


Michael  
**MENSON**  
D 02-97



Ricky  
**Reel**  
D 10-97

JAMES  
**Tossell**  
~  
D 02-98

Akofa  
**Hodasi**  
D 04-98



Remi  
**Surage**  
D 09-98



Surjit Singh  
**Chhokar**  
D 11-98

FARHAN  
**MIRE**  
D 12-98


Stelios  
**Economou**  
~  
D 05-99

Harold  
AKA ETTOL  
**McGowan**  
D 07-99

WHY?



Joseph  
**Alcendor**  
~  
D 07-99



Ben  
**Kamanalagi**  
D 09-99



Jason  
**McGowan**  
D 12-99

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## ONE YEAR ON: POLICE RACISM

# RACE INVESTIGATIONS: THE FAMILIES' PERSPECTIVE

**CARF takes a look at the last two years of policing of racial violence to see what, if anything, has changed.**

ON the face of it, it looks as though a lot has changed. More people appear to be reporting racial attacks, cases like that of Howard and Jason McGowan get on to the front pages of the national press, the new Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force has had a major success in the conviction of Michael Menson's killers. But our investigations suggest that aside from a handful of high-profile cases in the media spotlight, the police remain indifferent to the families of victims of racist violence.

#### Families force the pace

No family which has suffered the loss of a loved one through racial violence should have to deal with the extra burden of conducting their own investigation and mounting a public campaign to draw attention to their case. Yet unless the family finds the strength to register their story in the national consciousness, the police are likely to repeat the well-

miserably failed, first to classify the burning of Michael as an attack rather than a suicide and then to seriously investigate the murder. Kwesi, Michael's brother, told CARF what it was like working with the police. 'Many of our questions were noted and taken away but responses were never given. The answers we sought, they said, could not be given for "operational reasons". For more than 18 months, up till the inquest, we had no change. We were being fobbed off. When we suggested that the media be brought in, we were told that publicity would hamper the investigation. Only when they saw that the family was not going to go away and that we would go to the media, did they realise they had no other option but to take the case seriously.' In other words it was the Menson family, like the Lawrences and Reels, that made the racial murder high-profile enough to force the police into a more sustained and serious investigation. Similarly, it was only after *The Voice* newspaper,



documented errors made in the Stephen Lawrence case: failure to investigate the possibility of racial motivation, poor liaison with the family and fatal delays in collecting evidence.

So, for example in the case of Michael Menson, the Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force got involved only because the local police investigation had

followed by the *Independent* and TV's *Newsnight* programme, had drawn national attention to the terrible fact that two black men from the same Telford family had been found hanged within months of each other, after sustained racial threats, that the West Mercia police decided to ask for the Task Force's advice.



## ONE YEAR ON: POLICE RACISM

### The pitfalls of PR

In this situation – with the police being kept on their toes only to the extent that they are in the media spotlight – there is growing evidence to suggest that some senior police officers are not making real changes in the policing of racial violence so much as concentrating on reassuring the public that police attitudes have changed. The danger here is that the public relations aspect of this part of policing will become more important than any change in practice. In December 1999 we saw John Grieve, the head of the Task Force, use the successful convictions in the Michael Menson case to mount a well-planned PR offensive designed to reveal the police as a force happy to admit and repair its faults.

But this appearance of taking racial crime seriously, even admitting to suspecting a racial motivation early in a case, can mask a lack of activity or a poor investigation. The family of Farhan Mire found this out to their cost. The Met told them from the outset that the murder of the 32-year-old refugee, kicked to death on 23 December 1998, was racially motivated. The family had high hopes when Ryan Kelly was arrested and charged. But, just before the trial, 16 months later, with media interest in racial violence flagging, the CPS threw the case out for insufficient evidence and said it could find no racial motivation. It transpired that a witness and suspect had disappeared and no forensic evidence had been gathered. The family had been deceived and were now left with no hope of obtaining justice for Farhan.

Anti-racist campaigners have told CARF that they are worried that in the anxiety of some officers to look as though they are taking racial violence seriously, instead of a thorough investigation, officers are casting around for a likely suspect and a false arrest of a



Jason McGowan's mother, Doreen

known local criminal might occur. In the past, outrages like the Guildford and Birmingham bombings put pressure on the police to make arrests and grave miscarriages of justice took place. We cannot fail to heed those lessons.

### Business as usual

But most racial attack investigations of cases which do not have a high public profile, still bear all the hallmarks of ignorance, sloppiness and partiality that CARF has exposed for over 20 years. The most dramatic evidence for this is the way that West Mercia police failed to make a race hate connection in the deaths of Howard McGowan (found hanged in July last year) and his nephew, Jason, found hanged on New Year's Eve – in what appears to be a double lynching. According to the family, who live in Telford, Howard, a pub doorman, had suffered months of racial abuse and threats – some of which had been reported to police. After his death, Jason tried to find his uncle's killers because he could not convince the police the death was not a suicide but related to racial

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## EDITORIAL

# WHY?

In this issue, one year on from the publication of the Macpherson report, we ask why. Why are the police still making the same mistakes in cases of racial violence? Why do families still need to launch their own investigations to find out what really happened to their loved ones? Why are the police still not keeping families properly informed about developments? Why are charges in racial violence cases still being spuriously dropped or reduced?

It is true that the Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force has proven effective in some of the cases it has taken on. Yet we cannot allow a situation to develop where investigation of racist murders and serious racist attacks becomes the sole purview of a specialist unit, with day-to-day practices in the rest of policing left unchanged. Why should families have to put up with the woefully inadequate cowboy policing of most local stations until they can draw enough media attention to their case for the Task Force cavalry to be called in to clear up the mess? The last thing a family needs when faced with the death of a family member is to have the added burden of organising a public campaign to force the police to do their job. Unfortunately too many families continue to be forced into this corner.

If this were the sole cause for concern that would be bad enough. Yet on a host of other issues, from stop-and-search to black deaths in custody – all documented on the following pages – real change is being resisted. We are still waiting for the root-and-branch reform of policing which we were promised a year ago. ■

## RACIAL AND VIOLENT CRIMES TASK FORCE

The Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force was set up in August 1998. The force, headed by Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve, oversees the Met's response to all racial and violent crime (including the reviewing of ongoing investigations); advises on training; and sets standards for investigations, relations with victims, the gathering of intelligence and community safety

units. Community safety units, which deal with all hate crimes (i.e. domestic violence, homophobic and racial violence) are now established in 30 London areas. The Task Force can also be asked by forces outside London for advice. But it cannot get involved in investigating or advising on a particular case in any area, including the Metropolitan, unless asked in by the local commander. ■

