackets for big chains, like Marks & Spencers, Next, British Home Stores', Tekin told CARF. 'Factories are closed from December to March. The rush starts in May.' According to the Well Street workers, wages are constantly being brought down, workers are repeatedly being laid off when work is not available and, when it is, overtime is made compulsory.

This is typical of conditions in the industry. Distributors want short runs of ladies' fashions in order to meet fluctuating demand. To meet the rush, distributors deliberately commission production from a large number of small producers. Hence, the creation of a mafia-style 'ethnic' class which can exploit a community whose vulnerabilities it knows only too well, suits the interest of the big retailers. ■

CARF says: the next time there is a Burnsalls or a Bactons, anti-racists and the unions must make solidarity a priority.



Darren Jakobsen



individualise them. Invariably the legal fight, too, is lost, as the employers hold all the cards.

A Labour Research analysis (March 1994) of a Department of Employment survey concludes that only 4 per cent of applicants in industrial tribunals as a whole are black. Racial discrimination cases fare the worst of all cases at the

industrial tribunal and have the highest withdrawal rate.

Equal opportunities might aid middle-class individuals, but such policies don't even get a look in when it comes to fighting for the rights of whole sections of the workforce in low-pay ghettos where discrimination is written into exploitation, and

workers are protected neither by wages councils nor by the unions. In sum, you cannot legislate discrimination and exploitation away, the legal fight has to be part of a broader political fight. ■

CAB cases taken from: Unequal opportunities: CAB evidence on discrimination and employment (March 1994). Available from NACAB.

STOP VICTIMISING UNION MEMBERS



When Keighley trades council organised four coaches to take demonstrators to the TUC march, over half the takers were Asian. For a dispute at John Haggas textiles has brought a new-found confidence to Keighley's Asian workforce, many of whom have joined a union for the first time.

John Haggas in Keighley – one of many textile towns on the outskirts of Bradford – is situated in the basin where the Worst and Aire valleys meet. From the rolling hills surrounding Keighley, the modern sheds of John Haggas' four mills immediately stand out. Many of the old Victorian mills are derelict, or have been transformed into small craft shops.

In 1961, textiles in the Bradford area provided 73,000 jobs. But by 1992, as the big multinationals with their vice-like grip on the industry shut down plant and transferred machinery elsewhere, only 12,000 jobs remained.

According to Steve Davison, president of Keighley trades council, 'Haggas, a privately owned family firm – a squirearchy I call it – is one of the few firms expanding while textiles as a whole collapse. So Haggas acts as if he owns Keighley.'

And like any feudal lord, Haggas knows how to divide and rule his workforce, organising shifts so that white women work in the day and evening while Asian men make up the nightshift.

But Haggas' isolation from the multinational chain is also his weakness, and one reason why a pending dispute over redundancies at Haggas should be a test case for the trade union movement as a whole. Already, an alliance between the unions, Bradford Racial Equality Council, and the Asian community has brought change.

The initial impetus for unionisation came in December 1992 when Haggas attempted to introduce new working practices involving a speed-up in production at one of his four mills. All the shifts refused to comply, but only the Asian nightshift were issued with letters threatening them with discipline and the sack. It was this that prompted the workers to take a group case of racial discrimination to

an industrial tribunal – and win £229,000.

But this was more than just a legal battle. Public meetings were held and the Asian Textile Workers Group formed, linking Haggas' workers with Asian workers at three other firms taking similar action, and with the express aim of putting pressure on the TGWU to fund the workers' case and to seek union recognition. In the week of the tribunal itself, the Asian community came out in force, packing the public gallery at the Leeds court.

According to Val Rowlands of the Bradford Racial Equality Council, 'The effect of the recession is being targeted on Asian workers, either by increasing their workload but not their wages, or decreasing their pay and conditions.'



Haggas' next line of attack became clear at the tribunal proceedings when a representative warned, 'If these new working practices don't come into existence, then we will be making redundancies.' Exactly a year later 60 of the 82 workers received redundancy notices – but this time some of the white women workers on the dayshift, who had supported the nightshift, were sent notices too, making racial discrimination harder to prove.

'The task now', says Val Rowlands, 'is to prove victimisation and unfair selection procedures when the case comes before a tribunal in August. Only workers at the one mill that was central to the dispute have been singled out for redundancies, while Haggas has been recruiting new workers at other mills.'

The next few months are critical, as is the attitude of the TGWU. According to Steve Davison, 'We must act to get the union recognised, and break down the racial division between the day and the nightshift.' The TGWU now has 180 Haggas branch members but the company refuses to recognise the union. 'We are delighted with the co-operation of the TGWU so far,' says Val Rowlands, 'but endless opportunities are opening out.' It remains to be seen whether the TGWU nationally will grasp them. ■

Sheffield unites with Calcutta workers

Football fans, not always renowned for their internationalism, are leading the way in international solidarity in one English city. Fans of Sheffield United FC are pillorying their chairman for his treatment of workers thousands of miles away in Calcutta.

Reginald Brealey, chairman of Sheffield United Football Club, is the subject of a campaign by some of the club's fans. Bright yellow 'Wanted' posters listing his 'crimes against workers' have appeared on the club's walls and elsewhere and thousands of leaflets have been distributed at local matches.

