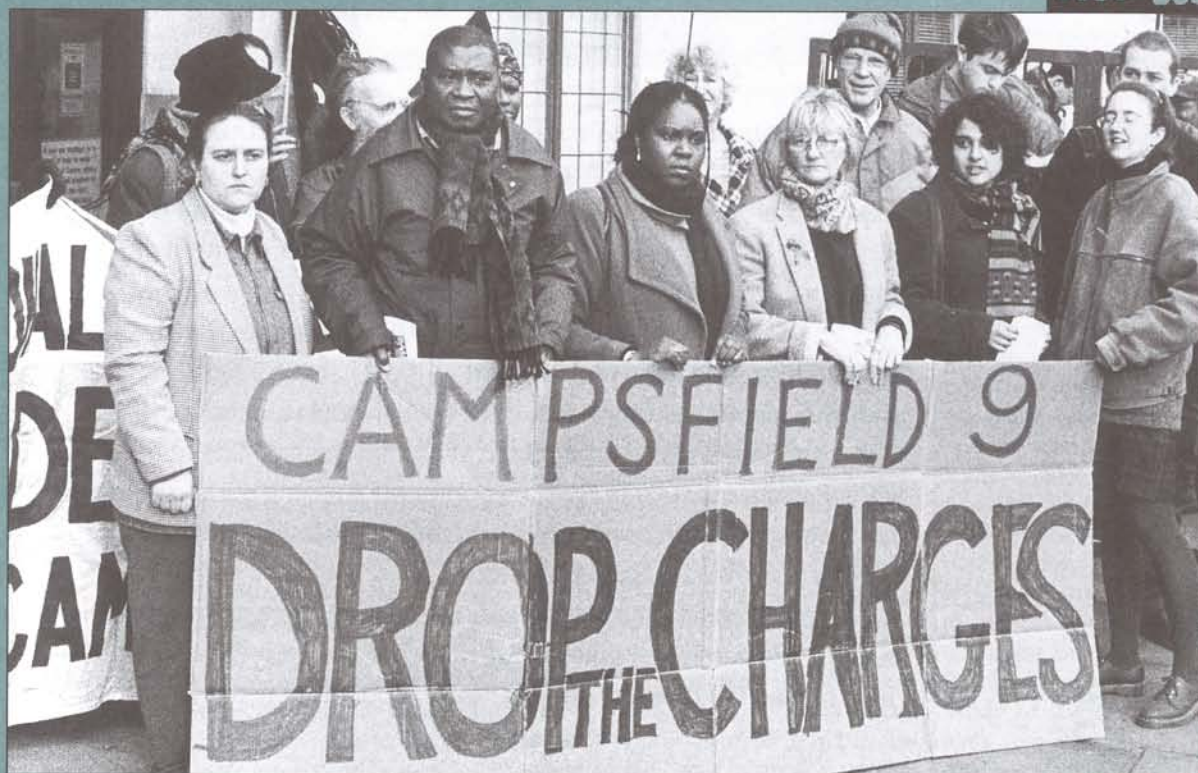


CAMPAIGN AGAINST  
**carf**  
RACISM & FASCISM

No 43 April/May 1998 80p

# ethical policies begin at home



PLUS ■ soccer's hidden racism ■ the Powell effect  
■ electoral politics and the European far Right

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## EDITORIAL

Criticising human rights abuses abroad in the name of an ethical foreign policy seems to come easy to this government. Self-criticism is a far more arduous task. Yet it was the new government's unwillingness to correct a human rights abuse at home – the administrative detention of asylum-seekers – that led to disturbances at Campsfield detention centre on 20 August 1997. As a result, nine west African asylum-seekers are due to stand trial for riot and violent disorder at Oxford Crown Court in June.

No other European country locks up asylum-seekers indefinitely before deciding on their claim. In opposition, Labour condemned the practice; in power, it has seen nothing unethical in continuing it. Ever since the 200-capacity centre was opened by the Tory government in November 1993 at a cost of £5 million, it has been the site of numberless hunger strikes and mass protests by desperate asylum-seekers. Run for profit by Group 4, Campsfield has seen protests against staff racism, heavy-handed security, insufficient food and continued incarceration. Staff have been accused of watching porno movies during detainees' prayers, binning complaints and shipping out to prisons those who persist in complaining.

The government can't pretend it doesn't know all this: the 1995 report of former chief inspector of prisons Sir Stephen Tumim set out the issues. But instead of addressing them, Labour has positioned itself to the right of the Tories in presiding over the first ever prosecution of asylum-seekers held in detention awaiting appeal.

Anti-racists must make sure that this is one prosecution the government comes to regret. Already, as the prosecution begins, there is a flurry of international condemnation – and a whiff of scandal. An array of international human rights organisations, including UNHCR and Amnesty International, are attacking Labour's failure to end the inhuman policy of administrative detention. To add to government embarrassment, a leaked letter from Tumim's successor, Sir David Ramsbotham, whose report on the detention centre has been sitting on home secretary Jack Straw's desk for five months, condemned the centre as 'a complete and utter shambles'. While the Home Office refuses to reveal when Ramsbotham's report will be published, it should not be surprised at the charge of suppressing evidence which shows how justified were the grievances leading to the August disturbances.

There is a lack of ethics at the heart of British asylum policy. As anti-racists build opposition to the outrageous prosecution of the Campsfield Nine, we must remind the government that morality begins at home. ■

Britain is in the forefront of states planning to deport Kurdish refugees to 'safe havens' in Turkey and Jordan, according to *Statewatch* magazine, whose January-February issue carries details of secret documents between Britain, current EU Council president, and its partners. The safe havens in Iraq have now become killing fields through Turkish incursions and bombing raids, and it is the refugees from those safe havens whose arrival in Europe has caused all the furore. It must be patently obvious to Blair, Cook *et al* that safe havens don't work. Their attempt to revive a discredited idea makes them prize hypocrites.

# Behind Glasgow's gangs

The death of 15-year-old Imran Khan, who was stabbed by a group of white youths outside a Glasgow chipshop on 13 February, has focused attention on the position of Glasgow's Asian community and the response of young Asians to racism and deprivation. It has also rekindled concern about the extent of racialised gang violence in the city.

The details of Imran's fatal stabbing are now *sub judice* as several youths have been arrested. But his family are now considering action against the hospital after a post-mortem revealed that he died of septicaemia, not of his stab wounds. The police too, are the subject of complaints that they did not carry out forensic analysis of Imran's jacket until after he died, nine days after the stabbing.

## Sidelining racism

No-one is claiming that this was a racist murder. On the other hand, it is impossible to understand the circumstances that led to Imran Khan's death without looking at how the Asian youth experience has been shaped by racism.

There has been a substantial Asian presence in Glasgow since the 1950s and 1960s when many Indians and Pakistanis, attracted by the Corporation's recruitment drive, came to staff the buses and health service. Today they are among the most deprived communities of the city, suffering from high levels of unemployment and poverty.

The extent of racial harassment and violence the Asian community has faced over the years has seldom been acknowledged. A survey by the Scottish Ethnic Minorities Research Unit in 1987 found that over half of Indians and Pakistanis had suffered racist attacks on their property and 82 per cent of housewives had been subject to racist abuse. Racial abuse is still an everyday occurrence for many Asians, but this merits little serious attention from either the media, the police or other statutory authorities. An attack on 53-year-old Kishwar Noor near her home in south Glasgow, two weeks after Imran Khan's death, was only reported in the *Scotsman* as a hook on which to hang a story about the 'race trouble concerns' expected at an anti-racist rally the following day. Noor had been racially abused by three whites, menaced with a knife and pulled to the ground. Her son Mohammed Shahid saw the attack as 'a symptom of the worsening pattern of abuse suffered by Asian people in this city. We are told the city does not have a race problem. That is not true - we suffer daily from abuse, mostly verbal'. His



Imran Khan, a victim of gang violence.

comments reveal the gulf between the experience of the Asian community and the 'official line' that Scotland, unlike England, is a happy, harmonious multi-cultural society. The result is that racism is sidelined and overlooked.

## An issue for schools

Nowhere has this ostrich mentality been so apparent as at the Shawlands Academy, Scotland's largest multi-racial secondary school, where Imran and the youths who have been charged with his murder were all pupils. The school has been the focus of concern for anti-racists before, and a feeling persists that, for many years, Shawlands has failed to deal satisfactorily with allegations of racism, including an incident in 1990 when a teacher was accused of racially abusing a pupil. In 1992, four whites were injured in a fight outside the school gates and suddenly, racial violence hit the headlines - but it was 'racist' Asian gangs that were demonised. Shawlands did nothing to counter this interpretation. And after the BNP attempted to exploit the affair by distributing leaflets outside the school, it was left to the Scottish Anti-Racist Teachers' Educational Network to call

for a proper debate on racism in Scotland's schools, rather than carry on the pretence of multi-racial harmony. The call was not heeded. 'The response to Imran's death has been no better', claims Andrew Johnson, an anti-racist educationalist from Strathclyde University, who accuses Shawlands of complacency and of failure to tackle the real issues.

