

In Memoriam

Bousrai Benothmane
Michael Menson
Zairean asylum-seeker
Anon German
Unnamed Croatian
Romanian
3 Albanian children
Togolese asylum-seeker
Stefan S
Manuelito Meuche
Jose
Manager
Marlon Downes

Jacques

DEATH BY POLICY

Bektas Heval
Abdellah Doumi
Kwame Osei
Afrim Magastena
Mohammed Mokhtari
Lakhvinder Reel
homeless man
R Alpaskan
Naim Mohammed
Homeless woman
Said Charaki
anon
Algerian
Abdelkhader Bouziane
Salko I

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EDITORIAL

Who is responsible for the deaths which CARF attributes to racism in 1997? We accuse Europe's governments of policies which put asylum-seekers' lives at risk. We accuse Europe's politicians of mounting a populist attack against asylum-seekers which, by allowing free rein to press scaremongering, creates a climate of racist aggression. We accuse Europe's institutions of a complacency and indifference towards black deaths – whether of asylum-seekers, of Roma, or of immigrant settlers – that borders on criminal negligence.

In so many of the deaths we document it is difficult to point the finger of blame at any one individual. And the upshot of this is that everyone is let off the hook. But the rot starts at the top and then infects the rest of society. It's EU policy which leaves asylum-seekers languishing in detention, vulnerable to suicidal despair; prison and medical officials who shrug at hunger strikes and fail to take obvious measures to prevent suicides. It's EU policy that forces the sans-papiers into the black economy, and into working conditions that kill; government inspectors who fail to prosecute or close down companies which endanger the lives of their undocumented workforce. It's EU policy which dictates that asylum-seekers live in camps and hostels, or in the poorest and worst housing; government housing officials who allow squalid conditions in refugee hostels so that fires spread rapidly, whether accidental blaze or deliberate arson. When European politicians talk of refugees as scroungers and illegal immigrants, small wonder that racists and fascists – including soldiers – go on the rampage.

Nor is it just refugees who are affected by racist negligence and institutionalised suspicion. Despite 'inclusiveness' rhetoric, many of those perceived as non-European – including black settlers – continue to remain on society's margins. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in the way that their deaths are investigated. The incompetent, inadequate investigations into deaths such as those of Lakhvinker Reel and Muhammed Khan are another aspect of racism.

Policies and institutions that frame and justify the second-class treatment of black victims must never be let off the hook. Institutions and governments are in the dock: for inciting, aiding and abetting racism. ■

The Central Council of the Sinti and Roma has submitted a dossier to the German press committee. It singles out for complaint 47 newspaper articles which have appeared over the past 12 months and which stereotype Gypsies as criminals. According to the Council, in nearly all cases the police or other official bodies were the source of the stories, the sole purpose of which seemed to be to foment prejudice. The Council observed that the press labelling of Roma accords with the spirit of the 1935 decree by the Third Reich minister of the interior, which stipulated that in all press reports about criminal offences of Jews their racial affiliation was to be emphasised.

An Asian shopkeeper has been murdered in Greenwich, sparking a debate among anti-racists about robbery and racism.



Flowers at the scene of the killing of Muhammed Rafique Khan

Robbery isn't colour blind

Muhammed Rafique Khan was knifed through the heart on 6 January outside his menswear shop in Plumstead High Street, south-east London. It was 10 minutes till closing when a 30-year-old white man ran into the shop. What happened inside is not exactly known. But witnesses at a nearby bus stop heard an altercation and saw the two struggling before Khan died. While the initial motive for Khan's murder is still unclear, racism is likely to have played some part.

Police mistakes

Already the investigation into Khan's death has come under the spotlight. Police arrested a 16-year-old local youth shortly after the murder even though the one witness who said she could identify the murderer said that the assailant was at least 30. So sure were the police that they had arrested the murderer, that the investigation wound down. Complacency took over. The youth is now on police bail after not being picked out in an identity parade. Standard procedures expected in a murder investigation were not followed; there were no dog and/or helicopter patrols after the murder, nor any cordoning off of the area (which would have identified someone trying to escape). A hasty arrest resulted in vital time, and possibly clues, being lost and the chances of catching the murderer significantly reduced.

Racism in Plumstead

Since Khan's murder, some shopkeepers on Plumstead High Street have come

forward to tell of the racial harassment they have suffered from local white youths. Others, however, have been downplaying the issue, as have the family, who are still in a state of shock.



The borough of Greenwich has one of the highest levels of racial violence in the country, and its special racial incidents police unit is regarded as a model for others in Britain. But the unit has done little to abate the racial violence and crime in the area. Of 440 reported racial incidents last year, just 24 resulted in charges being brought.

While campaigners have always called for tough action to be taken against the perpetrators of racist crimes, the 'unique approach' of the racial incidents unit prefers to rely on mediation (a slap on the wrist and a bit of a talking to). It hasn't worked. Gangs of white youths feel confident enough to congregate on the High Street taunting black shoppers and shopkeepers, despite the strong black presence in the area. Gurpreet Singh Gill, the owner of a newsagents' two doors from Mr Khan's shop, has described the taunts he faces daily from local whites. 'They call me "jungle man" and I've seen them watching from outside the shop. The murder was a very big shock. Now we make sure there are always two people in this shop all the time.' Surinder Cheema of the Greenwich Action Committee Against Racial Attacks describes the frustration of Asian shopkeepers and other members of the black community: 'It is a long-standing problem and there have been numerous complaints – they

could prosecute under new measures which were designed to prevent intentional harassment – but the police refuse to take action.'

Robbery or racism?

As in similar cases of shop burglary or street robbery where black people have died, the police seem, from talks to CARF, overly keen to classify the case as one of robbery, even while they acknowledge that robberies are extremely rare on Plumstead High Street. Publicly they have said they are keeping an open mind as to a possible racial element. Some anti-racist campaigners view the killing as a racist murder, others aren't quite sure.

The problem is that, in cases like this, it is rare to find an assailant declare, as did the killer of Akhtar Ali Baig, 'Look, I've gutted a Paki.' The racial motive will not be writ large like that. And there is an obvious motive of personal gain where robberies are concerned. What we have to realise is that robbery itself is not colour blind. Asian shopkeepers are particularly vulnerable to attack. In a downtrodden area where no one has much, they symbolise the capitalists. They are hated because they are doing slightly better *and* they are Asian. And the stereotype still persists of Asians as soft targets – the docile ones who won't fight back. Other racist stereotypes come into play in a shop situation: Asians are underhand and cunning so they will overcharge. A row over a price can easily escalate into violence.

A 1993 survey by the Newsagents' Federation found that the majority of Asian newsagents had been the targets of crime and believed much of it to be racially motivated.

This seems to be increasingly recognised even by the judiciary. Sentencing a 27-year-old to four years for unlawfully wounding two Asian shopkeepers in Stratford, east London a year ago, Judge Mitchell said, 'All shopkeepers need a weapon, particularly Asians in this area.' The accused had used a golf club to hit one shopkeeper while others shouted racial abuse and then attacked another shopkeeper with an iron bar.

Double motives

We may never know if Khan's assailant used racial epithets during his attack (to establish for the criminal justice system his racial motivation). But we are clear that Asians are picked out as robbery targets and that massive brutality is used against them by white thugs. The line between robbery and racial hatred blurs, the motives entwined. ■

THE LESSONS
OF STEPHEN
LAWRENCE

An indifference

The words 'Stephen Lawrence' have become watchwords for police indifference verging on racism. The private prosecution, the inquest, the calling of a public inquiry and now the Police Complaints Authority report (see below) are all testimony to the gross errors committed by the police. And yet nothing seems to have been learnt in the three years since the murder. Today the families of two more black victims – Michael Menson and Lakhvinder Reel – are up against the same problems.

Michael Menson

The death of Michael Menson, a promising young black musician, raised many of the same issues as Stephen Lawrence's. On 28 January 1997 he was set alight by four white youths in a north London phone

Richard Herbert

The CPS has told a Southwark coroner that it will not prosecute anyone for the death of a black *Big Issue* vendor, despite the coroner's concern. Richard Herbert died following a fight in a south London wine bar during which he was held in a necklock by bar manager Andre Trapel. A post mortem found that he died of asphyxiation. In December, the inquest into Herbert's death was adjourned by the coroner, Selina Lynch, who took the highly unusual step of writing to the CPS asking it to reconsider its decision not to bring criminal charges against Trapel. It is unlikely that a coroner would take such a step if she did not believe that an unlawful killing verdict was likely.

In cases of deaths in police custody, the inquest takes place first and then a decision is made on whether to prosecute. But, in other cases, the opposite pertains in order that the inquest verdict does not prejudice any criminal trial. Herbert's case illustrates the gross failures of the CPS in bringing charges against *anyone* accused of the murder of a black person, let alone police officers. As in the cases of Michael Menson, Stephen Lawrence and countless others, black lives count for little in the criminal justice system. The inquest resumes on 5 February.



box. Police declined to interview him during the 16 days before he died when he remained conscious, if very ill, in a serious burns unit. They decided that he had set fire to himself. A year later, the police are still no closer to finding his killers.

Lakhvinder Reel

Lakhvinder Reel was last seen in October 1997 running from white youths after an incident in which he and his friends had been racially abused outside Bentalls club in Kingston. It is not known if there was a fight. His body was found in the river a week later. Because the flies on his trousers were open when the body was recovered, the police said that he obviously died an accidental death by falling into the river as he urinated. This was pure speculation.

