

carf56

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACISM & FASCISM • JUNE/JULY 2000 • 80p



REFUGEES
RACISM &
RESISTANCE
LESSONS FROM EUROPE

3 Behind closed doors: racism in prisons and detention centres

Following the racist murder of Zahid Mubarek at Feltham Young Offenders Institute, a public meeting in June looked at racism in prisons, detention centres and asylum hostels

4 Chinese communities organise against racism

Racist violence against workers in Chinese restaurants and take-aways is being tackled by the newly-formed Chinese Monitoring Group

RACISM · REFUGEES · RESISTANCE

5 Asylum, popular racism and the local elections

In the run-up to the May local elections the press offensive against asylum-seekers was unstoppable. What role did the press play in repackaging William Hague?

8 Lessons in resistance

A report from the Refugee Congress in Jena, Germany

CAMPAIGNS AND REPORTS

10 Deportation protests

Swiss refugee caravan; Germany's African refugees resist deportation 'identity parades'

11 Dispersal stories

In Ireland and Scotland dispersal has resulted in campaigns of welcome to counter residents' and press racism

12 Anti-voucher campaigns in Germany

13 Another racist murder in south Wales

Local press reports stirring up xenophobia may have contributed to the death of Santokh Singh Sandhu

14 African outrage at racist attacks in Dublin

Protests against a racist attack on a Nigerian asylum-seeker

Also: Frances Webber on the new race relations bill

15 Racist attacks round-up

Re-investigation of the racist attack on Quddus Ali

16 Diary of race and resistance

Campaign Against Racism and Fascism

BM Box 8784, London WC1N 3XX

Tel: 020 7837 1450 Fax: 0870 052 5899

E-mail: info@carf.demon.co.uk

Website: <http://www.carf.demon.co.uk/>

ISSN 09166-1050 · Printed by Russell Press (TU)

Cover images: (fist) The Voice Africa Forum; (small photos) Frank Miller/Irish Times, (bottom) North News

Defend the Angel Heights Seven

Jack Straw may yet have cause to regret his attack on asylum rights. The indignities of dispersal, vouchers and detention are providing the framework for an upsurge in refugee resistance. Refugee communities are mobilising to protect their compatriots from the desolation of detention centres and the racial violence of the streets. And as they do so, they are helping to set a new agenda for the anti-racist movement in Britain.

Jack Straw has borrowed from Europe in modelling his asylum policy; we must learn from European movements which have a longer experience of dispersal and detention, and have developed organic relationships with refugee communities and innovative direct action politics around asylum. CARF saw just how much the rest of Europe had to teach us, when its representative attended the Refugee Congress in Jena, east Germany, in April.

If anti-racists in the UK are to fashion comparable resistance movements, there is no better place to start than by taking up the case of the seven asylum-seekers arrested after protesting at prison-style conditions at Newcastle's Angel Heights. Over the past six months or so, around 200 single young men, mainly Iraqi Kurds, have been dispersed by Kent County Council to this privately run hostel in Newcastle, where they have persistently complained about poor food and unacceptable conditions. Their protests led to the arrest of seven men at the hostel on 10 May, on charges of violent disorder. After the hostel's management refused to allow the men back in, Kent County Council labelled them 'intentionally homeless' and refused to rehouse them. Without an address for bail, they languished in Durham jail and Castington young offenders institution for three weeks, until a threat of High Court proceedings forced the Council to rehouse the seven, who were released on bail on 2 June.

But solidarity with the Angel Heights Seven does not stop with the campaign to end the vindictive prosecution and eviction. The Federation of Iraqi Refugees has warned that, with Europe harmonising asylum policies, Britain may be set to follow Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark in declaring northern Iraq safe for Kurds, despite repeated military incursions by Turkey and Iran and a climate of fear and instability. Could the dispersal of Iraqi Kurds to Newcastle be a prelude to their deportation to northern Iraq? Campaigning is needed on all the fronts – domestic, European and international – thrown up by refugees' struggles. ■

Further information from: Federation of Iraqi Refugees, PO Box 30042, London SE1 2EY; Federation of Iranian Refugees, E-mail: IFIRuk@yahoo.com; North East Campaign for Asylum Rights, PO Box 787, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE99 1DJ



behind closed doors

Racism in prisons and detention centres

While the existence of institutional racism may have been accepted theoretically by the authorities in the criminal justice system, those individuals who choose to stand up to daily racism, in either prisons, detention centres or asylum hostels do so at the risk of even more serious maltreatment. That was the picture which emerged at a public meeting organised by the National Civil Rights Movement in London on 1 June.

Civil rights lawyer Gareth Peirce spoke of the unquantifiable, everyday nature of racism within prisons, where, on every issue – whether it be privacy, visiting hours, religious practice, clothing regulations – black prisoners, refugees or anyone perceived as different, receive lesser treatment. Most of this daily racism is just endured. Those who fight it – such as Satpal Ram and Biba Sarkaria, both of whom are too brave and too honest to do otherwise – find that their time in prison is made that much worse. Satpal, who was not only put in prison because of racism but is also being kept in prison because of racism, has been moved over fifty times between different prisons as a result of his protests.



Zahid Mubarek (top) and Satpal Ram – victims of prison racism

'The situation at Angel Heights is not unique. Go and see London Park Hostel in Elephant and Castle. 400–500 asylum seekers are just dumped there. It is like a concentration camp. Go to Birmingham, Manchester, Coventry or Sheffield – the same situation applies. The political establishment has taken away the basic human rights of a whole section of society.'

Fariborz Poya, Federation of Iranian Refugees

Biba has for years campaigned for Asian women's rights from inside prisons and has been singled out and segregated by the authorities as a result. Perhaps the greatest frustration for many prisoners is that there is no effective way of making your voice heard within the system.

Daniel Machover, who represents a number of the prisoners at Wormwood Scrubs prison where allegations of serious racist brutality came to light last year, spoke of further investigations at Wandsworth, Belmarsh and Portland Young Offenders Institute.

Imran Khan spoke of black people dying in prisons with an unnerving regularity and the failure to investigate these cases seriously. He called for a public inquiry into racism in prisons and detention centres, hoping that the death of Zahid Mubarek (see updates, right) could, at least, serve as a catalyst for change in the same way that Stephen Lawrence's had.

Private prisons for the innocent

Hussein Kasujja, an asylum-seeker from Uganda, described his appalling treatment in detention. In 1998 he was asked to attend an immigration interview at Heathrow Airport, from where he was then taken in a Group 4 van to Harmonds-

worth detention centre and later to Tinsley House, near Gatwick. During the seventeen months in which he was detained he was refused bail applications and given no explanation as to why he was being held. As he became – understandably – increasingly frustrated, he was diagnosed as mentally ill by a psychiatrist and prescribed high dosages of anti-depressants. Luckily he found outside support. Many others, though, are not so lucky and an entire wing at Rochester detention centre is currently being used to house asylum-seekers diagnosed with mental health problems.

Government's dispersal disgrace

The same lack of respect for basic rights is common to those in prisons, detention centres and asylum hostels. Speakers from the Iraqi and Iranian Federations of Refugees spoke of conditions at Angel Heights hostel in Newcastle. Asylum-seekers who have been dispersed there from Kent are unable to register with a GP, meet with legal representatives or have interpreters. Food and clothing are inadequate. They are forbidden from using a swimming pool next to the hostel during normal hours and are made to attend at specially allocated times. Within the hostel, the management enter rooms at any time and confiscate possessions. As with those in prisons, protest against these conditions is a risky business, leading, in the case of the Angel Heights Seven, to arrest (see p2). ■

■ updates

Zahid Mubarek

On 23 March 2000, 19-year-old Zahid Mubarek was the victim of a racist attack in his cell at Feltham Young Offenders Institute, just 12 hours before he was due to be released. The attack left Zahid with massive head injuries and he died five days later in hospital. He had been convicted of a minor shoplifting offence. His cellmate, 19-year-old Robert Joseph Stewart, was later charged with his murder. Martin Narey, director general of the Prison Service, issued an immediate apology to Zahid's family for failing in his duty to protect their son.

Family campaign can be contacted through TMG, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx. UB2 5AA. Tel: 020 8843 2333 Fax: 020 8813 9734

Alton Manning campaign

The family of Alton Manning is celebrating a victory after the High Court ruled that the Crown Prosecution Service decision not to prosecute the officers involved in his death was flawed and must be reconsidered. Alton died during a strip search after prison officers at Blakenhurst private prison used 'control and restraint' techniques. He was restrained by eight officers after he refused to squat naked for an intimate inspection. Alton's body was found to be covered in cuts and bruises. Witnesses gave evidence that he was held in a dangerous neck-lock. In March 1998, an inquest jury recorded a verdict of unlawful killing, with the coroner recommending that the director of public prosecutions, David Calvert-Smith, prosecute the officers. Claiming 'there was no realistic prospect' of obtaining convictions, he had refused.