## Community responses

Johnson believes that Imran's death was an offshoot of the racialised gang violence that has been a reality in Glasgow for some years. While 'gangs' exist in any working class community, black or white, young Asians in particular claim that they have been forced to group together to defend themselves against marauding white racists who arrive from Paisley Road West, tooled up and looking for a fight. They have been especially critical of the police response, claiming that a high police presence in the Asian areas of Shawlands and Pollockshields at weekends results in harassment rather than protection. In turn, there was widespread concern among both black and white Glaswegians in the summer of 1996 that the violent activities of one Asian gang went beyond legitimate self-defence. What was once hype has now become real and many parents, black and white, are unhappy about their children travelling to and from school alone.

The response of the 'community leaders' has also come in for strong criticism from Asian youth, who feel it is time to speak out. Many of these 'community leaders' are embroiled in the current infighting on Glasgow City Council, and the result is that, while spending cuts decimate community facilities, Asian politicians jockey for position and the needs of the community have taken a back seat. There is just one community centre in Glasgow, recently opened after six years of discussion and procrastination. There are no real facilities for young people and few initiatives to find areas of common interest between white and Asian youth.

While institutions seem happy to leave the Asian community to rot in this racist hell, young people grow ever more angry. Glasgow, black and white, deserves better. ■



# Soccer's hidden racism: blowing the whistle

Are anti-racist football campaigns reaching the grassroots?

Anti-racism has now, partly because of high-profile efforts from the CRE and its chairman Sir Herman Ouseley, made its way into football. This year's Kick It Out campaign, backed by Blair and Hoddle, was launched in January with the Home Secretary visiting Birmingham City Football Club, and Tony Banks was guest speaker at a conference organised by socialist MEPs at Old Trafford on 'Tackling racism in football across Europe'.

Increasingly, those who want to influence young people are using well-known footballers to spread the anti-racist word. In Scotland, Hearts striker Jose Quintongo and Hibernian's defender Algerian Jean-Marc Boco recently launched Edinburgh's poster campaign to reinforce zero tolerance of racism.

It was, of course, a massive step forward. Only six years ago it was left to a handful of dedicated radicals in supporters' groups to raise the issue of racism. It was local community campaigners leafleting against fascists and racists on the terraces. While black players and supporters got abused, no one in the board rooms seemed to care. The high-profile campaigning has begun to change things. A commitment to anti-racism is now expected of the top clubs, so much so that Wimbledon's failure to support the local Kick It Out action group by 27 January, became newsworthy. And even David Mellor, head of the government's Football Task Force, was prepared to stick his neck out to defend a sacked black manager.

But now that anti-racism in football has impetus, it must go beyond exhortations from key spokesmen and campaigns that involve only Premier League stars. It must begin to trickle down to affect the running of the game all the way through. There are indications that anti-racism in football might dissipate its initiative in empty, politically correct gesture politics. Why, for example, was there such a concerted attack on BBC commentator John

Motson for a chance remark, when someone like Jimmy Greaves was for years allowed to get away with the most outrageous comments on prime time TV?

## Racism in local league football

At the other end of football's spectrum, in local leagues, sportsmen are being driven out of the game by racism, and clubs with 'too many' black players are being discriminated against. Terry Dannie of Gillingham talked to CARF about his experience. He loves football, which he has played since he was 12. Today, at 29, he is outraged that he now faces a ban for life because he was sent off in five games in a row. 'When I take a free kick, I get called all sorts - things like "black bastard". We get abuse from other teams all the time.' When he and other teammates reacted to racist abuse, they got shown the red card. Terry feels the way he and the other black players are singled out is totally unfair. 'Nothing ever happens to the other side,' he says bitterly about the racist taunters. The manager of the Boatswain and Call pub side is considering withdrawing the team from the league because the young side - eight of whom are black - are 'fed up with how they are treated'. The Rochester District League's spokesman says that a written warning about racism has gone to all clubs and refs. If that is so, it has had little effect.

Where can Terry go from here? We asked the Kick It Out campaign. They admitted that they get letters from players like Terry every day but, unfortunately, with 3,500 clubs in their remit (and only two workers) they just can't take up individual cases. They have also

found that intervening on a player's behalf with a local FA can even exacerbate a racism problem and penalise players yet further.

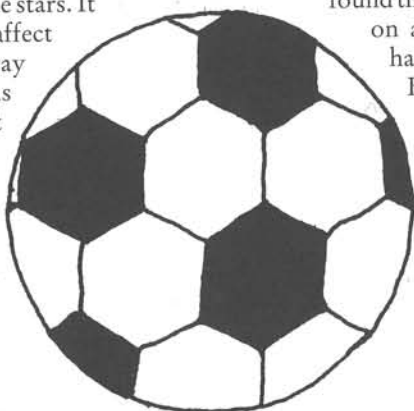
## Entrenched views

Entrenched views in local FAs are something Leeds Road TRA football club in Huddersfield know all about. This all-black team, in an all-white local FA, has been fighting a two-month ban which would have dashed all hopes of promotion and cup glory. (The team has been reinstated after an appeal but the fine levied on the club has not been returned.) The West Riding County FA had taken harsh punitive action against it after an incident last November - involving a supporter who quarrelled with a referee. Roy Akins, Leeds Road's manager explains: 'Referees think we are aggressive because we are black,' while striker Kirk Smith insists that black players get worse treatment than whites. Akins is cynical about the FA's backing for the Kick It Out campaign. For him the issue is more than mere abuse from supporters: 'It's about who runs the game and takes all the decisions.'

## Local initiatives

National campaigns may not be directly affecting entrenched attitudes at local level. But there are nonetheless a plethora of new initiatives at the grass-roots which might enable anti-racism to 'trickle up'. For example, the anti-racist play *Ooh, Ah Showab Khan*, about the battle of an Asian player to get into the Premier League, written by a Barking-based drama company and premiered in Newham last year, is now touring thousands of schools all over Britain. And in February Camden United - a youth team of Asian, African-Caribbean and white European players created in 1995 to defuse racial tensions in Somers Town - played Celtic Rangers from Ireland. This team, a non-sectarian squad, brings together Protestant and Catholic players from Dublin and Belfast.

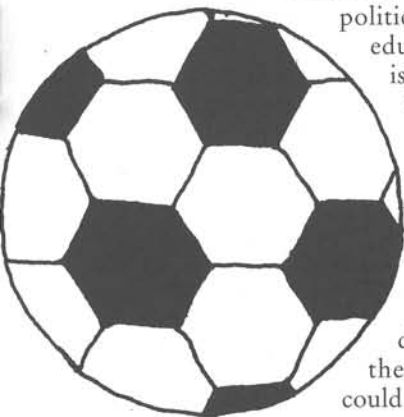
In many schools teachers have been encouraging pupils to support the call to kick racism out of football. Primary school children have been creating their own anti-racist posters for a national



competition. In Gloucestershire the Stroud Poets have, with Brockworth school, published a book of anti-racist football poetry to 'celebrate cultural diversity in world cup year'.

## Against bigotry

Celtic Football Club began the year by organising an appeal from prominent Scottish churchmen, politicians and educationalists to 'Stop the Hate'.



As part of their 'Boys against Bigotry' appeal Celtic declared the country could no longer accept sectarian

bigotry which disfigured Scottish society. Celtic has already worked through Glasgow education department for one year to get children from five to fourteen in 100 schools to examine the nature of bigotry and find ways of working against it. And Celtic—originally set up in the last century to meet the needs of the Irish who were excluded from existing football clubs—is now very consciously trying to be equally sensitive to the needs of today's black players and supporters. ■



Camden United

**Kick it out**, c/o 52 Upper Street, London N1 0QH. Tel: 0171 288 6012

**Ooh Ah Showab Khan**, ARC Theatre Ensemble, Eastbury Manor House, Eastbury Square, Barking IG11 5SN. Tel: 0181 594 1095

**Show Racism the Red Card**, 1 Drury Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 2EA

**Camden United**, c/o Kings Cross-Brunswick Neighbourhood Association, Marchmont Community Association, Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB

# COMING SOON: WORLD CUP

**Alison Pilling is the International Officer for the Football Supporters Association. CARF asked her about her hopes and fears for this summer's World Cup and the way anti-racism could be promoted to English fans**

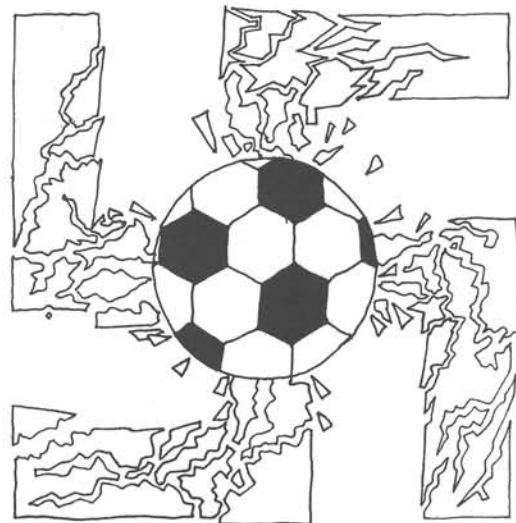
What the government should be doing is isolating the racist fans who may travel to the World Cup in France. But they can only do this if they get the support of the majority of fans. The 'Kick Racism Out of Football' campaign wants to produce an anti-racist, internationalist fanzine. This sort of thing might help. We are in a position to take a positive anti-racist message to France. After all, in terms of anti-racist work, British football is light years ahead of other European countries. We should export that positive, anti-racist message abroad.