Everything about the police investigation was flawed as far as Mrs Sukhdev Reel is concerned. She says that when she first reported her son missing because he had not come home from the club, the police refused to take a statement. Then they suggested that perhaps he was with a girlfriend of whom the family did not approve. It was Lakhvinder's family who tracked down the CCTV evidence of the dispute outside Bentalls. It was the family who put out a 'missing' leaflet and went around questioning people. They managed to find 40 friends, relatives and work colleagues to join in the search. And it was the family who found a witness who had seen the boy near the river. Only after that information was passed to the police did divers drag the river and find the body. Witnesses were not asked to try to identify the white youths outside the

WHAT THE PCA SAID

The Police Complaints Authority report highlighted a series of serious errors in the Lawrence murder investigation, some of which we detail here:

- Police failed to follow up leads given by informants. Even when the informants were known to some officers they were recorded as anonymous and no attempt was made to trace them to pursue the lead.
- After an appeal for information was broadcast, an individual went to Eltham police station and gave substantial information about possible suspects and about other serious assaults they had carried out. This important informant was not seen by any officer above the rank of detective sergeant. The lead was only pursued after a substantial delay and, even then, the clues gained were not exploited.
- Other leads which might have invalidated the suspects' alibis were not followed up for six days.
- Police failed to consult their racial incident databases. Had they done so they would have found information linking four of their suspects to other knife attacks on black people.
- Surveillance was badly carried out and not followed up.
- Sources of forensic evidence were overlooked, some recovered items were never tested and those tests which were done were not of an adequate standard.
- Interviewing of suspects was inadequate and insufficient criteria were used to check alibis.
- ID parades were shambolic. Not all witnesses were called to ID parades, not all suspects were put on parade and the wrong questions were asked of witnesses.

club, either by looking at photographs or by building Identikit pictures. No real attempt was made to find the youths or to investigate the possibility of manslaughter (death while running from an attack).

When the family made an official complaint, the Police Complaints Authority appeared to accept that the

verging on racism

Met's investigation left a lot to be desired. However, the PCA has no power to direct that an investigation be carried out in a particular way. When Surrey police agreed to take over the investigation into the death, the Met said they couldn't because the death is still under investigation by them.

While the forces argue it out, the family feels betrayed and let down by the treatment of the death. After nearly three months, the chances of someone correctly identifying the youths and the police being able to trace them are very slim. They will never know if their son was the victim of an accident or a gang of racists. Lakhvinder's inquest has been postponed while the police investigation continues.

Incompetence or racism?

The Macpherson Inquiry, set up by the government to 'inquire into matters

arising from the death of Stephen Lawrence' and to 'identify the lessons to be learned for the investigation and prosecution of racially motivated crimes', is currently studying the PCA's report into the case. The murder investigation is described there as having 'significant weaknesses, omission and lost opportunities'. This is a mild assessment given the catalogue of errors and failures by the police which prevented what could have been safe convictions. The report details the incompetence of officers investigating the murder and yet emphatically denies that racism was involved. How much incompetence does it take before an investigation is described as racist? It is unlikely that such negligence would occur in the murder investigation of a white victim – and more than likely that officers found to be so negligent would face disciplinary charges.

The Lawrence family has frequently compared the investigation into Stephen's

death with that into the death of Richard Everitt, a white schoolboy stabbed to death by Asians in Camden in 1994. In Everitt's case, police immediately rounded up 300 Asians and charges were brought within weeks. Today the families of Michael Menson and Lakhvinder Reel stand with the Lawrences in questioning the colour of justice. ■



Sean Smith



Mark Salmon

Norman Manning

The acquittal of one of the prisoners accused of the murder of Norman Washington Manning has again left a victim's family angry at police handling of the case

In November 1997, three years after Norman Washington Manning, 'Bunson', was murdered, two men finally stood trial. Norman, a black prisoner at Long Lartin prison, was killed in a vicious knife attack by two white inmates. He was stabbed 16 times and died in agony on his cell floor.

Once again police illustrated their total indifference to the death of a black person. 'Despite police being on the scene within an hour, a more incompetent investigation of a murder would be hard to find,' a spokesperson from the Norman Manning Memorial Campaign told CARF. The murder weapon (a bloodstained knife) and bloodstained clothing were bagged as evidence and then, after being in police custody for months, were lost. Witness statements were not taken until two years after the murder, some were only taken late in 1997. Collection of related evidence was not properly logged.

This police incompetence gave one of the defendants, Bruce Knowles, his main defence. Although evidence from prisoners

and prison officers tied Knowles to the murder, and Knowles was seen covered in blood by the wing officer, in court he argued that the police mishandling of the case rendered the evidence unreliable and the delays in bringing the case to trial meant that witnesses' recollections were unclear. Knowles was acquitted. His co-accused Fred Low, was sentenced to life imprisonment for Manning's murder (although this sentence was somewhat farcical as Low was already serving three life sentences for attempted murder and the manslaughter of another prisoner while he was in Gartree). It is to the credit of Norman's family and the campaign they launched that this trial ever came to court. It seemed at one stage that, despite the police knowing who the killers were, no one was going to be charged. Only relentless pressure put on the police by the campaign forced the police to bring charges. With Knowles' acquittal, the Manning family have been left feeling that justice has not been done.

ANTI-RACIST YOUTH WORK

Facing up to the problems

In the last two issues of *CARF* we explored the ways that some youth projects and academics were tackling the pressing issue of racism among white working-class youth. Here, we interview Howard Holmes, formerly anti-racism co-ordinator of Sheffield Youth Service, about a unique research project on the theory and practice of anti-racist youth work.*

CARF: Why did the University of Huddersfield initiate this research?

HH: To explore the myth and the reality of what the Youth Service is actually doing about anti-racist work with white young people, and to meet head-on the excuses that many youth workers offer for not doing meaningful anti-racist work. Our belief was that existing anti-racist work with white young people was largely reactive and limited. We hoped to explore the blocks and to signpost educational approaches and materials that give youth workers the confidence to improve this practice.

What process has the research project followed?

The first stage was a literature search, and a mapping out of the anti-racist debate within the Youth Service to date.

A practitioners group was then established consisting of youth workers (not anti-racist 'experts') from clubs and projects across West Yorkshire. The group met on a regular basis throughout the six months' research period to explore Youth Service reasons for not doing the work, suggest underpinning approaches and principles, assert the preconditions necessary for effective anti-racist youth work with white young people, consider appropriate youth work responses to the factors that might be behind a racist act by a young person and signpost the range of materials that are available to support work.

What are the main issues to emerge from the research?

Firstly, that many youth workers are very wary of embarking on planned programmes of anti-racist work. As one youth officer commented, 'they [youth workers] won't touch it with a barge pole!' Consequently, building up the confidence and self-belief of workers is key.

Second, it is a myth that appropriate and proven materials do not exist. There are plenty of good materials around – it is youth workers' skills and confidence that is the real issue.

Lastly, the thorny question of whether to target work with young people who are actual or potential perpetrators of racist behaviour and crimes needs to be confronted and resolved. Ethnic minority young people clearly have the right to equal access to safe provision but, as the Youth Service is based on education, that should not prevent workers engaging with racist young people. Unfortunately, Youth Service Equal Opportunities Policies seem often to have resulted in simply excluding young people who display racism, without any educational follow-up.

What happens now?

The intention is to publish the results of the research in a practical and accessible format. This document will provide practical approaches and material for workers to use

with young people, as well as reflecting the underlying principles and providing up-to-date resource lists.

There will also be a final report detailing the structure and process of the project, and a national conference, which we hope will encourage debates about the need for proactive work with white young people.

We also hope that there will be a larger scale piece of work to take the research further, and to make a comparative analysis of youth work approaches in other European Union states, such as Holland and Germany, where work with white young people involved in racist behaviour has been a source of considerable debate over the past few years. ■

Future issues of *CARF* will give information on the initiatives described by Howard Holmes.



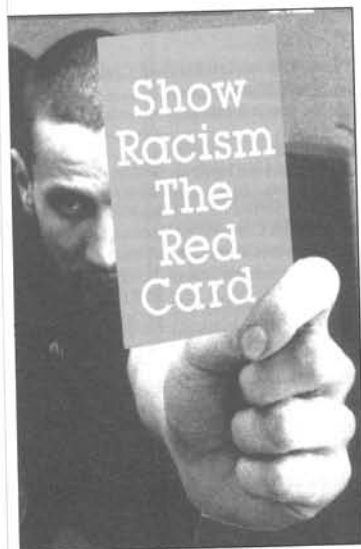
* The research was carried out by the Youth and Community Work section of the University of Huddersfield and the project was supported by the Commission for Racial Equality, the five West Yorkshire local authority youth services and Kirklees Racial Equality Council.