# RACIALLY MOTIVATED MURDERS – KNOWN OR SUSPECTED – SINCE 1997

NAME	DATE	CIRCUMSTANCES	POLICE INVESTIGATION	PROSECUTIONS	FAMILY REACTIONS/FEELINGS
Michael Menson	02/97	Found by the north circular, north London, on fire	While in hospital Michael told his family he had been set alight by a gang of men but police did not interview him or take his claim seriously. He later died from the burns. Police initially treated the death as suicide. However after pressure from the family the case was re-investigated.	Mario Pereira found guilty of murder and sentenced to life. Harry Charalambous jailed for 12 years for manslaughter. Both men were found guilty of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. The RVCTF* pursued Ozguy Cevat to Northern Cyprus (Britain has no extradition treaty with Turkey) where he was prosecuted for manslaughter and sentenced to 14 years.	An inquest verdict of unlawful killing in September 1998 and pressure from the family campaign led the RVCTF* to re-investigate the case in November 1998. The family are now campaigning for the release of the PCA report into the investigation.
Ricky Reel	10/97	Found dead in River Thames, Kingston after racist attack on him and a group of friends.	Police maintained that Ricky died while trying to urinate in the river and refused to acknowledge any racial motivation in original attack.	Inquest recorded open verdict, thus refuting police assumptions that his death was an accident. <i>No-one has been charged in relation to Ricky's death.</i>	Family initially had to search for Ricky, and find CCTV evidence. After complaints from the Reel family, a second investigation was launched in which the RVCTF was involved.
James Tossell	02/98	This white man died in a fire at the flat of a black friend who was the target of an arson attack by racists in Kenfig Hill, Wales.	Police attended an earlier incident where James and a friend (both white) had to barricade themselves into the property after bricks and racist insults were hurled at them. Had police taken this incident more seriously, they might have prevented the subsequent fire.	Two men arrested and charged with murder in 11/98, but charges were discontinued because of insufficient evidence. In 02/99 six men were sentenced for offences relating to the initial attack on the flat. <i>No-one has been convicted in relation to James' death.</i>	Family complained about police handling of the initial attack. An officer was suspended and is to face unspecified disciplinary charges. The CPS decided that the officer should not face criminal charges after the PCA inquiry.
Akofa Hodasi	04/98	Found hanged from a tree in Surrey three days after a racial attack in which a friend was stabbed.	Police failed to acknowledge the possibility of racial motivation, instead treating Akofa's death as suicide. The PCA has strongly criticised the senior investigating officer for losing control at initial stages and failing to interview the three men who had been arrested for the earlier attack. Police searched Akofa's room and the family house repeatedly.	<i>No-one has been charged in relation to Akofa's death.</i>	Police discounted family feelings that Akofa's death was not a suicide. Family complained about Surrey police handling of investigation and repeated searches, and asked whether the senior officer would be disciplined.
Remi Surage	09/98	Stabbed in the back while out shopping in Orpington.	Police failed to locate the man who was with Paul Knight when he attacked Remi.	Paul Knight sent to Broadmoor indefinitely for manslaughter (through diminished responsibility).	
Surjit Singh Chhokar	11/98	Stabbed outside his girlfriend's home in Lanarkshire, Scotland.	Three men identified and arrested. Last police contact with the family was in March 1999 as the family prepared to hold a press conference where the police after a few minutes refused to answer questions and the conference had to be abandoned.	One man stood trial for assault, blamed his two friends and evaded jail. 8/99 two other men were due to stand trial for murder but claimed they would not receive fair trial due to publicity. Legal arguments continue.	The family is unhappy because there are now strict reporting restrictions in force after request from the prosecuting authorities and the campaign is receiving no publicity at all, thus 'killing' public support for the case, which had been called the Scottish Stephen Lawrence.
Farhan Mire	12/98	Somalian refugee kicked to death by white man in Harrow, London.	From beginning of investigation (Lawrence Inquiry at its height) police insisted that the murder was being treated as racially motivated. Ryan Kelly arrested and charged with murder on 18 February 1999.	Case came to court in April 1999. Kelly discharged after CPS claimed not enough evidence to prosecute. CPS also queried the racial motivation in the murder.	Police told family, only days before the trial, that there was no forensic evidence and a witness and suspect had disappeared.
Stelios Economou	05/99	Pushed under a train in north London after helping two black girls who were being racially abused.	40-year-old Allan Casey arrested.	Casey pleaded guilty to manslaughter on grounds of diminished responsibility and was detained indefinitely in a mental institution.	Family were unhappy with Casey's diminished responsibility plea.
Harold (aka Errol) McGowan	07/99	Found hanged in suspicious circumstances after suffering two-year campaign of racist abuse in Telford, Staffordshire.	Officers did not forensically examine the scene where he was found, insisting he had committed suicide. Police also initially investigated Harold and his family rather than the possible racial dimension to a suspicious death.	<i>No-one has been charged in relation to Harold's death.</i>	McGowan family were unhappy over police investigation which had ignored the connection with the racial harassment of Harold. His nephew Jason (himself found hanged months later) began his own inquiries into his uncle's death.
Joseph Alcendor	07/99	Died after being punched in the head outside a party in Kilburn, London.	Killer allegedly attacked a number of people outside the party before and after he attacked Joseph, including an Asian man whose jaw he broke.	30-year-old man charged with murder. At the trial, which began in January 2000, defendant denied charges of murder and GBH with intent. The case is still ongoing.	The family had to remind the police to interview two Asian men also attacked the same night.
Ben Kamanalagi	09/99	Murdered by four men in Salford, three days after a dispute at a night-club where he was a doorman.	Details of the murder not released until October when police named the four men they wanted to question.	20-year-old Anthony Curtis arrested in Colne, Lancashire on 11 January after tip-off to police.	
Jason McGowan	12/99	Disappeared minutes before midnight on New Year's Eve while out with his wife in Telford. He was found hanged on roadside railings a few hours later. He had been investigating his uncle's apparent suicide (see above).	Police first said no evidence of foul play but independent pathologist suggested it might not have been a suicide. West Mercia police agreed to re investigate this and Harold's hanging death and requested advice of RVCTF only after media focus on the case in late January. Police also making connection to death, by hanging, of Akofa Hodasi (see above).	<i>No-one has been charged in relation to Jason's death.</i>	Family are convinced Jason was murdered after trying to discover the identity of his uncle's killers. <i>The Voice</i> newspaper and <i>The Independent</i> and then other media publicised the case. Family formally complained to PCA that investigation bungled because of police racism.

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intimidation. That may have cost him his life. Pathologists have also cast doubt on a suicide hanging, lending credence to the family's view that Jason was killed by racists.

### Denying racial motivation

Convincing local police of a possible racial motivation for an attack, especially when families are fighting alone without much community support or the spotlight of the media, seems to be the order of the day. For example in the murders of Ricky Reel and Akofa Hodasi the police had first to be persuaded by the families that these could indeed have a racial motivation. And at the trial of the attacker of Liban Ali, even the judge stated that he did not believe the attack was racially motivated. At the start of the Ricky Reel investigation, it was the family, not the police, who put up posters and found vital evidence.

### Criminalising victims

The Hodasi case revealed a variant of the treating-victims-as-the-guilty-party syn-

drome. Akofa's aunt was suspected of drug dealing because of the number of phones in her house.

This blaming of the victim was taken a step further in December 1999 when five Chinese restaurant workers, who had had to defend themselves against a white racist gang attack in London's Chinatown, were themselves arrested. (Ironically, the treatment meted out by the police to the victims mirrored absolutely what happened in a similar attack in the same restaurant 13 years ago!)

### Reducing and dropping charges

After the stabbing of Surjit Singh Chhokar by three white men, though all were arrested, only one stood trial – for assault. And in the case of Liban Ali, who just survived a violent onslaught by four attackers, only one was charged with attempted murder. Despite the Lawrence Report's warning against plea bargaining, a deal with the CPS meant he was charged with, and pleaded guilty to, grievous bodily harm.



In other cases, such as the brutal street attack on a Zairean student in London in October 1999, or the arson attack in which James Tossell lost his life in South Wales, arrests were made and then charges dropped for lack of evidence.

