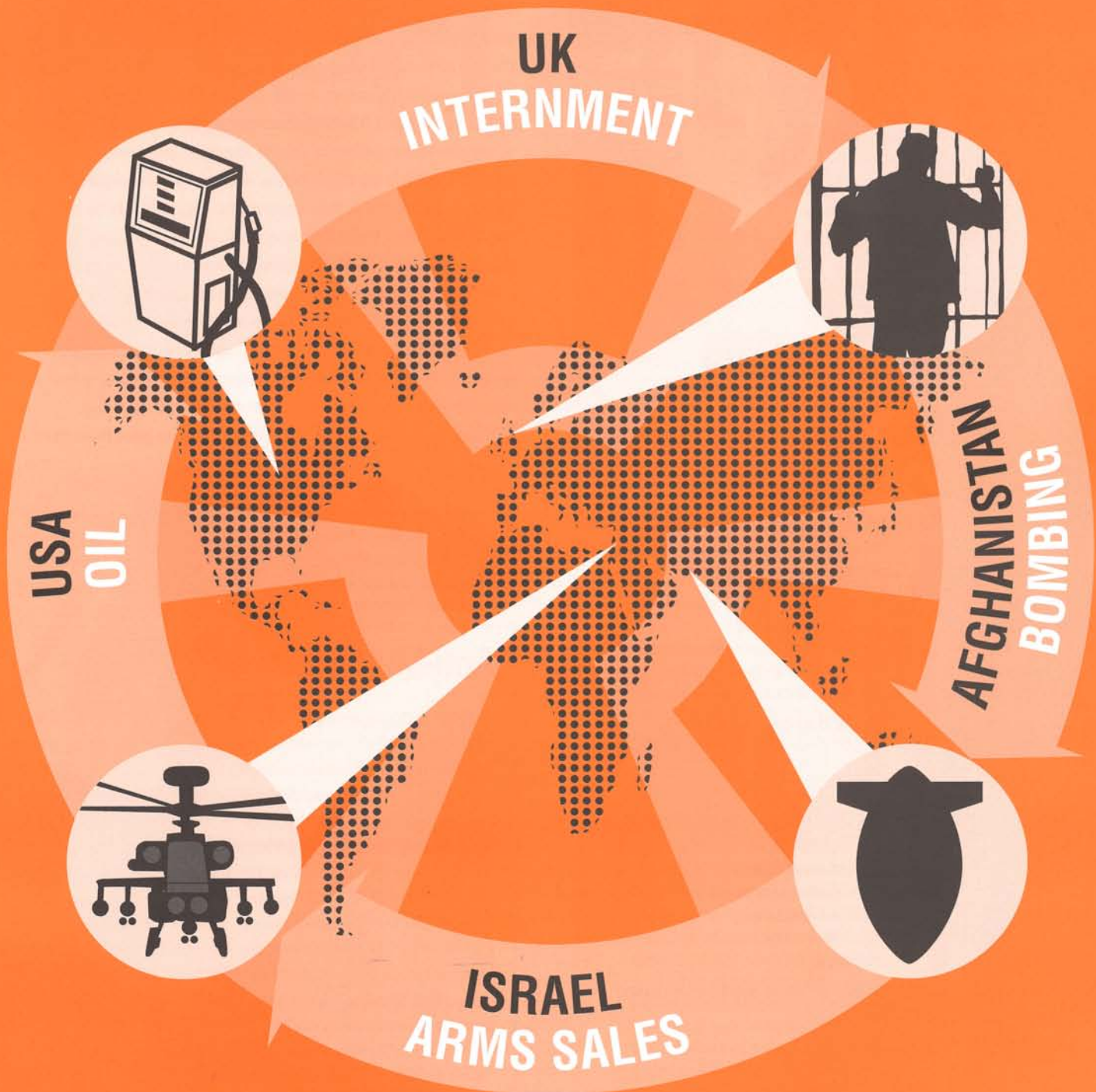


carf65

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IN THE NAME OF SECURITY

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editorial

What are the challenges thrown up by September 11 and the so-called 'War Against Terrorism'? In the short term, there is the pressing need to fight the racism that the war has engendered, in terms both of racial violence and the demonisation of Muslims and asylum seekers as the enemy within. The anti-terrorist legislation, which brings back internment without trial, institutionalises xeno-racism against foreigners suspected of terrorism.

Paradoxically, though, the response of the US and its allies to the tragedy of September 11 has given us the opportunity to develop a more inclusive and relevant Left invigorated by an anti-racism informed by international perspectives. And that is why we are devoting much of this special issue of CARF to the issues thrown up by the war and how we can best respond.