Football heroes against racism

If we keep returning to *Show Racism the Red Card*, the anti-racist football campaign organising in the north-east, it is because so few groups are doing work with young people and its work is exemplary. This time it has produced a 30-minute anti-racist video with study notes, which comes with the campaign magazine and the education pack (reviewed in *CARF* 31). The video is structured around interviews with leading black and white European players with a small amount of commentary and interviews with young people. The video does not pretend to profound analysis: there is not even an attempt to define racism. But what it does over and over again is to say racism is foul, wrong, unfair and debilitating. And, you, anyone, can do something about it – even if it is just to refuse to be part of racist chanting. To have sporting heroes from Ian Wright, through Gianfranco Zola to John Beresford (who admits to thoughtlessly joining in racist taunting in his youth) speak out against racism is

powerful stuff. OK, it is a pity that racism is somewhat narrowly taken to be how players are treated by one another and by fans on the pitch and we do not hear enough about the racism in the board rooms and local leagues, or why there are next to no black officials. That was not the business of this video. Just to get over 48 top players to talk to camera about their feelings on racism is achievement enough. It must have taken an enormous amount of effort and organisation, and Siren Films and Video are to be congratulated on a highly professional product. The video and accompanying documents, though emanating from the north-east clubs, deserve to be used with young people all over the country. ■

Show Racism the Red Card: a European anti-racist education video (with education pack, study notes and magazine) costs £55 (£35 for schools and voluntary organisations) and is available from 1 Drury Lane, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE1 1EA.



Since 1992, CARF has been monitoring deaths in Europe.
But who is to blame for the deaths of 41 immigrants,
refugees and Roma across western Europe in 1997?
CARF places institutions and governments
in the dock.

J'accuse

Did anyone notice that 1997 was the European Year Against Racism? In fact, it would be more accurate to rename 1997 the year of the official state vilification of refugees and abuse of refugee rights.

Refugees have proved a useful scapegoat for politicians and government, blamed – particularly at election time – for Europe's economic woes. To be a refugee, today, is not to be offered shelter as a victim of civil war, but to be placed under suspicion of being an economic scrounger or a criminal threat to the security of decent law-abiding citizens.

Trickle-down racism

European racism today coalesces around this generic anti-refugee stereotype. And it is a racism that starts with our elected politicians, is then broadcast via the media, and subsequently trickles down into all society's institutions. Because asylum-seekers are 'aliens', with no vote, no money and no clout, they have no redress against the opportunist use politicians make of their predicament or against the wicked stereotyping of a debased press. It's open season on refugees. No prosecutions for incitement follow their vilification; no race relations law covers *their* rights.

Thus, nearly half of the cases we document in 1997 concern asylum-seekers – not the victims of overt racism on the streets but of a depressing decline of human rights standards and values across Europe. Trickle-down racism is insidious. And it first manifests itself in the refugee camps and detention centres where asylum-seekers are locked up pending a decision on their fate.

SUICIDES

There were fewer suicides of asylum-seekers in 1997 than in 1996. But then, the number of asylum-seekers reaching

Europe has dropped drastically (thanks to new visa arrangements, the Schengen Accord and the tightening of external borders with eastern Europe and north Africa), and the number of rejected asylum-seekers being ferried out of Europe has increased (thanks to repatriation and readmission agreements with countries such as Afghanistan, Somaliland, former Zaire, Sri Lanka, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Lebanon).

Conveyor-belt justice

Most suicides in 1996 were due to the depression caused by the long wait in detention for a decision on an asylum application. But by 1997 long spells in detention pending an asylum decision were being replaced by an unseemly (and sometimes illegal) haste in decision-making as conveyor-belt justice replaces respect for individual claims.

Hasty and brutal decisions intensify fear and desperation. Three victims of the war in the former Yugoslavia took their lives in German prisons, and one Ghanaian, due to be deported, threw himself under a train. A Kurd, **R Alpaslan**, killed himself in detention in France, and a Zairean asylum-seeker hanged himself in a Swiss reception centre.

Public protest

There is a strong element of public protest to the indifference and inhumanity of European bureaucracy in many of the suicide attempts reported. An undocumented Romanian worker walked into his local employment office in Leibnitz, Austria, and poured petrol over himself because he had been denied a work permit. **Stefan S.** died of 90 per cent burns. An Eritrean asylum-seeker, who set himself on fire at the town hall in Geldermalsen, south Holland, survived, as did a Kurdish

refugee who attempted suicide outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brussels, by pouring industrial alcohol over his clothes and setting himself on fire.

Going underground

Another reason why there are fewer documented suicides among asylum-seekers is that fewer refugees claim asylum. Asylum-seekers are being disabused of any illusions they may have once held about Europe as the cradle of human rights. If you are a Bosnian in Germany, for instance, or an Albanian in Italy, and you have to choose between illegality and deportation, you choose the lesser risk of illegality. As hundreds of Albanians barricaded themselves into refugee camps when Italian police came to deport them, one of them put it in a nutshell when he commented that the 'smart ones' (ie, those who had left the camps and gone underground) had been rewarded.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in the post-Cold-War period, mass population displacement has become an objective and a tactic of war. But while large numbers of people continue to suffer the trauma of displacement, rich and poor nations alike close the doors against them, forcing them to return to situations where life and liberty are at risk.

But the choice of going underground is no choice at all. Although we have not included them in our table of deaths, we note three deaths in Germany due to the desperate measures that are taken when the rejected and illegal seek to evade deportation. In one case, an undocumented Togolese worker threw himself out of a window. As he was lying seriously injured on the ground, was handcuffed by the police. He died less than a month later in hospital.

AUSTRIA ■ **13 March:** Stefan S, 38, Romanian, commits suicide by setting himself alight after being denied a work permit by the authorities in Leibnitz, Styria (S) ■ **12 May:** El Said Osmen, Egyptian taxi driver, shot dead by drunken, racist customer (R)

BELGIUM ■ **January:** Bousrai Benothmane, rejected asylum-seeker, dies in government custody after being deported to Algeria (DD) ■ **7 November:** Saïd Charki, Moroccan, 24, shot dead by police in Anderlecht, Brussels (P)

FRANCE ■ **March:** José Ménager, 30, and Manolito Meuche, 20, both Roma, shot dead by gendarmes near Nantes (P) ■ **27/28 October:** R. Alpaslan, Kurd, 28, commits suicide in prison (S) ■ **17 December:** Abdelkader Bouziane, 16, shot dead by police in Fontainebleau (P)

GERMANY ■ **n.d.** Unnamed German youth, 17, killed by neo-nazis in Magdeburg, Saxony Anhalt (FR) ■ **January:** Togolese asylum-seeker, 36, dies in police custody in Baden Baden after suffering a heart attack (IN/P) ■ **10 January:** 3 children, ethnic Albanians from Kosovo aged 3, 2, and 3 months, die after fire at asylum-seekers' hostel in Monheim, near Leverkusen (IN/AI) ■ **2 February:** Unnamed Croatian, 35, due to be deported, hangs himself in Regensburg (S) ■ **8 February:** Romanian shot dead by police whilst attempting a burglary (P) ■ **30 April:** Toan Phan Van, 42, Vietnamese, dies five months after suffering serious injuries during a racist attack in Fredersdorf, Märkisch-Oderland (R) ■ **4 June:** Bektas Heval, Kurd, 26, dies in a fire at the Fallenbrunnen refugee hostel on the Bodensee (IN/AI) ■ **31 August:** Kwame Osei, Ghanaian, under threat of deportation, jumps under a train at Eberstadt (S) ■ **9 September:** Afrim Magastena, conscientious

CODE: ■ **R** Racism ■ **FR** Far Right ■ **P** Police ■ **S** Suicide ■ **IN** Institutional neglect (**AI** relates to asylum & immigration and **E** relates to employment) ■ **DD** Death after deportation ■ **TOTAL DEATHS: 41**

DEATH BY DEPORTATION

We have been forced to introduce a new category into our list of deaths. European governments are increasingly defining refugee-producing countries as free from persecution, deeming it safe to return asylum-seekers to countries such as Turkey, Iran and Sri Lanka. But throughout 1997, such questionable appraisals have been exposed as the sham they are as deported asylum-seekers are imprisoned or disappear on their return.

There is direct evidence that two rejected asylum-seekers died as a direct result of decisions by the French and Dutch authorities to deport them. **Bousrai Benothmane**, deported from France, was arrested in Algeria and died after being thrown from the window of the Palais de Justice. And **Reza Hashemy**, an asylum-seeker deported from the Netherlands to Iran, died in suspicious circumstances.

Plastering over the cracks

As European governments are loth to monitor, let alone publish, the true facts about the fate of deportees, it is unclear whether more rejected asylum-seekers have died due to deportation decisions characterised by total disrespect for human rights. According to the Anti-rassistische Initiative in Berlin, at least 14 deportees have been maltreated or tortured by police or military in their country of origin. In one case, Ahmet Karakus, a Kurd, was tortured and imprisoned in Turkey after German police officers passed on to their Turkish counterparts his asylum documents and a suitcase full of his personal papers and PKK documents.

The response of European governments to exposure of human rights abuses in countries deemed safe is not to question the wisdom of such blanket appraisals,



David Drew

but to issue a temporary stay on deportations to these countries until the situation improves. It's as though European governments know that their reputation for respect for human rights has been severely dented, but can only muster the energy to plaster over the cracks, hoping that the bad news will go away. Thus, the Dutch government had a moratorium on deportations to Iran after the death of Hashemy and the disclosure that the Dutch embassy in Teheran had been prevented from monitoring the fate of returnees. And the UK government had a temporary stay on deportations to Algeria after an Algerian deportee reportedly went missing.

