

# CARF

CAMPAIGN AGAINST  
RACISM & FASCISM

## refugees: countdown to zero

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GBH - Michael Murray (Robert Lindsay).

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### Campaign Against Racism and Fascism

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# Comment

At the European Summit of heads of state in Luxembourg in June, John Major spoke of the need for European governments to curtail immigration and to establish a strong 'perimeter fence' around Europe to keep out bogus asylum-seekers who were, he maintained, little more than economic migrants. In July, French prime minister Edith Cresson was praised by the National Front when she promised to fight illegal immigration by chartering special planes to fly out unwanted immigrants. This, commented Bruno Megret, deputy leader of the FN, proved what Le Pen had been saying all along.

The Euro-Fascists may well congratulate themselves as they see their anti-immigrant rhetoric bear fruit in terms of government policy. The language of Major, Chirac and Cresson smacks of Powellism - a new 'numbers' game'. But whereas Powell's use of the numbers' argument was linked to an earlier stage of immigration of Asian and Caribbean people from the ex-colonies, whose labour was needed to meet Britain's post-war economic needs (hence controls were brought in when labour was no longer required), today's numbers' game takes place in a period where there is no longer immigration to the UK, and those coming to the West are refugees from the Third World, forced to flee here for political reasons.

To play the numbers' game with refugees' lives makes a mockery of the 1951 United Nations convention on the status of refugees. For a just asylum policy can only be based on one criteria, the criteria of need. And need is heedless of numbers. To link asylum policy to numbers is to look at need in a numerical way, to transform justice into a macabre game of Russian roulette.

John Major states that asylum applications to Britain are now running at 1,000 per week - and this is the proof that restrictions need to be brought in. But a rational interpretation of these figures would lead him to different conclusions. For, if we receive 100 applications from, say Somalia, in one week, surely this speaks volumes as to the situation in that country: greater numbers point to increased persecution and are not evidence of bogus claims.

The idea that if numbers go past a certain limit, refugees cease to be refugees and are somehow magically transmogrified into economic migrants lacks credibility.

In 'Refugees: countdown to zero', we attempt to provide the background to today's refugee crisis that the politicians fail to consider. If the West really wants to do something about the refugee problem, we argue, it must examine its relationship to the Third World. Western governments could, for example, cease to give arms to authoritarian regimes; they could desist from propping up governments whose only virtue is that they serve western interests and from destabilising regimes (to the cost of \$50 billion in the case of the Frontline states) which they don't like. They could end the system of debt and dependency institutionalised by the IMF and GATT, which are presently calling for the removal of government subsidies on food production in Third World countries and which are bringing in new regulations to protect transnational corporations.

The debate around refugees is doubly hypocritical today, as it is taking place at a time when the West has created a new refugee problem in the Middle East. Liberal commentators may talk about global migration in an abstract sense, but imperialist interventions in the Middle East have not only created new refugees, but displaced old ones - the Filipinos, Tamils, Palestinians and Indians, who had gone to the Gulf region to find refuge and work.

In such a scenario, where the poor South is kept in hock to the rich West, the distinction between an economic and a political refugee does become blurred - but not in the terms outlined by John Major. How can you distinguish between political and economic refugees in countries where occupation, war and destabilisation makes it impossible even to eke out an existence; where politicians whose programmes run counter to IMF and World Bank interests find themselves subject to political assassination; where commodity price fixing and privatisation of the nationalised sector are creating malnutrition, disease and poverty; where death squads are employed to kill people simply for organising a trades union? Political persecution is often the end product of economic persecution.

As the Refugee Forum, in its open letter to the Home Secretary, points out: 'The answer to the problems of hundred of millions of people who live under totalitarian governments cannot lie in emigration to the West. But people don't travel thousands of miles because they want to, but because they have to - there is no alternative which offers them safety, freedom from arbitrary arrest or, even, indiscriminate shelling. Instead of encouraging racism among British people, the government should be educating them in the responsibility the West owes the refugees it has helped create, offering a true safe haven instead of a precarious, rocky perch.'

# Refugees: countdown to zero



Tamils demand the right to asylum

In July, just as the European Court of Human Rights was about to denounce Britain's asylum procedures for giving refugees inadequate protection, the Home Secretary announced new appeal rights for asylum-seekers whose applications for refugee status are refused by the Home Office Refugee Unit. When the new law comes in, they will no longer have to wait until they're removed from the country before they can appeal, but will have the right first to present their case to an independent adjudicator. This announcement should have been good news to the refugee groups, which have been campaigning for years on the issue. But it wasn't. For this is no ordinary appeal system, but one designed to get rid of as many 'bogus refugees' as possible as quickly as possible.

Free legal advice and assistance from lawyers is to be abolished; instead, only the Home Office funded United Kingdom Immigrants' Advisory

Service (UKIAS) is to represent asylum-seekers (though UKIAS has since challenged this, on the grounds that legal representation should be a matter of free choice). 'Manifestly ill-founded' applications will be dismissed without a hearing. The right to challenge Home Office decisions in the High Court will disappear.

The new appeal system, then, bears all the hallmarks of a sorely begrudged concession. And it was announced as part of a package of measures which all have the same aim and which are informed by the same ideology; the majority of asylum-seekers are 'bogus'. Fines for airlines carrying passengers with false or no travel documents are to double to £2000. The number of people who, having not qualified under the strict definition of refugees, are given 'exceptional leave' to stay in the country, is to be severely reduced.

## DOUBLE VISION

The ideology of 'bogus refugees'

reflects the double vision of the West on the issue. Refugees who stay where they are, dying in the mountainous war zones in Iraq or starving in refugee camps in Africa, are 'real' and victims to be pitied; those who attempt to get to the West are 'bogus', adventurers in search of a better life, and are to be deterred, detected and removed.

But both views fail to see the West's own responsibility in the creation of the 'refugee problem'. In April, it was only massive public incredulity and outrage which forced George Bush, John Major and other Western leaders to agree, belatedly, that they had a moral responsibility to help the refugees which their war in Iraq had created. Only after it became clear that the world would not let them get away with inciting a people to rebel, only to walk away from the consequences,

# NO RIGHT TO VOTE

In May, the European Parliament's Committee on Institutional Affairs agreed proposals which, if enacted, would strip more than a million UK Commonwealth citizens of the right to vote in European parliamentary elections. Its report, the De Gucht report, proposes that only nationals of EC countries should be allowed to vote in future European elections. While these proposals stand little chance of being passed by the full session of the European parliament this autumn, the fact that they could be supported by a wide cross-section of MEPs, including UK conservatives, is extremely worrying. With the Far Right continuing to set the terms of debate on immigration and asylum-seekers throughout Europe, it would appear that some Tory MEPs are even prepared to join openly with it in advocating the removal of such fundamental civil rights as the right to vote for those few black and Third World citizens who have it.

were the leaders shamed into doing something. Even then, the aid was only for the Kurds in the north; the southern Shi'a Muslims, whose plight had not hit the headlines, were quietly betrayed as US forces left them unprotected from the Iraqi army's retaliation for the US-inspired rebellion.

In Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Uganda, in Central and South America, Western governments have armed, trained and supported rebels against governments; in countless other countries, they have supported (sometimes installed) authoritarian governments - all, of course, to protect Western 'vital interests'. These interventions have been less visible than the dismemberment of Iraq, but no less devastating for the citizens of those countries. So, too, has been the financial intervention of the IMF and the World Bank, leading to national bankruptcy, immiseration and repression.