Edge of starvation

In 1988, Brealey became chairman of a British company, Titaghur, which operates four jute mills in Bengal. There raw jute is processed into hessian which is then sent on to the UK or elsewhere to be made into sacking and carpet-backing. According to a leaflet given out by the fans, he had initially promised workers when he took over the run-down mills that he would see that all 'retirement dues' were paid and that laid-off workers would be brought back when the mills reopened. In 1990, Brealey had said he was committed to improving workers' living standards and the modernisation of the factories in new plants. But, by 1991, the company was 'limping along for want of funds'. Now, the fans say, despite a rise in the price of raw jute on the world market, the workers are living on the edge of starvation.

The mills, which could employ

around 20,000 people, are now at a standstill. Workers claim that Brealey has not paid suppliers for raw jute, electricity or water. Supplies have been cut off, workers locked out. Not only are the workers desperate for the mills to re-open so that they can get a wage, but, because the mills still house their workforce in colonial-style Victorian line-rooms, they also have to subsist without water and electricity.

The latest offer to workers at the Angus Jute Mill (which has been closed since 23 December) proposes redundancy for 500 workers, abolition of the nightshift for unskilled workers and reduced hours and pay for the rest.

Brealey, who in 1989 was the first person in the UK to face charges of insider dealing (in relation to Titaghur shares)—he was subsequently acquitted—is now accused by Sheffield fans of failing to pay pensions to former workers and of not making provident fund payments on behalf of his workers. They say that workers could be owed up to five years of statutory bonuses and more than six months' wages.

'Contempt for black workers'

In January of this year, Brealey told the *Financial Times* that he was well on

the way to solving his labour problems. He had installed ten UK managers in Calcutta. But the Sheffield fans claim that the management team has displayed a colonial contempt for black workers.

On 16 March, when the workforce went to the head office of Titaghur plc in Calcutta to present their demands, angry workers dragged two managers out of their offices after claims that the managers had taunted and racially abused them. The managers had to be rescued by police. This was followed by a mass picket of the British high commission in Calcutta during which effigies of the managers were burned.

Brealey, who failed to invest in his Indian acquisitions, has spent £2.5m on purchasing a 16,500-acre estate in a remote part of Scotland and developing there a project to 'train young people who have been in care'. The project, named 'back to basics', is to be run by a retired army colonel and will involve visits to the Calcutta jute mills so that, 'youngsters will see how people earn their living and change their attitudes'.

What can actually be seen at the jute mills today is workers facing unemployment, starvation and police brutality. Protests against conditions of work and wages last year saw the police opening fire. On two occasions, the police have disrupted workers' mass meetings and arrested union leaders.

The Brealey Jute Workers Campaign is supporting the Calcutta workers' demands:

- that Brealey be extradited to India to face charges
- the reopening of the mills under conditions which provide a living wage
- payment of back wages owed
- payment of pension contributions and other statutory benefits owed to the workers
- unconditional release of arrested workers

and is calling for trade union and community support. ■

For more information about the campaign, contact International Class Solidarity Group, PO Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY, or South Asia Solidarity, c/o Londec, Instrument House, 205-217 Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9DB. Tel: 071-713 7907

Reg Brealey (on the left)



France: a fundamental racism

State racism and anti-Muslim hysteria in France have intensified since the election of the Gaullist RPR administration in 1993. Alongside police raids and mass deportations has come a media campaign against any expression of cultural or religious identity by the Muslim community.

Just as, in Britain in the 1970s, Thatcher stole the NF's ideas with her 'swamping' speech, so prime minister Balladur and his infamous interior minister, Charles Pasqua, have incorporated into state policy the twin planks of le Penism: its crusade against Islam and its stated goal of 'zero immigration'.

The Central Directorate for Immigration Controls has been set up under hard-line police chief Robert Broussard, and greater powers have been given to the police to carry out identity checks on 'foreigners'. And Pasqua has promised a programme of deportations: 'Once we have sent back several planeloads or boatloads of immigrants, the world will get the message', he said.

State offensive against Algerians and Kurds

The stridently anti-Arab and anti-Muslim element has passed the European liberal press by. In 1993, over 2,000 Algerians were deported; in November, Pasqua secretly chartered a special flight to expel 26 Algerians, some restrained in body belts.

Pasqua's deportation plan goes unchallenged even by the French Left, because its stated rationale – the fight against fundamentalism and terrorism – is widely accepted. And the canard that foreigners are playing out another state's political battles on French soil goes unopposed.

When every Arab deportee is suspected of Islamic fundamentalism, basic democratic procedures, such as the right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence, are disregarded in the name of a larger fight. In effect, the French government is being allowed to act as though there were a state of emergency. In November 1993, Operation Chrysanthemum and Operation Red Roses were launched against the Algerian and Kurdish communities respectively.

In police raids in Paris and the provinces, nearly 200 people said to have links with the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) or the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) were detained, of whom

around 30 were eventually charged with terrorist offences.

Suspension of democratic rights

During a television interview following the raids, Pasqua declined to explain what measures would be taken against those arrested. 'I'm not telling you. That's government business', he said, refusing even to say whether the judiciary might eventually be consulted.