INSTITUTIONALISED NEGLECT: ASYLUM & IMMIGRATION

A patchwork of neglect

In previous years, we have documented several asylum and immigration-related deaths due to institutional neglect. In 1997,

institutional neglect has become a far more dominant theme, stitched into all manner of deaths in a patchwork of negligence.

In detention

Institutional neglect is at its most pervasive when it comes to the treatment of immigration and asylum detainees. In fact, it's hard to think of any other category of prisoners whose medical and psychological needs would be so wilfully ignored. After a Bosnian asylum-seeker hanged himself with his belt from the bar of a cell in the psychiatric wing of the Tegel detention centre, the authorities said that they did not remove his belt as they did not consider him a suicide risk. Previously, **Salko L** had attempted to hijack a plane in order to get to western Europe.

A passive attitude to asylum-seekers' medical needs is commonplace. A north African hunger striker in Turin, Italy was left to die; the authorities' neglect of his condition sets a dangerous precedent. **Dinari Elai Ben Lazar**, accused of a drugs offence, went on hunger strike to protest

objector from Kosovo, hangs himself at refugee hostel in Prenzlau (S) ■ **14 October:** Homeless man, 59, kicked to death by skinheads (FR) ■ **31 December:** Salko L., Bosnian asylum-seeker, 39, hangs himself in the psychiatric wing of the Tegel detention centre (S)

ITALY ■ **June:** Dinari Elai Ben Lazar, north African immigrant, dies after 3-month hunger strike in protest at detention without trial (IN/Al) ■ **June:** Yoze Lorber, undocumented Slovenian, stabbed to death by off-duty police officer in Ventimiglia who alleges attempted burglary (P) ■ **19 July:** Abdellah Doumi, Moroccan, drowns after being thrown into the River Po (R) ■ **29 July:** Naim Mohammed, Moroccan gardener, 31, killed by his employer's son (R) ■ **19 September:** Mohammed Mokhtari, 33, Algerian and Mandouche Farid, 29, north African, both homeless shot dead in Porto (R) ■ **December:** Algerian immigrant dies after explosion at factory near Naples (IN/E)

NETHERLANDS ■ **May 1997:** Two Chinese workers die in industrial accident (IN/E) ■ **nd.** Reza Hashemy dies in suspicious circumstances after deportation to Iran (DD)

his innocence and his lengthy detention. Two months later he died, after a compulsory treatment order issued by the Mayor of Padua was ignored. A Dutch newspaper reported in August 1997 that an Iranian hunger-striker in detention in the Hague was close to death. The authorities were so unconcerned that they responded to press inquiries by stating that they were considering transferring the Iranian to a house where he could die.

How children suffer

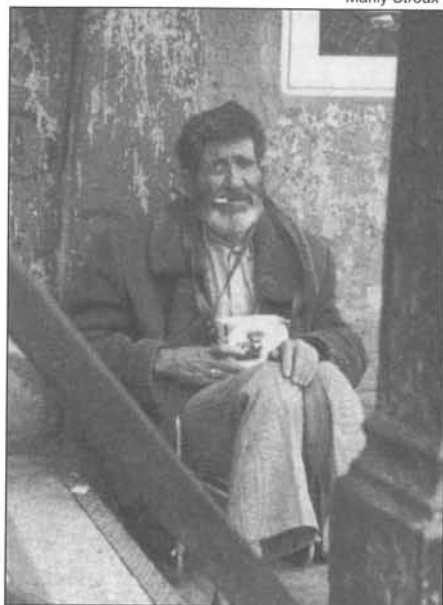
Governments don't seem to care about the effects deportation decisions have on children, despite paper support for international conventions regarding children's rights. Thus, in some Italian 'welcome centres' (surely a misnomer), children are separated from their parents. The Swedish Foreigners Board set a tragedy in motion when it ruled against an African family's right to stay in the country, arguing that 'the interests of the society in regulating immigration is an overwhelming interest which has to be weighed against the interests of the child'. After over two years in hiding at a church missionary camp, the African family's six-year old daughter ran away. In her diary, Mariam had written, 'I miss school so much and I want to kill myself.' Police attempted to deport Mariam's father when he went to report her missing. Six months later, Mariam has still not been found. And the authorities have callously sent the other members of the family to different camps.

In health care

Most European countries have brought in legislation to prevent undocumented workers, including rejected asylum-seekers, gaining access to the welfare state. Until proper research is conducted into

this issue, it is impossible to know the numbers who subsequently die, homeless and in ill-health. But two documented cases reveal the human misery involved. In the UK, a 67-year-old woman from the Middle East, believed to be **Melponieni Hagiamis**, was suffering from lung cancer. She had been living homeless around Heathrow airport for some time before she collapsed and died. In Spain, **Oumar Barry** had tuberculosis; he died homeless and untreated on the streets. A woman who brought him milk and bread every day asked the police to take him to hospital. But as they asked if he was an 'illegal', she did not press the point, fearing that the sick man would be deported. The deportation of Ghanaian asylum-seeker **Kwame Osei** was delayed so that he could go into hospital for an operation. But the hospital turned him away, saying he could seek treatment in Ghana. Osei knew the treatment would not be available there, and so he took his life.

Marilyn Stroux



SPAIN ■ **nd.** Oumar Barry, 38, homeless undocumented worker from Mali, dies of tuberculosis (IN/Al) ■ **18 June:** Jon Jairo V.D., 27, Colombian, shot and killed in Madrid (IN/R) ■ **20 June:** Mourad el Abadine, Moroccan student, 19, shot dead by former police officer in Madrid (R)

SWITZERLAND ■ **January:** Zairean asylum-seeker commits suicide by hanging at reception centre of Cernets-Verrieres, Neuchatel canton (S)

UNITED KINGDOM ■ **29 January:** Michael Menson, Afro-Caribbean, dies after sustaining serious injury in attack during which his clothes were set alight (IN/R) ■ **23 March:** Marlon Downes, 20, Afro-Caribbean, found hanged in Harlesden police station (IN/P) ■ **3 April:** Peter San Pedro, 25, dies in Kent hours after police spray him in the face with CS gas (IN/P) ■ **1 May:** Lytton Shannon dies in disputed circumstances in police custody (IN/P) ■ **21 October:** Lakhvinder Reel, 20-year-old Asian student, drowns in mysterious circumstances (IN/R) ■ **October:** 67-year-old homeless immigrant woman believed to be Melponieni Hagiamis dies of lung cancer (IN/Al)

In employment

For the first time we report on three deaths due to institutional neglect in employment. An explosion at a dilapidated fireworks' factory in Naples claimed the life of at least one Algerian immigrant, and many more workers, all undocumented, were seriously injured. There was no extractor fan on the shop floor and the factory's ten fire extinguishers were all kept in the boss's office. When eight Algerians went to the police station to bear witness to the causes of the explosion, they were all issued with deportation orders. (Lawyers acted swiftly to ensure they were withdrawn.)

Two Chinese workers died in May in the Netherlands, not at some sweatshop factory but at the Hoogovens Industrial Holdings plant which is one of the largest integrated steel plants in the world and has a record of investment in safer technologies. A team of Chinese workers who were paid at Chinese rates (an estimated \$20 a day) were segregated from their Dutch counterparts and employed to dismantle a furnace for re-erection in Indonesia. A trades union investigation revealed that the Chinese workers had been exposed to asbestos and heavy metals, unsafe scaffolds and rotten ladders.

In refugee camps

Four people died in refugee camps in Germany after fires broke out, and at least forty others were seriously injured. It is impossible to tell whether the fires were started deliberately by racists or were the result of the dreadful conditions in death-trap camps. The evidence both ways is compelling.

Neglect is notorious. For instance, in 1996, there were 109 fires at German reception centres. In 1997, three ethnic-Albanian sisters, aged three, two and three

months, perished in a fire at a camp at Monheim, near Leverkusen. The camp consisted of 17 makeshift portakabins, known as 'living containers'. Asylum-seekers at the Fallenbrunnen refugee hostel, Bodensee, were prevented from fleeing a fire in the entrance hall as ground floor windows were blocked by bars. One reason why the fire spread so rapidly was that over 100 plastic boxes had been stored in the entrance hall. Bomb threats had been made against the centre and, on the night of the fire, the only phones at the camp had been vandalised.

RACISM

Ten deaths could have been motivated by racism. While the racist motive in seven of these is beyond doubt, question marks will always remain over the other three, thanks to police incompetence.

Immigrants are victims

While in Italy extreme-Right parliamentarians rant on about immigrant criminality, new research shows that immigrants are, disproportionately, the victims of crime. Four deaths have been documented in Italy, but the real figure could be much higher as new research on immigrant victimisation rates proves that at least one immigrant suffers an act of serious violence every 24 hours. Each day in 1996 one non-EU citizen was killed in violence, although how much of this violence is racially inspired is not known. The same pattern is evident in Spain. SOS Racisme Catalunya told CARF that 'there have been several mysterious killings of Algerians and Africans which are described as "revenge killings" because of widespread prejudice that these groups are involved in drugs trafficking'. After a Colombian was shot in the head and died, police immediately suggested it was a 'revenge killing', despite the fact that **Jon Jairo V.D.** had no criminal record and there was no evidence to suggest he was involved in organised crime.