But to acknowledge this responsibility would be to recognise the need for fundamental changes in the global economic, political and military order. To acknowledge what the West (or the North) owes the Third World (the South) would be to recognise that Europeans derive their standard of living from non-Europeans, and therefore cannot justify closing the door on them.

## STRICT DEFINITION

The spectre of ragged armies of the world's poor, the starving millions of Africa and Asia, the victims of civil wars and proxy super-power conflicts, and now, the displaced and unemployed millions of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, are exercising Western Europe's governments as never before. By the terms of the Geneva Convention and Protocol of 1951 and 1967, signatory governments (including all the EC countries) are not allowed to return refugees to the country where they fear persecution, although they have no obligation to admit them. The Convention's definition of 'refugee' is very narrow, excluding people fleeing from war, civil war, natural disaster or serious disturbances (all of whom are accepted as refugees by African states who have signed the Organisation of African Unity's Convention).

But despite the strict definition, and despite the fact that well over 90% of the world's refugees are taken in by neighbouring countries, since the mid-80s the numbers seeking refuge in Europe have steadily increased, and the response of Western governments has become more restrictive. As 'hard-line' governments have introduced visa restrictions, fines on airlines, 'reception' or 'detention' centres, more liberal governments have followed suit, fearful of becoming a magnet for rejects from the rest of Europe.

## A WILLING PARTNER

The British government has been a willing partner in the effort to close Europe's doors to refugees. Thus, while in 1980 64% of asylum-seekers were granted full refugee status, by 1989 only 32% were recognised, with nearly 60% being granted 'exceptional leave to remain' - a second-class refugee status which carries no rights to security or family reunion. In 1989, over 2,000 refused asylum-seekers were expelled. In the past five years, Britain has imposed visa requirements on people from most of the 'refugee-producing' countries, including Iraq, Iran, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Zaire, Ghana and Turkey. It has imposed penalties on airlines carrying people with false or missing documentation, and has collected over £30 million in fines since 1987. In June 1990, Britain, together with the other 11 EC countries, signed the Dublin Convention, which allows asylum-seekers the chance to make only one application and defines which country is responsible for processing it, regardless of the asylum-seeker's wishes, language, or connections with other European countries. Since then, squabbles between countries as to who should take responsibility for an application has led to an increase in what is called the RIO (Refugees in Orbit) phenomenon, whereby asylum applicants are shuttled from one European port or airport to another. *Mr and Mrs C arrived in Dover, having fled Turkey concealed in the back of a lorry. They were not allowed off the lorry until it was on the cross-channel ferry, and the couple had no idea which countries they had come through on their 10-day journey. They have uncles, aunts, cousins,*



brothers and sisters in Britain. But the immigration officer refused to consider their asylum application and decided to send them back to France, as the country they had last been in. A High Court judge was told that the French Embassy refused responsibility for them and French officials would return them to Britain. He refused their application to be allowed to stay in Britain, saying that what the French authorities might do was of no concern to him.

When asylum-seekers are not simply turned round and sent back to a third country, the procedures for deciding their claim are weighted against them. Mr P arrived from Angola, distressed, emotionally and physically exhausted and anxious. His parents had been killed by UNITA guerrillas. He was interviewed on his arrival by an immigration officer (immigration officers carry out all asylum interviews, although they have no training for this, and no knowledge of conditions in refugees' countries). The interview was in French - Mr P's fourth language (after his Angolan tribal language; Portuguese, the Angolan colonial language, and Linguala, a Zairean tribal language). There was no interpreter. Later on, he was interviewed again and gave more information about his claim. The Home Office rejected this more detailed account on the grounds that he had not given it when he arrived.

#### IN DETENTION

Many asylum-seekers are detained, in immigration detention centres like Harmondsworth and Haslar (near Portsmouth), or in prisons. Since the death of Kurdish asylum-seeker Siho Iyigüven in Harmondsworth in October 1989, no one pretends that asylum-seekers are not detained. What they now suggest is that such detention is self-imposed. At the inquest in March 1991 of Kimpua Nsimba, a Zairean asylum-seeker held in Harmondsworth, the coroner rejected the comparison of Harmondsworth with a prison. 'These detainees', he said, 'are free to leave, and go back to their countries.'

In 1989, those stubborn victims of 'self-imposed' detention included a Zairean who had lost an arm to gangrene after being tortured. He was kept in Pentonville prison for two

months when he claimed asylum. Those detained in 1990 included about 25 children aged 7 to 15, whose parents had died, disappeared or were in prison.

In 1991, detainees in Pentonville included Zairean asylum-seekers, one of whom, doctors told the Home Office, had marks of whipping, beating and of the drilling of hot screws into his feet; he tried to hang himself twice during his six-month detention; the Home Office said they had lost his file and had 'no idea what to do with him'. One thing they wouldn't do was release him.

The detention of asylum-seekers has been endorsed by the courts. In 1989, the High Court held that the Home Office's detention of Tamil asylum-seekers for eight and ten months was 'not unreasonable'; recently, immigration adjudicators have been demanding sureties of £4,000 for the release of people awaiting a decision.

#### JUDGE AND JURY

The ever harsher measures against asylum-seekers have been accompanied by increasingly strident denunciations of them as 'bogus refugees'. In announcing the new measures in July, the Home Secretary emphasised the small number of asylum-seekers who are granted refugee status as proof that the great majority of applicants are undeserving, 'economic migrants'. But this ignores the fact that, with the Home Office itself acting as judge and jury in each case, it has been free to reject applications from victims of shelling on the grounds that the shelling was 'indiscriminate' and not, therefore, 'persecution'; or to reject acknowledged torture victims on the ground that they could not show that the regime they were fleeing from

wished to torture them again. It is these people who, by and large, obtain 'exceptional leave to remain' on 'compassionate grounds' - the category that the Home Office now plans to curtail. The only bogus thing about most asylum-seekers is their documents - since they cannot get visas as refugees, they are forced to resort to bribes and forgery to leave their country.

#### SURPLUS LABOUR

It is perhaps not a coincidence that the crackdown on asylum-seekers from the Third World comes at a time when a new 'reserve army' of cheap labour has become available in Eastern Europe. 'De facto' refugees, together with unauthorised workers, have traditionally been used to do the dirty work in the West - their lack of legal status makes them an ideal workforce, unwilling to jeopardise their precarious status by complaining or organising around lower-than-minimum pay, appalling work conditions and lack of health and safety provision.

Now, with the East opened up, that workforce is becoming surplus to requirements. In January, Germany called on its EC partners to help it absorb immigrants from the former Soviet bloc, and to make room for them, if necessary, by cutting back on Third World 'immigrants'. Since the only Third World 'immigrants' now allowed in to most European countries are, in fact, refugees, the message was to get even tougher on asylum-seekers.

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# Columbus: a colonial celebration



The new Columbus Lighthouse in the Dominican Republic. Photo by Philip Wolmuth

Rumours around the European Commission in Brussels are that the year 1992 was picked for the launch of the single market because it coincides with the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to the Americas. Many European countries are using the anniversary to celebrate European civilisation. Columbus, the great European, boldly going where (supposedly) no European had been before, is the perfect symbol of a reborn European power.