But if the case of Moussa Kraouche, spokesperson for the Fraternité Algérienne en France and described by *Le Figaro* as France's 'most wanted man', is anything to go by, the evidence against those arrested is derisory. Police claimed to have found three compromising documents, wrapped in a towel, in Kraouche's Versailles apartment, linking him to a terrorist enterprise. But after an internal police investigation, sparked by evidence that the documents were planted forgeries, the police admitted making a 'material error' with the documents.

The attack on multiculturalism

Some might argue that the failure of France's Socialist and Communist opposition parties to denounce the raids stems from the fact that they do not want to be seen supporting the FIS because of that group's appalling human rights abuses in Algeria. But this would be to let the opposition off the hook, by accepting the authoritarian logic which justifies the suspension of democracy in the name of the fight against fundamentalism.

The argument also ignores just how deeply, because of the entrenched view of France's superior civilisation inherited from the Enlightenment, the Socialist and Communist parties are implicated in anti-Arab racism.

In France today, any expression of Arab or Muslim identity is equated with fundamentalist excesses in Algeria and is vehemently denounced. Prayer itself is seen as an expression of fundamentalism. The bogeyman of fanaticism is used to attack the very

concept of a multicultural society based on cultural diversity and religious tolerance.

As Pierre Lellouche, conservative deputy for a Paris suburb and adviser to the President, put it: 'Multiculturalism would be the end of France. You can be what you want to be here – Christian, Jewish, Muslim – but we're all Gauls.' Nowhere is this sentiment seen more clearly in operation than in the issue of Muslim girls wearing headscarves.

The headscarf affair

Over the last few months, a creeping hysteria has swept France as Muslim girls wearing headscarves to school are expelled and excluded. And anyone who defends the girls' right to wear the veil is immediately equated with Algerian fundamentalists who attack women who refuse to wear the veil. RPR deputy Ernest Cheniere denounced the 'insidious jihad' launched in schools by 'a few hundred young Muslims pushed by their parents to impose on their teachers and colleagues the visible signs of their difference and of their radical commitment'.

In Nantua, teachers at a school where four Muslim girls were wearing scarves went on strike last October to protest at 'religious extremism threatening the tradition of secular education'.

Socialists and Communists alike have been swept along with this hysteria. The Socialist administration of Taverny bulldozed the premises of the Social and Cultural Association of the Muslim community, claiming that it was a hotbed of fundamentalism and a recruiting ground for the FIS.

Bemused members of the group, who come from Mali, Cameroon, Turkey and elsewhere, say they simply want a place to pray, meet socially and give educational support to youngsters excluded from school. They point out that the town has a synagogue and Catholic, Protestant, Evangelist and Jehovah's Witness churches, but nowhere for Muslims to gather. ■

Stop the repatriations

If you read the newspapers, you might be forgiven for believing that 'ethnic cleansing' is still a reality in the former Yugoslavia; that Angola is probably one of the most war-devastated countries in the world; that anti-Semitism and the persecution of the Romany are rife in the countries of the former eastern bloc.

But bureaucrats in European states, and, increasingly, at the United Nations, do not seem to read newspapers – they simply make the world up as they go. According to Germany, Angola is safe for Angolans; Sweden believes Russian Jews can be returned because anti-Semitism is no longer state-sponsored; and to a whole host of European governments, the former Yugoslavia is 'safe' for Kosovo-Albanians, Serb conscientious objectors and military deserters, Montenegrins and the Romany. Those seeking to flee Bosnia will, in future, need visas and other documents in order to reach western Europe.

But who decides which countries are 'safe'? Using a logic that is truly Orwellian, European governments don't ask the victims, but come to an agreement, often based on cash incentives, behind closed doors with



David Drew

the persecutors. Hence, Switzerland has drawn up a bilateral agreement (rubber-stamped by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) for the forcible return of 11,000 Tamils; Vietnam has been given cash by the Dutch government in return for taking back 350 asylum-seekers; France will give aid to the Romanian government to take back the Romany (as Germany did before it). And in the case of the former Yugoslavia, where there is meant to be an international

blockade against the use of its airports, the west has attempted to pay eastern bloc countries to do their dirty work for them. Germany, for instance, had plans to deport the Romany from Yugoslavia via plane or train to Düsseldorf, where they would then be transported via chartered plane to Timisoara, from where they will be herded across the Romanian border. But the Romanian government has broken with the agreement, fearing international condemnation.

EUROPE'S REPATRIATION LIST

DENMARK	Government classifies Afghanistan as a 'safe country' and announces plans to return all Afghani asylum-seekers.
GERMANY	9.75 million DM spent on deportations in 1993 as compared with 4.5 DM in 1992. Berlin court backs mass deportation of Vietnamese. Nationwide deportation programme aimed at refugees from the former Yugoslavia begins. Those targeted include: 10,000 Romany; 100,000 refugees from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo; 5,000 Albanians from Kosovo already deported by 11 March 1994. Government steps up plans to deport Angolans.
NETHERLANDS	Chinese students who fled China after the events of Tiananmen square will not be considered for asylum. Agreement signed with Vietnam to return 350 rejected asylum-seekers.
NORWAY	Government plan to deport Kosovo-Albanians runs into difficulties because of strength of sanctuary movement.
SWEDEN	Government forced to review policy of deporting Jewish asylum-seekers from the former Soviet Union after public protest.
SWITZERLAND	Bilateral agreement with Hungary signed for the return of asylum-seekers from Kosovo. Begins to implement agreement with Sri Lanka for the repatriation of 11,000 Tamils.