Yuppies bait immigrants

While **Mohammed Mokhtari** and **Mandouche Farid**, two homeless north Africans, were shot dead by an Italian drug addict who harboured a grudge against immigrants, the racist killers of **Abdellah Duomi** were young privileged Italians for whom immigrant-baiting seems to be a yuppie sport. **Duomi** was thrown into the river at the Murazzi del Po, Torino, by students celebrating exam success by picking on a group of

Moroccans. The Italians prevented **Duomi**, who could not swim, from reaching the river bank by throwing bottles, cans, pieces of wood, and even a vacuum cleaner at him. A young wealthy Italian was also responsible for the death of the Moroccan, **Naim Mohammed**, employed as a gardener at the holiday villa of a rich Roman jeweller. The jeweller's son, who claims Mohammed made homosexual advances to his brother, threw the Moroccan into the swimming pool at the family villa and left him to drown. An ex-member of the Spanish civil guard, who seems to have harboured a neurotic dislike of immigrants, shot dead 19-year-old Moroccan student **Mourad el Abadine**, after asking him whether he was 'a Moor'.

INSTITUTIONALISED NEGLECT: RACISM

We cannot say for certain whether **Michael Menson** and **Lakhvinder Reel** (see p4) and **Jon Jairo V.D.** were murdered by racists, but in all three cases institutional incompetence played a large part in ensuring that the truth does not come to light.

Police were quick to categorise the killing of **Jon Jairo V.D.** as a case of 'revenge'. But it is far from clear why five Spanish men, some of whom had blood on their clothes, were released, despite being questioned near the scene of the

shooting. The Spanish authorities also stand accused of adding to the suffering experienced by the family of **Mourad el Abadine** by denying that racism was a motive for his killing.

FAR RIGHT

We document two far-Right killings, both in Germany where it is not just foreigners who are attacked, but anyone the neo-nazis consider 'un-German' – including left-wingers, punks and gays. Thus, it is no accident that the two victims of far-Right murders this year were an east German youth – presumably an anti-fascist – and a 59-year-old vagrant whom skinheads in Bochum kicked and beat to death, claiming he was a homosexual.

Warning signs

While the figures are dramatically down on 1996, this is largely due to the fact that there was no one single large-scale tragedy, like the arson at the Lübeck refugee hostel which claimed ten lives. But there is no room for complacency. For instance:

Attacks on refugee hostels: The situation in Spain and Germany is cause for concern. SOS Racisme Catalunya told CARF that there are countless neo-nazi and racist attacks on hostels housing seasonal workers but 'these never appear and in the papers and never come to court because the victims are illegals'.

Influence among forces of law and



Marilyn Stroux

order: The growing evidence of far-Right support in the military in Germany, where conscript soldiers have been involved in racist attacks, and among police and prison officers in France.

'Forgotten youth': Finally, there is the unique situation developing in east Germany. Experts warn that one-third of youth – 'a forgotten generation' – are now sympathetic to the far Right and that many towns are becoming virtual no-go areas for foreigners and anyone deemed 'un-German'.

POLICE

Ten people died either as a result of police shootings or in police custody, in Austria, Germany, UK, Belgium and France. Six victims were shot dead by police. In four other cases, in the UK and Germany, police violence cannot be proved but institutional neglect is to the fore.

Summary justice

According to our information, none of the six men who were shot dead – two were Roma, and three illegals – were armed – although, in the case of the two Roma shot dead in France, the police dispute this. The victims were shot dead, following petty crimes, in a form of summary justice. In Italy, where there has been a moral panic about Albanian criminality, civilians, too, seem to be dishing out summary justice. An Italian businessman shot dead three Albanians. It is hard to imagine how a monk from Bergamotto can square with his conscience the murder of a non-EU woman who he claims had threatened him.

Suspect communities

Once again, there have been pitched battles between police and north African youth in France and Belgium where police are accused of declaring war on inner city communities. Indeed, French and Belgian police seem to hold all poor, immigrant communities under suspicion of criminality and drugs dealing. In the case of **Saïd Charki**, shot dead in December in Anderlecht, Brussels, the police version of events has been totally discredited. They claim that Charki was a notorious drugs dealer who had been under police surveillance for two weeks, and was shot dead after visiting the building of a 'drugs client'. But their intelligence was derisory. Charki had been visiting his mother and sister who lived at the house. He was shot dead while driving away in a car police claimed to be stolen; the car

Death at the gates of the fortress

In 1997 at least 223 people died trying to get to western Europe

1996 had ended with the news of the drowning of 280 refugees from the Middle East and south Asia in a deliberate ramming of their boat off Malta on Christmas Day. 1997 saw 200 documented deaths by drowning at sea of those making the perilous boat journey from north Africa, eastern Europe and the Middle East. Another 42 are missing presumed drowned. Many died crossing the straits of Gibraltar from Morocco in small fishing boats; but the majority died en route to Italy, from Albania or from Iraq via Turkey and Greece. Eighty-seven Albanians drowned in March in a collision with an Italian army ship, seventeen Iraqis drowned between Turkey and the Greek island of Samos in May.

Another ten people are known to have died as stowaways, on board ships bound for European ports, usually from Africa. They met their deaths through hunger, suffocation or inhalation of toxic fumes. A further fourteen died making the journey overland: 11 north Africans were killed when a van in which they were hidden overturned on the Spanish-French border, while three Iraqis were killed by landmines on the Turkish border with Greece. Four more refugees, two from Afghanistan, drowned crossing rivers on the Polish-German border.

Two air stowaways were killed in 1997; Vijay Saini froze to death crouching in the wheel bay of a Jumbo jet as it travelled from Delhi to London in March 1997 (his brother Pardeep miraculously survived, only to have his asylum claim rejected), and a 12-year-old Kenyan boy was crushed when the wheels retracted into the undercarriage where he was hiding, on take-off from Nairobi to Gatwick.

Because the journeys of those in flight

are largely illegal and undocumented, it is likely that the deaths we know about are a gross underestimate of the total. What is known is that as western Europe tightens controls more and more against refugees, it forces them to resort to the criminal gangs operating in Russia, Turkey, Poland, Italy, north Africa and Spain, which have taken on with alacrity the responsibility of transporting refugees to safety, and turned it into a hugely profitable business where the refugees bear all the risks.

In the face of mounting evidence of the conditions of degradation, slavery and destitution exacted on some of those who make the trip but cannot pay the traffickers' extortionate prices for the voyage, there were many European and global initiatives against trafficking in humans and in particular, of women and children for sexual exploitation. Conferences and summits produced dozens of recommendations and resolutions.

But what all the measures amount to are more and more efficient ways of exclusion and expulsion; they penalise the victims of trafficking, while the traffickers seldom get caught. They all fail to acknowledge the desperation which drives people to pay over their life savings, or sign themselves into bondage or prostitution, for the chance of escape.

It is surely no coincidence that a recent EU initiative on immigration and asylum, *Odysseus*, aimed at intensifying cooperation among member and applicant states, bears the name of the legendary figure who travelled into the Underworld. The effect of the EU's measures is to drive more and more people underground, into the arms of the traffickers.

belonged to Charki's brother-in-law.

In France, rioting broke out in Fontainebleau after a north African **Abdelkader Bouziane** was shot dead following a high speed car chase. The heinous crime for which the teenager was recklessly pursued – driving without a licence! Following riots, police embarked on full-scale confrontation with youths on a local estate, in the process alienating immigrant elders who claim they were fired at by riot police.

INSTITUTIONALISED NEGLECT: POLICE

We end our review in the UK, with three cases redolent of institutional neglect. According to the police, **Lytton Shannon** died in the custody of Wolverhampton

police after suffering a fit. But his family say that he did not suffer from epilepsy and had never had a fit. The family of **Marlon Downes**, who committed suicide in a west London police station, want to know why his shoelaces were not removed before he was put in the cell and why he wasn't watched more carefully. **Peter San Pedro**, a British man of mixed race, was picked up by the police on the suspicion that he was an illegal immigrant, which he clearly was not. San Pedro was, inexplicably, sprayed with CS gas. Released without charge, he later wandered disoriented into the path of a lorry and died from his injuries. ■

Additional information from: Institute of Race Relations European Race Audit, Migration Newsheet and Searchlight.
Special thanks to: Antirassistische Initiative, Berlin, SOS Racisme Catalunya and United for Intercultural Action, Amsterdam.

Pawns in a deadly game

The flight to Europe of thousands of Kurdish refugees from Turkey and northern Iraq has exposed divisions within Fortress Europe. Increasingly, refugees are becoming pawns in a calculated game of geo-politics.

On 28 December 1997, 825 refugees, mainly Turkish and Iraqi Kurds, including 165 women and children, were rescued from the Turkish-registered ship *Ararat* which had run aground off Calabria. It was the seventh ship laden with refugees from the Middle East to reach Italy in 1997. Another 386 were brought ashore a few days later, after surviving on bread and water during an eight-day voyage in which the six-member crew robbed them of their money and valuables and abandoned them when they saw the coastguards' helicopter. They were given a warm welcome by interior minister Giorgio Napolitano and Italian president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, who said that 'the doors must be wide open' to people living with persecution.

States advise, Schengen decides

Italy's perception of the Kurds as refugees needing asylum, however, was swiftly corrected by its senior Schengen partners. In Germany, which contains the largest Kurdish community in western Europe (half a million), and where it was assumed

most of the new arrivals were heading, the Bavarian police chief envisioned 10,000 illegal Kurdish immigrants ready to embark and about to overrun the country. Interior minister Manfred Kanther said that 'western Europe must regard itself as a security community'. He told Italy to erect road checkpoints at once to prevent immigrants from moving north to Germany, and urged Greece and Turkey to 'look out for illegal immigrants' at ports and ferry terminals. 'All our countries are potential destinations if the beginnings are not stamped out.' Germany has already been highly critical of Italy for its 'porous' external borders and for its lenient attitude towards the overseeing of expulsion orders, which allows deportees two weeks to leave the country.