But, unfortunately, there is a danger that this might not happen. The FSA has written to Jack Straw on several occasions, asking to discuss ideas, but we are still waiting for a response. What we need are proactive measures that will gain the kind of support that things like a hotline for English supporters to report hooligans will not.

Having said that, there is a problem with some of the English fans that urgently needs to be tackled. While there's an anti-racist tradition at club level, there isn't such a tradition at a national level where you need it most to address an insularity and a nationalism that still exists. That's why Jack Straw's attitude, and the attitude of the FA, is so vital. It's up to them to break down this insularity. But the situation is not helped by the fact that many English fans

have a siege mentality because they are so used to being treated badly when they travel abroad, as happened in Rome. Thus, the government's focus on the hooligan element is counter-productive. It should be building on the anti-racism of the majority of fans.

Ironically, though, the main flashpoint at the first English match with Tunisia, to be played in



Marseille, may not be provided by racist English fans at all. The French authorities have already expressed concern that the Front National may seek to exploit tensions in Marseille by condemning north African youths who attend the match to support the Tunisian national side in an FN version of Norman Tebbit's cricket test. ■



Camden United

Right or Left, no politician will speak ill of Enoch Powell. Once in his coffin, he was not just a brilliant politician but a sincere man and, by no means a racist – a British nationalist, perhaps, but not a racist

# The Powell effect

We are not interested in whether Enoch shook hands or made polite small-talk to 'immigrants' in his constituency. Nor whether or not he adhered to a philosophy of racial superiority. His personal predilections are not important. The fact is that his speeches – which changed both the tone and substance of the 'race debate' – had more effect on more black people in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s than any other event or even piece of legislation.

There had been politicians like Cyril Osborne who played the race card long before Powell but what Powell did was to use the language and tactics that had, till then, belonged to the fascist fringe. The language was emotional, the speeches based around rumour and gossipy tales – the kind of thing which, till then, had been exchanged at bus-stops and behind twitching lace curtains.

## The numbers game

Powell institutionalised the whole numbers game – how many were coming now, how many would come, how many would breed, how many would they breed and how many would have been bred by the year 2000. And, merging in to the numbers game, was the spectre of a changed British complexion – a coffee-coloured nation was at hand.

He was the first mainstream politician to talk of repatriation. Such talk immediately undermined black people's right to be here and, more than anything else, vindicated popular racism.

Powell purported to speak for the working class – the people put upon by immigration, the people left out of the debate on immigration, the people lied to by politicians on the subject of

immigration. His was the voice crying out for his people, his was the duty to reflect his people's concerns. And in the pursuit of that duty, he advocated the repatriation of the blacks.

It is often assumed that Powell spoke on race only in 1968 – at Walsall, Birmingham and Eastbourne. But he went on and on and on about race, immigration, nationality and citizenship – when Pakistan left the Commonwealth, when the Ugandan Asians came in 1972, when a handful of Malawian Asians came in 1976, when the inner cities were set alight in 1981.

## Trickle down racism

And each time he spoke – he was carried on radio and TV and stole the headlines not only in the tabloids but in the broadsheets – the impact was felt on the ground. Racial attacks, graffiti, harassment, insults all increased each time Powell went on the attack.

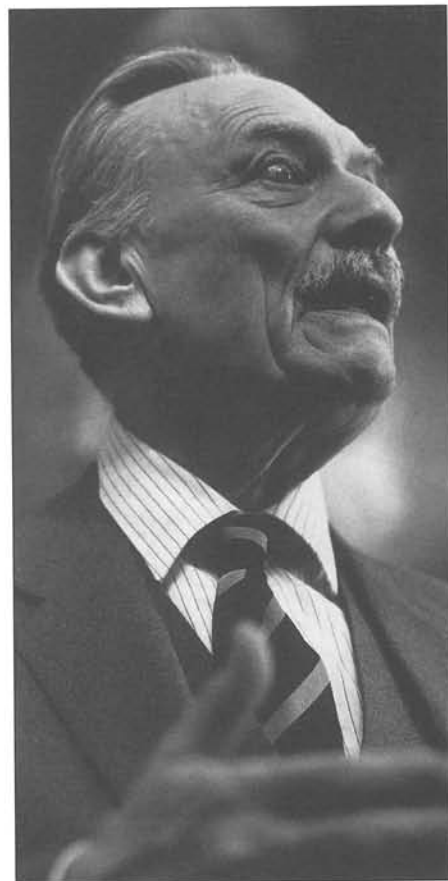
Powell formed the bridgehead between 'respectable' politicians and the fascists. Through his influence, the right wing of the Conservative

**SHIRLEY JOSHI**, anti-racist campaigner with CCARD and IWA in the Midlands

**'There is no doubt that the hostility and violence that characterised Powell's speech shocked black people and anti-racists in the Midlands. However it did not come as a total surprise. The speech had been preceded here not only by the Conservative candidate Griffiths' campaign for the Smethwick seat in 1964 but also by the betrayal of the Labour Party. What Powell's speech did do was to galvanise black organisations into action.'**

another's parties at election time and, over the entry of Ugandan Asians in 1972, joined forces to rally and march in protest.

The response of the gentlemanly, liberal



race relations establishment – of which the then policy-oriented Institute of Race Relations was the lynch-pin – was not to attack Powell and undermine his whole philosophy, but to mitigate his message. Calling on its demographic experts, the IRR would refute his predictions as exaggerated: the figures for those breeding were really so many thousand less. And his influence at the 1970s election (when, piqued by the Tory line on race and nation, he told his supporters to vote Labour) was negligible, its researchers argued. It was as though to deny him was to diminish his power.

## Media complicity

For the mass media Powell *was* race relations. After 1968, discussion was no longer about assimilation versus integration but simply whether one was for or against Powell. Even when Powell was in the political doldrums, he was 'reactivated' by the media. For example, in a 90-minute long BBC debate in 1978, 'The Question of Immigration' chaired by Robin Day flanked on the podium by front benchers Merlyn Rees and William Whitelaw, it was Powell (who sat in the audience) who was constantly deferred to and encouraged to define the terms and set the agenda.

But it was not just the media that kowtowed to Powell. Before 1968 all the governments fought shy of being seen to be in any way 'anti-coloured'. After 1968, in one way or another, all the governments

– up to Thatcher with her ‘culture-swamping’ speech – played racial politics openly. They wanted to be seen to be tough on black immigration.

## Black power

Powell had one beneficial effect that all his hagiographers have overlooked. He spurred black people into action. It is no coincidence that 1968 is seen as the heyday of Black Power in Britain. Black groups had, since the passing of the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act (which refused to recognise the British passports of Asians in Kenya) by the Labour government, been discussing the need to form a kind of alliance. But Powell’s Birmingham speech in April 1968 gave that movement impetus. Everyone now knew – Indian, West Indian or Pakistani, middle-class professional or worker – that all black people were at risk, all black people were ‘the enemy’. It was no longer enough to fight local battles against, say, the colour bar in housing or small foundry-owners over union recognition. Powell had upped the stakes. Black people now had a political battle on their hands and that required black unity.



## Black People’s Alliance

In Leamington Spa, on the day that dockers and meat porters marched in London in support of Powell, over 50 black organisations met to form the Black People’s Alliance (BPA) – ‘a militant front for Black consciousness and against racialism’. Jagmohan Joshi of the Indian Workers’ Association opened the meeting by drawing attention to the serious situation brought about by Powell’s speech and its aftermath. ‘We must put up a united front,’ he said. ‘Only when we

**HARDEV SINGH DHESI**, Organiser of the Indian Workers’ Association, recalling 1968

**‘I was living in Wolverhampton in his constituency; we organised demonstrations and disrupted his meetings. I was beaten by police in those demonstrations. It was very violent. But we knew that he was wrong.’**

are in a position of strength based on pride and confidence will the white people talk to us.’