The Columbus Regatta, a fleet of tall ships which will sail from Cadiz to the Americas next year, was announced in the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* as the 'Reconquest of America'. The boats will return to Liverpool in what is, in effect, a commemoration of the slave trade routes. The celebrations have taken on an even more absurd tinge with the 'wedding' between the Statue of Columbus in Barcelona and the Statue of Liberty in New York. The wedding ring, which will have a video of Columbus' life as its gemstone, is to be financed to the tune of £60,000 by Birmingham City Council. Celebrations of this nature glorify the

colonial invasion and continuing exploitation of the Americas. The European civilisation which is being celebrated is a white Christian civilisation, the same civilisation which was responsible for the decimation of the population of the Americas from 100 million to 10 million in the first century of colonial rule. We should not forget that the Aztec city of Tenochtitlan had a population of 300,000 at the time of the European invasion - five times the pre-Columbian population of Madrid. These celebrations also contribute to racism within Europe. If Columbus represents Europe, then the Latin American, African and Asian communities within Europe are being told that they don't exist. For Columbus and the colonisers who followed him, non-Christians were non-human. For black communities in Liverpool 8, a regatta which follows the slave trade route to Liverpool is an insult to their identity. The celebration, then, contributes to the idea of Fortress Europe, promoting a vision of Europe which denies the past and excludes the present for the majority of the world's peoples.

## UNMASKING 1992

It is for these reasons that the 500 years of resistance campaign has been launched. Following the initiative of a continental campaign in the Americas (called 500 years of indigenous and popular resistance), the campaign believes that we should be celebrating the continuing resistance to the invasion of the Americas by communities and organisations rather than the past exploits of pirates. Instead of applauding the construction of a \$60 million lighthouse on the Dominican Republic to Columbus' memory, the campaign applauds the actions of the new government in Haiti which ceremonially threw the country's statue of Columbus into the sea.

Campaigns of this nature are being set up all over Europe and the Americas. In Spain, for example, 'Unmasking 1992' is bringing together not only the question of the quincentenary and the European single market, but also the expulsion of the Moors and the Jews from Spain, events which also took place in 1492. In the Americas, boats are to be launched which will land in Spain in order to 'discover' it. The campaign is even having an impact within the European parliament: the Green group of MEPs has taken on '500 years of colonisation' as a priority for next year.

In Britain, the campaign hopes to act as an umbrella for independent initiatives by organisations all over the country: solidarity groups, human rights committees, anti-racist groups, women's organisations and political organisations. Speaker tours, benefits, cultural events, conferences and other events are being planned by different organisations with the aim of reflecting on our history and demythologising Columbus's voyage. The hope is that it will create an alternative to the weddings of the rich in order to consolidate the resistance of the oppressed.

For more information, contact 500 Years of Resistance Campaign, Latin American Association, Kingsgate Place, London NW6 4TA.

# British nationalists on Europe

*Since Mrs Thatcher's demise, factions of the Tory party have been at each other's throats over the issue of Europe. The press may speculate as to the position John Major will eventually adopt over European harmonisation and the single market, but behind the news lies another, much bigger story of the regrouping of the nationalist Tory Right. Below CARF examines the contours of different British nationalisms and reports on links that some members of the Conservative Party are making with the likes of Le Pen.*

## CONSTITUTIONAL NATIONALISM

The opposition to Europe of Mrs Thatcher and the Bruges Group is, for the Far Right of the Tory party, too little and too late. The Bruges Group, representing politicians, academics and judges from both within and outside the Tory party, argues that 'British sovereignty' is threatened by the EC bureaucracy and the imposition of laws from Brussels. The group, often referred to as the 'constitutional nationalists', stresses the uniqueness of the British heritage, particularly its parliamentary democracy.

## RACIAL NATIONALISM

The NF and the BNP share a very similar anti-EC stance derived from the NF's anti-EEC campaigns of the 1970s. The Third Way, however, believes that 'Europe 1992 should be used to argue against the Superstate and more power to the regions'. Fascist magazines make clear the nazis' distaste for the idea that true Brits have anything in common with the Continentals. For BNP fuhrer John Tyndall, Britain is separated from continental Europe by national and ethnic differences, and Britons feel more in common with the White Commonwealth because of their common Anglo-Saxon extraction. The European union, he warns, is an attempt to make us 'ditch our imperial heritage and merge our identity and freedom into the European Superstate'. And the European

Superstate is the first step to World union and the death of the nation-state and everything nationalists everywhere hold so dear.

Advocacy of the 'White Commonwealth' is crucial to this anti-EC stance. For Europe is not a geographical, but a racial entity - hence the idea of Turkey joining the EC is considered ludicrous, and EC bureaucrats are traitors (as is Mrs Thatcher) because they have allowed immigration to sully Europe's racial purity. Britain should protect its industry from foreign interests and, instead of seeking artificial unity with Europe, should adopt preferential trading links with its real ethnic and cultural brothers in the White Commonwealth. Hence, both the NF and BNP seem keener to forge links with the Far Right in South Africa, America and Australia than with their European allies.

## AUTHORITARIAN NATIONALISTS

If the BNP and NF's racial nationalism is linked to nostalgia for Empire, so too are the views of the authoritarian Right of the Tory party: the Monday Club (formed in 1961 in protest at Harold MacMillan's 'winds of change' speech) and the Western Goals Institute (formed in 1985 by Young Monday Club members, and closely associated with the World Anti-Communist League and the British Freedom Council) - the members of which, some say, have now taken over the Monday Club.

Whereas the nazis speak of Europe being ruined by Third World immigration, and openly voice their theories of white racial superiority, the language of the authoritarian nationalists is more usually couched in terms of the cultural superiority of Western values and civilisation.

A recent Yorkshire Monday Club leaflet circulated door-to-door in Bradford is entitled 'Don't let Europe Rule Britannia' and calls for the defence of 'British national identity and culture'. When the Technical

group of the European Right met in London in July (a CARF reporter attended the press briefing), Stuart Millson, Gregory Lauder-Frost (foreign affairs spokesman of the Monday Club) and Andrew Smith of Western Goals attended Le Pen's press briefing. Lauder-Frost was particularly concerned that he condemn left-wing teachers who constantly denigrate Britain's colonial heritage, urged him to draw comparisons between Muslim violence in France and the UK, and spoke of the need for Britain to keep its own currency as the most potent symbol of its national identity.

Andrew Smith later spoke of his desire to develop a European network of right-wing groups, and of his admiration for Le Pen. Indeed, Western Goals makes no bones about its desire to create a 'Pan-European order based on the values of European civilisation' which are under threat from 'Marxism and liberalism'. It opposes internationalism and the multi-cultural society, and boasts links with the Republikaner in Germany as well as with the right wing in Namibia, Mozambique (Renamo), El Salvador (ARENA) and the South African Conservative party.

The lesson the Far Right of the Tory party now realises it has to learn from Le Pen is his ability to chart a fascist path within the EC, manipulating its structures to build an anti-immigrant platform for right-wing groups across Europe, without submerging (in principle that is) different European nationalisms into the pan-European one which the nazi foot-soldiers so fear. As Andrew Smith put it, in developing a right-wing network, 'Mr Le Pen is seen as the natural leader. As a French patriot, he stands for some of the same values and principles as our own Conservative party. His support for the halt of Third World immigration into western Europe mirrors the increased concern of our own government.'