Europe's security agenda

Germany's attempt to bring the new entrants into Schengen in line with its preoccupation with security reveals the internal logic of Schengen. An area without internal borders needs external borders sealed against immigrants and refugees. Security considerations must outweigh human rights. Large groups of refugees, according to this logic, are redefined as 'illegal immigrants', because they are trying to breach the security of the borders. This was acknowledged by the French foreign minister, who said that normal principles could not apply 'when there is mass immigration', and riot police were sent to the Italian frontier to prevent the Kurds from entering France. Austria, too, sent reinforcements to the Alpine passes from Italy, while Tony Blair, European Union Council President until June, pledged tougher border controls in Europe.

The same 'security' imperatives were evident in recent internal EU documents on the movement of Iraqi Kurds from the civil-war torn northern Iraq – the area declared a 'safe haven' by the west and then left to the mercy of Saddam Hussein. In debates between European civil servants and ministers in late 1997, the refugees were described purely as a threatened 'massive influx' into Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and France. The biggest problem was the fact that it

was 'very difficult to repatriate them' because of the conflict and the embargo on Iraq. The preferred 'solution' was to strengthen external controls around the EU and to enlist Turkey's help as a regional border guard.

The Kurds are trapped

So where does this leave the Kurds? The same Turkey which Europe is enlisting as a policeman, persecutes the Kurds and forces them to flee to a Europe that does not want them. In the past three years or so, Turkish troops have destroyed around 3,000 Kurdish villages in south-east Turkey, a 'scorched earth' policy to destroy the Kurdish liberation struggle, and have repeatedly invaded the so-called 'safe haven' in northern Iraq, destroying refugee camps and killing their inhabitants, while the 'safe haven' has become a war zone. Around 3 million Kurdish refugees have fled from the villages to double or treble the size of cities such as Diyarbakir, creating conditions of the utmost poverty, destitution and squalor.

Turkey's role in the Kurdish exodus is a dual one – as persecutor, and as facilitator. While it drives Kurds out of south-eastern Turkey, and its persecution of suspected separatists and communists is well documented, Turkey's geographical position and its strong police and army presence at ports and airports give it the power to control migration from the region. Yet Kurdish groups have noted the apparent links between senior government officials and Turkish criminal gangs and between the latter and the Italian mafia, and the ease with which large ships carrying up to 1,000 people have slipped out of Turkish ports.

The Turkish/EU agenda

Why this collusion? Kurdish groups accuse Turkey of engineering the 'deadly escape' of the most recent exodus of Kurds in order to punish the EU for a series of snubs during 1997 which culminated in the summary rejection of their membership application in December.

Turkey's relationship with western Europe is complex. An important member

■ ■ THE PLAYERS ■ ■

EU: Wants Turkey as market for member states' goods, as regional policeman, not EU member state. Allowed Turkey into customs union 1996 (human rights campaigners outraged). Told Turkey December 1997 no chance of joining

Italy: new member of Schengen group, wants extra help and resources to police the sea facing the Balkans, Greece (through which boats come from Turkey) and north Africa

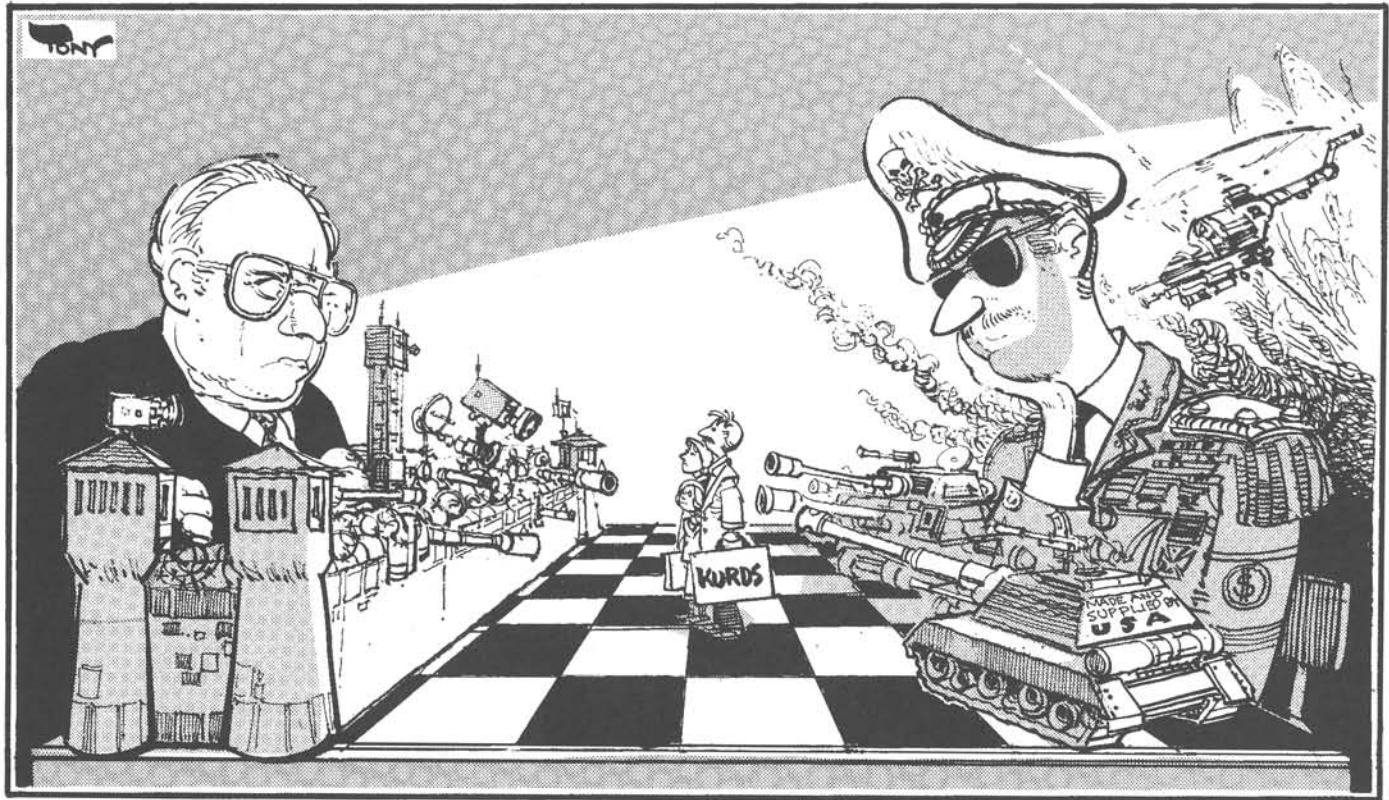
Germany: founder member of Schengen group, has biggest Turkish Kurdish population in Europe and wants fewer, not more. Role as major arms dealer to Turkey superseded by US

UK has presidency of EU Jan-June 1998, won't join Schengen group and remove internal border controls; has pledged to tighten controls at external frontiers of EU and 'combat illegal immigration'

Turkey: NATO member, world's largest arms importer, and key strategic role between Europe, Asia and Middle East. Gross violator of human rights, persecutor of Kurds and leftists. Believed to be punishing EU for rejection of membership application by 'releasing' refugees to cause embarrassment

US: major arms supplier (85%) and friend to Turkey. Has put pressure on EU states, particularly Britain (holding presidency) to smooth Turkish feathers over EU membership

Iraq: source of exodus of refugees from (un)'safe' north who cannot be repatriated because of UN embargo on Iraq (no transport) and no travel documents. US enemy No 1



of NATO, it is poised between Europe and the Middle East, the Balkans and Russia and Asia. It is also the world's largest arms importer, with a 1997 military budget of over \$5,000 million (of which the US currently supplies 85%) and a 25-year plan to spend \$125,000 million. Its army is the second largest in NATO. It has increasingly close links with Israel, and the American Jewish lobby has become a principal defender of Turkey in the US.

Links with western Europe have been getting closer since the 1950s. Most imports into Turkey come from the EU member states. Turkish guest workers built up Germany's infrastructure after the second world war.

Euro-Turkish tensions

For over a decade, Turkey has been seeking entry into the EU. It wants European investment, access to European markets for its goods and for its labour, European funding for its infrastructure. But the country's appalling human rights record has not been the main reason for keeping Turkey at arm's length. (In fact, Turkey has enlisted European support in its war against the PKK.) First, Turkey is the poorest of the applicants for EU membership (the others are from central and eastern Europe and the Baltic states). Despite the World Bank's endorsement of Turkey as a 'dynamic country' because of an 11% increase in external trade between 1990 and 1996, half the population lives below the poverty line. (In Diyarbakir, capital of the Kurdish area, the proportion is 80%, with half of those living in 'famine conditions'.) No

one wants the influx of poor migrants that entry to the EU would bring.