By January of the following year, the BPA managed to turn the tables on Powell and Powellism with one of the decade’s most massive turnouts – for the ‘March of Dignity’. Over 5,000 demonstrators took to the streets for what was regarded as London’s first Black Power march. The issues were British racism and Rhodesia’s

**A SIVANANDAN**, Director, Institute of Race Relations

**‘Racism is as racism does. Enoch Powell changed the parameters of the race debate in Britain both in parliament and in the country at large and gave a fillip to popular racism that made the lives of ordinary black people hell.’**

white minority government. As strong contingents of Africans, West Indians, Indians and Pakistanis linked arms to march from Speakers’ Corner they shouted, ‘Hang Ian Smith’, ‘We want Black Power’ and ‘Disembowel Enoch Powell’. A black and white coffin was produced and protestors pulled from it an effigy of Powell and set it alight. And ‘the head was wrenched off the blazing dummy and tossed about like a ball’.

What particularly angered black power groups was the fact that though Michael de Freitas (a black leader) had been prosecuted in 1967 for incitement to racial hatred (under the act set up to protect black people from racism), Enoch Powell, who had indeed incited hatred and violence, went unprosecuted. The Universal Coloured People’s Association and the Pakistani Workers’ Union organised a protest letter to get Powell prosecuted which was circulated to all black groups. It included a petition against Powellism which called for the expulsion of all ‘natives of Britain from our lands’ and a condemnation of British racism from Third World ambassadors and high commissioners.

Powell and Powellism became the watchwords of rabid intolerance in the decades that followed. Powell’s face, usually in

## THE POISON CONTINUES



The Bishop of Croydon, Dr Wilfred Wood, a long-term campaigner for black rights, was one of the only commentators to speak out after Powell’s death about the damage that

Powell had caused. Shocked by the fact that Powell’s body was allowed to lie in Westminster Abbey, he gave a radio interview to the BBC on 15 February. The result was immediate. Abusive phone calls: ‘bloody nigger’, ‘filthy black swine’, ‘black bastard’, ‘walking proof of Darwin’s theory’ and a pile of racist letters – most of them anonymous – to his offices. The fight against Powellism is not over.

### BISHOP WILFRED WOOD

**‘He gave a certificate of respectability to white racist views which otherwise decent people were ashamed to acknowledge in themselves. It is the unhappiness and misery Powell caused that made me object [to his body lying in Westminster Abbey].’**

hideous caricature, was to disfigure many a leaflet and community magazine cover. For Powell was not so much a spectre haunting black politics as the stone on which its resistance was honed. ■

Reprinted from *Race & Class*, April 1998.



# Is there a New Deal for black youth?

One of New Labour's election pledges was to get 250,000 under 25-year-olds off benefit and into work. Sandie Lock, a trade unionist from Bradford, questions what the 'New Deal' has to offer young black people.

The Labour Party's flagship New Deal scheme for unemployed people aged 18-24 will be introduced nationwide from April. The first phase of New Deal is the Gateway programme which involves individual counselling for up to four months, including advice and assistance in job-search techniques and help in finding work. If the young unemployed have not found work by the end of the Gateway period, they will be offered one of four limited options. Those who refuse to take up employment will not enjoy a fifth option of 'staying in bed and drawing benefits' – the government is adamant about that.

## Why compulsion?

If the scheme provides good quality training and work placements, which will help young people into paid employment, why the need for coercion?

Forcing young people into inappropriate schemes or withdrawing their benefits is likely to increase their disaffection with society. In fact, the compulsion element intrinsic to New Deal creates a disturbing parallel with Community Service, offered to offenders instead of a custodial sentence. Community Service aims to punish offenders and rehabilitate them back into society; with New Deal young people are being punished for being unemployed and labelled as unemployable (because of their youth, their level of social deprivation, and often the colour of their skin).

## The Bradford experience

New Deal offers no specific measures to address the causes of the higher levels of unemployment among people from ethnic minorities. Discrimination by employers and social deprivation seem to be disregarded in favour of blaming ethnic minority youth for their unemployment. A recent TUC analysis of the Labour Force Survey results showed that 19% of black workers were unemployed (21% of black men), compared with 7% of white workers. It also showed that two-thirds of black workers were being paid less than whites doing the same jobs.

At a 1997 conference to promote New Deal in Bradford, it was predicted that

the number of people of Asian origin will grow by 16.5% by 2011. But only 2.7% of Asian boys go into employment (from year 11) compared with 16.6% of white boys. But despite this compelling evidence of discrimination, there were only three non-white people at the Bradford conference. When challenged, the Employment Service said that they had invited everyone they knew. Perhaps they need to get out more! But seriously, this does not augur well for the commitment to involve ethnic minority organisations in the design and delivery of New Deal, a commitment which seems to exist only on paper.

The final two pages of the Employment Service booklet 'Design of the New Deal for 18-24 year olds' for example, outlines the arrangements for ensuring that 'New Deal provision meets the needs of all ethnic and racial groups'. It states that local New Deal partnerships will consult and involve ethnic minority organisations 'as appropriate'. This certainly did not happen in Bradford.

## Recipe for discrimination

A 1993 report by Bradford Council showed that 43% of African-Caribbeans, 81% of Bangladeshis, 25% of Indians, 53% of Pakistanis in the Bradford District experienced low income, social deprivation and poor housing, compared with only 14% of white Bradfordians.

Under New Deal, employers can reject

anyone they consider unsuitable. The fact that an outcome-related bonus is paid to employers and training providers for those who find full-time work at the end of the New Deal placement may act as an incentive to cherry-pick those most likely to go on to full-time work (those least likely to need the extra help which New Deal is supposedly designed to provide).

When asked what assurances the Employment Service could give that New Deal employers will not be allowed to discriminate, the response was that employers would not be accepted onto the scheme if they were known to be discriminating against participants. Considering the amount of discrimination (by age, by postcode or because of a non-white sounding surname), already practised by employers, this 'reassurance' is far from satisfactory.

## The real fifth option

All in all, New Deal fails to address the fact that unemployment is caused by the lack of real jobs. Unless money is invested in job creation, New Deal may simply result in the best trained, most experienced dole queue in Europe. On the other hand, those thrown off benefits because they refuse to be railroaded into an inappropriate option, could be thrown further into the exploitative recesses of the hidden economy, resorting to crime and at even greater risk of homelessness. This is the real fifth option. ■



Jon Walter

# Electoral politics and the far Right

**If 1997 was the EU-inspired European Year of Action against Racism, 1998 looks set to be the year in which the political parties of western Europe play the race card unrelentingly in regional and national elections**

The parliamentary political landscape of western Europe is changing – and the beneficiaries of change are extreme-Right, anti-immigrant parties. Already, six such parties – in Denmark, Norway, France, Italy and Austria – are embedded in the European parliamentary process. The far Right is eating into the Conservative vote, and the Conservatives, in turn, are running scared, even considering deals and dialogue with the likes of Le Pen. When it comes to immigration and asylum issues, all of Europe's mainstream centre-Right and most centre-Left parties are locked in a right-wing political embrace. But with key regional and national elections in 1998 in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, France and Denmark, the far Right will seek to ensure that this right-wing immigration consensus spills over into outright racism.

## **FN holds trump card**

As we go to press, we are only just digesting the implications of the elections in France for a devolutionary network of 22 regional assemblies, voting for which is carried out on a basis of proportional representation.

Initial readings of the results indicate that the FN's 15.2% of the vote does not represent a substantial improvement on its 1997 general election score. It is nonetheless in a stronger position than ever before to influence the mainstream political process. For the centre-Right political parties are imploding, and the FN seems set to grow.

Previously, centre-Right Gaullist and UDF coalitions controlled 20 of the 22 regional assemblies. Now they have an outright majority in just two, and the centre-Left in an estimated ten. What this means is that if the centre Right wants to govern the remaining regional administrations, it must go into coalition with

the FN. The RPR and UDF leadership issued a stern vote to its regional councillors not to countenance such an alliance. But as we go to press, news indicates that in many regions the leadership is being ignored.

## **Kingmaker Le Pen**

The FN scored 3.3 million votes, which translates into 275 seats in regional parliaments. While the FN already controls four municipalities – Vitrolles, Orange, Marignane and Toulon – its influence in the regional assemblies which are governed by coalitions has been

negligible to date. But so strong were the FN's results – particularly in Alsace, Lorraine, Nord-Pas, Provence, Rhone-Alpes and Ile de France – that its councillors had the decisive vote in selecting chairs of the regional assemblies. Already five regional UDF chairmen were elected with FN backing and have been suspended from the party as a result, as has the former RPR secretary-general, Jean-François Mancel, who publicly supported an FN-RPR pact. Kingmaker Le Pen, previously shunned by the centre Right, is basking in the glory of his new role, laying down six terms upon which he will back the centre Right.