Until all police forces take racial violence seriously, carry out the required level of investigation immediately after an attack, keep families informed of developments – including setbacks, and allow ongoing investigations to be scrutinised by third parties, we will never know whether the guilty are walking free or the wrong suspects were picked up. The way to restore confidence in the policing of racial violence is not better public relations but a better police response. ■

## SOME MORE RACIST ATTACKS SINCE APRIL 1999

NAME	DATE	CIRCUMSTANCES	POLICE INVESTIGATION	PROSECUTIONS	FAMILY REACTIONS
	04/99	Over 60 people injured in bomb attacks in Brixton and Brick Lane. (Third bomb killed three white people in a gay pub the Admiral Duncan, in Soho.)	22-year-old David Copeland was arrested and charged the day after the Soho bombing with three counts of murder and three counts of explosions likely to endanger life.	The trial has been adjourned while Copeland is sent to Broadmoor for psychiatric assessment.	
Liban Ali	06/99	Liban and two friends attacked and racially abused by a gang of white men and women in Leicester city centre. Liban had his head 'kicked like a football'.	All those involved were arrested but only one, James Watson, was charged with attempted murder.	One week before the trial, CPS, police and defence solicitors agreed a deal. Watson pleaded guilty to GBH and was sentenced to four years. Judge commended Watson for the remorse shown throughout proceedings.	Liban's family are unhappy with the reduction in charges and lack of consultation.
Zairean student, Holloway Road	10/99	Walking home with a friend when abused and attacked by gang of five white youths who stabbed him.	In October 1999, police arrested four men in connection with the attack. The men were later released but ordered to return for further questioning.	No-one has been charged in relation to the attack.	
Chinatown Diamond 5	12/99	Five Chinese waiters from New Diamond restaurant, Soho arrested after defending themselves from a racist attack from eight white men. Since the attack the restaurant has been subjected to a number of attacks.	Perpetrators of racist attack were not initially arrested; only after public pressure from the Chinese community did police act. (The restaurant had a similar incident in 1987, when four waiters were arrested and charged with GBH and affray after they defended themselves from attack.)	The Chinese waiters and their attackers are all on police bail; no charges have yet been brought.	'The police response has lacked sensitivity and understanding of violent racism. They have turned victims into aggressors and seem to have learned nothing from the Lawrence Inquiry,' said a member of the defence campaign.
Safaraz Najeib	01/00	After stopping to watch a fight outside a Leeds night-club, Safaraz and his four friends were chased by white gang which beat him. He suffered broken leg, ribs and nose.	Police were quick to say that attack was being treated as racially motivated.	Police have so far made five arrests but all suspects have been released on bail until March, pending investigation.	

### TABLE NOTES

\* RVCTF = Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force. RVCTF is also re-investigating the death of Daniel Blake who was found on a railway line in Neasden, north-west London. Contact addresses for the campaigns listed on these pages are as follows: Liban Ali, Chinatown Diamond 5, Harold McGowan, Jason McGowan, Michael Menson, Farhan Mire, Safaraz Najeib, Ricky Reel: The Monitoring Group, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex. UB2 5AA. Tel: 0181 843 2333 Fax: 0181 813 9734. Chhokar Family Justice Campaign: c/o Aamer Anwar, Scottish Fire Brigades Union, 4th Floor, 52 Enoch Square, Glasgow. This table was compiled with information from the Institute of Race Relations' Race Violence Project (see [www.irr.org.uk](http://www.irr.org.uk)). ■



## RACIST POLICING

# TAXI DRIVERS IN READING PROTEST

Relations between Reading's Asian taxi drivers and the Thames Valley police are at crisis point. The taxi-drivers feel themselves to be unprotected from racial violence and the target of police harassment.

Trouble over racist violence began last July, when seven youths attacked a driver, breaking his wrist with a bottle. No charges were brought over the attack (though one youth was charged for assaulting a police-woman). On 21 January a gang of white youths assaulted a driver and again no one was charged. Then, two days later, four white youths broke the glass that partitioned off the driver in his taxi, and started to beat him. The driver lost control of the cab and smashed into a telegraph pole. The four white men got out of the cab and continued to beat him up, screaming 'Get the Paki out'. The four assailants were arrested at the scene, but released on bail the next day. So far no charges have been brought.

Local anger against the police began to emerge last November when Shaheed Iqbal was arrested for a minor traffic offence and, he claims, beaten up by the police. His arrest led to a spontaneous demonstration of about 200 mini-cab drivers. According to Rajinder Sophal of Reading Race Equality Council, a huge police presence blew 'this peaceful demonstration out of all proportion'. Eight people were arrested and faced charges ranging from traffic violations to assault.

Now feelings in Reading are running very high. 'If the police do not protect the drivers', Azam Janjua, chair of the Reading Taxi Association, told CARF, 'some of them will start to protect themselves.' ■

## DEATHS IN CUSTODY

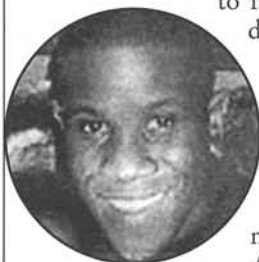
# FIVE MORE DEATHS IN CUSTODY SINCE DECEMBER

On 14 December, 25-year-old **Ertan Uzan** and his cell-mate 30-year-old **Fulton O'Shea** were found hanged in their shared cell in Brixton prison... 1 January, 42-year-old Algerian **Mr Benmerabet** collapsed outside the Atomix nightclub in Kent. Kent police were called to assist the ambulance service to take him to hospital. Mr Benmerabet was not arrested but restrained with handcuffs. He later died in hospital on 3 January... 16 January, 26-year-old **Asif Dad** died

while in the custody of Chelmsford police. The exact circumstances surrounding his death are not yet known. According to the police, Asif was arrested after they were called to a disturbance in the street and he collapsed and died after a struggle. Police say neither batons nor CS spray were used. Initial post-mortem results have been inconclusive... 24 January, Lithuanian asylum-seeker **Robertas Grabys** hanged himself at Harmondsworth detention centre. ■

# CAMPAIGN UPDATES

**Roger Sylvester:** In November, the Police Complaints Authority completed its investigation into the death of Roger Sylvester. The file has now been passed to the Crown Prosecution Service, which will decide whether officers are to face charges. Roger died in January



1998 after being detained under the Mental Health Act by officers from Tottenham police station, north London.

At a candlelit vigil outside the station a year after the death, Reverend Gerry Bruce spoke for the first time of seeing Roger in hospital before he died. He claimed police had 'beaten Roger to a pulp'. The family campaign now awaits an inquest, which is due to be held in June (as is that of Sarah Thomas).

**Christopher Alder:** In December, Janet Alder, who is fighting to find out how and why her brother died in Hull police station, heard that the inquest into his death is now due to begin on 3 July. The inquest is to be held before the trial of the officers involved in Christopher's death on charges of misconduct in public office. ■



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Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign, PO Box 25908, London N18 1WU  
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United Families and Friends Campaign, c/o Inquest, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4 2PJ. Tel: 0370 432439.

# HASSAN MUSA CASE TO BE REOPENED?

The family of 44-year-old Hassan Musa, who died this Christmas after spending 21 years in a vegetative state after a racist attack, is considering asking the Attorney-General to re-open the case.

In 1978, 23-year-old Hassan was kicked unconscious by a gang of white thugs in Sunderland while visiting friends. Three of the

attackers were charged with GBH and public order offences and served time in jail. The inquest recorded a verdict of unlawful killing and the case was referred back to Sunderland police who are waiting to see whether the family want murder or manslaughter charges brought against the attackers. ■

# THE POLITICS OF STOP AND SEARCH

By Lee Bridges, Professor in the School of Law, Warwick University



MUCH of the recent debate in the press over stop-and-search is more to do with a campaign to re-establish its political legitimacy as a policing tactic than reforming its use. And, if the prime minister's public endorsement of greater use of stop-and-search is anything to go by, it is a campaign in which the least progressive forces within the police are winning out.

In the process, the study commissioned by the Metropolitan Police from the former Home Office researcher, Dr Marian Fitzgerald, has got caught up in this wider political battle. This being said, Dr Fitzgerald has done much to fuel this, not least by claiming to have shown that the decline in the use of stop-and-search in London following the Macpherson Report is directly related to a rise in crime. In fact, no such definite link has been established; rather there is a statistical correlation between these two factors which can, nevertheless, simply reflect other causes of crime. It is true that many in the police and in the media believe that crime has risen because of police reluctance to use stop-and-search for fear of being accused of racism, but this is not to prove such a link.