Fighting back

Across Europe, anti-racists are waking up to the fact that mass resistance is the only way to stop mass repatriations.

Students at the Free University of Berlin have worked furiously to stop the repatriation of former guest-workers from Angola, Vietnam and Mozambique, and the Roma National Congress has faced fascist and police persecution since launching its campaign to stop the repatriation of the Romany.

In Denmark, 'Refugees Underground', a church-based sanctuary movement, is hiding Serb conscientious objectors and pointing out that, far from being safe to return to Serbia, they face long prison sentences and even the death penalty there.

In the UK, we need to wake up to the new repatriation schemes. The thousands of asylum-seekers who have 'exceptional leave to remain' in the UK must now fear that they will be the next to be added to the repatriation list. ■

Build on the hunger strikes

As refugees at Campsfield and elsewhere end their hunger strike, CARF reports on the protest, its causes and the response in the prisons and outside.

The demands of over 200 immigration prisoners who joined in Britain's largest hunger strike were simple: stop the detention and deportation of refugees. The number of asylum-seekers held in detention has doubled in the past six months, and they are also being detained for longer periods. Detainees complained that they were spending three months or more in detention with no news of their case and that bail was being refused even when sureties were offered.

On 6 March, ten hunger striking detainees from Campsfield who had been sent to York prison psychiatric unit were released. The following day, two more detainees at Campsfield began a hunger strike. Within five days, 180 Campsfield detainees, from Ghana, Zaire, Algeria and elsewhere, were on hunger strike. The Campaign to Close Campsfield responded by calling a solidarity picket of

Campsfield, and about 40 hunger strikers held a rooftop protest. When ten hunger strikers were moved to prisons at Winson Green, Blakenhurst and Bullingdon as part of the Home Office's dispersal strategy to

break the strike, they received support from other prisoners: at one stage 20 people in Winson Green joined a hunger strike. The West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign picketed the prison in solidarity.

Strike-breaking

The methods used by Group 4 and the Home Office to break the strike have been many and various. Hunger strikers report the following:

- Threats of detention for nine months
- Threats of immediate deportation
- Threats of not being taken to appeal hearings
- Promises of instant release, not carried out
- Frequent fire drills tiring out hunger strikers



- Specially appetising breakfasts and luxuries such as bowls of fruit being left in hunger strikers' rooms by staff
- Inadequate medical attention for hunger strikers who reported illness.

The atmosphere at Campsfield was said to be very menacing. Detainees reported that the normal personnel were replaced by younger and fitter men, apparently brought in from other areas of England, and with no name tags. Groups of hunger strikers were isolated within the camp in a 'nursing centre' guarded 24 hours a day and sealed off from the rest of the camp. Hunger strikers held in isolation were escorted everywhere, even to the phone and the toilet, and were, they say, banned from watching TV or mixing with non-hunger strikers.

The campaign in support of the hunger strikers achieved a large amount of publicity. On 15 March the asylum-seekers' demands were published in the *Guardian*. There was extensive media coverage as the strike spread. Although, by means of the threats, promises and tricks reported above, most of the asylum-seekers had come off their hunger strike by the end of March, leaving around a dozen who were still refusing food halfway through April, the racist and inhuman treatment Britain metes out to refugees was finally put under the spotlight. ■

The common 'enemy'

Proposals for Europe-wide laws to keep members of 'criminal gangs' out of Europe, put forward by senior police officers to a House of Commons committee, give cause for concern to anti-racists and those fighting the large-scale criminalisation of immigrants and refugees travelling to Europe (see 'Criminalising the Kurds', CARF No. 19). What is suggested is an extension of the principles behind the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which allows the exclusion of suspected IRA members and others whom the Home Secretary believes are involved in acts of terrorism, to other groups deemed terrorist or criminal. The proposals would allow the banning of such groups, and of people suspected of being members, from all EU countries. In practice, this would impose a

kind of curfew on European 'undesirables', who would be restricted to their own country, and prevent the entry into the EU of 'undesirables' from outside.

The potential for the mischievous and racist use of such powers is legion in the hands of an unaccountable European coalition of police, security, intelligence and immigration officials for whom words such as 'Muslim', 'Arab' and 'terrorist' are synonymous. Already, groups such as the Police Working Group on Terrorism (PWGOT), established in 1979 but virtually unknown outside policing circles in Europe, see 'countering the threat posed by radicals in the European Islamic community' as a priority.