One of the six demands is that the centre Right pledges to defend French cultural identity. When FN-controlled municipalities struck out for French culture, they threw multicultural books off the library shelves and replaced them with far-Right texts; they shut down north African youth organisations, banned rap groups, attacked hip hop as decadent, and censored Jewish writers and those who

fight Aids or uphold gay rights. And what exquisite French delights replace this healthy cultural pluralism? The 1997 cultural programme for Orange consisted of six tea dances, 12 displays of local folklore and a ballroom-dancing grand prix.

It's not clear yet what deals the centre-Right will strike with the FN. But whatever the outcome in terms of Tammany Hall politics, French anti-racists must gird their loins for a further 'Lepenisation' of the French body politic.

## **Fini's triumph**

While there is no general election pending this year in Italy, Alleanza Nazionale leader Gianfranco Fini is poised to take an even more decisive role in shaping centre-Right electoral policy. Unlike Le Pen, who is despised on the centre-Right, Fini has received its embrace

and has been part of the Forza Italia right-wing Pole of Liberty alliance since 1994. But now as FI leader and media magnate Silvio Berlusconi faces one corruption scandal after another, Fini looks set to become the de facto leader of the parliamentary Right, and has even been dubbed the 'Tony Blair of Italian politics'.

## **Variations on a French theme**

In Denmark and Austria, the far Right is playing a similar role in pushing the mainstream debate on to anti-immigrant terrain. The previously little-known Danish Peoples Party, formed in 1995, notched up a record 7% vote in the March general election. As in France, it took votes from a centre-Right coalition



Le Pen



Fini

comprising conservatives and the Venstre party (which describes itself as liberal but is actually to the right of the conservatives). The DPP is led by 51-year-old former social worker Pia Kjaersgaard, who describes herself as a homely housewife, and conducts television interviews in her kitchen in her dressing gown. It has tripled its representation in parliament. Its importance lies in the way its hysterical anti-immigrant theme – its campaign for the repatriation of non-whites – dominated the whole election. The centre Right's response was to take over the DPP's anti-refugee message. When the DPP called for all refugees to be returned once conditions permitted, conservative leader Uffe Ellemann-Jensen publicly pledged that if he won he would introduce more restrictive border controls and quicker measures to return refugees to the places they fled from.

In Austria, Jörg Haider's Freedom Party is playing a similar role in shifting the centre-Right terrain rightwards. Haider himself will not be standing in the April presidential elections, focusing instead on the 1999 legislative elections, but the FPÖ is setting the tone of the debate. Haider's most deadly venom is reserved for eastern European countries which he wants kept out of the EU in the name of Austrian security and to protect western wealth from eastern poverty. Echoing the FN's campaign for national preference, Haider has launched a 'Schilling First' programme and warned that EU eastward expansion will threaten Austrian jobs and salaries, bringing in 'a violent wave of immigration'.

While Haider concentrates on the external enemy, the Christian Democrat



Haider

ÖVP, part of the governing coalition, is pressing for a new tough nationality law to deal with the enemy within, those who refuse to adapt to the Austrian way of life. In future, applicants for naturalisation may have to demonstrate a knowledge of regional and national anthems, basic features of inheritance law, the number of brass bands in Austria and the name of the Upper Austrian representative in the EU.

### Racist populism in Germany

In other countries where elections are due this year, such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany, the far Right is not a serious electoral threat. So can we expect a more tolerant approach to



Samora/Patrick Leslat

electioneering there? If the run-up to the September general election in Germany is anything to go by, the answer is a decisive no. Electioneering is already characterised by populism and the scapegoating of immigrants.

Kohl, in office for sixteen years and desperate to remain, is faced with a strong challenger in the form of the charismatic Social Democrat leader, Gerhard Schröder, the prime minister of Lower Saxony who has the backing of industrialists. The fact that there is no serious far-Right challenge on the horizon would be cause for rejoicing, were it not for the fact that the mainstream political parties have taken it upon themselves to promote an extremist and anti-immigrant agenda.

Traditionally, the Christian Democrats

and their coalition partner the CSU, have absorbed the nationalist and racist vote. But now the Social Democrats are trying to outflank the Conservatives in anti-immigrant rhetoric.

*Guardian* correspondent Ian Traynor warns that in this election year 'It is open season for encouraging xenophobia and scapegoating foreigners as social security spongers... To listen to the politicians, every boat person is hell-bent on evading the controls to get to Germany to enjoy the good life at the taxpayers expense.' It's as though the politicians are acting as cheerleaders for the neo-nazis, who were stepping up their attacks on refugee centres and enjoying a membership revival as 1997 drew to a close.

The government commissioner for foreigners, and the interior ministers of

16 German states, have warned of a 10% increase in far-Right violence and of the growing right-wing menace in at least 25 towns and cities. But the leaders of the political parties are impervious to the warnings.

### The Schröder factor

When Christian Democrats declared 1998 'the year of internal security' and warned of floods of immigrants, Social Democrats called for German border controls to be reintroduced, Schengen scrapped, and for the immediate deportation of foreigners convicted of any criminal offence.

While we have become accustomed to hearing Chancellor Kohl rant on about immigrant birth rates, and the need to preserve Germany's Christian identity, to deny Turks citizenship rights and to keep out east Europeans, it seems shocking that a Social Democratic leader should echo such themes. But Schröder has recently backed a racist election campaign by colleagues in Hamburg, and told a newspaper that 'eastern Europeans want part of our relative wealth and are unscrupulous'.

German Social Democrats are, of course, not the only European centre-Left party playing the anti-refugee theme. It has become increasingly dominant in British Labour Party speak, to the point where health minister Paul Boateng, himself the son of a refugee from Ghana, could tell parliament, 'Of course there are bogus asylum-seekers, and they are preying on our hard-pressed taxpayers.'

### Bavarian immigration precedent

There are also four key regional elections in Germany this year. Already, the Bavarian CSU has set out its anti-immigrant stall for regional elections in August, demanding to be allowed to introduce its own immigration controls. In particular, it wants to impose rules requiring proof from immigrants of a job and health insurance before they are allowed into the state.

Mirroring the neo-nazis, who exclude foreigners at street level, the CSU seeks to turn wealthy Bavaria into a foreigner-free zone, and threatens to vote against the Amsterdam Treaty unless Bavaria is allowed to go it alone. It is a dangerous precedent that should set alarm bells ringing across Europe. For in other countries too, rich regions want to break with national governments and establish their own immigration controls. ■

## IN TOUCH WITH EUROPE

**Out of touch with groups in Europe campaigning around similar issues? With this regular column, CARF aims to keep anti-racists in touch with some of the most important new initiatives.**

**Refugee hunger strikes:** By mid-January, in Lille, France, 18 sans-papiers, on the 61st day of their hunger strike, were in a grave condition. MRAP condemned the indifference of the authorities. A hunger strike of 14 rejected Kurdish asylum-seekers in the Netherlands ended in February after a month because of the indifference of the authorities. As of 3 February, 101 persons held on remand in Austria awaiting deportation, were on hunger strike.

**Refugee support group:** FFM in Berlin have launched a campaign to defend nine asylum-seekers charged with serious offences following a rebellion at a detention camp for asylum-seekers at Eisenhüttenstadt, Brandenburg.

**Sanctuary movement:** Churches in Lower Saxony, Germany, are supporting two pastors who have been prosecuted for offering sanctuary to two Angolans. By early march 100 Kurdish asylum-seekers were in church sanctuary in Cologne demanding the right to stay. The Kurds organised a march in mid-February with the 'No one is illegal' network.

**Anti-deportation campaigns:** Mass protests prevented the Austrian authorities deporting 40 Iraqi Kurds to Slovakia, a so-called safe third country.

**Against internal controls:** Taxi drivers in eastern Germany have held demonstrations outside the courts after a series of successful prosecutions against them for picking up foreigners who have entered the country illegally across the Polish or Czech borders. According to the defiant taxi-drivers, the person who breaks the law is the person who discriminates and they will 'continue to take passengers who look foreign, speak German poorly, have a lot of luggage or wet clothes, to the places they want to go'.

**Police:** Fourteen Algerians successfully sued a Swiss policeman who passed on information about them to the Algerian police, leading to torture when they returned to Algeria. Unbelievably, the police officer has been returned to duty after serving a short prison sentence.

**Health:** Migrants Against HIV/Aids highlighted the role of the French Academy of Medicine and French Aids specialists in a meeting they hosted on the pathology of immigration.

**Anti-Roma racism:** Hungarian human rights organisations have united to condemn the mayor of Sátoraljaújhely who has expelled four Roma families from the town.

**Anti-fascism:** Gay groups in Sweden point to growing neo-nazi involvement in homophobic violence, including five murders over the last ten years. Anti-fascists prevented the National Socialist Front staging the first anti-Semitic rally in Stockholm since the second world war.

## AROUND THE EUROPEAN COURTS

**As immigration and asylum decisions in one country increasingly affect campaigners in another, CARF continues its round-up of some of the most important legal decisions.**

**France:** Appeals Commission has granted asylum to an Algerian *rai* singer, persecuted by fundamentalists. Previously, 99% of Algerians have been refused refugee status on the grounds that they cannot prove persecution by a state or government, only by 'armed groups'.