Behind the headlines, the report makes depressing reading, as it shows that the more we understand how the police use stop-and-search, and the operational imperatives and working assumptions behind it, the less likely it appears that it will ever function in a non-racist manner. Fitzgerald herself takes a lead from the Macpherson Report and its assertion that stop-and-search powers 'are required for the prevention and detection of crime'. In fact, there is substantial evidence to suggest that stop-and-search is a relatively ineffective tool against those crimes with which its use in relation to black people is often associated, such as robbery and so-called 'street crime'.

Despite this, it is now claimed that it is an effective tactic – indeed, virtually the only one available – against crimes such as 'going equipped for theft' and possession of offensive weapons, and that detection in these areas serves to prevent other, more serious crimes. The trouble is that these indirect benefits in terms of crime prevention are difficult to prove or disprove, while arrests for these types of offence can often be arbitrary and discriminatory.

This is even more so for drug offences, which remain the primary purpose for which stop-and-search is used, particularly against the black community. Fitzgerald expresses great concern over the trend she detects in young Asians being stopped and searched, often in groups, simply because of their presence on the streets in certain areas, and their arrests for possession of small quantities of cannabis. In the process, they obtain criminal records and enter into local police 'intelligence systems' as persons 'known' to the police and therefore as legitimate targets for future stops-and-searches.

Fitzgerald's report gives a great deal of legitimacy to the 'intelligence-gathering' function ascribed to stop-and-search. Yet she admits that the legality of using this coercive power for such purposes is questionable, and points out that much of the so-called 'intelligence' gathered could be gained through other methods, such as the police simply talking to people or observing them. There is also a way in which such 'intelligence-gathering' becomes self-fulfilling and perpetuates racial bias in the use of stop-and-search. Black people are more likely to be 'known' to the police and even to have a previous criminal record (often arising from earlier stops-and-searches) and therefore can legitimately be 'targeted' to be stopped and searched again.

Another rationalisation for the racial

bias in stop-and-search offered by the report is that black people do in fact make up a larger proportion of the relevant age group and of 'the population on the street at the times and in the places where searches [are] most likely to occur'. But this is to accept, rather than to challenge, the working assumptions within the police that direct stop-and-search toward highly selected areas and groups in the population.

The aim behind current official efforts to 'reform' stop-and-search (of which this research is a part) is to make it more carefully 'targeted', leading to a higher proportion of arrests in relation to the number of persons stopped and searched. In this respect, new powers the government is intending to give the police, to carry out compulsory drug tests on arrested persons and to subject them, through denial of bail, to a form of preventive detention, may have a crucial role to play in re-establishing the political legitimacy of stop-and-search. The Fitzgerald report is replete with examples of the police arbitrarily stopping young black people on 'suspicion of drugs' but not being able to effect arrests because none are found. With this new power, however, they might be able to justify an arrest for the purposes of carrying out the compulsory drug tests.

The result will be that more stops-and-searches will be seen, at least by the government and researchers such as Dr. Fitzgerald, as legitimate because they result in arrests. The police would have used a new discretionary power in a racist way in order to legitimate an old racist practice in conducting stops-and-searches. More young black people will be criminalised, and this in turn will identify them as the target for arbitrary stops, searches and arrests in future. The spiral of police racism and conflict with young black people looks set to continue. ■



Asylum rights are increasingly determined at an international and European level – making it all the more important that campaigns have a global reach

## Key note

# The era of global

Over the last decade a common 'Fortress Europe' immigration policy has emerged in which each individual EU state has reduced its safeguards for refugees down to the level of the lowest common denominator. Now, measures to police the movement of migrants are being exported beyond the borders of Europe itself (and the designated buffer states on Europe's edges) and are being imposed on the troubled countries from which refugees are fleeing. The aim is to curb migration at the point of departure rather than at the final destination and to ensure that Third World governments take back rejected asylum-seekers.

In an Austrian strategy paper prepared in mid-1998 for the EU's High Level Group on asylum and immigration, the EU was asked to 'use its economic and political muscle' to enforce an integrated approach to asylum, for the first time using trade and development arrangements as levers with which to achieve its aims. In other words, unless Third World governments agreed to readmission procedures for failed asylum-seekers and illegal entrants along

## Asylum round-up

# Dispersal and the new racism

**When the UK government proposed to institutionalise forced dispersal and no-choice accommodation for asylum-seekers, CARF predicted that asylum-seekers would be dumped in slum areas and would become sitting targets for racist campaigns and attacks. Up and down the country, that's what's happening. Meanwhile, a new anti-asylum movement formed in the Netherlands could show the shape of things to come.**

Reports indicate that – as predicted – asylum-seekers are being dumped in the worst run-down and hard-to-let housing, with all the expected social consequences. The government's claim that asylum-seekers would be properly welcomed by local consortia and settled in good quality accommodation is a hollow joke. In **Liverpool**, asylum-seekers aren't complain about appalling living conditions for fear of a hostile response. High-rise estates in Liverpool's poorest areas, Liverpool 8 and Liverpool 5, have been bought up by slum landlords to fill with asylum-seekers for a government grant of £150 per asylum-seeker per week. Blocks to which asylum-seekers are sent are not centrally heated, lifts in 18-storey blocks don't work. Stairs are littered with rubbish, including needles and drugs. Water does not reach the top floors. There



# 'migration management' begins

with tighter controls on those leaving their countries, then vital development aid and trade concessions would be withdrawn. These ideas have now been incorporated into formal action plans, with six countries targeted: Afghanistan, Albania (later extended to Kosovo), Iraq, Morocco, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, the EU has ordered more airline liaison officers to be stationed at Colombo airport and has put extra pressure on the government to push through new laws criminalising illegal exit. The effect of this has simply been to increase the price which organised criminal gangs charge for this 'service'. Sri Lanka will also be asked to agree arrangements for the identification and documentation of all citizens – its authorities have already begun issuing machine-readable passports, under European pressure. In the case of Somalia, it is proposed that the government agree arrangements for the identification and documentation of all refugees who are returned to Somalia. Similar measures are

being adopted in the other four countries, with Italy even building its own detention centres in Albania.

The effect (and likely aim) of these measures will be to remove the refugee issue from the purview of European civil society and circumvent possible legal and political challenges to asylum policies within Europe. Instead, the EU will be entering into partnerships with often undemocratic regimes to advance its own 'migration management' strategy. And the linking of migration issues with trade and development policy shows how Western governments will use their power not only to establish a global free market but also to enforce global controls on the movement of people.

Free trade thus goes hand in hand with unfree borders. Unfortunately the nascent anti-globalisation movement, which successfully disrupted the Seattle WTO free trade meeting in November 1999, has been slow to examine the issues thrown up by the global reach of the new controls on migration. ■

have been infestations of fleas and mosquitoes. Landlords barge in to private rooms. There have been assaults. Complaints are met with the refrain, 'You're lucky to get anything.'

## The new Rachmanism

Much of the accommodation asylum-seekers are placed in by local authorities is privately owned. The government was very keen to involve the private sector in its 'partnership for social housing'. But the lack of adequate vetting of the providers or of the accommodation on offer is in danger of creating a new Rachmanism. In **Everton**, where semi-derelict tower blocks Millburn and Brynford Heights were bought up in 1990 by property companies, the local MP was denied access to the blocks, now used for housing asylum-seekers. A 17-year-old Iraqi Kurd interviewed by the *Sunday Express* on 26 December said: 'This place is disgusting. I am freezing all the time...I can't stand it here but

where can I go? I'm not allowed to work and the landlady has my identity papers and won't give them back. It is like being kept prisoner.'