United Families and Friends Campaign, c/o Inquest, Ground Floor, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2PJ.

NACRO exposes prison racism

In a survey of 1000 inmates by NACRO, one in ten Asian prisoners had been victims of racial attacks. Few felt that it was worth reporting these to the prison authorities. As one white prisoner put it: 'The screws are racist bastards – especially to the Asians.' ■

Race and prisons: a snapshot survey, NACRO, 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU.

chinese communities organise against racism

As reported attacks against Chinese communities increase, a new monitoring group has been established to tackle routine harassment and police stereotyping

Like many other Chinese families in the UK the Cs, who live in a northern town, run a small take-away shop. The family, with three young daughters, live above the shop which is also their livelihood. And, in common with other Chinese restaurant and take-away workers around the UK, they are used to hassle from customers, often spilling over into racist abuse. In September last year three white men came to the take-away drunkenly shouting racist abuse at Mr C, who refused to serve them. They turned violent and started smashing up furniture, waking the young girls upstairs. Then they climbed over the counter, forcing the C family to barricade themselves behind the kitchen door. As the three men were shaking the door, Mr C got a pan of hot oil and warned the attackers not to enter, but they persisted. As the lock on the door broke, Mr C poured the oil over them and they left. Although the police had been called at the first sign of trouble, they only appeared about twenty minutes later. With the family's

help, the police were able to chase after the attackers and question them. But it was Mr C who was himself arrested and charged with grievous bodily harm with intent. The attackers were not arrested, or even breathalysed.

The experience of the C family is repeated around the country. Activists from the recently established Chinese Monitoring Group are dealing with over thirty cases of workplace attacks in the last year. In all but two of these cases, the police have done nothing to deal with the attackers. The experiences of families who run take-aways are often the worst. Trouble starts with gangs of youths throwing stones or eggs and shouting racist abuse. Threats of violence are made. The police tell the family that nothing can be done and that they should just 'log any incidents'. Eventually things escalate to the point where the family are physically attacked and are forced to defend themselves. Guess who then ends up getting arrested.

Crude stereotypes

Jabez Lam, a project worker at the Chinese Monitoring Group, believes that the police hold deeply entrenched stereotypes.

'When we ask for assistance and report incidents, their response is based on the stereotype that the Chinese are quiet and keep themselves to themselves so it is better not to bother them. But when we are attacked and we defend ourselves then another stereotype kicks in: we are all kung-fu fighting Triads.' Stereotypes such as this came into play in an incident at the New Diamond restaurant in Soho, London, last December. Eight white men who came into the rest-

aurant were refused service because they were rowdy and breaking things. Mr Poon, the manager, was kicked to the floor and racially abused. The other waiters tried to intervene and one, Fu Yon Lam, suffered a severed tendon in his hand. By the time the police arrived, two of the waiters were already on their way to hospital. The remaining three waiters were arrested there and then while other officers were dispatched to the hospital to arrest the two who had been injured. The waiters were held for 21 hours and were to face charges of grievous bodily harm, before a massive protest from the community dissuaded the police. Meanwhile, the white gang visited the police by appointment to give statements, but have still not been charged. According to Jabez Lam, the fact that the gang were themselves seen as victims by the police, even though they initiated the attack and outnumbered the waiters, shows the level of prejudice involved. To make the charges on the waiters stick, the police had to argue that, at one point, a single slightly-built Chinese waiter was able to beat up five white men.

History repeated

Ironically an almost identical incident occurred at the New Diamond restaurant in 1987, with the police making the same one-sided arrests. That case resulted in waiters facing four years imprisonment, a sentence which was only reduced after the community mounted a support campaign. At that time the police claimed that they had learnt from the incident and promised it would not be repeated. A special unit was later established at Charing Cross police station to 'liaise' with the Chinese community.

But Jabez Lam remains unconvinced. 'What exactly is the lesson the police have learnt? How to arrest more skilfully? We have asked the police's Chinese liaison unit what exactly their brief is but so far they have not come up with anything. They say that their brief is very wide-ranging. From what I understand the unit was initially set up specifically to deal with Triads.' At one meeting with the police which Lam attended, a chief inspector said, 'I remember the good old days when you wouldn't bother the police with incidents like these, you would just ask the kitchens to get the chopper out and sort it out yourself.' But, as Lam says, 'When we decide to "sort it out" as you put it, you arrest us.'

Impatient for change

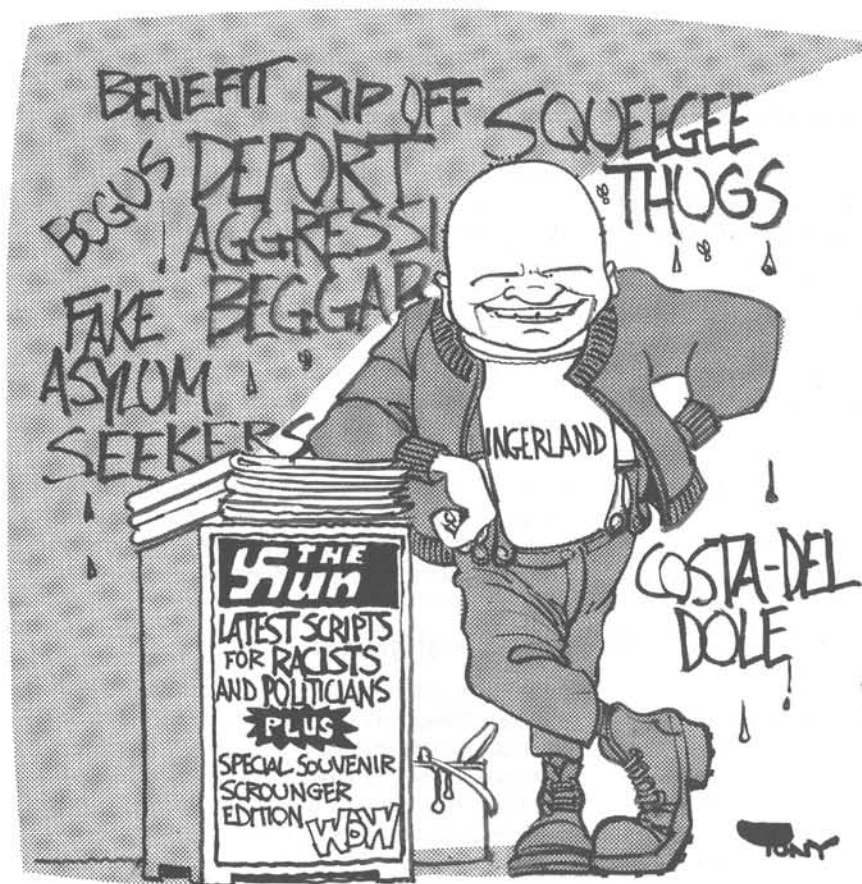
Nowadays the Chinese community is more organised than in 1987. Now, in the post-Macpherson climate, Chinese communities are demanding that the lessons from the Lawrence Inquiry be extended to all communities affected by racism, including the less obvious and less well-known problem of racial violence against the Chinese. ■

Chinese Monitoring Group, c/o 19 Whitcombe Street, London WC2 or c/o TMG, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx. UB2 5AA. Tel: 0800 374618



Double trouble

The New Diamond restaurant was attacked in 1987 and again in 1999. In both cases, Chinese waiters were arrested for defending themselves against racist gangs.



asylum, POPULAR racism, AND THE LOCAL elections

racism • refugees • resistance

Anti-racism has been largely an urban tradition, associated with towns and cities with settled black communities. But as William Hague, backed by the Tory press, targets seashores and shires, the need to address racism there is more urgent than ever.

The return of Powellism

It was on 15 March that the editor of the *Sun* gave 'timid' William a dressing-down for the Tories' failure to launch a massive campaign 'against beggars and fake asylum seekers'. The *Sun* implored Hague, far too nervous about being 'branded jingoistic, nationalistic or racist', to speak out on the 'real issues that engage voters'.

Hague: the new Enoch Powell

Two months later, the *Sun*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Mail* had transformed drooping William into 'resilient' Hague, the 'uncomplaining man from Yorkshire taking on the whole new establishment'. Central to Hague's transformation into the people's champion against ungrateful asylum-seekers was the way in which the press hyped up interest for a speech Hague was due to make at the Social Market Foundation on 18 April – the text of which was handed over to the press at least a week beforehand, leading to a flurry of ecstatically supportive editorials and comment pieces. So that even before Hague spoke to recommend the detention of all new asylum-seekers in secure units and the formation of a special removals agency to get rid of rejected asylum-seekers, an editorial in the *Daily Telegraph* welcomed the most important speech of Hague's political career, praising him for a text which 'radiates a sense of determination and purpose' and the *Daily Mail* noted that at last Hague was 'at one with ordinary people's concerns'. The next day the *Sun's* editor patted Hague on the back for 'getting it dead right' – hardly surprising given that Hague had learnt his words by rote from the *Sun*.