**Germany:** Federal Administrative Court has ruled that Afghans have no claim to asylum on the grounds that as there is no longer a single state power, persecution is not state-sponsored.

**Safe-country and repatriation agreements:** Denmark has reached an agreement with two clan leaders for the return of refugees to some areas of Somaliland, deemed safe. Italy started mass deportations of Albanians in September 1997. The Netherlands has signed an agreement with Sri Lanka for the forcible repatriation of rejected asylum-seekers. The EU, with Germany in the driving-seat, has issued an ultimatum to the Bosnian leaders to resettle refugees from the war, or have aid programmes cut. Switzerland, Germany and France have refused to issue a moratorium on deportations to Algeria – with France insisting that some parts of the country, such as Algiers, are safe. All the 167 Algerians who applied for asylum in Austria in 1997 were rejected. Seventeen were repatriated.

**Fact file on suicide attempts:** Brutal deportation decisions are leading to more suicides and suicide attempts. At the beginning of January, as newspapers continued their scaremongering stories about Kurdish flight to Germany, a Kurdish refugee due to be deported to Turkey walked into a garden near Mönchen-Gladbach, doused himself with petrol, set himself alight and died. In France, at the Mesnil-Amélot detention centre near Roissy, it is reported that 29 detainees have recently attempted suicide, mostly Algerians. Two Lebanese asylum-seekers, who attempted to commit suicide in January by cutting their arteries, have since been released from an Austrian remand centre. ■



## CAMPAIGNS AND REPORTS

# Campsfield 9 – drop the charges

by Bill MacKeith,  
Campsfield Nine Defence Campaign

A trial of international significance is due to start at Oxford Crown Court on 1 June 1998. Nine refugees – seven men and two 17-year-old lads – are charged with riot and violent disorder which they are alleged to have committed on 20 August last year at Campsfield immigration detention centre near Oxford.

All nine are west Africans, five from Nigeria, one Gambian, one Ghanaian and one Liberian. They received a rude welcome when they arrived in Britain and requested political asylum. Refugees fleeing from persecution, they were taken away and imprisoned, without criminal charge or conviction, without reasons being given, and with absolutely no time limit on their imprisonment. By 20 August, the nine had been held in conditions described by former Chief Inspector of Prisons Judge Tumim as 'settled misery' for periods ranging from a month or two to many months.

No other country in Europe treats refugees as badly as does Britain. In addition to the daily affronts to human dignity, the asylum system, which is a shambles, is unfair and lacks even the basic legal protection in force in other European countries. There appears to be no rhyme or reason for the decision made to detain an individual.

These are all statements made on Channel 4 News on 5 March 1998 by a London representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),

and by the new Chief Inspector of Prisons, David Ramsbotham. Former army general Ramsbotham visited Campsfield after the mass protest by detainees on 20 August. His report is being kept secret by Home Secretary Jack Straw, who received it in November. In a leaked letter, Ramsbotham was scathing in his criticism of the way the government permits the private company Group 4 to run the refugee prison. The UNHCR is concerned about the mounting tide of immigration detentions in Europe, and has initiated a programme of visiting detention centres, starting with Britain. The Channel 4 report corroborated complaints of daily racist taunts and reflected the lack of any change in the new government's treatment of refugees.

The protest on 20 August, like previous mass protests by detainees, when teams of Group 4 guards went to the rooms of two detainees at 6.30am to move them, immediately and without warning, to prison. This is a punishment (and a threat) used by Group 4 to deter complaints and 'trouble-makers'. As usual, no notice had been given, and the two detainees' lawyers were not informed. Other detainees protested at the injustice, and between 50 and 100 joined in demands to be treated as human beings, not criminals, and to be released.

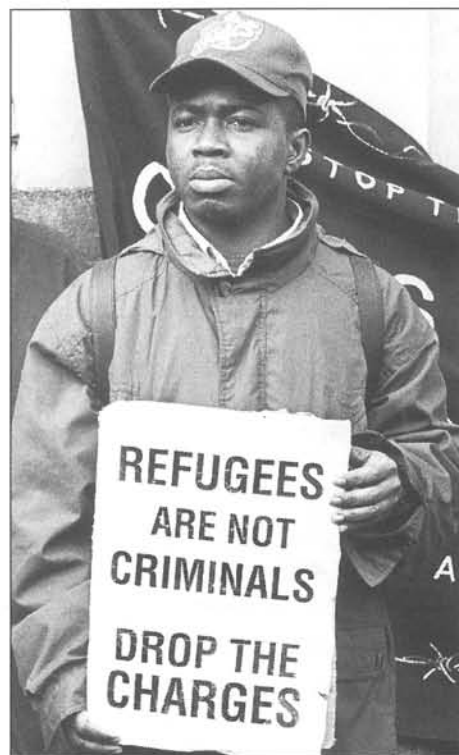
Immigration minister Mike O'Brien has claimed – in language prejudicial to a fair trial – that £175,000-worth of damage was done in 'an act of madness' by nine individuals who all happen to be black west African refugees, five of whom are Nigerians. The military dictatorship there is

### LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 29 April 1.30 – 3.30pm

- Stop deportations: amnesty for all
- Re-unite divided families
- Restore benefits
- End detention under asylum and immigration law
- Review all immigration laws

Organised by the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns. Ring 0121 554 6947 for more details/publicity material.



S. O'Neill

armed with tanks sold by Britain, and supervises the activities of British multinational Shell in Ogoniland (two of the accused are Ogoni). It is Britain's 'ethical foreign policy' and shameful abuse of refugees and other migrants that should be on trial on 1 June, not nine people who are denied all normal legal safeguards and rights to free expression.

Five of the nine accused are in Bullingdon prison, near Oxford, and two are in Reading jail Young Offenders' Institution and Remand Centre. One is free on bail, having been granted refugee status. And one youth is in a secure psychiatric unit, having made a serious attempt to commit suicide.

The Campsfield 9 Defence Campaign is organising a series of important meetings and protests to raise the profile of this important political trial. So far over 100 Oxford University professors and college heads have written to Tony Blair calling for the charges to be dropped. All supporters are urged to do likewise, and to write to Home Secretary Jack Straw and to the Director of Public Prosecutions. ■

Ring 01865-558145/557282/726804 for details.

### CAMPAIGN ACTIONS IN LONDON AND OXFORD

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>29 April 5.30–6.30pm</b> .....       | Picket of the Crown Prosecution Service (after the parliamentary lobby of the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns) |
| <b>12 May at 7.30pm</b> .....           | Public meeting in Oxford Town Hall  |
| <b>20 May at 7.30pm</b> .....           | Public meeting in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London  |
| <b>1 June from 8.30am onwards</b> ..... | Mass picket outside Oxford Crown Court  |

## From Campsfield to Eisenhüttenstadt

Campaigners at Campsfield are linking up with anti-racists in Berlin who are protesting at the arrest of nine asylum-seekers after a rebellion at the Eisenhüttenstadt detention centre in Brandenburg. But in an unprecedented and blatantly illegal move, four of the nine have been deported even before the trial takes place.

On the night of 20 November 1997, police and members of the detested BOSS security service active at the centre tried to deport Ghanaian asylum-seeker Collins G. overpowering him in his sleep. Fellow detainees rushed to his aid, setting alight various objects in an attempt to prevent his removal. It took the police four hours to quell the protest.

Nine men accused of instigating or participating in the 'riot' were arrested and charged with grievous bodily harm, damage to property and resisting police. When workers from the anti-racist group FFM and Brandenburg Refugee Council visited detainees, they were told that

nighttime deportations and other infringements happened frequently.

Then, as lawyers prepared for the court case in June, police acting on the authority of Judge Werner Ruppert, head of the criminal division of Eisenhüttenstadt county court, swooped again, rounding up five detainees including Collins G. for removal. The judge temporarily suspended enforcement of the criminal warrants against the accused to enable them to be deported. As we go to press, four men have already been deported. An attempt to deport Collins G. proved unsuccessful when Ghana Air refused to take him on board because of his frantic resistance.

Campaigners are outraged by the blatant illegality and open contempt for human rights demonstrated by the court's actions. In moving to deport the nine rather than allowing them to stand trial, they say, Judge Ruppert has carried out a grossly illegal act which makes a mockery of the German criminal justice system. ■

Further information from FFM, Gneisenaustr. 2a, 10961 Berlin, Germany. Tel: 00 49 30 693 56 70.