The war in Afghanistan, and the spotlight it has shone on Israeli state terror against the Palestinians, have left the West uniquely vulnerable to accusations of double standards and humbug about democracy. This is the right time, as Neil Sammonds poignantly argues, to renew the debate about British responsibility for injustice in the Middle East, principally in Iraq and Palestine. But, closer to home, the veteran black activist A Sivanandan warns us that, as the struggle against discrimination and for civil rights has become more complex, we must re-examine the basic tenets and principles of our anti-racism. Yet our anti-racism at home must be shaped by an international perspective – by an informed understanding of the poverty and injustice engendered by the globalised system of capitalism.


There are cracks in that system. It is up to us to prise them open. ■

CORRECTION

In CARF 63, in an article entitled 'Scotland's eviction row', we reported that MSP Tommy Sheridan had vowed to oppose the eviction of a racist family 'by setting up barricades if necessary'. Tommy Sheridan assures us that he has never made such a declaration, and we are happy to print this correction. ■

Anti-Muslim attacks

■ 23 SEP Al Hazar mosque in South Shields damaged in arson attack ■ 27 SEP 20-year-old Asian woman beaten with a hammer on crowded train in Manchester by a white man shouting 'You want killing for what you did in America' ■ 28 SEP Petrol bomb attack on Bekash restaurant in Essex, filled with Muslim customers ■ 29 SEP Police arrest seven men armed with knives, baseball bats and CS spray as they prepare to attack a mosque in south London ■ 3 OCT Pakistani community centre and mosque fire bombed in Edinburgh ■ 4 OCT Margaret Thatcher comments in *Times* article that 'she has not heard enough condemnation from Muslim priests' ■ 5 OCT Norman Tebbit claims that Muslims 'have found some difficulty in integrating into the mainstream of society' ■ 19 OCT Norman Tebbit comments in *Right Now* interview that British Muslims should 'stand alongside the forces of civilisation against barbarians born into Islam' ■ 5 NOV Iain Duncan Smith, Conservative Party leader, refuses to sign cross party pledge to avoid using inflammatory language when speaking about Muslims ■ 19 NOV Sheraz and Neelam Ghafoor and their two children forced to flee their home and business after arson attack in Hull.



The government is using the 'War Against Terrorism' to bring back internment without trial, to further erode asylum rights, and as an excuse for more surveillance and secrecy

all in the name of security

On 13 November, home secretary David Blunkett laid an order before parliament declaring Britain to be in a state of public emergency due to the events of September 11. Blunkett was paving the way for new terrorism, crime and security legislation which, among other things, allows for the indefinite internment of foreign nationals, the incorporation into British law of an EU-wide definition of terrorism, and for wider powers to MI6 and GCHQ to carry out 'intelligence gathering' outside Britain.

The domestic mirror

Blunkett's internment proposal will be even harder for civil libertarians to oppose than similar measures adopted during the Gulf War (when scores of innocent Arabs were detained), given that the threat of terrorist actions against civilians is not an imagined one. Blair is Bush's top backer, Britain is a prime target for bin Laden's al-Qa'ida network. In this climate, the government's argument that it has to balance individual civil liberties against society's right to live free from terror, seems a reasonable one. Yet, the new legislation, particularly when set alongside other developments in asylum policy, is patently unreasonable. Just as the war in Afghanistan is not a limited and

targeted intervention against a defined enemy, the domestic front of the 'War Against Terrorism' is similarly undefined. Heedless of 'collateral damage', the governments of the US and the UK trawl for suspects in 'foreign' communities.

US trawls for suspects

In the US, 800 immigrants were rounded up immediately after the events of September 11 (one detainee died in custody in New Jersey). By mid-November, the figure had risen to 1147, only four of whom were officially named as suspected members of al-Qa'ida. Such arbitrary detention without trial has been backed up by a whole raft of anti-terrorism measures; from the Mobilisation Against Terrorism Act (greater powers to detain suspected terrorists) to greater powers for the FBI, Immigration and Naturalisation Services and federal prosecutors (to spy, jail and interrogate); from the Patriot Act (sweeping powers granted to federal agents to break down the firewall between intelligence gathering and criminal justice) to the reversal of guaranteed protections of freedom of information (to suppress information on issues such as arbitrary detention on national security grounds).

Unlike the UK (where Blair is attempting to delay the introduction of freedom of information legislation), the US has a freedom of information act. Now the Attorney General is reversing longstanding freedom of information act provisions, to the extent that it is virtually impossible to breach the information blockade about the 1147 people detained. Tracking them has proved difficult, as basic information such as the names of the detainees, and the reasons for their detention, has been labelled classified information. But, according to US civil libertarians, the arrest of so many people, under such draconian measures, has so far failed to provide one scrap of new intelligence about the events of September 11, or, for that matter, other planned terrorist actions.