Second, there are underlying tensions in Euro-Turkish relations which came to the surface when the Islamic Welfare Party became the leading member of the coalition ruling the country, and its prime minister threatened to veto the enlargement of NATO if Turkey's application to join the European Union was not considered. This provoked the group of the Right in the European Parliament, the European Peoples Party, to declare on 4 March 1997 that Turkey 'is not a candidate for membership of the EU in the short or the long term because of differences of civilisation'.

The declaration was endorsed by German Chancellor Kohl, Spanish PM Jose Maria Aznar, Belgian PM Luc Dehaene and Romano Prodi, the Italian prime minister. Kohl reportedly considers Turkey 'an Asiatic country with fundamentalist tendencies'. 'The history and geography books we studied at school never said Anatolia was part of Europe,' he said. The comments sparked a furious row, but in December 1997 (despite a new, secular Turkish prime minister) the outgoing EU president, Luxembourg PM Claude Juncker, stated bluntly that Turkey was not eligible for EU membership in the foreseeable future. Turkish leaders accuse the EU of being a Christian club not open to Muslims.

Geo-politics takes command

But under huge pressure from President Clinton, the British government is wooing Turkey vigorously to stay in the western

axis; the alternative is for Turkey to get closer to Iran, a move it is threatening by investing in a joint project for a natural gas pipeline. Turkey must be kept 'onside' to fulfil its bridgehead role: regional policeman for the US in the Middle East, and border guard or buffer state preventing uncontrolled refugee movements into the EU's eastern flank.

So, within days of Italy's announcement of philanthropic assistance to the Kurds, emergency meetings of police chiefs from Germany, France, Italy and Turkey had been convened in Rome, while Schengen officials met in Brussels, to work out strategies to keep the Kurds out. Italy, rebuked by senior Schengen members for its folly, agreed to abolish its 15-day grace period for deportees and is likely to set up detention centres to lock them up in instead, in line with the rest of civilised Europe. Greece stepped up its patrols in the Aegean, with scores of coastguard officials, specially trained and armed with assault rifles, standing by, while the Turkish police rounded up foreigners in poor areas of Istanbul and near the Greek border, and seized three boats suspected of ferrying refugees. And the EU Council of Ministers will add a clause into its association agreement with Turkey requiring it to readmit migrants (both its own and travellers from other countries) who enter western Europe via Turkish territory or Turkish seas.

Thus were refugees transformed into 'illegal immigrants' on contact with western Europe, the menace to European prosperity, the enemy at the gate, and their persecutors enrolled as collaborators to help keep them out. ■

Treading on cultural corns

Sir Herman Ouseley, this year's president of the North of England Education Conference, made an outspoken speech on 5 January. He accused the government of creating educational apartheid and of expecting a national curriculum to deliver equality while effectively creating a hierarchy between schools. He spoke of the lack of blacks selected for teacher-training, the stereotyping and racial harassment behind the underperformance of Afro-Caribbean boys and the over-representation of black boys in school exclusions.

Right-wing columnists immediately went on the attack, not against the essence of what he had said, but because, in showing the limits of the national curriculum, he had touched that raw nerve – the sanctity of British culture.

Bernard Dineen (*Yorkshire Post*) declared that Ouseley, by criticising a notion of Britishness that reflects 'the values and culture of the white, English, middle class', was giving black pupils a licence to misbehave. Young blacks failed, he wrote, because they had single mothers. **Bernard Ingham** (*Express on Sunday*) simply derided the comment as 'a plank-stupid, politically correct idiocy'. **Norman Tebbit** (*Mail on Sunday*) was equally sophisticated

and educated in his critique, terming Ouseley's call to extend the curriculum so as to boost self-esteem in young black pupils 'a pernicious form of madness' peddled by 'tax-financed bigots and racists'. 'We could hardly be more inclusive,' he went on. 'But to invent black or Asian authors, artists or scientists... is a plainly dangerous delusion.' **Ray Honeyford** waded in (*Mail on Sunday*) to endorse Tebbit with the observation that 'a multi-cultural curriculum is theoretically incoherent and a practical impossibility', and Afro-Caribbean failure is 'rooted in the massive proportion of black children who come from broken homes'. For **Auberon Waugh** (*Sunday Telegraph*) 'separating education from the values and cultures of the white middle class is rubbish, and dangerous rubbish, because they are what education is all about.'

The right-wing papers which did not have their own in-house ranter used **Nick Tate** of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority to denounce Ouseley's views. 'Wide off the mark' (*Express*), 'makes me wonder who is advising them' (*Daily Telegraph*), 'Anyone who suggests that the current curriculum simply reflects the values and culture of the white English middle class does not deserve to be taken seriously' (*Evening Standard*).

Inquest verdict in body belt death

On 18 December, the inquest into the death of 29-year-old Dennis Stevens, who died in Dartmoor prison after being held in a body belt for 24 hours, ended in a verdict of accidental death. The inquest heard that Dennis was given medication for panic attacks. He stopped taking the medication, and was transferred to the segregation wing, where he was put in a special cell after punching a prison officer. On the day before his death, prison officers went to his cell to assess whether he should be returned to a normal cell. He 'lunged' at them, and five prison guards placed him face down for over 20 minutes, handcuffed and in a body belt. He was dead by the following morning. The inquest was adjourned after the Stevens family challenged the coroner's refusal to allow the jury to consider an unlawful killing verdict. But the High Court supported the coroner. The Stevens family and legal advisers boycotted the inquest after the decision and are pursuing a private prosecution.

Killer CS spray

In December the inquest into the death of Peter San Pedro recorded an open verdict Peter died after walking into the path of a lorry, hours after being sprayed with CS spray. His family is calling for more research into the effects of CS spray. Police allege that Peter refused to be examined by a doctor before he was released.

FASCIST ROUND-UP

The trials of nazi 'heroes'

■ C18 member Charlie Sargent and Blood & Honour organiser Martin Cross have been sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of fellow fascist Christopher Castle. The murder was a result of the ongoing feud within C18.

■ Griffin picket attracts three

The trial of BNP leader-in-waiting and publisher of *The Rune* Nick Griffin on charges of incitement to racial hatred has been put back to April. Never one to miss an opportunity for a little self-aggrandisement, Griffin is milking the situation for all it's worth – a 'battle for free speech, liberty and freedom' no less, according to *British Nationalist*. All of these are, of course, subjects that nazi outfits such as the BNP would know a lot about – having spent their entire existence attempting to deny them to anyone who is the 'wrong' colour or who dares to disagree with them. Still, it will be interesting to see how well the ex-Cambridge student's front will hold up if he does get sent down.

The massed ranks of the BNP have, however, rallied to Griffin's support and held a

demonstration against those well-known state-sponsored agents of oppression *Liberty* and *Amnesty International*. Angry at these organisations' refusal to uphold the right of Griffin to peddle his fascist filth, the BNP took to the pavements outside their London offices. The expected traffic chaos did not materialise as all three BNP picketers were given short shrift – both by the public and by the organisations.



Mass picket confronts Liberty director

■ Birdbrain

Charges against Lady Jane Birdwood, the nazi granny due to stand trial for inciting racial hatred, were dropped as she was deemed too bonters to attend court.

KKK Knight Hawk visits Valhalla

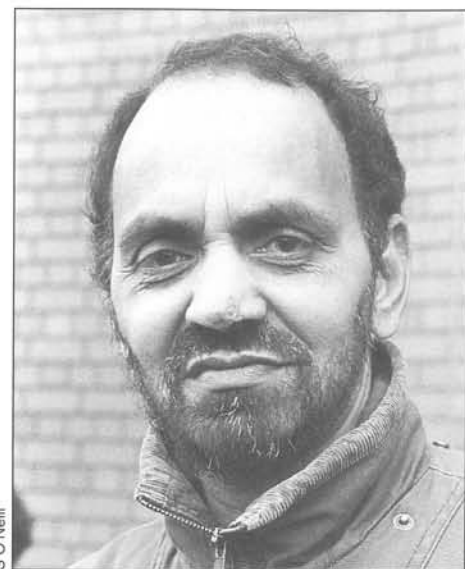
Ku Klux Klan Grand Knight Hawk Andrew Frain was found hanged at his home in Calcott, Berkshire, at Christmas. Frain, jailed for six months in 1996 for possessing racially inflammatory material, is believed to have committed suicide. If you've spent a good part of your life running around dressed in a white sheet and getting your mates to address you as Mr Grand Knight Hawk, suicide wouldn't seem like such a bad idea.

Watch out Athena

The second issue of *Patriot*, the new BNP glossy, has a full page colour ad for 'Folk Arts and Heritage' posters and cards. Assorted Vikings mix with images of Stonehenge to evoke images of English heritage. But these are no pastel watercolours – more a tacky Athena poster with a Union Jack on top.

BNP recruitment drive

The BNP has hit on a failsafe method of recruitment. Its latest leaflet tells us to 'Buy British Beef before it's too late' – the rapid spread of mad cow disease being the only remaining hope of the BNP becoming a mass membership party.



S O'Neill

Mohammed Siddique

Victory against double punishment

The campaign against the deportation of Mohammed Siddique ended in victory. Siddique, a Kashmiri activist, served a ten-year prison sentence in Britain for his role in the kidnapping of an Indian diplomat in 1984. The action was an attempt to secure the release of one of the leaders of the Kashmiri liberation movement who was under sentence of death in an Indian prison. Deportation proceedings began against Siddique immediately on his release from prison, at the request, it was widely believed, of the Indian government. The West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign, which campaigned for Siddique, described the deportation threat as inhuman and racist and protested that Mohammed, who has lived in Britain since 1963, was being punished twice for his crime. Mohammed's victory marked the last of the campaigns launched by the West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign under the Tory government. Since 1985 they have fought thirty public campaigns against deportation, all of which have been successful. Unfortunately, the Labour government shows no sign of reducing their workload.