In these conditions, where poverty, isolation and stigma combine, one refugee has already tried to throw himself from the top of the block where he lives, and two others have been admitted to psychiatric hospitals. Far from reassessing the wisdom of the policy in the light of events such as this, the government will isolate asylum-seekers in Liverpool even more if proposals to use two boats as floating accommodation are accepted. A new group, Merseyside Refugee Action, has been set up by refugees and asylum-seekers in conjunction with health and legal workers, to tackle these issues.

In **Norwich**, a local campaign which has alleged Rachmanism has been threatened with legal action. A campaign by the Norwich and Norfolk Refugee Support Group persuaded the Home Office to stop a landlord's bid to house 1000



asylum-seekers. London councils also agreed to stop sending asylum-seekers to his properties in Great Yarmouth. After the *Guardian* reported the campaign, he took legal action against the group – which has the effect of gagging criticism. According to the *Guardian*, a home in Hull for mentally disabled people and asylum-seekers, owned by the same landlord, was closed in August after a tribunal ruled that residents' health and welfare, and possibly even their lives, were at serious potential risk.

## Local press fans prejudices

But the media do not usually expose the plight of the asylum-seekers. Most of the issues reported, especially by local papers, are campaigns of popular racism, aided sometimes by the far Right and often by the tone of the press coverage itself. In **south London**, a tenants' association



**Rachmanism** – landlords buying up slums to fill with immigrants at extortionate rents – is named after Peter Rachman, a notorious racketeering landlord in Notting Hill in the 1950s. He used violence to evict sitting tenants so he could fill squalid properties with black people, who could not find housing because of the colour bar, and he could therefore charge massive rents.

## Solidarity with Kurds

# Say no to UK credit for Turkish

**Blair is backing a project which will violently uproot Kurdish villagers in south-east Turkey and ultimately create more refugees**

An ad hoc coalition of Kurdish community and human rights groups and environmentalists has come together to fight the UK government's plan to back Turkey's Ilisu dam, which will drive thousands of Kurdish villagers out of their homes. The dam, part of a huge hydro-electric project along the river Tigris, will flood around 60 villages and a number of small towns in the heart of Turkish Kurdistan.

### Blair ignores warnings

The project is so controversial that the World Bank has refused to fund it on the grounds that it violates a number of policy guidelines. But the British construction company Balfour Beatty is at the head of a consortium of European

companies planning to start work on the dam, and Tony Blair has been keen for the government to extend £200 million in credit to the company to enable it to start work.



Illustration from Kurdistan Web:  
[www.humanrights.de/~kurdweb](http://www.humanrights.de/~kurdweb)

## Asylum round-up

### DISPERSAL AND THE NEW RACISM *continued*

which planned to put out a racist leaflet to stop Kosovan asylum-seekers being housed on the estate was stopped by police. Southwark police warned the Ashley Cooper Estate Residents' Association that their leaflet protesting at the council's decision to house the Kosovans there could incite race hatred. The residents did not want the estate, off the Old Kent Road, to be used as a 'dumping ground' for asylum-seekers – not because the conditions on the estate were unfit, but because the asylum-seekers were. The association chair, Paul Fowler, described Kosovans' 'aggressive begging' on the Old Kent Road, and painted the tenants as victims of council trickery, police intimidation and asylum-seekers' aggression.

The *South London Press* added its own inflammatory mix of prejudice and unsubstantiated gossip in a full-page story on 14 January claiming that reports of shoplifting, gang intimidation and harassment were increasing in line with the number of asylum-seekers in Southwark. Its report cited stories of gang attacks by

people 'believed to be Kosovans', mixed with tendentious quotes from tenants saying 'it's a nightmare' and 'we feel we are under siege'. The message conveyed by the SLP coverage of the asylum-seekers in Southwark, that they are criminals and a nuisance, was repeated in a cover story in the *Newham Reporter* headlined 'War on bogus immigrants', about a pilot project in Newham in which immigration officers will be able to raid the homes of suspected illegal entrants. ■



**CARF is concerned to find out how asylum-seekers are being treated in different areas and how local papers, radio and TV stations are covering local stories. Please send us press cuttings or reports from your area.**

## No asylum hulks on the Mersey

**Securicor Custodial Services, which manages the shipping company Bibby Lines, is proposing to house 250 asylum-seekers on a fleet of barges moored on the Mersey. In Hamburg they have long experience of reception ships, writes Christoph Schmitt of Off Limits.**

At the beginning of the 1990s, the authorities began to look for new ways of accommodating asylum-seekers. In Hamburg, they had an idea which could be described as truly Hanseatic. Four container ships from a British shipping company were chartered.

### From Altona to the Mersey

How much it costs to charter the ships and the charge for placing the ships in the harbour are facts guarded by the Hamburg senate like state secrets. In the beginning we were told that the use of the container ships would be a temporary measure. But ten

years later, there are still two ships in the Altona harbour, the Bibby Altona and the Bibby Challenge.

The number of refugees living on these ships can only be guessed at. The official capacity of both ships together is around 1,200. But according to the operating authority, around 2,200 refugees were registered in December 1999. (The operators assume that around 500 refugees are registered but not living there.)

On the Bibby Altona alone, which serves as the first central collection point for asylum-seekers, there are over 260 children with their families and

# dam

Protests from groups as diverse as the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, the Kurdish Human Rights Project and Friends of the Earth forced the government to commission studies on the dam's impact.

The reports showed that 16,000 people will have to be resettled and another 20,000 will be affected, but that, although the project design was completed almost twenty years ago, local people have not been consulted about the project and overwhelmingly object to it.

In the war against Kurdish separatists, an estimated 2-3,000,000 Kurdish villagers have already been forced out of their homes in south-east Turkey. Campaigners against the dam fear that it will be used to weaken the

Kurdish community in the area further.

The use of British taxpayers' money to support unsavoury overseas projects came under the spotlight in the Pergau Dam affair in 1994, where the High Court ruled unlawful the spending of millions of pounds on a disastrous and hugely expensive dam project in Malaysia. Balfour Beatty was the main contractor there too. The company is also the subject of a prosecution for alleged bribery and corruption in a dam project in Lesotho.

## Campaign pressure points

A threat of legal action from Friends of the Earth led the government to promise further

assessments, and a final decision on whether to support the dam is to be made soon. The Kurdistan Solidarity Committee is calling for letters of protest to be sent to Blair, trade and industry secretary Stephen Byers and foreign secretary Robin Cook. ■

Kurdistan Solidarity Committee,  
44 Ainger Road, London NW3 3AT.  
Tel: 020 7586 5892/7250 1315



more than 140 under-age, unaccompanied refugees.

## 'Almost unbearable'

The living conditions of the refugees on board these ships are almost unbearable. The cabins measure 12 square metres. Each one holds two people, or in the case of families even more. That means that at most there are only 6 square metres available per person. Up to 40 people have to share one toilet and shower room as well as one kitchen.

Refugees who fall under the social security law for asylum-seekers only get 80DM (£27) 'pocket money' a month and are therefore dependent on the canteen, which has been severely criticised for the quality of its food. Food preferences of different cultures and religions are hardly taken into account. Those with special dietary needs, such as diabetics, only receive special meals if they have a medical certificate.