For more information on Western Goals UK, see *Lobster* No 21.



# Justice in the dock

*Within minutes of the release of the Birmingham Six in March, Home Secretary Kenneth Baker announced that there was to be a Royal Commission into Criminal Justice. CARF questions whether this is a serious attempt to look at the inequities in the criminal justice system.*

The Guildford Four, the Maguire Seven, the Birmingham Six, the West Midlands serious crime squad cases - in all these instances British 'justice' has been found to be gravely at fault. The Tottenham Three, the Bridgwater Four, Tony Parris and many other people who we do not even hear about - these are all cases where justice is believed not to have been done. What does the Home Secretary do? Publicly apologise for the former and refer the rest to the Court of Appeal? No. He sets up a Royal Commission, to be headed by a businessman and academic, Lord Runciman.

The panel includes no one with personal experience of being unjustly treated by the criminal justice system, no lawyer who has been directly involved in fighting an iniquitous verdict. There is a senior policeman, a former Home Office civil servant, three professors, three little-known lawyers - and the only non-white is Ushar Prasha. And these people will be serviced by Home Office officials. Royal commissions are held out as being impartial and objective. But their very terms of reference can refute this. When Kenneth Baker announced the Runciman commission, his first concern was that it should examine 'securing the conviction of those guilty of criminal offences', rather than 'the

acquittal of those who are innocent'. What is more, the commission is considering curtailing the right of silence. Regarded with hostility by the police - and already done away with in Northern Ireland - the right of silence is considered by defence lawyers as a fundamental right of accused people and a protection for the innocent. Far from being impartial, the last royal commission on criminal procedure, prompted by another grave miscarriage of justice, was hijacked by the police. The end result - the Police and Criminal Evidence Act - increased police powers while failing to include many of the safeguards which at least a minority of the commission had thought essential. That commission also failed to address some fundamental issues. Despite powerful evidence on the racism pervading the criminal justice system, this got hardly a mention in the commission's final report. And now, of the 88 questions drawn up by the Runciman commission to circulate to those giving evidence, only one mentions race - and that is in relation to the balance of juries. Yet anti-black and anti-Irish racism are manifest in the criminal justice system, and in many miscarriages of justice.

Royal commissions are also used by government to divert embarrassing questions, in the hope that, by the time they report - Runciman is meant to do this in two years - public concern and anger will have died down. But it will not. And the families and friends of those unjustly jailed are not prepared to wait for another report before securing their release.

## A CASE TO ANSWER

After 25 years in prison, Kayode Orishagbemi has the dubious distinction of being the victim of the longest lasting miscarriage of justice in British legal history. In 1966, he was convicted of murder, although the pathologist who examined his alleged victim was unable to say how she died. He was convicted mainly on the evidence of a co-accused, Evelyn Akolo, and was sentenced to life imprisonment with a recommendation that he serve a minimum of 20 years. He has been in prison ever since. In March 1967, less than a year after the trial, Miss Akolo retracted her evidence and said that for £30 she had agreed with another prosecution witness to give perjured evidence. But the Court of Appeal dismissed his application for leave to appeal, and a police investigation concluded that the police prosecution had been carried out properly. When Mr Orishagbemi tried to prosecute the other witness who had perjured herself, he was prevented from doing so by the Home Office and labelled a 'vexatious litigant' for trying to prove his innocence.

He has been refused parole several times because, like the Birmingham Six and many others, he refuses to express remorse for something he did not do. Now it is probably too late, even if the Court of Appeal were to rehear the appeal, as witnesses have disappeared. Unless the Home Secretary orders the immediate release of Mr Orishagbemi, he may well die in prison.





# Scotland: the fight back

*As part of its general election campaign the BNP has announced that it will be standing a candidate - possibly John Tyndall - in Edinburgh. The Supporters Campaign Against Racism in Football, which believes that this will mean an increase in fascist activity on the terraces, reports on the situation.*

Since the late 1970s, when the NF and the Anti-Nazi League campaigned at football grounds in Edinburgh, neo-Nazi parties were thought to be an extinct species in Scotland, being confined to urban areas south of the border. And because Scotland has a relatively small black population, it was felt that we did not have a problem with racism. However, the true situation is rapidly becoming apparent. The BNP, the NF and even the Ku Klux Klan are active and organised in both urban and rural areas.

In Edinburgh, fascist influences on the football 'casuals' of both Hearts of Midlothian FC and Hibernian FC are beginning to be felt. The situation in Scotland is complicated by the sectarian divide between Protestant Rangers and Catholic Celtic and, to a lesser extent, between Hearts and Hibs. The BNP has tried to exploit the divide, targeting the 'Orange' 'Loyalist' population by adopting a virulently anti-IRA and anti-Irish stance.

This has had a resonance amongst a section of the fans of Rangers and Hearts, who the BNP sees as a ready-made 'constituency' for it to recruit activists and promote its racist and fascist creed.

Organised fascists were able to exploit the latent racism in Scotland when Rangers and Celtic signed black players Mark Walters and Paul Elliot about two years ago. At every football ground they played at, these players were subjected to a disgusting and terrifying level of racist abuse and outright hatred. The chanting of obscenities and throwing of bananas was probably at its worst at Tynecastle Park, the home of Hearts. For anti-racists on the terraces those occasions were intensely depressing; our condemnation of racism was drowned out by the seemingly unanimous chants from the packed terraces. It was especially difficult to counteract the racist propaganda because of the bitter rivalry felt towards the two Glasgow clubs which demands hatred of even their white players.

Whilst the authorities, clubs and supporters' associations purport to be anti-racist in principle, the reality is that they refuse to tackle the situation, hoping it will somehow go away. In adopting this head-in-the-sand attitude, they run the risk of ruining football as well as contributing to the

damage done to society by the unfettered spread of fascism. Black players won't come to Scottish football. Black fans won't watch the games and the genuine fan will be driven out if the problem of racism and fascism are not dealt with.

For these reasons, a group of football fans from both major clubs in the city came together to form SCARF, Supporters Campaign Against Racism in Football, towards the end of last season. A public meeting involving both black and white players was held in August and a benefit concert will be held later this year.

Both football grounds are situated in areas that have significant black populations and are high profile parliamentary seats (Edinburgh Central, Labour marginal; Edinburgh Leith, safe Labour but sitting MP Ron Brown may stand against the official Labour candidate) and where racial incidents and BNP campaigning are on the increase. It is reasonable to assume that the BNP will stand in one of these constituencies, focussing on one of the football grounds. For these reasons the leafleting of football matches (the Hearts v Real Sociedad and the Chelsea 'friendly' have already been leafleted) is a main priority for SCARF.

SCARF can be contacted at  
PO Box 474, Edinburgh EH11 2TQ.

## Axmed appeal

Two years after the racist murder of Somalian refugee Axmed Abuukar Sheekh in Edinburgh, the friends and family of Axmed have set up the Axmed Compensation Appeal Fund. The idea of the Fund is to make it easier for Axmed's parents, who are in Somalia, to challenge the decision of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in Scotland to award each of his parents just £3,500 (plus the cost of a gravestone) for Axmed's death.