David Drew

So frustrated have the FBI become over the detainees' alleged unwillingness to talk, that they have begun to demand the right to torture detainees, either by administering sodium pentothal or turning suspects over to a country where torture is not prohibited. Bush has meanwhile signed an executive order allowing special military tribunals to try non-citizens charged with terrorism in secret and to order their execution.

Return of Diplock courts?

The UK's anti-terrorist legislation will pave the way for the same sort of information blockade on those detained. The government will not have to prove that 'foreign nationals' have been engaged in any criminal conspiracy to commit terrorist acts in the UK. Instead, foreign nationals can be detained indefinitely (subject to a six monthly review by the special immigration

appeals commission), on the information of the intelligence services alone. Suspects and their lawyers don't have the right to see all the evidence; an advocate to represent their interests, appointed by the attorney general, deals with it in their absence. Blunkett, justifying these draconian measures, states that, in certain circumstances, foreign nationals cannot be deported (for instance if they are nationals of countries with which Britain has no extradition agreement, or if they might be tortured or executed in the country to which they are deported). He has no alternative, therefore, but to detain them until the suspects can find a safe residence in a third country or convince the home secretary that they pose no threat to public security. The writer and former Irish Republican prisoner, Ronan Bennett compares this to northern Ireland's notorious Diplock system of justice, where suspects were tried by a judge alone, acting as judge and jury, and where, owing to secret legal processes, evidence could not be fairly tested.

Information blockade

Blunkett rails at the 'airy fairy' fears of civil libertarians, but fails to respond to criticisms of the government's airy fairy definition of terrorism. The EU definition (which will be incorporated, without parliamentary debate, into the anti-terrorism, crime and security legislation) embraces anti-globalisation protesters and others involved in 'urban protest'. Blunkett says that society as a whole has nothing to fear from a proposal to detain foreign nationals, given that only a handful of people will probably be detained, but fails to indicate just what the quality – or the origin – of the evidence that will be needed to detain someone indefinitely. During the Gulf War, scores of mainly Iraqi and Palestinian suspects were arrested and detained for deportation on suspicion of being supporters of Saddam Hussein, on intelligence which, it turned out, was almost 100 per cent inaccurate. Similarly, 97 per cent of those held under the Prevention of Terrorism Acts from 1974 to 2000 were not charged with any offence.

Asylum surveillance regime

The new emergency legislation comes just a year after the Terrorism Act 2000. This, the first emergency legislation in 25 years, contained the innovative Proscribed Organisations Order which outlawed membership or support of twenty-one foreign organisations. While, post-September 11, no sane person could argue against proscribing al-Qa'ida and its associates, the Proscribed Organisations Order also banned organisations fighting for self-determination of oppressed minorities in countries such as Sri Lanka and Turkey. This was tantamount to criminalising all Sri Lankan Tamils and all Turkish Kurds, who would all sympathise, in one way or another, with the goals of the LTTE or the PKK.

Thus, even before the events of September 11, refugee communities in the UK were being subjected to a special surveillance regime in the name of anti-terrorism. But in announcing the introduction of new asylum reception proposals (including a four-tier system of asylum centres and the introduction of identity cards), and in putting forward legislation plans for the internment of foreign nationals, Blunkett has gone even further than the Terrorism Act 2000,



BUILDING SUSPICION

- The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill defines a terrorist group as a group 'suspected by the Secretary of State of being concerned in acts of international terrorism'
- Any foreign national suspected of being a member of a group suspected of being involved in terrorism will be indefinitely detained without trial unless he or she can be extradited or deported
- All asylum seekers will be tracked from arrival to removal
- Detention places in secure removal centres will increase from 1,900 to 4,000

explicitly stating that as terrorists have, in the past, used the asylum system to gain entry to the UK, this justifies keeping all asylum seekers under a special surveillance regime.

A reasonable argument? Hardly. First, the few 'troublesome' Islamic fundamentalist refugees living in the UK are hardly a terrorist threat; they are up-front and outspoken in their views (hardly the behaviour of surreptitious criminal conspirators). Second, should any criminal conspiracy be planned, the police have a panoply of existing powers to detain and question suspects (and numerous appropriate criminal offences already exist with which to charge those against whom there is any evidence of terrorist activity). Third, the facts about the September 11 conspirators (none of whom were refugees) go against Blunkett's arguments. All entered the US legally, criss-crossing the country by plane and rental cars quite openly. Blunkett must be joking if he expects us to believe that al-Qa'ida operatives would smuggle themselves into the First World (as Australian prime minister Michael Howard implies) on sinking boats controlled by mafiosi, or on the backs of lorries, or, indeed, apply to NASS as destitute asylum seekers.