## Justice for Ricky Reel

The family of Lakhvinder 'Ricky' Reel held a vigil outside the Home Office on 9 March to protest at the continuing indifference of the authorities to his death. Ricky, whose body was dragged from the Thames last October, is believed by his family and friends to have been the victim of a racial attack. Police have so far maintained that he fell into the river while urinating. Now an independent post mortem has found bruising on Ricky's back, indicating that he might have been pushed. Ricky's family have accused the police of complacency, citing the failure to follow up an anonymous letter naming a number of youths as his killers, and the refusal to stage a televised reconstruction which could prompt witnesses to come forward. In the face of police inactivity, the Reels themselves have spent recent months leafletting Kingston and Southall, in the hope that someone may come forward with information. Ricky's mother, Sukhdev, has said that many people have expressed a complete lack of surprise at the fact



Ricky's brother and mother are supported by SMG Unity

that police are refusing to investigate what could be a racial murder of a black person, asking her, 'What did you expect?'. Her fight for justice is supported by the family of Stephen Lawrence and the Reels will submitting evidence to the MacPherson inquiry when it examines the police response to racist attacks. ■

Justice for Ricky Reel Campaign, c/o SMG Unity, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx. Tel 0181 843 4343. Full information about the campaign can be found on the internet: [www.iansmith.co.uk/justice/](http://www.iansmith.co.uk/justice/)

## Deportations update



The Onibiyo family campaign has produced an eight-page booklet about the family's successful struggle to be reunited. Their story serves as an inspiration to all involved in challenging racist immigration laws. Two members of the family, Ade and Abdul, were deported. While she was trying to find out where her husband and son were and whether they were safe, Joyce Onibiyo was herself threatened with deportation. The booklet highlights the importance of a public and vociferous campaign. The case also

set a legal precedent, establishing the right to make a second asylum application because of new information or a country's worsening human rights record, a ruling which has already helped many other asylum-seekers. Joyce Onibiyo is now vice-chair of the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, using the experience she gained for the benefit of others. The Onibiyos send their thanks to the many individuals and organisations who helped them, saying, 'Our victory belongs not just to the Onibiyo family but to the many thousands of working class people. From the bottom of our hearts we thank every one of you.' ■

*Reunited: How we won* by the Onibiyo family campaign is available for 50p from Lambeth Unison, 6a Acre Lane, London SW2

### Mehmet Ali Altun must stay

Campaigners in Norwich are protesting at the threatened deportation of Mehmet Ali Altun. Mehmet, a Turkish Kurd who fled to Britain four years ago, was a socialist activist who organised protests among students against the Turkish regime. As a result he endured horrific torture from the Turkish authorities, including having his feet slashed

and being forced to stand in salt water for four days. Despite this, the Home Office will not class Mehmet as a political refugee and is determined to send him back to Turkey where he is certain to face more torture and possibly death. His appeal will be heard in May. The Norwich Anti-Deportation Campaign is collecting signatures on a petition to the Home Secretary and organising Mehmet's defence. ■

Norwich Anti-Deportation Campaign, 28 Doman Road, Norwich. Tel 01603 616542.

### Labour betrays Omoyiola

Liverpool UNISON branch president Bayo Omoyiola won a last-minute reprieve from deportation to Nigeria on 19 March, when Court of Appeal judges gave him leave to appeal against the refusal of political asylum. Omoyiola, a friend and colleague of Abdul Onibiyo, was identified in the Nigerian press as a pro-democracy and human rights activist after he fled from Britain to a Hong Kong conference on labour rights in 1996. Omoyiola's campaign against deportation, like that of Onibiyo, attracted the support of Labour MPs in opposition; in 1995, 118 mostly Labour MPs signed an Early Day Motion supporting him. Most of them are silent now, after their Home Secretary, taking on the Tory mantle, maintained the deportation decision. ■

## National Affront

About 40 fascists, mostly members of the National Front (NF), took part in a second march designed to whip up violence against Roma asylum seekers in Dover in February. The first, last November, was halted by anti-fascists. This time, with intense police protection, the fascists managed a short march before being escorted out of the area.

The Dover marches, revived NF paper sales and pickets of the 'Irish peace process' are examples of a surge of street activities by the NF, now run by John McAuley, after the failure of merger negotiations with the BNP. With the BNP's effective abandonment of street activities, the NF has been joined on the street by disaffected C18, NSM and BNP activists. The NF is now moving into the BNP's heartland in London's East End. It has poached one of the BNP's few women members, Linda Cooper, who is to stand for the NF in Poplar's Lansbury Ward in the May local elections. The BNP's response should be interesting.

## Harrington: Kick him out (again)

A campaign has been launched to have former Wandsworth National Front organiser Patrick Harrington expelled from Greenwich university. Harrington achieved short-lived fame as a fascist 'freedom of speech' campaigner at North London Poly (now the University of North London) in 1984-5, and has spent the years since in smaller and smaller splinters of the old NF, culminating in the microscopic Third Way. He was unceremoniously booted out of the multi-racial Hammersmith and West London College, where he was sent on a teacher-training placement. But a spokesman for Greenwich university, which claims to have a robust equal opportunities policy, says that there is 'no reason to invoke disciplinary procedures in his [Harrington's] case'.

Letters of protest at Harrington's presence at the University should be sent to Dr David Fussey, Southwood House, Avery Hill Campus, Bexley Road, Eltham; fax 0181 331 8875.

## Blood & Honour fascist gets three months

Leighton Jones, a key player in the Welsh Blood & Honour music scene, has been sent down for three months for producing and distributing racist CDs, including No Remorse's sick 'Barbecue in Rostock', which celebrates a pogrom against refugees in the German town in 1992. Jones has links with ISD Records (named after Ian Stuart Donaldson), and had also been close to Billy Bartlett and Celtic Warrior – but the feud between C18 and the NSM for control of the lucrative CD business is reflected in the track 'So Called Friends' on their recent CD, which reveals Jones' part in an assault on a French fascist in Bartlett's flat. ■

CARF would welcome information on fascist candidates standing in your area in the May local elections.



England's finest? The National Front adorn the route of the Bloody Sunday commemoration march in London

S. O'Neill

## Mad dogs and Englishmen

When Britain's landed gentry went on the march through London, the BNP was not slow to recognise the recruitment possibilities. While the organisers of the Countryside March officially told the BNP that it was not welcome, there was little objection when party members arrived to distribute copies of a specially produced newsletter *British Countryman*. Amid reports that the American gun lobby provided financial backing for the march and that coachloads of Le Pen supporters from France also attended, one countryside magazine, *Earth Dog-Running Dog* (dunno, don't ask us) printed one of the most blatantly racist articles ever seen outside a fascist publication. Editor David Harcombe, a member of the British Field Sports Society, described Oona King, the black MP for Bethnal Green and Bow who recently spoke out against fox-hunting, as 'the daughter of some immigrant telling us what to do... a self-opinionated girl, typical of her species'. He went on to describe East Enders as drug

abusers, scroungers and muggers. The East Enders who elected Britain's first BNP councillor back in 1993 will doubtless be delighted to be described thus. ■



The army is stockpiling a chemical 10 times more potent than CS gas to use in riots, the *Independent* revealed in February. The CR chemical, which has been used in riot control in Hong Kong, is designed to be fired from a water cannon. It is registered under the Chemical Weapons Convention, which the British government has refused to publish in breach of an earlier promise. CR is thought to cause severe discomfort and breathing difficulties, and to affect the eyes. While the Ministry of Defence refuses to say in what circumstances CR would be used, the disclosure of a new riot control agent, held by the army rather than the police, confirms that future incidents of civil unrest will not be dealt with lightly. Harry Cohen MP has taken up the issue and tabled a series of questions in the Commons. In the meantime, it has also been confirmed that the government is spending £100,000 on researching an alternative to CS. ■

## Silcott must be freed

An excellent new book puts the case for Winston Silcott's release

More than six years after being cleared of the murder of PC Blakelock at Broadwater Farm in October 1985, Winston Silcott languishes in jail. Thirteen years after the death in disputed circumstances of Anthony Smith, and twelve years after being convicted for his murder, Silcott's appeal attempts are still coming up against a brick wall. At a time when, if guilty, he would be eligible for parole, his very innocence makes it impossible for him to show the requisite 'remorse' to be considered for release.

The evidence in support of his contention that the stabbing of Smith was an act of self-defence against an armed man

who had already stabbed him is overwhelmingly strong. The doorman at the club where the incident took place, and two other eye-witnesses, including the main prosecution witness at the original trial, agree that Smith had a knife and that Silcott acted in self-defence. There is evidence, too, that the failure to plead self-defence at the original trial was not Silcott's fault but that he was overridden by his defence team, and that the 1986 trial was irredeemably prejudiced by the shadow of the Broadwater Farm events, which meant armed police on the roof, jury protection, and the beginning of Silcott's demonisation. Despite the quashing of the Blakelock conviction in 1991, Silcott remains a demon in the popular press. At the mere mention of his name, the tabloids – and senior police – scream and point the finger: 'You should be glad he's in jail,' one Scotland Yard officer said, 'for the sake of your mothers and sisters.' He has become the bogey-man of middle England.