An oral hearing in front of the Board has now been granted, but Axmed's parents are not entitled to legal aid to employ an advocate. The Fund needs to raise a minimum of £1,250 to ensure that the family can reach the full compensation allowed without deductions for legal expenditure. The importance of such a challenge, explained a representative from the Fund, is that 'as well as attempting to achieve a more satisfactory award for Axmed's parents, this may also be a "test case" for black people seeking compensation for serious criminal injuries in Scotland as a result of racist violence.'

Please make cheques payable to The Axmed Compensation Appeal Fund, c/o Roundabout Centre, 4b Grayfield Place, Edinburgh EH7 4AB. 'The murder of Axmed Abuukar Sheekh: Questions from the Abbukar Sheekh family and Somali friends' is also available on request.

# A docklands nightmare

Back in the 1960s, when plans were mooted for the redevelopment of Docklands, Beckton, which lies at Newham's easternmost tip, was seen as an answer to many of the borough's social problems. Hundreds of new homes would be built and an industrial zone established on land freed by the closure of the Royal Docks. Thirty years on, the dream has turned sour for black families in the area.

## THE CYPRUS ESTATE

Particularly bad is the situation on the Cyprus estate, a cluster of quiet streets edged with mock Tudor houses built in 1988. Tension has escalated since an Asian woman was assaulted after taking her 5-year-old child to the local nursery. A white neighbour, Mrs Love, attacked Mrs Karim, kicking her to the ground and causing her extensive injuries.

Mrs Love was arrested the following day and charged with Actual Bodily Harm. But her boyfriend proceeded to threaten the Karim family, culminating in an incident in which he drove his car at the Karim's relatives, hitting one of them with such force that he was thrown over the car on to the bonnet before hitting the ground. The charge subsequently brought against him of 'furious driving' is, says Newham Monitoring Project, 'completely inadequate'.

## SUPPORT US - OR MOVE US

According to the Cyprus Ethnic Welfare Association, which was formed in 1989 to represent the estate's black inhabitants who were ostracised by the official all-white tenants' association and subjected to racial violence, the attack on the Karim's is just the tip of the iceberg. It has written to Newham council urging it and the police to take action. 'We no longer feel that we can continue living under these conditions', says the Association on behalf of all the black families living on Cyprus. 'Unless there is a marked improvement in the support that we receive and unless concrete action is taken against those we can identify as causing this

continual harassment against us, we will have to request immediate priority status for simultaneous transfers out of the area.'

This is no easy demand for the families to make, for, in the past, they have been determined not to be forced from their homes through racism. A well-known example of local resilience is that of the Dodia family. They suffered three years of violence, which included physical assault and extensive damage to their property, as well as a campaign of noise and nuisance and threats to kill, but were determined not to be cowered. Finally, at the end of 1990, Newham council managed to evict the racist family.

## A LONG TERM STRATEGY

The Newham Monitoring Project has been working closely with the Cyprus Ethnic Welfare Association in attempting to provide support for the black families through their 24-hour emergency service, regular visits, patrols and, when necessary, taking children to school. NMP now fears that the all-white tenants' association is poised to launch a defence campaign for the Loves and warn of a 'Rights for Whites'-style scenario (BNP stickers are going up in the area).

If the tenants' association does launch a racist campaign, NMP says, then the council must take a firm stand, derecognising it if necessary. 'What is happening on the Cyprus estate is a Docklands phenomenon', Asad Rehman of NMP told CARF. 'There is a belt of entrenched racism stretching from the Teviot estate in Poplar through Canning Town to Beckton. The situation is not open to easy solutions or one-off tactics. Only by adopting a long-term strategy and mixing direct action, grassroots campaigning with pressure on institutions will we establish an anti-racist environment and give local black families the confidence to fight back.'

For further information contact Asad Rehman, NMP, 382 Katherine Road, London E7.

Tel: 081-555-8151.

## REMEMBER ALIA

On 5 June, St Pancras Coroner's Court in north London returned an open verdict on the killing last year of 18-month-old Alia Miah. Alia died at the London Hospital from severe skull fractures and widespread internal bleeding three hours after an assault in St Leonard's Road, Tower Hamlets. Three boys, one aged 11 and the others 12, were involved in hurling a 5-foot plank at Alia from a nearby block of flats. She was hit with massive force as she played 25 floors below. The 11-year-old boy was heard shouting racist abuse immediately after the killing. All three boys were subsequently detained by the authorities.

Incredibly, the Crown Prosecution Service decided that no action could be taken because there were no independent witnesses to the fatal assault on Alia. The Miah family had lived on the estate for only two weeks, ironically in a flat previously occupied by a family evicted because of their racial harassment of black families. However, the Miahs have subsequently, and understandably, left the estate and possibly Tower Hamlets, a borough with a long history of racial attacks.

The glaring and alarming issues raised by the manner of Alia's death and the response of officials are not only of concern to Alia's family, but to the whole anti-racist community. It cannot be left that 'no action' will or can be taken with these young boys, who will become young men. Their role in Alia's killing is an open secret, a blatant display to the black community of official and public indifference to attacks upon them. Neither can the appalling number of 'open verdict' decisions (often at the coroner's instruction) on black deaths continue to receive so little public attention and scrutiny.



# Stop the Deportations

The West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign (WMADC) is fighting to stop the deportation of yet another black woman from Birmingham. Kulwinder Kaur has been in sanctuary at the Ramgarhia Sikh Temple in Small Heath, Birmingham, since 14 June. As we go to press, the Home Office - although offering no guarantees - has agreed to review her case. Kulwinder's case is just the latest to be taken up by the West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign. In many cases, women, separated from their husbands due to domestic violence, have found themselves hounded by immigration officials.

## VIOLENCE OR DEPORTATION

Kulwinder met her husband in 1989 whilst he was on holiday in India. She came to Britain, but shortly after her marriage her husband and his family started to ill-treat her, culminating in an incident when she was forced out of the house with nothing but the few clothes she could carry. When Kulwinder went to stay with relatives, she was served with a deportation order and told to leave the country by 28 June 1991.

For all women - whether black or white - the decision to leave a violent partner is not easy. But for many black women, racist immigration laws add another twist to the scenario of economic dependency on and responsibility for the family that imprisons them.

Take, for instance, Hemlata Patel's predicament. Hemla came to this country to marry her husband, a British citizen, in 1986. In October 1987, eight months after her wedding, she was forced to leave her home on the advice of the police following another confrontation with her husband. In early 1987, she had made an application to stay in the UK on the basis of her marriage to a British citizen, but the application, which was not considered until June 1989, was refused as she had left her husband by that time.

The campaign for Hemlata Patel is still being waged. So is that for another woman, Prakash, who faces deportation to Mauritius along with her young son Prem following the breakdown of her marriage, but the WMADC have been heartened by their success in the Sonia Malhi Defence Campaign which was waged throughout 1989 with Sonia going into hiding. At the end of January 1991, the Home Office gave her permission to stay.

Another ongoing case - highlighting the crippling effect of Home Office bureaucracy and delay - is that of Vinesh Chudasama, a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. Vinesh came to Britain

in 1985 and married a British citizen in September. Three years later, the marriage broke down and his wife left him, taking their baby daughter with her. The Home Office is trying to deport him on the grounds that his marriage broke down within 12 months of his application for residency. In fact, Vinesh made his original application to stay in 1985, but the Home Office lost his file, thus causing the two-year delay. Now the court are refusing him access to his daughter on the basis that it is not in the child's interest to know a father who is about to be deported.