Since last summer, European interior ministers have been in agreement that law

and order should be a priority in European Union policy. In September, they agreed informally to abolish the political defence from the European extradition treaty currently being drafted. The rationale for this is that member states are too civilised to persecute political dissidents as terrorists. However, as the example of the Turkish Kurds makes clear (as do the examples further afield of the ANC and the PLO among others), 'terrorism' is a matter of definition and of politics and, like beauty, is very much in the eye of the beholder. If, in the eyes of present-day European interior ministers, police and immigration officers, all refugees are potential terrorists, Europe's law-and-order solutions could well spell deportation and death for Third World refugees. ■

National demonstration
Close down Campsfield
Saturday 4th June
 Feeder march leaves St. Giles Oxford at 10.30am
 Assemble 1pm car park Exeter Hall, Kidlington
 March to Campsfield and rally at 2pm
 Speakers will include refugee organisations and former detainees
 Campaign to Close Campsfield, c/o 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford. Tel: 0865-724452/722357

Justice for Oliver Campbell

On 22 March, the appeal of Oliver Campbell, serving a life sentence for murder, finally came before the Court of Appeal, over a year after leave to appeal was granted. Oliver has continually protested his innocence, and the Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign has been demanding his release because of serious concerns about his conviction. This was based on a confession taken without a solicitor, which Oliver later withdrew.

The court was picketed by the Campaign, and supporters inside heard that the case was to be adjourned for a report obtained by the defence to be considered. The report, by the country's leading authority on confessions, suggests that interviews given by Oliver to the police may have been oppressive in the light of his abnormal suggestibility. His case is being compared to other landmark cases such as the Cardiff Three, where confessions were rejected as unreliable because of oppression. Oliver's solicitors are also seeking two former prisoners who allege that Oliver's co-defendant named someone else as



the murderer whilst in prison – evidence which was also unavailable at his trial.

The appeal has been scheduled for 23 May at the latest, with the possibility of an earlier hearing on 11 May, and the campaign for Oliver Campbell will again be protesting outside the Court of Appeal against Oliver's continued detention.

For further details, contact the Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign, PO Box 273, London E7. Tel: 081-552 6284. ■

Ishtiaq Ahmed is innocent

Ishtiaq Ahmed, convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment in January 1991, will have his appeal heard on 27 June.

A Police Complaints Authority investigation is under way after allegations that witnesses were threatened and pressurised into changing their statements. One of the officers involved in the case has already been suspended and another has been dismissed. Ishtiaq's supporters will demonstrate



outside the Court of Appeal in the Strand at 9.30am on Monday 27 June. ■

For further information, contact the Ishtiaq Ahmed Campaign, 9 Salisbury Road, Reading RG3 1BH. Tel: 0734-589087.

Justice for Trevor Henry

Trevor Henry, the south Londoner serving 10 years imprisonment for an assault (see CARF No 11), had his sentence reduced to 5 years in March. The Appeal Court decided that there was a discrepancy in the framing of the original charge, but it refused to overturn his conviction altogether.

The Justice for Trevor Henry Campaign claims that the police automatically presumed Trevor's guilt and overlooked the possibility of other suspects. In addition, Trevor was not helped by the bad legal advice he received – his original firm of solicitors have since been closed by the Solicitors Complaints Bureau. Trevor's friends are continuing the fight to clear his name.

Justice for Trevor Henry Campaign, c/o Lewisham Action on Policing, 192 Evelyn Street, London SE8 5DB. Tel: 081-692 1308. ■

Refugee murdered

Somali refugee Saied Ahmed, aged 68, died on 6 April from burns after his Oxford home was firebombed three weeks earlier. Mr Ahmed, his wife, eight children and nephew were forced to jump from windows to escape the fire started by burning rags thrown through the letterbox. Police have so far refused to confirm a racial motivation despite the recent harassment of the family and an increase in racist graffiti locally. ■

Local Bengalis were among the 50,000 people attending the TUC demonstration through east London in March calling for justice for the Tower Hamlets 9. The campaign for those arrested at the vigil for Quddus Ali continues to raise fundamental issues of self-defence and the policing of black communities. In recent months, campaigners have spoken at meetings of trade unions and community groups across London and in Bradford, York, Sheffield and Bristol. Supporters are encouraged to initiate regional support committees to increase the profile of the campaign in the run-up to the trial. For further details, contact Tower Hamlets 9 Defence Campaign, PO Box 273, London E7. Tel: 081-548 0099. ■



Around the courts

Watch this space...

A Somali refugee is bringing an action for race discrimination after his wife and 4-year-old daughter were prevented from embarking on an EgyptAir flight to London despite holding visas. This was the result of instructions issued by EgyptAir's head office not to allow any Somalis to fly to the UK. Undoubtedly, the instructions were prompted by fear of the fine of £2,000 per person imposed by the government on airlines carrying undocumented passengers or those with false documents.

The things they say...

A Jamaican woman living in Birmingham is to sue the Foreign Office for race discrimination after she and her husband were interviewed in Kingston, Jamaica, when he applied to join her in the UK. They say that the immigration official made disparaging comments about Jamaicans including the following generalisations: 'They ... make strenuous attempts to avoid the constraints of matrimony, preferring instead the financial benefits of having children by different partners and the respect this confers on them... [and] have a traditional disregard for the sanctions of matrimony, [leading] to a consistent abuse of the concept in order to secure residence abroad.'

In other words, the last thing a Jamaican man wants is to get married, and the only reason for doing so is to get residence rights in Britain.