*A chronology of injustice* shows how that process came about, and how it prevents a fair rehearing of his case that he acted in self-defence in the fatal stabbing of Anthony Smith. The book weaves the story of Winston Silcott from his childhood in with the history of Broadwater Farm and the way its population was first lauded and then scapegoated, together with information about how racism operates at all levels of the criminal justice system. It presents a convincing case for Silcott's innocence, and portrays a strong, dignified and generous man, anxious to assist others in their battles against miscarriages of justice, and supported in his turn by the limitless dedication of his own family to secure justice for him. It shows how senior police officers and politicians are doing everything in their power to prevent his release, or his being compensated for the years of unlawful imprisonment and vilification over Blakelock's killing.

There is a lot of information packed into this short book, and the chronologies (one summary, and one packed with detail) are particularly useful for an overview of events. Currently, the Criminal Cases Review Commission is deciding whether to refer the conviction back to the Court of Appeal; if its members read this book, the application cannot fail. It certainly should not be allowed to fail. ■

*A chronology of injustice: the case for Winston Silcott's conviction to be overturned*, compiled by Legal Action for Women. Available from Crossroads Women's Centre, PO Box 287, London NW6 5QU, tel: 0171-482 2496.

### A Chronology of Injustice



The case for  
Winston Silcott's conviction  
to be overturned

Compiled by  
Legal Action for Women



### SUICIDAL NEGLECT

In March, the inquest into the death of 23-year-old Jason Sebastian, who died on remand in Belmarsh prison, recorded an open verdict. On 29 August 1997 Jason, a paranoid schizophrenic was arrested for indecent assault and was held on remand. By 19 September Jason was dead.

The inquest heard that his doctors had advised the prison authorities not to leave him alone in a cell as he was a high suicide risk. However, his medical records never reached the prison doctor. Sebastian was placed in the segregation unit after verbally abusing a female prison worker. An assessment by the prison doctor declared him fit for punishment. He was found hanging in his cell four days later. ■

## I N T E R N E T

### Virtual insanity?

**What new possibilities does the internet offer for anti-racists, and what potential dangers does it present? Over the next few issues, CARF will be looking at these questions to see whether existing strategies for fighting racism and fascism in the media need updating for the internet.**

Fascist organisations in Europe and America, denied access to broadcast and print media because of successful anti-racist campaigning, have turned to the internet as their main propaganda channel. For these groups the internet offers the potential of an unregulated media network with a high percentage of young, white users. This new medium has quickly acquired a culture of dogmatic libertarianism (where freedom of speech and the right to privacy are seen as absolutes), and this kind of laissez-faire approach to the spread of dangerous ideas protects the far Right from intervention.

As a result the internet is now home to a number of fascist, white nationalist and holocaust denial groups who use the full potential of new technology (sound and video clips, animation, graphics) to illustrate the same old 'arguments'. With cyberspace's penchant for the homegrown and bizarre, a growing trend is amateur race hate websites, the wackier the better. This growing online sub-culture offers everything from 'white, gentile-only online dating agencies' to cartoons of gorillas being infected with AIDS by a black man. Sad, but scary.

The campaigns of the 1970s against fascism in the media were possible because the media under scrutiny were concentrated in the hands of a small number of broadcasters and newspaper editors who had centralised control. They could therefore be held responsible for content. Because the internet is not a centralised system, it is extremely difficult to use public pressure to remove fascism from the internet, as it is hard to ascribe accountability. Organisations like the Simon Wiesenthal Center in the USA have attempted to have far-Right websites removed from the internet by putting pressure on the commercial companies (called Internet Service Providers – ISPs) which 'host' these sites, such as America Online and GeoCities. However, an expelled website simply re-locates to another host. There is usually some smaller ISP who will happily host a fascist site, often citing the right to freedom of speech in defence. At a time when internet enthusiasts see themselves to be in battle with the government over the right to internet privacy and against censorship, it is difficult to gain public support for withdrawal of fascist material. ■

Websites to look at:

**CARF** <http://www.carf.demon.co.uk/>

**Simon Wiesenthal Center** <http://www.wiesenthal.com/>

# 1998

## CALENDAR OF RACE AND RESISTANCE

**FEB 3** Post mortem on Lakhvinder Reel finds that a third party could have been involved in his death **FEB 4** Westminster council announces plans to bus 120 asylum seekers to a former old people's home in Liverpool **FEB 5** BBC and independent broadcasters announce proposals to increase the number of candidates required for a political broadcast after receiving complaints after 1997 BNP general election broadcast... Home Office announces rise in grants to local councils from £140 to £165 per head to support asylum-seekers **FEB 6** Amer Rafiq awarded £100,000 damages against Metropolitan police after losing his right eye during an arrest **FEB 9** Industrial tribunal hears from three British Airways workers who are claiming unfair dismissal after being sacked in 1996 for sustained racial abuse against Asian and Irish colleagues... 30-year-old Leighton Gareth Jones jailed for three months for possession of material likely to stir up racial hatred after producing a racist CD **FEB 11** Police officers suspected of sending racist mail to other officers based at Ealing police station are ordered to have DNA tests... Industrial tribunal hears how bosses at Leeds-based computer company, ISA Wholesale, ordered Asian workers to adopt English names because their customers preferred it **FEB 12** Eight Sri Lankan stowaways found on lorry in Portsmouth, having gone without food for three days... Anglo-French police operation results in arrest of 25-year-old Herve Guttuso, French leader of neo-Nazi group Charlemagne Hammerskins in Springfield, Essex for death threats and inciting racial hatred on the internet **FEB 13** Shelley Griffith, 30-year-old surveyor, wins £41,000 compensation for racial discrimination after being passed over for promotion by Bridgend council in Wales **FEB 14** Female Nigerian police officer resigns from force after revealing that she is an illegal immigrant **FEB 15** Northumbria police investigate complaints of racism from Asian graduate Rishi Johri, who claims officers made his life hell and forced his resignation **FEB 18** Sheffield REC reports increase in racial harassment of Irish people after two children attempt suicide because of abuse about their origins **FEB 19** TUC report shows that African-Caribbean and Asian women are three times as likely to be unemployed as white women **FEB 21** Bolton fans scream anti-semitic abuse at Eyal Berkovic, West Ham's Israeli mid-fielder... Staff at Hammersmith and West London college refuse to allow trainee lecturer Patrick Harrington, former NF leader to continue his teaching practice at the college... 15-year-old Imran Khan dies eight days after being attacked outside a chip shop in Shawlands area of Glasgow **FEB 23**

High Court finds that black marine Mark Parchment has left it too long to bring action against MOD for violent racist abuse while a member of the forces **FEB 24** Nottingham police announce that 397 racial incidents were reported in the county in 1997... Court of Appeal quashes conviction of Somalian seaman Hussein Mattan who was hanged for murder in Cardiff in 1952 **FEB 26** Vietnamese community leaders threaten legal action against senior stipendiary magistrate Roger Davies for his comments about the 'appalling behaviour' of Vietnamese asylum-seekers **FEB 28** Twenty people arrested in Dover after Anti-Nazi League supporters clash with

National Front, who are marching against Czech Gypsies seeking asylum... Research by NHS shows black NHS staff declined from 10 per cent to one per cent over the past ten years and concludes that racism permeates every aspect of health care **MAR 1** Metropolitan police launch initiative in Lambeth designed to round up 'Yardie' gangsters **MAR 4** Home Secretary Jack Straw succeeds in High Court challenge to loophole in law that allowed young immigrants to be adopted by British couples to gain citizenship rights... Vandals deface memorial plaque for Stephen Lawrence in Eltham, south-east London. **MAR 5** 60-year-old KKK member Ian Christie jailed for three months for sending racist mail to Lord Provost of Dundee... MOD suspends six soldiers from Kineton base, Warwickshire and investigates allegations that schoolchildren on residential course were subjected to physical and racial abuse... Sir David Ramsbotham, Chief Inspector of Prisons, condemns system for asylum-seekers as 'complete and utter shambles' after visiting Campsfield House detention centre, Oxford **MAR 8** Bristol charity Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI) reports dramatic rise of 60 per cent in racist attacks in the area since 1997 **MAR 9** Inquest begins into death of Egyptian student Ahmed El Gammal who died after being arrested by Leyton police **MAR 10** CRE investigates Sheffield University students' allegations of bias against black medical students leading to disproportionate failure rate

**MAR 11** Chairman of Stephen Lawrence inquiry announces that five men named as his killers face six months in jail for contempt if they refuse to testify... Home Office announces that CCTV is to be installed at all major airports as a security check on immigrants **MAR 13** PCA recommends that senior Metropolitan police officer faces charge of neglect of duty over his handling of the Stephen Lawrence murder **MAR 16** Stephen Lawrence's father complains that Sir William Macpherson, chairman of the public inquiry is insensitive on race issues.

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