Cases such as these demonstrate the harshness, particularly in imprisoning women in destructive relationships, of Britain's immigration laws. There are countless other cases that illustrate how the laws also work to keep

families apart who want to be together. Take the Surjus. They have a son born in Britain and Harry Surju, a British citizen, has lived here for 18 years. But the Home Office was refusing to accept that his wife, Dharmowtee, who he married in Mauritius, had the right to stay permanently in Britain with her husband. However, with the help of

the anti-deportation campaign, their case was won last April. 'The Cutting Edge', a BBC documentary on the Surju family, is due to be screened in September.

## RESISTANCE

What is so truly impressive about the work of WMADC is not only the sheer commitment, or the volume of work it takes on, but its understanding that multiple

tactics need to be employed to stop racist deportations. The use of 'Sanctuary' has provided a particularly sharp tool for generating publicity. 'We want to see the fight against racist laws spread all over the country and urge CARF readers to write to us about what is going on in their area', says Bhopinder Basi of the WMADC. 'There must be law centres that are taking up cases of deportation, but we fear that they are limiting this to a legal challenge, failing to advise people on how to fight outside the racist laws. None of our cases can or could be won on the basis of challenging the law alone. It takes active resistance for the Home Office to stop the deportations and allow people to stay.'

For further information contact: West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign, c/o 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 19.



Kulwinder Kaur  
photo: Mark Salmon

# South London: BNP activity... and policing

## BNP ELECTION UPDATE

The British National Party (BNP) expanded from their Bexley base to stand a candidate at the July by-election in the London borough of Southwark's Brunswick Ward. Stephen Tyler received 132 votes (6.2%), finishing in fourth place. Coincidentally, it was the same day that BNP deputy leader Richard Edmonds was remanded at Camberwell magistrates' court for possession of a knife while canvassing for Tyler.

While 132 miserable votes will probably be considered something of a success by the BNP (judging from previous performances), a much greater threat arises from its presence on the streets and the inevitable violence that accompanies this. Southwark council has recorded 30 racist attacks by gangs of white youths in the area in the past three months. The BNP presence was initially heralded by some unwelcome leafleting on estates in Camberwell. Local people responded and a meeting on the Elmington estate attracted over 100 people. The estates were counter-leafleted, pointing out the BNP's violent, fascist track record and the

hypocrisy of its 'law and order' claims. The BNP persisted in its campaign by marching through Camberwell five days before polling day. At least one participant, 22-year-old Paul Chopping from Milton Keynes, was arrested and charged with abusive behaviour.

Two days later, South London Anti-Fascist Action held a meeting in Peckham on the BNP mobilisation. A transit of BNP 'cadres', led by Richard Edmonds, sensibly decided to stay at a considerable distance, although they did not escape entirely unscathed. On the night of the election result the BNP kept a low profile. A picket of 150 anti-fascists awaited the result. Tyler, the BNP candidate, put in only the briefest of appearances and was last seen scurrying away, with two or three minders, around the back of the town hall. The BNP has also launched a branch in Mitcham, which then held a paper sale in Mitcham High Street early in June. We understand that they are having some problems finding a venue for their meetings. We have little doubt that they will find a great many more problems during their brief, but unwelcome, sojourn in the area.

**POLICING** In Peckham, on 11 July 1991, a 52-year-old black woman ended up with five stitches to a head wound when police stormed through her front yard to catch a suspect. Neighbours saw police officers hurl the woman's husband, who was in his pyjamas, to the ground 'like a sack of potatoes'. He was under observation by the local hospital for a heart condition at the time. The woman, bleeding from the head, was then arrested together with her son, who was charged with four counts of affray and assault.

In Camberwell, on 8 June 1990 Elson Mason was arrested for assaulting a police officer and threatening behaviour. He maintained that he had just parked his car when a policeman approached and detained him, giving no reasons. Elson struggled to break free and was then assaulted before being taken to Carter Street station. When his case came up the arresting officer, asked why he had detained Elson, said he wasn't satisfied with the way he had parked his car. Officers said that there had been a screaming 'black mob' at the scene, and denied any assault. They could not explain why photographs taken by Elson's brother supported his version of events. Dismissing the case, stipendiary magistrate Mr Phillips said that it was 'a disgrace in this day and age that the police could treat a black man in this manner'.

This was the third time Elson Mason has been acquitted on charges of assault arising out of encounters with officers from Carter Street station. As a result, he is taking out his third civil action against the police.

In Brixton, on 14 June 1991, the offices of two South London community organisations, Black History for Action and Black Eye, were raided by police with sledgehammers. BHA is calling on black and progressive organisations and individuals to join them in protesting against the destruction of their premises.

Black History for Action, Box 1, 122 Vassall Road, London SW9 6JB.



The families and supporters of the Tottenham 3 present a petition to the Home Office calling for the immediate referral of the cases to the Court of Appeal. Fresh calls for the 3's release followed revelations that the sole evidence against Winston Silcott - police notes containing a 'confession' - had been tampered with.



# Threatening trends

As fascist organisations in the UK, posing as the respectable face of law and order, prepare for a general election, an unprecedented amount of BNP and NF literature and hoax mail is being sent out - and death threats are being made to prominent anti-racist organisations. Leicester Racial Attacks Monitoring Project and Newham Monitoring Project are amongst those black organisations sent messages, on BNP headed notepaper, threatening to 'kill all niggers'. The Afro-Caribbean Resource and Day Centre in Birmingham received a poison-pen letter from an organisation calling itself 'SS Liebstandarte UK Death Brigade', which threatened to wage 'a murderous campaign against the West Indian community'.

Not surprisingly, black groups close to the BNP's Welling bookshop in south London are receiving particular attention. The Asian Women's Centre in Plumstead has received threatening phone calls, such as 'I'm white, you're black - you're dead', and a BNP leaflet, 'A few scientific statements on racial differences', which condemns 'inter-breeding' and blames black people for 'all crime and for aids', has



South London BNP activists in action

been widely distributed in Greenwich. Amongst recent hoax literature has been a letter sent to anti-apartheid organisations advertising an ABW/NF fund-raising rally on Hampstead Heath in north London. Also, a letter, purporting to be from the Institute of Race Relations, was sent to a Rochdale furniture company warning that it would be taken to an industrial tribunal as it had been discourteous to 'ethnic' customers. The owner of the firm immediately recognised this as a hoax - which perhaps had something to do with the fact that the IRR's

letterhead was shabbily photocopied on lurid purple notepaper and every other word was spelt incorrectly. Under the Public Order Act, it is a criminal offence to publish or distribute written matter which incites racial hatred. If the police and Crime Prosecution Service wanted to charge these budding politicians, no doubt they could. To date, no action has been taken.

Stop press: At the beginning of August, the home of an SWP member in Newham was petrol-bombed. The National Front is suspected of carrying out the attack.

## Press rampage

According to the local and national press, in the early hours of Monday, 29 July, a 'mob' of 50 to 100 black youths 'rampaged' down Chapeltown Road in a 'shop-looting spree' to which police, outnumbered in a 'no-go area', were unable to respond. You would be forgiven for thinking, if you walked up Chapeltown Road on Monday evening, that the derelict and boarded-up shops were the result of the rampage.