Targeting seashores and shires

Even before the *Sun's* dressing-down of Hague, the Tory leader had been rallying the Conservative rank and file around asylum, organising a 'crisis summit' of Tory council leaders in September 1999 on asylum and claiming that in Westminster there were more asylum-seekers dependent on social security than old people in nursing homes. But after the *Sun's* rebuke, Hague upped the ante. In April, he visited Kent and Rochester, urging Conservative councillors to give the asylum issue a central place in the May local elections. In a speech in London in support of Tory mayoral candidate Norris, Hague warned that asylum-seekers were costing taxpayers £180 million a year – equivalent to the cost of 5,000 new Metropolitan police officers. His message, Tory focus groups announced smugly, would play well

in shires and seaside constituencies.

Indeed of the 3,337 seats on 152 English councils contested in the May local elections, half were in shire districts, where the Tories put up their strongest showing. Of 13 councils and around 600 council seats won, Eastbourne, Southend-on-Sea, Torbay and Great Yarmouth were amongst the Tories' seaside gains, Stratford-on-Avon, West Oxfordshire, Reigate and Banstead its more leafy suburbs and shires. Hague paid Torbay two visits during a campaign which drew succour from constant rumours that around two or three hundred asylum-seekers were to be housed in local bed and breakfast hostels and empty nursing homes. On May Day, Hague made a flying visit to Southend-on-Sea, announcing that the Essex seaside town, which has 2,000 refugees (many unofficially dispersed from London boroughs) had already taken too many. Tory councillors who describe Southend as a 'dumping ground' for asylum-seekers, celebrated its 11-seat majority as a 'vindication of its hard line on asylum-seekers'.

The challenge to Macpherson

Hague's demonising of asylum-seekers was not just a populist attempt to play the race card at the May local elections. Hague's populism is ongoing, as was demonstrated by his championing of jailed Norfolk farmer Tony Martin (again at the *Sun's* instigation) in a campaign which feeds on rural anti-Gypsy racism. With Hague appearing to have

few convictions and still fewer policies, his advisers are searching for the 'big idea' capable of challenging Labour at the next general election. And the conceptual framework from which to launch this big idea is provided courtesy of the right-wing press. Race and immigration, *Daily Telegraph* columnist Janet Daley predicts, will be just such a big idea. For while Thatcher demolished the post-war liberal consensus on economics, 'It may be the business of this generation's Conservatives to attack the Left-liberal consensus on society'.

In fact, Hague's big idea is just the reworking of two aspects of the Conservative racist tradition into one strand: into Powellism is plaited

the anti-anti-racism of the Thatcherite period. And if *Daily Telegraph* columnist Clifford Longley is right, Hague hopes to add a third dimension of Christian conservatism, modelled on the right-wing fundamentalism of the American republican movement. Longley reported on the Tory leader's warm reception at an Evangelical youth festival in Somerset in April. He predicts that Hague (who has a close adviser in Conservative shadow minister Gary Streeter, chair of the Conservative Christian Fellowship) will soon

flesh out a vision of a 'Conservative Judaeo-Christian tradition' of family values to be pitched against the 'politically correct secularism and moral relativism of Labour'. But Hague's 'big idea' needs to pit itself against another 'big idea'. And this is provided by Labour's apparent willingness to define Britain as riddled by 'institutionalised racism'. To accept this view of society, the right wing argues, is to be unpatriotic to Britain.

Ever since the Macpherson inquiry acknowledged institutionalised racism, the right-wing press has been campaigning to undermine reform. Now Tory tribunes have jumped on board the press battleship, as witnessed by Anne Widdecombe's hysterical outbursts and Hague's speech to the Police Federation urging police officers to rebel against 'politically correct race awareness courses' in favour of spending more time fighting crime. So much has the press led in this that the Tories increasingly resemble not an opposition party but the parliamentary wing of the *Sun*.

The asylum battleground

Yet the fight to dismantle Macpherson-inspired reform is, in a post-Stephen Lawrence climate, riddled with contradictions: even the right-wing press does not want to be seen to be attacking the integrated black middle class. So the surer battleground from which the right wing can launch its fight, in the true Powellite tradition, is that of race, asylum and immigration. Following TGWU leader Bill Morris' attack on Labour policy on asylum, the UNHCR's intervention on the asylum debate, and the Liberal Democrats' call to the CRE to investigate Labour and Tories for encouraging racism, Tory press hounds have been unleashed on the refugee 'race relations industry' to hunt down those organisations that threaten freedom of speech with the 'bogus language of anti-racism' and which are 'rapidly becoming one of the greatest threats to British liberties'.

Refugee pawns

The pawns in today's right-wing anti-anti racist offensive are not so much black Britishers and their organisations but asylum-seekers and groups that back them. The fact that many asylum-seekers are eastern European provides the press with the smokescreen it needs to unleash its unbridled xenophobic racism. How can we be racist, asks the *Sun*, when most asylum-seekers are white? Newspapers focus constantly on asylum scroungers, ranging from the 71 Kosovan refugees returning home from Leeds Bradford airport (who 'one year ago turned up in rags and left yesterday in designer gear like models on a catwalk in a fashion show') to the immigrants who 'rip off millions in benefits' (like the Albanian asylum-seeker that a *News of the World* undercover reporter enticed to exchange vouchers for cash), to the ungrateful asylum-seekers at Angel Heights, Newcastle, who dared to protest against the accommodation and services all provided courtesy of the generous British taxpayer. But behind these ungrateful asylum-seekers (for, as 'every Romanian Gypsy knows' Britain 'is a land of subsidised milk' and 'handout-honey') lies a 'multiculturalist priesthood', made up of the UNHCR, Refugee Council, BBC, CRE, the 'more inflammable bishops', Blair's peers, judges who are making 'Britain the Costa Del Dole for bogus refugees' and an 'entire industry of left wing lawyers'. And of course the only dissenter, the only man capable of standing up for ordinary people is yes, you've

Perhaps the tabloid journalists who attacked the 'cheeky asylum-seekers' who dared to protest at conditions at Angel Heights Newcastle in May should be forced to eat their daily diet.

North News



The *Daily Star* labelled the protesters ungrateful 'scroungers' audacious enough to protest at their FREE food and board and lodging. The *Sun*, never a paper to concern itself with factual accuracy, reported that inside Angel Heights asylum-seekers were well provided for with loads of cash, computers, TVs and free sports facilities.

guessed it, that honest Yorkshireman William Hague. A modern St George out to slay the asylum dragon.

Linking the issues

Yet behind these refugee pawns, behind the asylum issue, is the right-wing press' determination to win the wider fight against Macpherson and to ensure that any remaining liberal tendencies within government are extinguished altogether. One way in which the press attempts to link asylum to Macpherson is by comparing Labour's 'generosity' (if only!) towards asylum-seekers with its parsimony towards pensioners. And Hague, who in a speech in May in London described pensioners as the 'unwanted, unwelcome and uncool guests at New Labour's banquet', is again taking his script from the tabloids when he speaks up for the 'OAPs that get less than refugees'. But how can the press make that link? In April, the press attempted it by alleging that the chair of the Labour parliamentary party Clive Soley – or was it Peter Mandelson (the papers couldn't make up their minds) – had recommended to Millbank that Labour abandon any attempts to woo the grey vote on the grounds that pensioners were far too racist to vote Labour, leading the *Daily Mail's* Paul Johnson to condemn 'Labour's appalling insult to a generation of heroes' and to *Sun* 'Fury as Labour claim old folk are racist'.

Lessons for Labour

For anti-racists, this demonisation of Labour as anti-racist and pro-asylum leaves an ironic taste, given that there is no major difference between the political parties on asylum, and given that it has been Labour's introduction of detention, dispersal and vouchers that has led to the current racist onslaught against refugees. Yet it is also profoundly depressing that Labour has failed to imbibe the lessons of that first period of Powellism and continues to play the numbers game, seemingly oblivious to its consequences.