Tower Hamlets, true to form

Tower Hamlets is rumoured to be about to change its name to Sellafield. No, sorry, to the East End; it was Windscale that changed its name to Sellafield, so that people would think it was a different place and forget the smell. Will we ever forget the smell of Tower Hamlets' racism? A Somali family living in the friendly borough was forced to leave their home there after two years of racial harassment, including attempts to kick down the door and daubings with racist graffiti by neighbours. The family had to get out quickly, and asked council officials to secure the place to prevent theft and vandalism until they could retrieve their property. Needless to say, the property was left unsecured and the place was ransacked and set on fire. The family's entire belongings were destroyed. Tower Hamlets has refused to accept responsibility or to pay compensation which the family estimates to be around £900. The family is taking the council to court for negligence. ■

Kick racism out of football

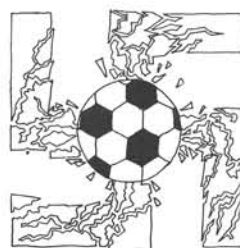
Following the success of the CRE's 'Let's kick racism out of football' campaign, plans are now being drawn up to carry the campaign forward into next season.

Every Premier League and Football League team, with the sole exception of York City, have put their names to the anti-racist charter drawn up by the CRE. The aim now is that those clubs should take part in activities designed to put that anti-racist commitment into practice.

Alongside this will be a national fans' anti-racist campaign, coordinated by the Football Supporters' Association where fans can show their support for anti-racism and for the club's efforts to outlaw racism. A national anti-racist fanzine will be written by, and for, supporters. Hopefully, it will be freely distributed at every League ground at the first home game of the next season.

The fanzine itself and the plans for its distribution are currently being worked on by a group consisting of the FSA and existing fan-based anti-racist football campaigns such as Leeds Fans United Against Racism and Fascism, Newcastle United Against Racism and the Everton fanzine *When the skies are grey*. The group will be asking fans at all clubs to distribute the new fanzine and to put pressure on their own clubs to support anti-racist policies.

Full details of how supporters can get



involved in this anti-racist campaign will be in the next issue of *CARF*.

Do the right thing

The fan-based campaigns mentioned above have succeeded in countering

racism through years of patient grassroots work, based on the fact that the campaigns are run by the fans themselves. This latter fact is what has persuaded other fans to take note of the campaigns, and to reject racist behaviour and attempts at infiltration by Nazi groups. What such fan-based campaigning can achieve is highlighted by the success at West Ham, where the club has been persuaded to sign an explicit anti-BNP statement by fans and local community groups.

Unfortunately, such long term work can easily be undermined by the misguided interventions of outside anti-racist groups. At several football grounds in recent months there have been examples of the Anti-Nazi League turning up out of the blue and telling football fans 'not to be racist'. Such parachuting in simply antagonises fans because they recognise these people as outside political activists with their own agenda and no interest in football. This is exactly the suspicion that the existing fan-based campaigns have worked so hard to overcome, and that hard work is quickly undone by people intervening without consulting the existing campaigns. ■

Illustration: Simon Wood

Germany: migrants fight back



IN *CARF* No 19, we reported on the campaign formed in Germany to defend five Kurds charged with the murder in Berlin in April 1992 of Gerhard Kaendel, a leading member of the neo-Nazi Deutsche Liga. Now migrants have come together to form the 'Antifascist Genclik Komitee' to campaign for the release of the arrested Kurds and to highlight the whole issue of self-defence against racism and fascism. The Antifascist Genclik Komitee, which held its first national demonstration on 20 April, plans to: ● fight back against state violence; ● build a long-term migrant movement to fight all forms of racism, including state racism. The Komitee also points to other

cases in which migrants have been criminalised for fighting back. These include: ● six Turkish youth in Hamburg accused of violence against members and the premises of the fascist Free Workers Party in Halstenbek; ● a 29-year-old Turkish man imprisoned for a year for 'disparaging the German state' after he distributed leaflets arguing that the German state was collaborating with fascists. Anti-fascist and migrant struggles in Germany are being criminalised. Self-defence is no offence. Please send donations to: R. Stüker, Konto-Nr. 240 29 76, Sparkasse Berlin Stadt, BLZ 100 500 00. Cheques to: Stichwort Antifa Anzeige. ■

When, in the wake of the IRA bombing of the City of London, police erected the so-called 'ring of plastic' around the City, it was a matter of public bemusement, as well as anger, that the vast majority of 'IRA suspects' whose vehicles were stopped and searched at the road-blocks by machine-gun-toting police were black. When home secretary Michael Howard announced in April that police were to have 'sweeping' new powers to stop and search people and vehicles for weapons in situations where 'they believe that violence is likely', we know whose communities police will be sweeping through.