But the boarded-up shops in Chapeltown Road have, in most cases, been that way since the riots of 1981. The video shop, 'devastated', accord-

ing to press reports, was open for business as usual on Monday evening. The real story in Chapeltown was not a rampaging mob, but two burglaries of business premises - not the most serious offences committed in Leeds over that weekend. Far from being a 'no-go area', Chapeltown is probably the most heavily policed area of Leeds, with helicopters frequently carrying out surveillance in the past few months. The real reason for the police failure to respond to the burglaries is more likely to be the fact that the victims were Indian and Eastern European, rather than any reluctance

on the part of police to take on Chapeltown youth.

There have, however, been vociferous protests in recent months at the heavy-handed and intrusive policing of Chapeltown. A story such as this one is of great propaganda value to the police, appearing as it does to justify their methods there by reference to lawless rampaging mobs. No one need be surprised if, the next time there is trouble in Chapeltown, the police response is excessive and provocative - it is stories like this which give the green light to such over reaction.

# Anger in French suburbs

Six young black people have died in less than a year in France's suburban housing estates. Tensions, already high after last autumn's riots in Vaulx en Velin, the school students' protests and the Gulf war, erupted again last March when Djemel Chettou, aged 19, was shot dead by a supermarket guard at Satrouville. This resulted in several nights of rioting. Similar outbreaks have been reported throughout France.

A game of bitter attrition is being played out, with groups of youths contesting the authorities which marginalise them. Sometimes, the results are horrific. On 7 May, in a village in the Val d'Oise, 17-year-old Barmoro Fofano fell to his death from a sixth-floor window during a police search following incidents in a shopping centre. On 27 May, 19-year-old Aissa Ihich died from an asthma attack while in police custody in Mantes la Jolie, a suburb of Paris. Initially, police claimed his death was due to a heart attack, but Aissa's friends discovered that his inhaler had been taken from him. Police had let him die.

Tensions and occasional eruptions of anger continued in Mantes. In early June, a policewoman died as a result of a police car chase of joyriders. Fifteen minutes later, police shot dead Youssef Khaif who was in another stolen car, but had nothing to do with the previous incident. In July, Mohammed Daoudi (aged 19) and Mustapha Asouana (aged 29) were shot dead by an unlicensed gunman in Angouleme.

Politicians reacted to this violence with a flurry of anti-'immigrant' activity. And this was all done in the context of the Senate ratifying the Schengen agreement on 27 June and political parties taking up positions for the 1992 legislative elections.

The Right and sections of the Left highlighted 'illegal immigration'. In mid-June, Jacques Chirac, leader of the RPR and mayor of Paris, said that

it was understandable that French workers were mad when they saw immigrant neighbours, with their 'noise' and 'smells' and 'three or four wives, 20 kids, getting 50,000 francs in welfare benefits without working'. He directly attacked the policy of family unity. At the same time the Communist party published a pamphlet stating its opposition to immigration and focusing on illegal immigration - this, the party said, was 'in solidarity with oppressed immigrant workers'.

Others came in on the attack. Charles Pasqua outlined a quotas policy to limit further immigration and to restrict the concentration of immigrants in the suburbs. Socialist prime minister Edith Cresson announced that she did not rule out these ideas and, in a television interview, said she was prepared to charter planes to deport illegal immigrants. (This had a particular resonance in France where on 18 October 1986, 101 Malian workers, many of them legal residents, were

deported in chains on a flight chartered by Chirac - an event which shocked the public.)

Although Edith Cresson backtracked somewhat on the latter proposal, the socialist government announced a range of measures designed to stress its intention of maintaining law and order rather than making any fundamental improvements in the situation of France's black population. The most concrete measures came from minister of interior Philippe Marchand, who announced that the police would be strengthened by an additional 2,300 officers in the suburbs and by putting recruits in the last month of training on the estates where there had been tension. Furthermore, police in affected areas would get increased pay and overtime, and two companies of armed CRS riot police would be available to deal with any incidents. Finally a coordination unit would be set up by the national police to exchange information and teams of judicial police will be on hand to question young people.

## STATEWATCH

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# Reviews

**DEADLY SILENCE** How is it that healthy young black men die in British prisons, special hospitals or police custody, that physically and mentally ill black patients are neglected to the point of death - and yet so little is reported or done about it? 'Black deaths do not have a good press, especially when they occur in the custody of our custodians. The media leads the public to believe that our guardians can do no wrong', answers the Institute of Race Relations in a new report. 'Racism leads them to believe that blacks can do no right. The silence of the custodial system is compounded by the silences of racism. We have chosen to break that silence.' For those who will now listen, what they will hear is shocking.

The cases themselves make harrowing reading. Clinton McCurbin died in 1987, whilst being held in a headlock by police in a shop in Wolverhampton. Michael Martin died in Broadmoor special hospital in 1984, following his forced removal down a flight of stairs by officers using 'control and restraint' procedures.

Richard 'Cartoon' Campbell died in Ashford remand centre in 1980, after being the victim of a catalogue of maltreatment and neglect by a variety of prison personnel.

But there is more to these episodes than the racist and fatal treatment meted out to these individuals. One of the great strengths of this report is its presentation of incidents so as to highlight the policy and administrative failings which lead to fatalities. From these the authors are able to propose meaningful safeguards and reforms to try to prevent any more such deaths. One of the most terrifying features of all 75 cases documented in this book is the absence of any system of independent inquiry or redress, and the near total silence of the media. Thus, one of the most important recommendations is the establishment of a permanent, independent Commission on Deaths in Custody to investigate and report on all such deaths.

The deaths listed in this report represent the extreme result of a system in which neglect, brutality and, for black people, racism are the order of the day. It is fed by other aspects of the criminal justice system, in which racism is also endemic. Thus, the report ends with an appendix on 'Black people and the criminal justice system' - a necessary reminder that there could be more and more deaths like those documented here unless there is a radical overhaul of the whole system.

*Deadly silence: black deaths in custody* by the Institute of Race Relations, 2/6 Leeke Street, London WC1X 9HS. Price £4 (+40p p&cp).

**GBH AND THE BLACKS** Remember the 'riots' of 1981 when in 33 cities black youth took to the streets in rebellion against racism and police brutality? Remember how we laughed at the yellow press for suggesting that this had to be the work of outside agitators trained by some secret sinister organisation? Things could not really be at boiling point in our cities, blacks did not have it in them to create those uprisings, went the argument. Now, Alan Bleasdale, supposedly left-wing and committed, has spelt out exactly the same message in his notorious 'GBH', serialised on TV. For, in his depiction of Liverpool's political scene, the blacks 'riot' not because of racism, not because of racist policing. No, it needs thugs, specially recruited (by some shady organisation manipulating the Left to bring anarchy and then revolution) to dress up as cops and go on binges of what Bleasdale calls 'racist attacks', to bring about black discontent. The implication is that Liverpool's real cops are quite OK, relations with the black community are fine, and these orchestrated racist binges have nothing to do with everyday policing. Worse, black people clearly do not have the nous to do their own political organising, they are just pawns in someone else's game. There was never much love lost between Militant and Liverpool's black community, but Bleasdale may be taking over from Derek Hatton as the manipulator they love to hate.

# Update

**SULTAN MOHAMMED** Since we reported on the BNP attack on the Reverend Sharpton meeting, Sultan Mohammed has been bailed to appear at Clerkenwell magistrates' court on 3 October. A picket is being organised by the Sultan Mohammed Defence Campaign. Meanwhile, police report that BNP activist Ian Dell has been charged with section 4(1) of the Public Order Act. (Sultan Mohammed Defence Campaign, PO Box 273, Forest Gate, E7).