Each time the Tories play the numbers game, Labour responds with numbers of its own. Labour is providing the right-wing press with even more ammunition to fire at asylum-seekers. When, on 11 April, a spokesperson for Tony Blair said that 'If you take Kosovo out of the equation, then, on the latest evidence, around 70 to 80 per cent of asylum-seekers' cases are not genuine', the *Sun* could say: 'The majority ARE bogus – the Prime Minister has said as much'. For Labour to sing the same tune as the Tories is also futile, as the right-wing press is out to bring Labour down on asylum, come what may. Thus, on 26 April, Straw's office stage-managed a photocall for the home secretary in Dover to publicise his tough stance against truck drivers who bring in illegal immigrants. But the photocall backfired spectacularly, with the *Daily Telegraph* reporting sarcastically that 'Home Secretary Jack Straw yesterday welcomed a gipsy asylum seeker to Britain with a handshake' and the *Daily Star* mocking Straw under the headline 'Hello Mr. Sponger – Need any benefits'.

By abandoning all principle on asylum in favour of sucking up to the right-wing press, Labour has abandoned Britain's most vulnerable constituency to the forces of racism. More people in Labour's heartlands must, like the TGWU's Bill Morris, stand up and be counted. ■

So much has the press led in denying the existence of institutional racism that the Tories increasingly resemble not an opposition party but the parliamentary wing of the *Sun*



Richie Andrew

Protest outside the *Daily Mail* and *Evening Standard* offices in April

Lawyers fight media harassment of asylum-seekers

A new grouping of radical lawyers and journalists intends to confront press harassment and xenophobic coverage of asylum-seekers.

The group was formed after a media campaign of harassment of the Kinewa family who are seeking asylum from Algeria. In April the family were forced to stay indoors and the children were prevented from going to school for two weeks. There was jubilation when lawyer Stephanie Harrison obtained an undertaking from the *Daily Mail* preventing it from contacting the family or from publishing anything about them unless it had been vetted by the paper's lawyers and could be proved true. The celebration proved premature when the *Mirror* published a story that the asylum-seeker concerned was a terrorist – and the judge refused an injunction because the *Mirror's* source was the Algerian embassy!

Shortly after this incident, *Daily Mail* journalists began turning up at asylum appeals in Taylor House, opposite Sadlers' Wells theatre in London. After another lawyer confronted a reporter and got him excluded from her client's asylum appeal, he returned the following day with a cameraman and pursued her instead.

The lawyers intend to campaign for a change in the rules which would allow adjudicators hearing asylum appeals to impose reporting restrictions, and would allow journalists who breached restrictions to be prosecuted for contempt of court. At present, magistrates have these powers but they do not extend to asylum appeals. They also intend to work with journalists and with organisations such as Presswise (which presses for more protection against media intrusion, and trains refugee and community groups in how to handle the media), to counter media lies about asylum-seekers and to campaign for more regulation to prevent media harassment and racist coverage.

Law, Asylum and Media group, c/o 2 Garden Court, Temple, London EC4Y 9BL, tel 020 7415 6265

Background reading on the press and the Macpherson report:
'Stumbling on: race, class and England' by Arun Kundnani in *Race & Class*, April–June 2000)

Lessons in resistance

The recent Refugee Congress at Jena was one of the most significant milestones in European anti-racism. CARF's delegate reports

Whereas during the 1970s and 1980s the British black and anti-racist movements provided perspectives which were emulated in the rest of Europe, today the roles are reversed. Now that the most pressing anti-racist issues involve asylum refusal, deportation, incarceration, dispersal and social exclusion, we in the UK have everything to learn from Europe. Not only have countries like Germany had a much longer history of asylum-seeking on a large scale, but organisations run by refugees are at the forefront of the anti-racist movement, setting the pace for an imaginative programme of direct action politics around asylum.

Major players in the European resistance movements on asylum gathered at Jena, east Germany in April for eight days of serious discussion and creative debate on how to unite against deportations. Co-ordinated by the African Voice, a six-year-old African asylum-seeker organisation, the meeting brought together over 400 delegates from a range of organisations from all over Europe working on human rights, refugees, domestic work, medical aid, cultural expression, state surveillance and pro-democracy. Indian Peoples' Movements representatives could exchange views with Mexican border documentation campaigners; Tamil women discuss with Filipino migrant workers; Moroccans, Nigerians and Ecuadorians compare notes.

The Congress was the first big mobilisation by the Caravan for the Rights of Refugees and Migrants which, in 1998, led huge demonstrations of migrants, undocumented workers and asylum-seekers through 44 German cities (see CARF 51). It was also the third European meeting of the Sans Papiers network which is active in Belgium and France. What emerged from the Congress is that the European experience for asylum-seekers and undocumented workers is becoming uniform. As Europe has harmonised racist and rigid immigration rules, Fortress Europe has become a repressive and threatening reality for everyone who looks foreign, for everyone who does not carry an EU passport. And across Europe the image of the 'criminal refugee/foreigner' contributes to a public consensus in favour of a ruthless state racism which involves social exclusion, detention and deportation.

Restricting movement | Dispersal of asylum-seekers in Britain has just begun. Germany is a step ahead. Hundreds of would-be participants just could not get to the Congress, because they only had the right to remain in their particular state in Germany. To have travelled to Jena would have been a criminal act. Some were even threatened with deportation if they attended. In response to the obvious restriction this German residence law places on refugees' ability to organise collectively, groups were formed to plan strategies to

abolish the law. Protests will peak in October on the commemoration day of German reunification. And to put solidarity into immediate practice, international delegations took the initiative and visited asylum hostels and detention centres in other regions of Germany.

Awaiting deportation | In Bavaria the delegation visited Ansbach, a former US military base which accommodates asylum-seekers from all over the world. Most of them are at the end of the asylum process, waiting while the German authorities obtain travel documents so as to deport them. In the meantime these refugees have no documents – not even the usual temporary identity papers – and are rendered illegal the minute they leave their hostel. The local police lurk outside or at the bus stop, knowing that anyone they question will have no valid papers and can be arrested. Police have even patrolled within the hostel and have penalised refugees (who hold nothing but deportation orders) even if they stay in their assigned rooms. It is a life in limbo. 'Not only is our humanity denied', one refugee told us, 'but our right to exist.' As the delegation got ready to leave, it was approached by four refugee women. 'Will you come to the bus-stop with us? We need to get to the doctor's.' In Ansbach just going to the doctor means risking arrest and imprisonment.

Isolation | 'Tambach-Dietharz welcomes all its visitors' reads the sign outside this smallish village not far from Weimar in east Germany. What is does not say is that you are only welcome if you are not a foreigner. The hostel's location is completely isolated – we had to drive up a number of hairpin bends and then through a big forest before we finally arrived outside a huge complex. As I took in the rundown buildings surrounded by barbed wire and security men guarding the entrance, I could not help thinking of the concentration camps.

Those at Tambach-Dietharz hostel who need shopping or to see a doctor have to walk for 1½ hours to reach the village. If they want to meet friends or contact a lawyer, they have to find the expensive fares to the nearest city out of their monthly allowance of £26. Refugees told us about malnutrition, horrible living conditions, their fears for the children because of the sharp barbed wire. 'By law even dogs in Germany have to live in a larger area than we do,' burst out one resident. 'There is nothing to do, just sleeping, eating and sleeping, that's all,' intoned another.

Project X | In Lower Saxony, a government trial project inflicts yet further indignities. Here Project X exists, not to detain deportees, but to psychologically break those whose country of origin is not known. For without a passport no one can be deported. And the final act of





resistance by a refused asylum-seeker is to withhold his or her identity. Detainees can be held indefinitely at Project X; the only routine consists of interrogation about who they are, where they came from. Eventually everyone is deported, to any country, even if it is not their own, as long as the papers are 'valid'.

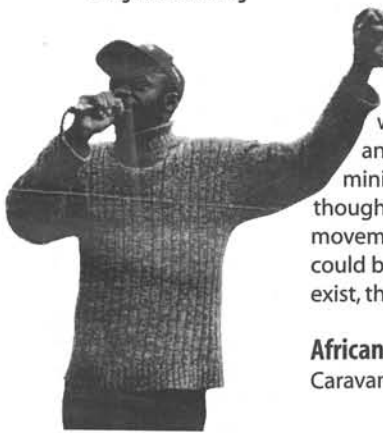
It was reported at the Congress that even African embassies are being dragged into this sullied deportation process. Diplomats are encouraged to take part in identity parades where they finger people to the German authorities as their nationals. (see page 10)

Perspectives of resistance Europe, especially Germany, might provide dark intimations of what could happen here, but the powerful networks against state racism built by grassroots organisations and refugee groups provide stunning examples of how effective resistance can be.

Italy mass street protest Giuliano from the Italian movement Ya Basta! (That's enough) linked to centres in Turin, Naples and Florence, gave a moving speech to the Congress about how mass protests closed via Corelli, one of the most horrendous detention camps in Milan (see CARF 55). A civil resistance campaign of opposition to detention centres was built in Italy. Imagine 20,000 people on the streets of London telling Jack Straw what they thought of his dispersal policy! Well it was 20,000 people who took to the streets in Italy, occupied an ancient Milanese monument and forced interior minister Bianco to capitulate. But, warned Giuliano, though one-off direct action is impressive, the movement has to stay vigilant. 'Another via Corelli could be just around the corner. But as long as we exist, they will never be strong enough to stop us.'