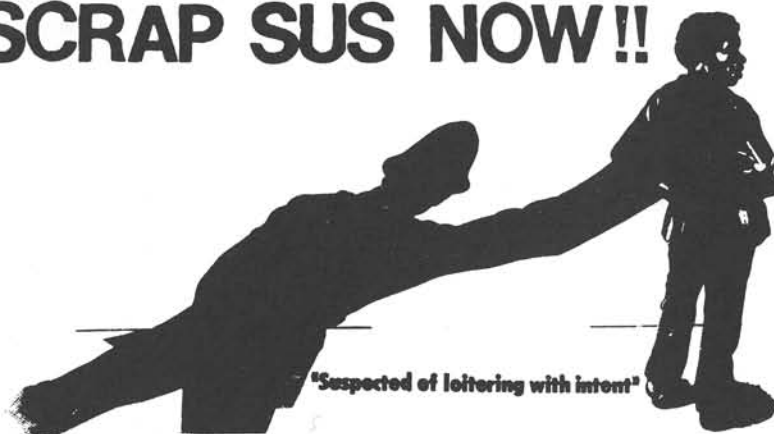
In 1981, the criminal offence of 'sus' – loitering with intent to commit an offence, under the Vagrancy Act of 1824 – was abolished. This was achieved after a long campaign by the mothers of thousands of black youths who were picked up from bus-stops and hauled to police stations, magistrates' courts and from there to detention centres and into the criminal statistics – all on the word of one or (usually) two lying policemen.

The abolition of 'sus' did not stop the targeting of black youths. In the same year, the ill-fated Swamp '81 operation was implemented. This two-week stop-and-search operation, under which the racist harassment of hundreds of black

'Sus' is back

**FREEDOM FOR BLACK YOUTHS AND OTHERS FROM SUS
THEY DESERVE BETTER TREATMENT**

SCRAP SUS NOW!!



BLACK PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SUS

youths by police was officially sanctioned and given a name, led to the Brixton uprising of 1981.

Howard's proposals once again lend

official sanction to the harassment of black youths. Areas to be targeted for the stop-and-search operations will include 'areas where drugs are sold' – police-speak for black areas – as well as around football grounds, pubs and demonstrations. On the authority of an inspector, police will be able to implement a 'stop-and-search zone' for up to 24 hours at a stretch, and, if violence breaks out, they can continue the operation for a further six hours.

The proposals were announced in the wake of figures showing a fourfold increase in complaints of racist policing in 1993. The Labour party, eager to present themselves as the true party of law and order, is unlikely to oppose the proposals. In this climate, where the rights of 'suspect' communities are ignored, the measures will, if implemented, legitimise the wholesale criminalisation of another generation of marginalised black youths.

● Armed police besieged the home of pensioners Felix and Wilhelmina Angol in April looking for their estranged son. Officers reportedly broke down the door of their home in Queen's Park, north-west London, where they were arrested, made to walk across broken glass without shoes to a police van in which they were locked for half an hour, despite the fact that two police stations are minutes away. A police spokesperson said: 'We only arrested the Angols to protect them.' ■

Fear of a black 'underclass'

When Snoop Doggy Dogg, the hugely successful American rapper who is on bail for an accessory to murder charge, recently came to play in London, the *Daily Star* put him on the front cover with the headline 'Send this evil bastard back'. From the *Guardian* to the *Sunday Telegraph*, nobody could resist a feature on this man – not because of any newly found interest in rap among the nation's media, but as a way of once again satisfying the media's ongoing desire to talk in worried terms about the American 'underclass'.

For the 'quality' newspapers, the tabloids, and the politicians, it is the fear of an American-style 'underclass' – which is taken to be a black underclass – that underlies all discussion on crime in Britain. The American theory of the 'underclass' blames poor single mothers for creating a distinct culture that rejects the work ethic in favour of dependency on welfare and asserts that the children brought up in this culture drift into crime.

This tactic of locating the cause of crime in the distinct culture of a particular group will be familiar to anti-racists. It serves the purpose of diverting attention away from the real social situation, and allows crime to be thought of as an alien intrusion into society. The 'evil bastard' that the *Daily Star* demanded be sent back was not just Snoop Doggy Dogg, but the alien intrusion of black music itself and its perceived threat of corrupting young people with its criminality.

Another week, and the 'evil bastard' is the threat of ragga. Another week and 'Juice', a film about black gang members in New York, is invoked to explain the Les Reed murder on the Ely estate in Cardiff, just because the convicted men had watched it before the murder – even the depiction of black gang members in a film is regarded as a corrupting influence.

In this way, even though blacks make up a minority of what would be regarded as the 'underclass', it's still black culture that gets blamed for crime. ■