Because the external walls of the ships are not insulated, conditions are extremely cold in the winter, but unbearably hot in the



Marilyn Stroux

**'It is unbelievable that a major company could propose this 150 years after we managed to get rid of the Victorian hulks that were used to house prisoners.'**

**Councillor Richard Kemp, Housing spokesperson, Liverpool City Council**

summer. As interior rooms are covered with plastic materials they are constantly wet. There is no soundproofing so noise pollution,

from the air-conditioning for example, is loud and constant. On top of that there is the perpetual motion of the waves to be coped with. ■

Off Limits, Hospitalstraße 109,  
22767 Hamburg.  
email: [Redaktion@offlimits.de](mailto:Redaktion@offlimits.de)  
web: [www.offlimits.de](http://www.offlimits.de)





LC/Catrinus van der Veen

Angry protesters attempt to take over a public consultation meeting about a new refugee reception centre in Kollum

## News from abroad

# Lessons from the Netherlands

The recently-formed 'Party for a Safe and Caring Society 2000' wants to stop the government dispersing asylum-seekers throughout Holland and halt the building of any more asylum-seekers' reception centres (AZCs). According to the Leiden-based anti-racist group, De Fabel van de Illegaal, opposition to reception centres – ranging from verbal abuse to physical violence and even arson – has been commonplace for years. But local protest movements received a massive boost in autumn 1999 when the 'Committee AZC No' was formed in Kollum, a village in the largely rural northern province of Friesland. About 1,000 protesters attempted to take over a public consultation meeting about a new AZC. When about a dozen men, who had attempted to pelt the mayor with eggs, fought a pitched battle with plainclothes police, the press were on hand to report the so-called 'Kollum riot'.

### The Kollum factor

The press had turned up in force at Kollum because from May 1999, when 16-year-old

Marianne Vaatstra was raped and murdered just outside the village as she cycled home from a disco, opposition to 'criminal asylum-seekers' had become a national issue. With little but prejudice to guide them, some locals (but by no means all) and sections of the press had blamed asylum-seekers at an existing temporary AZC for the Dutch girl's murder. A gang of young men, drawn from local villages, had attempted to break into the AZC and refugee children had been pelted with stones. At a rally outside the public meeting, Marianne Vaatstra's father announced the formation of a confidential telephone advice line for people to report problem asylum-seekers and blamed Dutch asylum policy for his daughter's death. Shortly afterwards, the Party for a Safe and Caring Society 2000 was formed to co-ordinate opposition to any new AZCs in the north of Holland and, possibly, across the whole of the country.

Within a few weeks of the public meeting, the public prosecutor was to call a press conference where he condemned the 'witch hunt' against asylum-seekers and

announced that DNA tests had cleared all suspects from the AZC. A large-scale regional DNA test of known sex offenders and those within Marianne Vaatstra's circle of friends is now being carried out.

Groups like Anti-Fascist Action are now active in Kollum, as is the far-Right Centre Democrats, which has leafleted door to door. But Kollum is no longer a local issue. New committees and protest movements are springing up all the time.

De Fabel van de Illegaal and the anti-fascist investigative group Kafka fear that the whole of the Netherlands could be 'Kollumised'. Already there is evidence that far-Right groups are attempting to get a foothold in the new Party for a Safe and Caring Society 2000. But as Fabel spokesperson Gerrit de Wit concludes, 'What is most alarming is the fact that in many cities and villages it is locals who are spearheading protests against refugee centres.' ■

De Fabel van de Illegaal. Tel: 00 31 71 512 7610.  
www.dsl.nl/media/lokabaal

# A Scottish challenge

### Catherine Franks writes:

The Asylum and Immigration Act is being challenged in Scotland on several fronts. Just after Christmas church leaders united to attack the proposals contained in the Act. The criticisms by the ten leaders, including those of the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic and the Scottish Episcopal Church, are that the Act contravenes the UN Convention, does not treat asylum-seekers with dignity, increases the risk of racial harassment and abuse, and wastes money through the voucher scheme.

### Preserving benefits

Criticism of the Act has also come from MSPs who believe there is scope for debating the matter in the Scottish Parliament. Shona Robison MSP explained that an All-Party Group on Refugees is exploring the legality of Whitehall's amendment of Scottish legislation

without consultation with the Scottish Parliament. Cross-party support has been gained for a parliamentary motion by Cathy Jamieson MSP, which states, 'That the Parliament is concerned that aspects of the Asylum and Immigration Act will effectively amend Scottish legislation pertaining to social work, the health service, mental health, children's rights and housing; considers that the Scottish Parliament should, therefore, be consulted on this matter; believes that the cash payments to asylum-seekers should continue in Scotland; and believes that the Scottish Parliament should consider supplementing financial resources provided to local authorities by the Home Office in relation to the Act's provisions...'

### Black community responds

Leaders of the African-Caribbean community have added their voices to criticism of the

Act, fearing that it will have a detrimental effect on race relations in Scotland. As a 'cluster-area' Scotland will see the number of asylum-seekers here rise tenfold to over 3,000 a year. We fear that no adequate provision will be made for support services such as interpretation, language tuition, health and education. The Africa Centre Scotland hosted a conference in Edinburgh's Council Chambers on 19 January to facilitate a debate about the way the Act will be implemented here. The conference provided a forum for community groups, the statutory sector and refugees and asylum-seekers to come together to look at ways of challenging the Act.

Community groups felt a campaign should be organised to oppose the Act and the conference was seen as a starting point for this. Links need to be fostered between groups to enable them to mount a unified challenge. It was felt that black organisations have been excluded so far in the consultation process in Scotland and this needs to change. ■

For further information on this campaign or a report on the conference, please contact the Africa Centre Scotland, 45 Blackfriars Street, Edinburgh EH1. Tel 0131 557-4591.

# Ireland runs with the EU pack

### Patrick Gowan writes:

Dispersal, vouchers to replace cash provision, new aiding illegal entry laws. Sounds familiar. But this is Ireland, not the UK.

For Ireland 1999 proved to be an interesting year in the politics of immigration. In January, deportations were halted when sections of the 1935 Aliens Act were found to be unconstitutional. In order to restore a legal basis for deportations the ironically mistitled Immigration Bill 1999, which granted extensive powers to the Justice Minister, was pushed through the Irish parliament. This bill was subjected to considerable criticism by human rights groups in Ireland but passed into law in the autumn.

### The right to work

Following pressure from employers and the junior party in the coalition government a limited right to work was granted to those asylum-seekers who had been in the country for a year or more prior to 26 July and whose application for asylum had yet to be

processed. However, the limitation on this right to work soon became apparent. It required Irish employers to apply for a work permit on behalf of the asylum-seeker, to demonstrate that no suitable Irish applicants could be found, and to pay a fee (minimum £25) to have the permit processed. Not surprisingly, only a handful of asylum-seekers found employers willing to cross these bureaucratic hurdles.

In the last four months of 1999 the number of applications for asylum doubled to 1,000 per month. Despite the fact that this level was

very low in EU terms, the increase was met with considerable alarm in the Irish government. The Irish Justice Minister blamed the new right to work provisions for acting as a significant attraction. An Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Bill was made law, imposing stiff penalties for anyone aiding illegal entry, whether for humanitarian reasons or for profit.

### Accommodation crisis

Staffing shortages at the Refugee Application Centre in Dublin resulted in long queues and ended in a strike by beleaguered staff. An accommodation 'crisis' saw asylum-seekers sleeping in parks during cold November and December nights.

Fearing that the introduction of direct provision in the UK in April 2000 would further increase asylum applications in Ireland, the Justice Minister announced the introduction of similar measures in Ireland. These include a voucher system to replace cash welfare payments, the introduction of reception/detention centres, and the mandatory dispersal of asylum-seekers across Ireland despite there being inadequate services outside Dublin. A campaign of resistance to these measures was launched by the National Federation of Campaigns Against Racism in December with wide support from human rights groups and is likely to be the main focus for Irish activists in the coming months. ■

For further information ring ARC on 00 353 1 453 6700 x 4400.