Africans organise Action in Germany since the 1998 Caravan has been varied and inventive. In Hamburg it is

Mahmood Bengura speaking up for African refugees in Hamburg



Africans and their supporters who are at the forefront of struggles. 'African refugees have been victimised more than any other group of refugees', explained Mahmood Bengura. 'In the asylum system in Hamburg it is unbelievable the way the authorities break the law at every turn. We fought against their interviewing under-age young people, their keeping people in container ships. We told them that they could not hold people in such conditions. And, then, they went and created yet worse problems for us.'

Against airline deportations

One of the most imaginative campaigns in Germany was launched by the No one is Illegal group against Lufthansa. This resistance campaign, known as deportation.class, has published its own newspaper and held a series of demonstrations at German airports (see <http://www.deportation-alliance.com>). Recently the group printed its own leaflets which looked identical to Lufthansa's own, inviting people to fly 'deportation class' at cheaper rates. Following the distribution of these bogus leaflets in travel agencies, Lufthansa was forced to explain itself publicly. Similar activities against national airlines which are used for deportation have been mounted in Holland against KLM, in France against Air France and in Belgium against Sabena.



Border camps Campaigners have also been stepping up their activities in Europe's border areas where asylum-seekers and migrants are hunted down and detained in the worst of conditions. Since 1998 two border campaigns have been held on the German-Polish-Czech border and three more camps are planned for the Austrian-Hungarian, German-Danish and Polish-Ukrainian borders this summer. So far these have been organised by German, Dutch, French and Italian activists. Isn't it time we thought of a British equivalent?

Bringing Jena home The Refugee Congress gave us an idea of what a future framework of organised resistance in Britain could look like. The Caravan helped German anti-racist groups and refugees and migrants from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America to come together for a common cause and shape effective political action. While we already have grass-roots campaigns and strong co-ordinating bodies, we need broader political debates about different, more effective forms of resistance. We have to find a way to catch up with Europe, strengthen the network of resistance here, broaden anti-racist politics, build deeper links with refugee communities – we have to find a way of bringing the momentum of Jena to Britain. ■

CARF and the National Civil Rights Movement are hoping to help build a resistance movement around refugee issues in the UK. If you are interested in supporting such a movement or being on a mailing list please contact CARF.

■ **The Voice Africa Forum**, Schillergäßchen 5, 07745 Jena, Germany. Tel.: 0049 (0) 3641 423795 <http://www.humanrights.de>, THE_VOICE_Jena@gmx.de

■ **Kein Mensch ist illegal**, c/o Forschungsgesellschaft, Flucht und Migration, Gneisenaustr. 2a, 10961 Berlin. Tel.: 0049 (0) 172 8910825. Fax: 0049 (0) 6181 184892. <http://www.contrast.org/borders/kein>

■ **International website for exchange and information on deportation campaigns** <http://www.deportation-alliance.com>

■ **Lufthansa campaign**: If you would like to receive material about the campaign, please contact: AG Für Freies Fluten, Metzgerstr. 8, 63450 Hanau. Fax: 0049 (0) 06181/184892. AG3F@OLN.comlink.apc.org

■ **Noborder network** <http://www.contrast.org/borders/camp>

■ **Coalition Against Project X** can be contacted at: Initiative für Offene Grenzen, Kaiserstrasse 24, 26122 Oldenburg. Tel.: 0049 (0) 441 248175. Fax: 0049 (0) 441 2489661

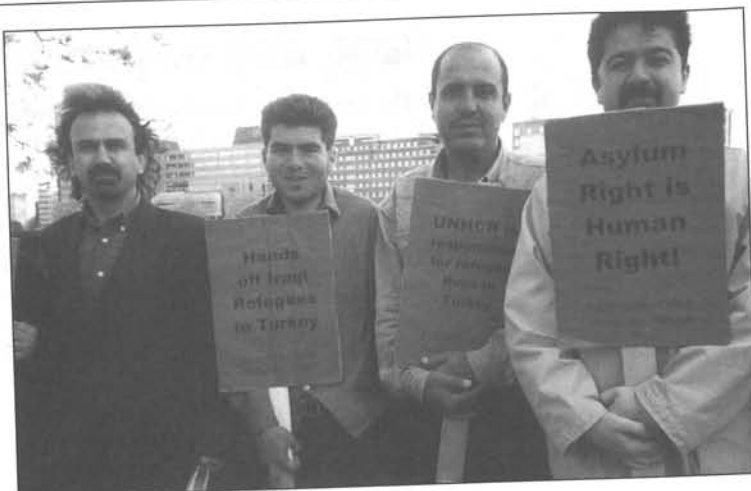


NORTHERN IRAQ IS NOT SAFE

Swiss refugee caravan formed

Amidst rumours that the Swiss Federal Office for Asylum-Seekers (BFF) is negotiating with the ruling Kurdish parties in northern Iraq for the return of rejected Kurdish and Iraqi asylum-seekers, a caravan for the rights of refugees has formed in Switzerland. Around 50 asylum-seekers, mobilised by the International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, will start a week-long protest march on 10 June. Travelling from Zurich, equipped with tents and a mobile kitchen, the asylum-seekers plan to arrive in Bern, via Lucerne, on 16 June where they will hold a final protest outside the BFF's headquarters. ■

AG Internationalismus, Postfach 7611, 3001 Bern. email: info@asyl.ch



The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees staged protests outside UNHCR offices throughout Europe on 25 May to protest at its policy towards Iraqi asylum-seekers who face destitution, daily police harassment and deportation in Turkey. Many desperate Iraqis flee their homeland through Turkey and then apply to the UNHCR for family reunification with family members in western Europe. But the UNHCR has now stopped processing any new applications and refuses to negotiate with the Council of Iraqi Refugees in Turkey to address refugee grievances. ■

International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, PO Box 7926, London SE1 2ZG

HAMBURG/SIERRA LEONE

Africans resist deportations

The ill-fated western-imposed peace agreement in Sierra Leone was on the brink of collapse. But for the Hamburg foreigners' department, it was deportations as usual.

In August, the Caravan for the Rights of Refugees will be holding a massive protest outside west African embassies in Bonn, to call on African states not to collude in deportations. The aim is to draw attention to Hamburg's willing participation in the EU's global migration management plan, whereby

Europe forces African states to take back rejected asylum-seekers on pain of losing both economic aid (the EU's £7 billion aid budget is the world's largest) and diplomatic representation.

Hamburg's foreigners' department has, for some time, been trying to deport African refugees, who arrived in Germany in the early 1990s at a high point of political instability in west Africa. But as most have no passports or travel documents, the department has sought to enlist African diplomats in the process of establishing nationality by inviting officials from the countries refugees have fled from to attend mass identification parades. Refugees who refuse to attend are issued with fines that they cannot possibly pay; those who do attend, and are identified, are deported.

Since November 1999 African refugees

have taken to the streets to expose this practice. But anger exploded in March when the foreigners' department instructed 213 asylum-seekers to attend an identification parade in front of officials from Sierra Leone. Unbelievably, Hamburg refused to provide a safe haven for refugees from a war which has displaced an estimated 3 million people, forced half a million into exile and left tens of thousands dead or mutilated. There was particular outrage as many of Hamburg's African refugees were former child soldiers who had escaped after forced recruitment by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). For four days, a non-stop picket was mounted outside the foreigners' department, and lawyers advocated a mass boycott of proceedings. Eventually, the interviews were abandoned, but not before the foreigners' department had threatened legal action and the use of force against those who refused to attend them in future.

Since then events in Sierra Leone have led to a temporary halt in deportations there. But what, ask campaigners, has happened to the many Sierra Leoneans and others that Hamburg has already deported to Ghana and the Gambia – countries which have become the dumping grounds for African refugees from Europe, no matter where they really come from. Meanwhile, Togolese refugees are the latest group to be targeted for deportations; they were called up for mass interviews in May. ■

Caravan Group Hamburg,
c/o Refugee Council, Hein-Köllisch-Platz 12,
20359 Hamburg.
Tel: 00 40 43 15 87. Fax: 00 40 430 44 90

Conni Günther



Ireland and dispersal

Ireland's introduction of dispersal and reduced cash payments has led to a disastrous xenophobic backlash against asylum-seekers. But Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) and the Anti-Racist Campaign (ARC) are finding that dispersal is mobilising new constituencies in the fight for asylum rights.