**COMMUNITY DEFENCE IN HACKNEY** Angry tenants on the Pembury estate in Hackney, north London, slammed police tactics in a recent 'drugs' raid and attacked the local council over housing conditions 'not fit for animals' at a packed meeting there in July. Locals denied that there was a drug problem on the estate and accused police of trying to provoke rioting with Broadwater Farm-style tactics. Now, the Hackney Community Defence Association are working with some of those arrested and residents are calling for a picket of the next court appearance in connection with the raid. Details from Hackney Community Defence Association, 50 Rectory Road, London N16.

**BRIAN MOORE**, the young black TV presenter jailed for defending himself against a racial attack, walked free after his sentence was reduced by the Court of Appeal in July. In Norwich in April 1989, Moore and some friends were subjected to 'vile racist abuse' and then attacked by a gang of 15 white youths. As they defended themselves, two white men, Kieran Patten and David Last, came to their aid. When Moore reported the incident to the police, he was charged, along with Patten and Last, for causing violent disorder. All three were jailed for three years - as were the only attackers to be charged. At the appeal, Lord Justice Beldam said it was not right that the three should serve the same sentence as those who perpetrated the attack.

# Calendar: race & resistance

## MAY

- 23 White and Asian youths clash in Bradford after Muslim graves desecrated.
- 25 Anti-fascist demonstrators attend League of St George meeting in Kensington, London.
- 27 3 killed in clashes between north Africans and police in Mantes-la-Jolie, France; also disturbances in other areas.

## JUNE

- 4 Bill Morris becomes first black leader of a British trade union.
- 6 Home Office says 6,459 racially motivated attacks reported to the police in England and Wales in 1990.
- 7 Amnesty International criticises Britain's procedures for asylum-seekers.
- 9 North African shot by police in Mantes-la-Jolie, France.
- 12 London police chief calls for more public order powers to stop racist marches in ethnic minority areas... Kurdish asylum-seeker deported without case being considered by Home Office ... CRE seeks tougher anti-discrimination laws.
- 13 Racial activities by 'organised groups' on the increase, says Tayside CRC.
- 14 European ministers agree need for EC-wide policies and procedures on asylum-seekers.
- 16 Lord Scarman describes changes in police attitudes towards black people since 1981 as superficial.
- 20 Home Office says Public Order Act does not need amending ... Liberty launches campaign highlighting miscarriages of justice, including the Tottenham 3 ... Cases of two of the Cardiff 3 referred to the Court of Appeal.
- 21 Prosecutions for stirring up racial hatred should be easier to bring, says president of the Jewish Board of Deputies.
- 23 Dundee anti-racist group says reported racist attacks up by 25% last year.
- 25 Home Secretary says police should be monitored for race and sex discrimination towards the public ... Syed Jaffrey claims racial discrimination by British Eurospace because of increased security during the Gulf war.
- 26 5,371 overseas visitors denied entry to UK and removed between January and April this year ... British Rail found guilty of discrimination against 3 Asian cleaners over promotion.
- 28 John Major calls for 'tight perimeter fence' around the EC to hold back 'economic migrants' ... United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service found guilty of racial discrimination in employment.

## JULY

- 1 Metropolitan Police start 24-hour armed police patrols ... Black gardener Leslie Burnett gets £40,000 damages from Metropolitan Police for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and assault.
- 2 Home Secretary announces package to curb asylum-seekers and end legal aid for immigration advice ... UN High Commissioner for Refugees warns of Europeans' dangerously negative

- attitude to genuine refugees ... 4-day hunger strike by immigration detainees at Haslar prison ends when Home Office agrees to consider grievances.
- 3 Report reveals catalogue of racial harassment and abuse in Fife ... Glasgow court gives Christopher Tees a 7-year sentence for racist attack on Niaz Ahmed, who is now paralysed.
- 4 MPs protest against allowing Le Pen to enter into Britain to head meeting of right-wing Euro MPs in London ... EC agrees to measures to harmonise visa controls ... Court of Appeal cuts Brian Moore's sentence, imposed after he defended himself in a racial attack and he goes free ... Birmingham Racial Attacks Monitoring Unit's grant cut by council.
- 6 Home Office minister Angela Rumbold calls CRE proposals on discrimination unworkable.
- 7 NOP finds majority of whites condemn Britain as a racist society.
- 8 French prime minister Edith Cresson proposes tougher measures against illegal immigrants.
- 10 William Galbraith opts for jury trial on race hate charges arising from Cheltenham's parliamentary candidate selection row ... Contempt proceedings against 3 Home Office civil servants for failing to prevent deportation of Zairean asylum-seeker in May dropped.
- 11 Home Office to review deportation procedures.
- 12 10 Nottinghamshire policemen disciplined for racist treatment of PC S Singh ... Mohammed Riaz gets £35,000 compensation from Lancashire police for wrongful arrest and being held in custody for 3 months in 1986 ... Universities to check for 'hidden racism' after UCCA figures show Afro-Caribbeans less likely to get places than whites and Asians.
- 14 Forensic tests show that key passages in Winston Silcott's 'confession' may have been tampered with.
- 15 Britain's second black judge appointed
- 17 High Court to review Cleveland council's transfer decision giving parental choice under Education Act precedence over allegations of racial discrimination.
- 18 Fines against airlines for landing immigrants without proper papers total £30.7m in 3 years.
- 23 Birmingham city council condemned for using covert surveillance on people suspected of racial harassment.
- 25 Tottenham 3 campaign criticises Home Secretary for ordering police enquiry into convictions of Winston Silcott and Mark Braithwaite rather than referring cases to Appeal Court.
- 26 High Court rules that ministers are above the law and so Home Secretary is immune from contempt action arising from deportation of Zairean refugee ... An employer who refused to take on Muslims because he considered them 'extremists' did not commit racial discrimination, ruled an industrial tribunal.

- 27 Det Chief Supt Melvin, the detective at the centre of the Broadwater Farm investigations, cleared of disciplinary charges after 13-year-old Jason Hill denied access to solicitors.
- 29 Lord Chancellor denies racial bias in the system of appointing judges ... France should recruit more immigrants to make up for expected fall in workforce, says government study.
- 30 Charges dismissed against three black men from Leeds' Chapeltown after hidden camera proves police lied in court.
- 31 United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service votes against Home Office plans to make it the sole source of free legal advice on asylum and immigration issues ... High Court rules that Tower Hamlets RC school cannot refuse places to children because they are not Christians.

## AUGUST

- 2 Leeds police to investigate 'looting and violence' in Chapeltown which 'caught officers by surprise' (see page 13).
- 3 Crucial pages of police notes of Winston Silcott's interview with Det Chief Supt Melvin have gone missing ... United Nations agency for refugees condemns government proposals to cut asylum-seekers legal rights.
- 4 Germany's Social Democrat leader calls for annual quotas for asylum-seekers.
- 5 Home Office orders deportation of Tamil leader asylum-seeker in support of 'the international fight against terrorism'.
- 6 Home Office cancels plan to deport Zairean asylum-seeker following his application to the European Commission on Human Rights.
- 12 After police shoot dead Ian Gordon, a 24-year-old Afro-Caribbean, protests erupt in Telford.

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