# A LICENCE FOR REPRESSION

**Recent events in Germany confirm CARF's worst fears about Jack Straw's anti-terrorist measures**

On 19 December, Harald G, one of Germany's leading anti-racists and a close friend of CARF, was detained under terrorist laws after police raids in Berlin and Frankfurt. Police stormed the Mehringhof complex in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin where the asylum research project FFM, which Harald co-founded, and scores of other political projects are based.

Inside the Mehringhof's complex, a few dozen people, recovering from a late night party, awoke at 5.30am to find 1,000 police, including masked members of the notorious GSG-9 anti-terrorist police, storming the building. Simultaneously, special commandos, including masked officers equipped with machine guns, entered Harald's home, dragging him from his bed. Similar raids in Berlin and Frankfurt led to the arrest of the Mehringhof's caretaker Axel H and the activist Sabine BE. Two of the twenty people arrested in the Mehringhof raids have subsequently been deported to Belorussia and Bolivia.

## The evolution of criminal/terrorist laws

Unlike in the UK, where anti-terrorist laws were, until recently (see below) annually renewable in parliament, German anti-terrorist laws have gradually evolved out of an earlier law against criminal association contained in para 129 of the German criminal code. Also peculiar to the German situation has been the proscribing of political parties for ideology alone, as the FRG's written constitution drawn up after the war was meant to protect the new Germany from the perceived evils of communism and fascism. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (equivalent to the UK's MI5) has gained a reputation for monitoring the left. After the war, it was communists and pacifists who were criminalised –

even hounded from public office by a 1950 decree that made loyalty to the constitution a condition for public service employment.

The targeting of the Left was strengthened in 1976, when the Social Democrat government of Helmut Schmidt responded to the first Red Army Faction attacks by introducing amendments to



para 129 of the criminal code, first to extend the definition of criminal association to terrorist groups and later to extend it to allow for the prosecution of any perceived solidarity, verbal or active, with a criminal/terrorist association. Then, in 1986, the CDU's chancellor Kohl, seeking to crack down on anti-nuclear and environmental protests, further added to §129a by including dangerous acts against rail, boat and air traffic, destruction of important work materials and interference with public installations. The right to asylum was gradually undermined and finally taken out of the German constitution in 1993, and violations of

the Aliens Law and the asylum procedure were defined as criminal acts under a special anti-crime statute.

## Internment

So what danger did Harald and Axel pose to the German state? Harald was involved in the campaign to stop the criminalisation of German taxi-drivers under aiding illegal entry laws, and monitoring the trial of neo-Nazis arrested after the death of an asylum-seeker in Guben. Axel had been active in international solidarity work on central America. Now they find themselves, along with Sabine, in 'preventive detention' – a kind of internment (no opportunity for bail, solitary confinement and only one half-hour visit every two weeks) – accused, among other things, of providing a munitions base for a revolutionary cell, a bomb attack on a government asylum office in 1987 and seriously injuring a federal court judge and the former chief of the Foreigners Administration in Berlin in gun attacks. Despite tearing up floors and drilling holes in walls, the police who raided the Mehringhof found no arms cache. The sole evidence against Axel, Harald and Sabine is the testimony of a Berlin man, who turned state's evidence under State Witness Regulations which allowed lesser charges against those suspected of terrorism, if they denounce others. This law expired on 31 December 1999, just 12 days after the Berlin and Frankfurt raids.

## Silencing opposition

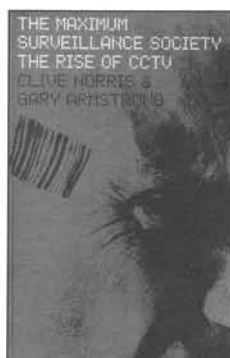
The three detainees could be in prison for a year while the public prosecutor examines the preliminary evidence against them. In the meantime, FFM's work has been badly hit, with all anti-racist projects put on hold. At the same time, as racial violence across Germany,





## REVIEWS

# WATCHING THE WATCHERS



This book addresses the rise in the use of CCTV as a crime prevention tool and the frightening reality behind it. The authors spent time in CCTV control rooms watching the watchers. As you would expect, camera operators disproportionately targeted young black men, and the police failed to attend crimes witnessed on monitors or even make arrests. Stereotyping was commonplace. Operators were heard to call *Big Issue* vendors '*Big Issue*

scum, homeless low-life and drug dealing scrotes'.

Once, the camera showed a police officer picking a fight with three black youths, telling them to 'fuck off to where you come from'. The fight resulted in two of the youths being arrested, as colleagues whisked the officer away. Operators failed to tell anyone about the existence of a recorded tape of the incident – which raises the question of accountability: to whom are the operators accountable?

The research shows that police use CCTV selectively, and not necessarily to fight crime. It explodes the myth behind the assumption that CCTV reduces crime. It doesn't. ■

*The maximum surveillance society: The rise of CCTV.* Clive Norris and Gary Armstrong, Berg, £14.99.

but particularly in Brandenburg, Berlin and Saxony, reaches intolerable levels, the state is suppressing anti-racist opposition. Groups providing victim support are being shut in favour of the official police-backed Brandenburg Against Intolerance Project. One Brandenburg victim support group suffered a similar experience to FFM's when the public prosecutor began investigations into a member's supposed anti-nuclear terrorist offences. As the case dragged on over two years, funding for Brandenburg Victims' Perspective was suspended. Its work suffered yet more when the accused man's home was raided and the organisation's files, notebooks and interviews with the victims of racism were confiscated. Meanwhile, in Passau, the Committee for a Critical Public has been formed after vague accusations of terrorism were made against 39 anti-fascists. On one suspect's file, commitment against apartheid and 'the fight against Shell' were listed as criminal activities which gave grounds for surveillance.

After months or years of investigation, and sometimes imprisonment, the majority of prosecutions under §129a end up being thrown out of court due to lack of evidence. Its real purpose seems to be the surveillance and immobilisation of left-wing organisations.

In 1998, Britain's first permanent anti-terror law was passed. The Criminal Justice (Terrorism and Conspiracy) Act broadens the scope of 'terrorism' too, to include action by animal and environmental and animal rights activists as well as refugees supporting liberation movements abroad. The German experience, whereby anti-terror law is used to stifle opposition on ideological grounds, could well be replicated in the UK unless opposition to Straw's anti-terrorist measures mounts. ■

### BUILD SOLIDARITY

A new website has been launched to keep supporters up to date and to link international campaigns. It has an English page: [www.freilassung.de](http://www.freilassung.de)

Messages of solidarity should be sent to: FFM im Mehringhof, Gneisenaustrasse 2a, D10961 Berlin. Tel: 00 49 30 6935670. Fax: 00 49 30 69508643. E-mail: [FFM@ipn.de](mailto:FFM@ipn.de)

Donations for the solidarity campaign and for the costs of the court case (money to be divided to assist all defendants equally) should be sent to bank account 61 00 24 26 at Berliner Sparkasse (Bankleitzahl 100 500 00). Please indicate that payments are for 'Freilassung'.



## ANGELA DAVIS AND THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

This CD is a lecture Angela Davis gave at Colorado College in 1997 on the *Prison Industrial Complex*. In tying

her personal history and involvement in political activism to the topic of prison systems, Angela Davis explains the role played by power apparatuses (eg, educational systems) and systems of repression (eg, prisons) in informing our image of 'the criminal'. Hence she uses the term 'Prison Industrial Complex', rather than 'Criminal Justice System', to point to the crucial link between the economic and the political realm that allows corporations to 'move across borders' in their 'perpetual search for more profit', while the underprivileged (eg, women, blacks, Hispanics, immigrants etc.) are forced to get involved in illegal markets which lead them straight into the Prison Industrial Complex.