Many residents' committees – most notably at Rosslare in Wexford – have formed to oppose the dispersal of asylum-seekers to their area. The Immigration Control Platform, led by Clonakilty teacher Aine Ni Chonaill, is distributing leaflets linking asylum-seekers to AIDS and disease. In Clogheen, Co. Tipperary, a hotel where 40 asylum-seekers were due to be dispersed was set on fire hours before a public meeting between local residents and the Directorate for Asylum Support Services. And in

Ballsbridge, a middle-class area of Dublin, a residents' association has launched a High Court action to prevent a new reception centre for asylum-seekers being built.

But there are encouraging signs too – with anti-racism breaking out from the confines of Dublin and embracing rural Ireland. Clonakilty Friends of Asylum-Seekers says that the Immigration Control Platform does not represent local feeling, and several support groups have been set up in areas like Westport and Galway where, for the first time

campaigns & reports

ever, asylum-seekers were invited to join the annual St Patrick's Day parade. The trades union movement is being drawn in too, with social security officers refusing to administer a system of reduced payments which they say is discriminatory, and the shop workers' union MANDATE warning that shop workers will oppose any attempts to introduce vouchers. ■

AFA, PO Box 3355, Dublin 7
ARC, c/o 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2

Glasgow welcome

Refugees, trade unionists and community organisations got together in May to launch the Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees, which aims to counter the hostility against asylum-seekers engendered by a hysterical press. The trouble started in March, when members of sixteen Romanian Gypsy families 'dispersed' from London were found begging in Glasgow. The incident received saturation coverage in the English and Scottish press, with the *Glasgow Daily Record* giving the story front-page billing on two consecutive days.

The first day's story – of cheats and scroungers making straight for middle-class areas of Glasgow to engage in a spot of door-to-door aggressive begging – was accompanied by a rabid 'comment' piece of right-wing propaganda, warning of 'floods of illegal immigrants pouring over the English channel undetected', receiving £150-per-week handouts 'within hours of arriving' and getting involved in 'almost nightly street battles', 'harassing people for cash' and forming intimidating 'squeegee gangs'. Decent Scots folk, said to be living on a fraction of what the ungrateful Gypsies were milking from the system, were quoted as being 'livid'. By the following day, the *Record's* story had resulted in the Gypsies being sent back to London. On that day, considerations of 'balance' led to a piece on the persecution the Romanies were fleeing, underneath the gleeful story of the Gypsies being 'kicked out of Scotland', and an editorial on how important it was to welcome refugees, in which the rabid racist rant of the previous day gave way to hypocritical homilies on the need for tolerance.

The incident and the virulent press response to it provoked predictable outrage and led to a BNP leafleting campaign in the run-down areas where dispersed asylum-seekers are being accommodated. The leaflets enlarged on the *Record's* theme of putting 'our own people' first.

The campaign, initiated by those involved with refugee support through the Scottish Refugee Council and other groups, has tried to set the record straight. Its leaflet, headed 'Don't believe the tabloid lies!' providing factual rebuttals of each of the tabloid myths, has been widely circulated in Glasgow. And despite the fact that the city council has not, as yet, taken a stand in its favour, the campaign, backed by the Scottish TUC, is attracting much local support. And over 200 people attended a public meeting organised in May by the voluntary group, Positive Action in Housing, which looked at the poor housing being provided for dispersed asylum-seekers. ■





DISPERSAL ■ A EUROPEAN ACCOUNT

Vouchers: learning from Germany

Campaigners against the degrading voucher system for asylum-seekers' support, institutionalised by the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, can learn from the German experiments in practical solidarity, which have involved exchanging vouchers for cash.

Sodexo Pass International, the company awarded the contract to operate the British voucher system, has been operating similar schemes in Germany for over two years. The vouchers are not transferable and must be signed by the customer at the check-out. They can be used only in conjunction with a customer card, which operates like an identity card for the asylum-seeker, complete with photograph. A campaign by the Iranian community in Hannover revealed the hardship and indignity caused by the introduction of the voucher system there. 'When I was ill I sent my son to Lidl to buy milk', said one refugee. 'I gave him my

identity card and the voucher, which I had already signed. When my son came to the check-out to pay for the milk the cashier shouted 'No way!' and returned the voucher. My son tried to explain that I was ill and that I could not come to buy the milk myself, but she still refused to accept the voucher.'

Solidarity groups such as Hannover's Aktionsbündnis gegen Wertgutscheine (Combined action against the voucher system) and other groups elsewhere set up exchange bureaux which gave asylum-seekers money for their vouchers. The exchange schemes got round the non-transferability

of the vouchers by enlisting the support of those shops where the vouchers were to be used. They persuaded the shops to buy the vouchers from the exchange bureaux. The shops then returned the vouchers to Sodexo for their cash refund. One such initiative, in Hildesheim, was given a Democracy award at a ceremony in the lower house of the German parliament in December 1999.

In Britain, there was outrage at the government's instruction to shops in March to keep the change from asylum-seekers' vouchers – an instruction described by Sodexo as a 'revenue-making opportunity' for the participating shops. A number of charity shops like Oxfam, Barnados, Shelter and Marie Curie have refused to participate. TGWU general secretary Bill Morris received a standing ovation at a black workers' conference in April when he called for 'the toughest campaign the union could muster to stop the degrading, divisive and stigmatising' scheme.

An exchange voucher scheme along the lines of the German initiative would be a way of showing solidarity and an important exercise in using popular initiatives to subvert the system. It would require the charity shops to rethink their principled opposition to participation – but does provide an imaginative alternative to boycott. Something to think about? ■

Aktionsbündnis gegen Wertgutscheine,
c/o PF2005, 30020 Hannover
tel 0049 (0) 511 210 88 87, fax 511 69 25 38



On 20 May, a memorial stone was dedicated for the ten refugees who perished four years ago in an arson attack on the Hafen Street refugee hostel in Lübeck. Echos needs international support for its campaign to get the investigation into four white German suspects reopened. A model letter urging the District Attorney's Office in Schleswig to reopen the case can be obtained from CARF or by emailing echos@sireconnect.de

Another racist murder in south Wales

South Wales police figures released in February showed an increase of over 300 per cent in racially motivated crimes reported over the last two years. The police say that the rising figures are explained by increased confidence in the police and a greater willingness to report crime rather than an actual increase in racist activity. But could it also be because of increased local fascist activity and the current anti-asylum-seeker xenophobia?

Recent local newspaper reports have stirred up fears about the 5,000 asylum-seekers, to be dispersed in Wales from the beginning of April. The assistant chief constable, David Francis, warned of 'tensions between groups'. Can it be these tensions that led to the death of Santokh Singh Sandhu, who, on a night out with friends on 15 April, was viciously murdered in Port Talbot? 42-year-old Santokh, also known as Peter Singh, who had lived in Port Talbot for 30 years, was out with a friend, Bob McQuaide. They were heading for The Red Lion, a bar/restaurant near the town's police station, when they were attacked by two white men. Both

men were beaten and Santokh later died from his injuries. Santokh was a married man with three children under 14. Police have charged 57-year-old William Morgan with his murder. ■

South Wales police disciplined

Also in south Wales, five police officers, two inspectors, a sergeant and two constables, were disciplined after a complaint by two black students, Marcus Walters and Francisco Borg, who were arrested after a racist gang attack by skinheads in Cardiff (see CARF 44). The PCA investigation found no racial motivation on the part of the officers. ■



Marcus Walters and Francisco Borg were attacked in Cardiff's City Road in August 1997

Racism in south Wales

- **FEBRUARY 2000** 64-year-old Swansea man found guilty of two-and-a-half year campaign of writing racist letters.
- Three Turkish men injured in racist attack outside pub in Newport.
- **SEPTEMBER 1999** Driver of coach full of Swansea football fans found in possession of racist literature.
- **MAY 1998** Police reveal that BNP and KKK are targeting deprived areas of Wales for recruits
- **APRIL 1998** SW police and CPS decide not to prosecute BNP for distributing racist leaflets in Manselton, Swansea.
- **FEBRUARY 1998** 16-year-old white boy James Tossell dies after arson

- attack at black friend's house where he is staying, after abuse and attack by a white gang believed to be after the black occupant of the house.
- **AUGUST 1997** Two black men racially attacked by 8 skinheads in Cardiff and then charged by south Wales police with violent disorder and assaulting police.
- **DECEMBER 1994** 60-year-old shopkeeper Mohan Kullar beaten to death with a brick in Neath, south Wales. 22-year-old Grant Watkins sentenced to life for murder, Stephen May, eight years for manslaughter in October 1995, Ian Thomas got three and a half years for violent disorder. ■



Mohan Kullar

Special offer for CARF readers

Where the Dance Is, tales on migration by A. Sivanandan
Published by Arcadia. Offer Price £9.00 (Normal price £10.99).