West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign Tel/fax
0121 331 1511.

DEFEND THE CAMPSFIELD 9

Nine West African asylum-seekers are charged with riot following disturbances at Campsfield detention centre last August.

PICKET

9 February, 8.30am onwards
Oxford Crown Court, St Aldates, Oxford
Ring 01865 558145/726804 for details

Amistad: Spielberg sells slavery

REVIEW

CARF was in the USA to see the opening of Spielberg's new film

What could have motivated the most famous film director in the world to make a 2½ hour 'epic' about a rebellion of slaves aboard the Spanish ship *La Amistad* in 1839? Not since *Roots* has the slave trade been treated as major drama. Is it merely a case of Spielberg following up *Schindler's List* with another film about a historical tragedy?

The *Amistad* rebellion was a key event in the process which began the abolition of slavery. Plantation slavery was still in full swing in North America, but the slave trade itself had been outlawed. After taking control of the ship which was transporting them to Cuba, the slaves, illegally captured from Africa's gold coast, attempted to sail back to Africa. But the trickery of the Spanish slave traders and the intervention of a passing American ship meant they landed instead in Connecticut. The battle to determine the status of the *Amistad* slaves became a cause célèbre for the abolitionists, pitted against the Spanish slave traders (who claimed that the Africans, born on a slave plantation, were their property). The case marked the build-up to the American civil war, threatened to bring down the American president, and caused major conflict between America and Spain. How does Spielberg treat these events? The opening scenes of the film depict the shipboard rebellion which, with no explanation, is depicted as a brutal massacre of the slave traders. The slaves' dialogue is untranslated, while the Spanish slavers' dialogue is subtitled. The effect is that the slaves are portrayed as brutal animals. Illuminated only by the moon, their bodies

glisten as they plunge knives through the hearts of the slave traders. (Surely it will not be long until a PhD thesis is written on the representation of the black body in this film.)

And it's downhill from here. Take a Hollywood courtroom scene, wind it back 250 years, stretch it for an hour longer than necessary, insert



flashbacks depicting the capture of the slaves – and there you have it. Even here the film fails. While the scenes of the Middle Passage are genuinely moving (finally we see what motivated the rebellion) they are lost amid the complex legal arguments. The wider politics, economics and morality of the slave trade are not explored. The dramatic tension concentrates on the defence team, leaving the slaves to be depicted in a predictably patronising fashion. Someone should tell Spielberg to stick to dinosaurs and theme parks.

Amistad will be released in the UK in April.



Clare Godfrey

FREE SATPAL RAM ■ A new single from Asian Dub Foundation

'So heartfelt it could start a mass jailbreak' NME Released on 9 February

Proceeds to the Free Satpal Campaign Available on London Records Includes remix by Primal Scream

DEC 1 Myrna Simpson awarded legal aid to apply for judicial review of decision of Hornsey coroner to adjourn inquest into death of Joy Gardner before verdict was reached ... 19-year-old David Brace sentenced to three months youth custody after being prosecuted by Newham council for racially motivated assault **DEC 2** East London police officer, moved after complaining about superior officer's racist and sexist behaviour, awarded £7,500 compensation for 'injury to feeling'... Black councillors in Birmingham stage protest at council meeting for union activist Luqman Khan, whose complaint of racism led to his suspension from the city's Economic Development Department **DEC 3** Scottish Office announces that racial harassment of English in Scotland will be criminal offence under proposed legislation **DEC 4** 43-year-old banker James Curry

awarded up to £10 million lost earnings for race discrimination by investment bank Goldman Sachs **DEC 5** Family of 20-year-old Ricky Reel, who drowned in suspicious circumstances suggestive of racial attack, complain to PCA and Scotland Yard over handling of investigation... Black basketball player Sandra Hamilton quits local team and leaves for Canada after campaign of racial abuse in Rhondda, Wales... Manchester police officer Paul Randle found guilty of discreditable conduct and forced to quit the force after being secretly taped racially abusing black comedian Charlie Hale **DEC 6** BNP meeting to be held at Leeds hotel cancelled at last minute after 50 anti-Nazi protesters demonstrate outside **DEC 9** Home Office report claims riots in Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are a possibility if police relations do not improve **DEC 11** High Court rules in favour of asylum-seekers and medical support group against their removal to seaside towns by London local authorities **DEC 12** Southampton police officers who confiscated kirpans (religious knives) from two Sikhs are forced to apologise and return knives **DEC 14** Jack Straw deploys Immigration Service Intelligence Unit to search for more than 7,000 missing asylum-seekers ... Southwark coroner asks CPS to rethink decision not to prosecute bar manager Andre Trapel, who killed *Big Issue* seller Richard Herbert by holding him in a neck-lock ... TUC report shows that 66% of black employees are paid a lower hourly rate for same job than workers with similar qualifications **DEC 15** PCA report on the murder investigation after Stephen Lawrence's death criticises Metropolitan police handling of the case but denies police racism **DEC 16** Jack Straw sets up register of authorised immigration advisers to cut down on 'unscrupulous

agents' **DEC 17** Home Office pays damages to Algerian refugee detained for over a year because of delay in considering evidence that justified his refugee status **DEC 18** Inquest into the death of Dennis Stevens who died being restrained in Dartmoor prison with body belt, records verdict of accidental death **DEC 19** Destitute Brazilian suffering from advanced HIV/AIDS wins right to food and shelter from Brent Council in High Court ... Fashion buyer Adelle Martins loses six-year fight against Marks and Spencer when Court of Appeal upholds ruling of Employment Appeal Tribunal that their failure to employ her was not motivated by race bias **DEC 21** Stow-away arrested after being found on burning cargo ship towed into Falmouth, Cornwall **DEC 22** Report on discrimination in Home Office says 40% of black civil servants feel discriminated against because of their colour **DEC 23** Destitute

1997/8

CALENDAR OF RACE AND RESISTANCE

asylum-seeker forced to sell watch and bracelet, worth only £10, before Wandsworth council officials would help him ... Police arrest 24 suspected illegal immigrants seen leaving a lorry in Lenham trailer park near Maidstone, Kent; another 23 arrested after leaving a lorry on an M40 service station **DEC 27** Nine young women African asylum-seekers vanish from Sussex social services homes, and are believed to have been lured into prostitution **DEC 28** 16 suspected illegal immigrants who endured temperatures below -20C hidden in a frozen food lorry are arrested at Dover, Kent ... Eleven black police officers based at Ealing police station receive racist letters, thought to be from another police officer **DEC 29** Police in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire launch crackdown on racial harassment after more than 100 incidents reported in the past year ... Car

manufacturer Ford launches 'zero tolerance' campaign against racial and sexual discrimination within the company **JAN 1** 16 suspected illegal immigrants arrested at a service station on the M1 **JAN 2** *Sunday Times* columnist A A Gill, who described the Welsh as 'dark ugly trolls' in his column, is being investigated by the CRE **JAN 6** 59-year-old shopkeeper Rafique Khan, from Plumstead, south east London, stabbed to death by white youth **JAN 7** Police use of CS spray on 14-year-old boy causes disturbance in Bristol children's home ... CRE report shows that white graduates are twice as likely to receive job offers than black graduate candidates ... Judge criticises Met police's 'over zealous use of stop and search powers' as Hackney man Mikal Efekele wins £7,500 compensation for wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and assault **JAN 8** Four Albanian stowaways delivered to Reading police station by the driver of the lorry they had stowed away in ... Knight of the KKK, 60-year-old-Ian Christie, convicted of sending threatening letter to the Lord Provost of Dundee, a day before Dundee Library was to be renamed Nelson Mandela Library **JAN 9** Government approves state funding for Muslim and Jewish schools **JAN 11** Police say 666 people were arrested in 1997 after entering country illegally, double the number for 1996 ... Ministry of Defence lawyers try to block action by black marine Mark Parchment, who tells High court of 'sustained racial humiliation', claiming he was forced to carry a spear on parade instead of a rifle **JAN 12** Flat of black Olympic hurdler Tony Jarrett in St Johns Wood, London, fire-bombed; C18 suspected ... Truck drivers union URTU suspended over race row, walks out of TUC **JAN 14**

A London Research Centre survey reveals that Bangladeshis and

Pakistanis are four times more likely than white people to be living in poverty... Industrial tribunal rules that 21-year-old Farida Khanum was unfairly dismissed after she returned to work from a pilgrimage to Mecca wearing a head scarf **JAN 15** Strathclyde police figures reveal a 61% rise in racial incidents in the area in past nine months **JAN 19** Attorney General halts trial of Dowager Lady Jane Birdwood for distributing racist material after she was found to have an unreliable short-term memory ... 32-year-old George Lewis who spent five years in prison, awarded £200,000 compensation after West Midlands Serious Crime squad found guilty of fabricating false evidence ... Five soldiers to face court martial for racially bullying fellow soldier Clive Walker ... 26-year-old Audley Harrison and 31-year-old Hazel Bruno-Gilbert who claim they were assaulted by Stoke Newington police awarded £62,500 compensation.

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