Although Angela Davis is tackling prisons, she is really talking about the larger picture of globalisation and the impact it has on issues such as the criminalisation of 'the enemy'. One example is the use of detention prisons for so-called 'illegal immigrants' as institutions that, by their very presence, support 'anti-immigration rhetoric' as well as 'anti-crime and anti-welfare rhetoric'. In the end she admits that the only solution is an 'abolitionist strategy' of institutions that 'discipline and punish' rather than address the problems people really have. Angela finishes her lecture as she started, with a radical appeal to be 'critical' and thoughtful about the contribution we can make to 'make a difference'.

A great CD for anyone interested in Angela Davis, as well as themes like criminalisation and globalisation! ■

Available from AK Press, PO BOX 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE. E-mail: [ak@akedin.demon.co.uk](mailto:ak@akedin.demon.co.uk); Web: <http://www.akpress.org>

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

# CRITICAL REPORT CENSORED

A long awaited report on the UK by the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (CPT) has at last been published – but with four blank sections in it! This 1997 investigation looked at allegations of ill-treatment by police officers and has been censored by solicitors representing the Metropolitan police. Ironically the

CPT report criticises the lack of openness and transparency in cases against the police and the ensuing criminal and/or disciplinary proceedings, which, it states, raise 'serious questions about the independence and impartiality of the procedures presently used to process complaints about police misconduct'. ■

To obtain full report go to: [www.cpt.coe.int](http://www.cpt.coe.int)

## RACISM

**2 DEC** 21-year-old Simon Thornton and 20-year-old Mark Rust ordered to serve 240 hours community service for racially assaulting staff of Tandoori restaurant in Downham, Kent **5 DEC** Unnamed Kurdish refugee dies in London hospital after being beaten up at bus stop by two youths **11 DEC** Mal Hussein and Linda Livingstone, who have both been victims of continuous racist attacks, lodge proceedings against the government at the European Court of Human Rights **14 DEC** Police name 20-year-old Anthony Curtis, 19-year-old Rickton Henry, 19-year-old Patrick McDonagh and 18-year-old Richard Smith as the suspects in the murder of Fijian Ben Kamanalagi **20 DEC** 64-year-old David John Howell pleads guilty to sending racist hate mail to black people in Swansea... Black activist Delroy Lindo arrested by police after protecting his 15-year-old son from being beaten up by a racist **22 DEC** *Three men convicted for murder of black musician Michael Menson* **1 JAN** *Jason McGowan found hanged outside leisure centre in Telford, only six months after his uncle, 32-year-old Harold was found dead. Both men were victims of continuous racial harassment* **10 JAN** Relatives of 23-year-old Hassan Musa, a Libyan student, in a persistent vegetative state as a result of a racist attack in 1978, consider asking Attorney General to reopen case against the thugs, after Hassan dies over Christmas **16 JAN** The Bishop of Stepney, John Sentamu, adviser on the Lawrence Inquiry, reveals that he was stopped and searched by London police **18 JAN** *Two Leeds United players, 19-year-old Jonathan Woodgate and 22-year-old Lee Bowyer, arrested in connection with a serious assault in Leeds city centre, that left 19-year-old Safran Najeib with serious head injuries. Both have been released on bail* **24 JAN** Detectives appeal for public help to find writer of about 100 racist letters, who has been operating since 1993 and is thought to live in west London **26 JAN** Raphael Rowe, one of the M25 Three, is awarded undisclosed damages by the Prison Service for being beaten up at Wormwood Scrubs **27 JAN** 21-year-old Parthi Sankar and 20-year-old Bobby Singh attacked by gang of nine white youths in Glasgow **28 JAN** *West Mercia and Surrey police join forces to investigate suspicious deaths of Akofa Hodasi in 1998 and the McGowans in 1999*

## IMMIGRATION

**6 DEC** Shortage of housing undermines government's plan to disperse 6000 asylum-seekers a month; officials express fear that placing asylum-seekers in inappropriate areas might lead to racial tension... Local authorities lose powers to support asylum-seekers whose appeals are rejected **15 DEC** Following campaign by Norfolk's Refugee Support Group, councils stop sending asylum-seekers to certain hotels, after complaints of racial assaults, racism, and inadequate food and hygiene arrangements... High Court quashes home secretary Jack Straw's attempt to deport John Quaah, a Ghanaian asylum-seeker who is suing Group 4 and the Home Office after being acquitted of rioting and violent disorder in Campsfield detention centre **23 DEC** Backlog of applications for asylum-seekers awaiting a decision has reached 98,045, undermining Jack Straw's promise to deal with all applications within six months by April 2001... Almost 100 asylum-seekers are facing homelessness, following the rejection of their asylum appeal, which releases Islington Council of its responsibility to house them **3 JAN** Scottish Parliament appeals to Home Office to treat asylum-seekers with more dignity and considers not implementing the voucher system **24 JAN** Report by Save the Children and

Dundee university law department shows institutional racism against Scottish travellers **31 JAN** *Visitors from Indian sub-continent might face payment of £5,000 bond before entering UK*

## FASCISM

**3 DEC** Labour MP Andrew Dismore calls upon Jack Straw to prohibit marches by the National Front on Remembrance Sunday **7 DEC** Police investigate claim by neo-Nazi group, which associates itself with the White Wolves, that it planted two bombs in Cape Town, injuring more than 50 people, in retaliation for Nelson Mandela's support of the Lawrence family **9 DEC** Charity Commission freezes funds of St Michael Trust and St George's Educational Trust, following information that both charities are involved in running a secret fascist village in Spain **11 DEC** Police start High Court action to stop leaflet campaign by BNP that uses pictures and logos from Met anti-crime campaign **15 JAN** Germany issues international arrest warrant for German neo-Nazi Gernar Rudolf, who is hiding in Britain to escape prison sentence

## LAWRENCE INQUIRY

**21 DEC** Doreen and Neville Lawrence sue 42 Met officers, including Commissioner Condon, for failed investigation into their son's murder **7 JAN** Neville Lawrence lodges formal complaint against Scotland Yard after being stopped and questioned for twenty minutes about a street robbery in Paddington **9 JAN** Revealed that Neville Lawrence, when stopped, was driving car loaned to him by Met for security reasons **18 JAN** *Jack Straw argues that reduced use of stop-and-search, as a consequence of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, might be responsible for 19% increase in robberies* **28 JAN** Doreen and Neville Lawrence to sue Met for £500,000 in damages for way police treated them during failed investigation into racist killing of their son Stephen

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

**2 DEC** *Jack Straw widens definition of terrorism in new bill* **9 DEC** Commission for Racial Equality announces that it will launch formal inquiry into allegations of racism within the Crown Prosecution Service... Government study reveals that the number of reported racist incidents rose by 66% last year... Home Office publishes figures revealing that black people are six times more likely to be stopped and searched by police than white people **15 DEC** Report shows that young Asians are more likely than black or white youths to be searched for drugs by police **11 JAN** Report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary criticises Met for ineffectiveness in countering racial crime and investigating murders **14 JAN** Outgoing head of the Police Complaints Authority, Peter Moorhouse, criticises police for attempting to stop the disclosure of final reports into complaints made by the public... PCA reveals that deaths in police custody have fallen from 47 between April and December 1998 to 35 in the same period in 1999 **23 JAN** According to Home Office the British Crime Survey is being expanded to include police performance on racism **24 JAN** Government figures reveal that 81 black people have died in prison or police custody in England and Wales over the past four years **26 JAN** Director General of the Prison Service, Martin Narey, announces change of prison culture from 'hard labour' to educational work... *Jack Straw extends race relations bill to include indirect racism* **2 FEB** *Met police pay £55,000 damages to Kurdish refugees after an armed raid (in 1996) while they rehearsed a Harold Pinter play*

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