ISBN 1 900850 19 2. Send payment with order to: CARF, BM Box 8784, London WC1N 3XX.

campaigns & reports

updates

Another racist murder

Asian shopkeeper Kombra Divakaren died of head injuries on 21 May, two days after being viciously attacked by a gang of white youths attempting to steal a football from his shop in Queensway, London.

The attack is being treated as racially motivated after it was revealed that Kombra had been the victim of regular racial abuse from a gang of white youths, aged 13-16 and including both boys and girls, who used to harass him in his shop.

Under suspicion

In May Detective Chief Inspector Robin Scott was removed from operational duties, alongside ten other police officers under investigation by the PCA for the bungled investigation into the murder of Michael Menson.

Michael Menson Family Campaign, The Monitoring Group, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA. Tel: 020 8843 2333

Poor investigation, again

In April West Mercia police were forced to defend their investigation into the death of Errol McGowan after a C4 documentary criticised the lack of forensic examination of the crime scene. The family campaign are holding a march in July to commemorate the first anniversary of Errol's death.

Saturday 1 July: rally and march; assemble 11.30am Telford Town Park (near Telford town centre rail and coach stations)

Justice for Errol and Jason McGowan, The Monitoring Group, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA. Tel: 020 8843 2333

National day of protest

On 13 May the Justice for Ricky Reel Campaign held pickets outside police stations all over the country. Outside New Scotland Yard over 100 protestors demanded a new police investigation into his death. ■

Justice for Ricky Reel, The Monitoring Group, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA. Tel: 020 8843 2333

African outrage at racist attacks in Dublin

Patrick Guerin of
ARC writes:

Following a vicious attack on a 16-year-old Nigerian asylum-seeker in April, some 70 African protesters took to the city-centre streets in Dublin. The victim, Paul Abayomi, was struck on the head from behind and needed five stitches over his right eye. The spontaneous demonstration by members of Dublin's African community was the first of its kind in Ireland. The protesters voiced their anger at the increasing levels of racist abuse and attack in Dublin. During the protest,

from Dublin's O'Connell Street, a number of protesters remonstrated with

members of the Irish police at the lack of official interest in dealing with such incidents.

Over the past twelve months Dublin has witnessed a series of racist incidents in which pregnant women have been spat at and assaulted, African-owned shops have been fired at and cars belonging to African asylum-seekers damaged. With most asylum-seekers living in the inner city, tensions have at times emerged with members of the local community. As in other EU cities, underprivileged communities have been misled into seeing asylum-seekers as new competitors for already scarce resources and blaming them. A climate of fear and hostility has been created by some Irish politicians, including government ministers, and sections of the Irish media. Asylum-seekers are continually described as bogus

even before their applications have been processed and have been accused of being spongers on the Irish state. In the view of anti-racist campaigners in Ireland the rise in the level of racial tensions is a direct result of the Irish government's promotion of anti-immigrant legislation and a policy of mass deportation. ■

ARC, c/o 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2, Eire

Frank Miller/Irish Times



Frank Miller/Irish Times



comment



Frances Webber,
leading immigration
lawyer

UK

The last frontier: immigration controls and racism

Why does a minister who wants to be remembered for his anti-racism keep on giving aid and comfort to racists? In the Race Relations Amendment Bill currently going through Parliament, home secretary Jack Straw is once again trying to face both ways at once. On the one hand, the Act allows immigrants and asylum-seekers to appeal against immigration decisions, and to obtain damages from a county court, if such decisions have discriminated on grounds of race or colour. On the other hand, immigration officers will be authorised to discriminate on grounds of 'nationality, ethnic or national origin' in carrying out their functions under the Immigration and Nationality Acts.

In the Lords, Lord Bassam of Brighton sought to justify the provision by talking about the need

to stop 'scams' operated by Chinese nationals masquerading as Malaysian or Singaporean Chinese, which, he claimed, made it acceptable for immigration officers to check every Chinese-looking person.

The question puzzling us lawyers who act for immigrants and asylum-seekers is this: how on earth are we going to prove unlawful race discrimination on the part of an immigration officer, if it is not unlawful for an immigration officer to discriminate against someone on the grounds of their 'perceived ethnic origin'? It is ironic that a law brought in to counter institutional racism ends up – so far as immigration is concerned at least – by rationalising and further institutionalising it. ■

UK

Whose national security?

In a decision that dismayed anti-racists and refugee groups, the Court of Appeal in May upheld home secretary Jack Straw's right to deport Muslim cleric Shafiq ur

Rehman on 'national security' grounds. Rehman, who claimed he had been targeted for deportation after he rebuffed MI5 demands that he inform on his congregation, was accused of promoting terrorism against India by fundraising and recruiting rebels for fighting in Kashmir. He said the support he provided was for building schools and hospitals, but his lawyers also argued that whatever he did had nothing to do with Britain's national security. The Special Appeals Commission, before whom he appeared last year, agreed, but the Court of Appeal has upheld Jack Straw's view that 'the promotion of terrorism against any state is capable of being a threat to our own national security'.

The ruling is very bad news for refugees in exile in Britain and for solidarity groups. Coupled with the broad new definition of terrorism in legislation going through parliament, it seems designed to prevent any campaigning or solidarity action against repressive regimes from which they have fled, giving the green light to deportation of politically active refugees and criminalisation of solidarity campaigns. ■

racist attacks

'I've tried to have hope but I'm slowly losing it. They did arrest these boys who attacked me but how come they did not get prosecuted? It would have been different if I had been white. I could have had justice the following day.'

Quddus Ali

LONDON

Quddus Ali new investigation

In May, the Racial and Violent Crimes Task force announced it was to re-investigate the racist attack on Quddus Ali on 8 September 1993, which left him in a coma for four months. 17-year-old Quddus was racially attacked on his way to a local video store by a gang of seven men and a woman in Tower Hamlets, east London.

Nine Bengali youths were charged with riot after a peaceful vigil outside the hospital where Quddus was on a life support machine. And the Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign was launched.

At the time of the attack, the BNP was campaigning in the area, and in September of the same year Derek Beackon was elected as a BNP councillor for Millwall ward.

LONDON

Unprovoked racist attack



As CARF goes to press, Tewodros Afework, a 29-year-old Eritrean man, is still in a coma with serious head and facial injuries after a vicious unprovoked racist attack on Easter Sunday night. Tewodros, also known as Teddy, was attacked on 23 April by a white man near Sainsburys on Kentish Town Road, London. A six-foot tall white man shouted out racial abuse before punching and kicking Teddy to the ground. Teddy's head is said to have swelled to twice its normal size.

Teddy's family is unhappy about the way the police are investigating the attack, which is being treated as attempted murder. They are appealing for witnesses to come forward and for the Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force to be involved in the investigation. The family has also criticised the police failure to take pictures of Teddy's injuries until a week after the attack, and their lack of urgency in obtaining vital CCTV footage. ■

Family campaign can be contacted through TMG, 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx., UB2 5AA. Tel: 020 8843 2333 Fax: 020 8813 9734 E-mail: info@ncrm.org.uk

And finally...

Recently, a train driver on a late night train from the south coast to London was heard to make the following announcement at five-minute intervals during a 20-minute delay: 'I'm sorry we're delayed ladies and gentlemen, and please remember that asylum rights are human rights, and that protection from persecution is vital!' NICE ONE MATE! ■

OBITUARY

Bernie Grant 1944-2000

Scottish pipers, African dancers, Guyanese poets, cabinet ministers, ambassadors, community workers, Labour activists, babes in arms and matriarchs in sombre Sunday best – 3,000 mostly black people packed Alexandra Palace on 18 April to say farewell to Bernie Grant, MP, who died on 8 April after a long illness.

For Stafford Scott of Broadwater Farm's Youth Association he was 'the unofficial minister for black people', for Nelson Mandela and Jesse Jackson, who were among hundreds of dignitaries to send tributes, he was a statesman of stature. The man vilified by the press some 20 years ago for his 'police got a bloody good hiding' remark was being widely acknowledged as a great parliamentarian.