FEB 17 Seventeen Asian textile workers disciplined for taking a day off work for Eid win £1,000 compensation each. **FEB 18** Department of the Environment guidelines tell local authorities to check the passports of homeless people to ensure that housing is not given to 'illegal immigrants'. **FEB 21** Report launched by the Asylum Rights Campaign reveals dramatic crackdown on rights of asylum seekers in breach of UN Refugee Convention. **FEB 23** Previously suppressed police evidence reveals that ten Surrey police officers were guilty of serious impropriety in the handling of the 'Guildford 4' case. **FEB 24** Court hears how a drunken gang petrol-bombed Exeter mosque. **FEB 25** Revisionist historian David Irving is freed after spending eleven days in jail for failing to disclose his assets after a High Court order. **MAR 2** North west London Jews receive anti-Semitic literature in the post from the Church of the Creator referring to 'Jewish ritual murder' and 'paedophilia'. **MAR 4** Youth sentenced to three years' youth custody for racist attack in Newham, east London in which a 14 year old needed 11 stitches after being hit on the head with an axe. **MAR 6** Nine Algerians and one Indian released from Campsfield immigration detention centre after being on hunger strike for a fortnight. **MAR 8** Attorney General announces that the CPS will prosecute illegal immigrants for serious crimes instead of deporting them. **MAR 12** Fascists raid Bloom's Jewish restaurant in east London daubing swastikas on walls... Home Office documents reveal that courts show sexual and racial bias. **MAR 14** 12 members of a Somali family in Oxford are taken to hospital after an arson attack on their home, subsequently one man dies. **MAR 15** Human rights groups demand urgent inquiry into treatment of asylum seekers on hunger strike at Campsfield detention centre, ten of whom are moved to prisons because 'they were being disruptive' according to the Home Office. **MAR 16** Police are to be given additional powers to 'stop and search' according to Home Secretary Michael Howard. **MAR 17** Official police figures show that reported 'racial incidents' have doubled in the last five years. **MAR 18** TUC figures show that last year black people were seven times more likely to lose their jobs than white workers... Trevor Monerville, the teenager who suffered brain damage after his arrest by Stoke Newington police in 1989 is stabbed to death in Hackney. **MAR 19** New evidence is passed to the CPS to aid the capture of PC Blakelock's killers, for which the 'Tottenham Three' spent 5 years in prison. **MAR 20** MORI poll shows that 23% feel that police are prejudiced against black people... Poll for The London Programme reveals that 70% of black Londoners thought that their colour would make it more difficult to find or keep a job. **MAR 21** Chief Inspector of Prisons Judge Stephen Tumim calls for the Home Office to move immigration detainees out of Pentonville Prison, calling their detention inappropriate... Two black factory workers win an industrial tribunal case against a firm who handed them 'joke' application forms asking them to choose from 'mugging, prostitution, pimping, occasional riots' as their hobbies... Black PC Woodrow Bryan wins £8,000 after enduring two years of racism at Hendon police college and during his probationary period in Fulham. **MAR 22** Boxer Philip Kamara loses appeal against deportation to Sierra



CALENDAR RACE RESISTANCE

Leone - Home Office offer to arrange for his wife and eight month old baby to join him... The Bar is accused of racial discrimination after just 91 out of 882 places for the barristers' finals course are offered to black students. **MAR 23** Research from the Medical Practitioners Union reveals that black doctors are 6 times more likely than their white colleagues to face disciplinary action from the General Medical Council... Gloucestershire chief fire officer claims that Asian and Chinese people are usually too short to qualify as firefighters. **MAR 24** Banking Insurance and Finance Union claims that in some areas up to half of those being made redundant in Barclays redundancy plans are black due to discrimination. **MAR 25** Tower Hamlets Liberal Democrats are accused of secretly de-selecting Bangladeshi candidates in favour of whites for local elections.

MAR 26 Jamaican schoolgirl on the Isle of Wight is excluded from school for wearing beads and plaits in her hair. **MAR 27** Lady Jane Birdwood is found guilty of distributing material likely to cause racial hatred for her pamphlet 'the Longest Hatred' (and is later given a three month suspended sentence). **MAR 28** Annual report of the Police Complaints Authority reveals that complaints of serious assaults and racial discrimination by officers rose by 300 per cent last year... Refugee Council estimates that over 9,000 asylum seekers and immigrants are held in British prisons each year. **MAR 29** Paddy Ashdown says that Lib Dem candidates in the local elections will be prepared to share platforms with the BNP... Tower Hamlets council dismisses 150 Section 11 teachers. **MAR 31** 16 year old thug is given probation after almost murdering a Sikh pensioner in Gravesend... Home Affairs select committee recommends that racially motivated attacks should carry an extra jail sentence of up to 5 years. **APR 2** 15 year old girl is struck over the head with a glass bottle by racist gang wearing balaclavas in south London. **APR 3** Mixed race family in Bramhall, Manchester have house curtains set alight and swastikas daubed on front door. **APR 6** England pulls out of friendly football match with Germany due to be played on Hitler's birthday after fears of nazi violence... 82 year old BNP Newham candidate, Henry Vinecombe, withdraws from May elections saying he did not know he had been put forward. Vinecombe's son, Kevin, is also standing for the BNP in Newham. **APR 7** Letter bomb explodes at BNP's south London headquarters burning the hands and face of a party worker. **APR 9** National Front are left more than £100,000 in the will of Henry Williams, a customs officer.

APR 11 Home Secretary forced to amend proposals to abolish right to silence... Brixton police refuse to comment after officers are caught abusing Asian shopkeeper on camera. **APR 14** Report from the London Borough of Islington says that attacks on black residents have increased by 20 per cent. **APR 15** Crown Prosecution Service says there is not enough evidence to prosecute the killers of Stephen Lawrence, his family say they will consider bringing a private prosecution... Sikh temple in Scunthorpe is daubed with swastikas and racist graffiti. **APR 17** West Indian cricketer Andy Ifill is held for 2 nights at Gatwick airport before being deported. **APR 18** Half of Britain's inner city black families are living well below the poverty line according to a report from the London Borough of Greenwich.

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