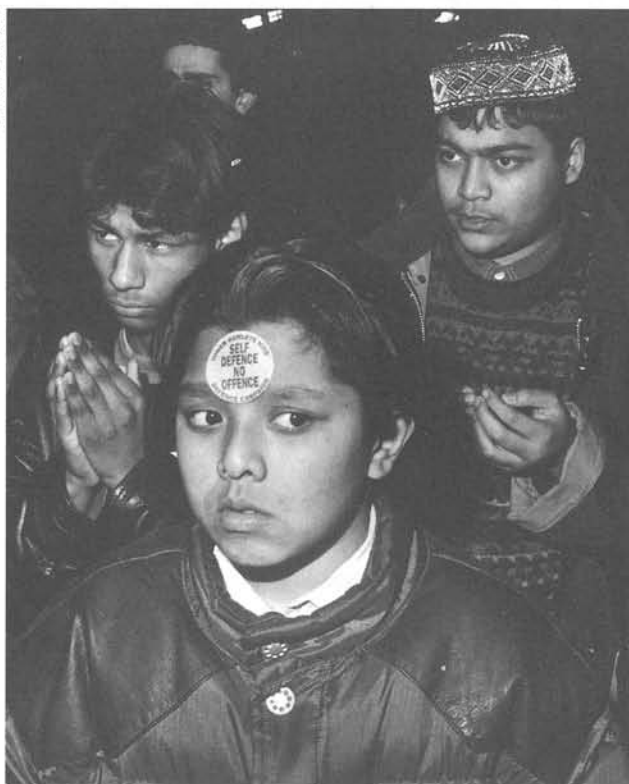


Not since the Black Day of Action in 1981 has London witnessed such a huge and emotionally charged black event. It was a celebration of the life of an immigrant postal worker who earned the right to represent his constituents, of a working-class man who had kept the faith, of a black internationalist politics which remained constant over 30 years.

Not since the Black Day of Action in 1981 has London witnessed such a huge and emotionally charged black event

No wonder the whole body of mourners rose to its feet to cheer Dennis Skinner's denunciation of Hague's policy on asylum-seekers. CARF is proud to claim Bernie Grant, a stalwart in the 1970s of the Haringey Labour Movement Against Racism and Fascism, as one of its founding fathers. ■

Darren Jakobsen



Self-defence is no offence

Protesters take to the streets in support of the Tower Hamlets Nine, September 1993

In December 1993, 21-year-old John Rutter was charged with the attempted murder of Quddus. He was acquitted of all charges in January 1995. It was not until June 1994 that Quddus was able to go home.

Now 23, he is permanently brain damaged. He is still paying the price for being black. ■

diary of race and resistance

APRIL-MAY 2000

racist violence

8 APR Two Asian men attacked in Leicester city centre as they stand at stall promoting Islam; one suffers a broken jaw

15 APR Three Turkish sailors on shore leave in Plymouth racially abused and attacked at Yates Wine Lodge ■ **42-year-old Santokh Singh Sandhu dies after being racially assaulted by two white men in Port Talbot, Wales**

17 APR 57-year-old William Morgan charged with the murder of Santokh Sandhu

18 APR 20-year-old Mark Oliver jailed for eight months after racially abusing and poking Tarlochan Singh in the eye in July 1999 in Clifton, Nottingham ■ An Asian man stabbed after remonstrating with three white men for racially abusing two black cyclists in Leicester city centre

23 APR **24-year-old Eritrean, Tewodros Afework, left in coma after being beaten unconscious in racist attack on Kentish Town Road, north London**

27 APR 22-year-old Neil Burke sentenced to 100 hours community service and ordered to pay £500 compensation to an Asian after attack in Falkirk, Scotland

8 MAY Pupils from Roundhay school football team, Leeds, attacked by racist gang while playing match; one player suffers head injuries

9 MAY Black schoolboy racially abused and attacked in his room at Adams' Grammar (boarding) school, Newport, Shropshire by gang of eight white youths who daub walls with racist slogans

16 MAY Scotland Yard figures show dramatic rise in reported race crimes, with 23,346 incidents in London in the year to April 2000 compared with 23,049 incidents in the whole of the UK in the year to April 1999

22 MAY Chris Cotter appears in court charged with fabricating claims of racist gang attack (on himself) in March; Surjit Claire and Craig Wynn also face charges of conspiracy to commit GBH, after police say the men intended to sell their story to the newspapers

30 MAY Two men freed after court rules insufficient evidence to convict them of assaulting 42-year-old Tamara Mhura at a bus stop in Edinburgh in February, despite two 'eye-witnesses' statements identifying them

immigration

14 APR Barnardos, Shelter and Marie Curie charities join Oxfam, Save the Children and the Scottish TUC in boycott of asylum voucher scheme

16 APR Government seeks alternative word to 'bogus' to use in relation to asylum-seekers

17 APR Jack Straw rules that it is 'broadly safe' for 3,000 Kosovar Albanian refugees to

be returned after their 12-month permits end on 25 June

18 APR Conservative leader William Hague announces wish to detain all asylum-seekers until decisions on their stay are made

■ Armed police called after Halic Ciftci, a Turkish asylum-seeker, threatens to kill himself during an appeal against his deportation in Islington, London

20 APR Mori poll finds public concern over immigration and race relations at highest point for 20 years

25 APR Home Office figures show increase in March of people applying for asylum, and rise in number of applications processed, with 81 per cent refused

27 APR Shadow home secretary Anne Widdecombe targeted in custard pie attack by Campsfield High Command of the Biotic Baking Brigade for her comments about asylum-seekers

1 MAY Government encourages entry of skilled foreign workers into UK to reduce skills shortage in IT industry

8 MAY 32 asylum-seekers from the hijacked Afghan plane appeal against deportation orders

10 MAY **Seven asylum-seekers arrested in Newcastle after protests at Angel Heights hostel about living conditions** ■ Government announces plans for new detention centres at Manston, Kent and Thurleigh, Bedfordshire and extensions to existing centres at Harmondsworth near Heathrow, Lindholme, Yorkshire and Aldington, Kent

11 MAY **Two Iranian asylum-seekers, protesting against deportation orders in Rochester prison, taken to hospital after 30 days on hunger strike**

23 MAY Government backtracks again over £10,000 bond plans for visitors from Indian subcontinent and instead announces six-month trial from October with bonds of £3,000 for visitors from Philippines and Morocco

24 MAY **Government wins appeal against Special Immigration Appeals Commission decision that Shafiq Rehman was no threat to national security; Shafiq now faces possible deportation**

29 MAY **Audit Commission report warns that dispersal programme of asylum-seekers is close to collapse, with many local authorities unprepared to help new arrivals**

post-Lawrence policing

25 APR Gloucester police announce Operation Napkin a success after making just one arrest in month-long dining out operation in Indian and Chinese restaurants to catch people racially abusing staff

2 MAY Ram Lal Jhumat faces charges of assault after defending his daughter Karuna from racial attack in January 1999 in Yardley, Birmingham

4 MAY Bradford police launch new initiative to get people to 'grass' on-line

8 MAY Express reveals that report on the PCA by management consultants KPMG recommends that civilian investigators investigate police

criminal justice system

23 APR Leaked Home Office report reveals that less than 10 per cent of prison staff have received training to tackle racism despite targets to complete all such training by 2000

3 MAY Four black men launch case for £1 million compensation against home secretary for failing to protect them, after suffering racial abuse over three months while on remand at Swansea prison for charges that were later dropped

5 MAY Police handling of hate crimes in Bradford to be examined by community panel

9 MAY **Report by NACRO reveals three attacks a day on black prisoners** ■ European Court of Human Rights rules that 40-year-old Kuldip Sander did not receive fair trial on charges of fraud at Birmingham crown court in 1995 because jurors made racist comments

12 MAY Family of 42-year-old Jay Abatan, murdered in 1998 after an argument over a taxi in Brighton, unhappy about police investigation, launch campaign to find his killers after two men are cleared of all charges

17 MAY Jack Straw announces review of how complaints against the police are investigated

27 MAY PCA report reveals that CS spray, used at close range, can cause serious injuries

30 MAY Lord Chancellor unveils plans to give all magistrates racism awareness training

fascism

13 APR John Haycock 'wins' seat on Bromyard and Winslow parish council for BNP after only 16 candidates stand for 18 seats

15 APR **Newcastle Evening Chronicle** reveals that Rodney Aitken, frontman of fascist band Warhammer, works as a bouncer in Newcastle nightclubs despite having convictions for violent behaviour

18 APR Jack Straw bans planned NF march in Worcester on St George's Day

23 APR 40 NF members march through Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

3 MAY BNP spokesman Phil Edwards accuses Conservative party of 'pinching our campaign on asylum-seekers'

subscribe

Please return to CARF,
BM Box 8784,
London WC1N 3XX

*All cheques payable to CARF

- ☐ I wish to receive copies of CARF each issue to sell.
- ☐ I wish to subscribe to CARF for one year starting with issue No 57 and enclose £7.50 (individuals)/£12 (institutions).*
- ☐ We wish to become a CARF supporting organisation and enclose £70 for one year's subscription of 10 copies per issue.*
- ☐ I wish to become a CARF supporter and make a regular donation to CARF. Please send me a banker's order form.
- ☐ I enclose £..... donation to CARF.*

Name

Address