Presumption of guilt

Yet it is precisely destitute asylum seekers arriving in the UK who will, in future, be targeted as suspected terrorists. Blunkett argues that the new arrangements, accompanied by increased surveillance measures for the police and intelligence agencies, will allow the state to monitor more closely the 80,000 people who claim asylum annually. In future, the whole asylum procedure, from application to provision of welfare, to appeal, will be subjected to a 'terrorist check', as ministry of defence officials are drawn into advising the home secretary on every aspect of asylum and immigration procedure.

In terms of asylum applications, new anti-terrorist measures will specifically deny a safe haven to anyone suspected of being a terrorist or a danger to national security. While this power to exclude is not entirely new

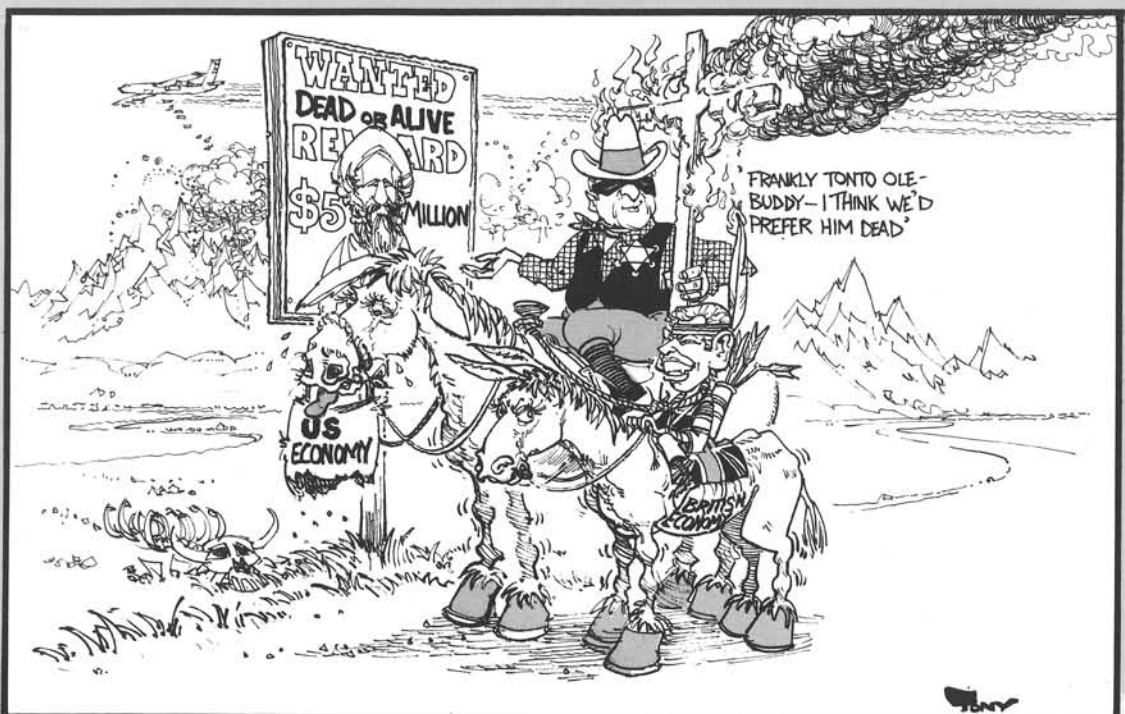
(the Refugee Convention itself provides that protection should not be given to those reasonably believed to be guilty of 'war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the UN, or serious non-political crimes committed outside the country of origin'), its extent and scope, is no longer clearly limited and defined. In future, all asylum seekers whose claims are based on their support for liberation struggles, stand to be excluded from refugee status altogether.

Blunkett's announcement in November of new welfare arrangements for asylum seekers also needs to be weighed against the defence ministry perspectives emanating from the 'War Against Terrorism'. In announcing the creation of a four-tier system of asylum centres and the introduction of identity cards, Blunkett explicitly stated that at the heart of his new proposals is the presumption that, from the moment someone applies for asylum, s/he should be tracked as well as supported. What is truly amazing about such an admission is its explicit linkage of a system of welfare to a system of surveillance. Blunkett has as good as announced the existence of a Soviet style police state for asylum seekers.

Institutionalising xeno-racism

Does Blunkett really believe that his approach is necessary to target terrorist asylum seekers, or is he just using the War Against Terrorism to further his stated ambition of 30,000 deportations of rejected asylum seekers each year? By locking people up in institutions beyond the gaze of public scrutiny (the new Yar's Wood detention centre, on ministry of defence land, is subject to the Official Secrets Act), and controlling their every movement; by forcing them to live in accommodation centres for the duration of their claim and appeal, it will be easier to deport them quickly, and without publicity, once their asylum application is rejected.

Appeal procedures will also be streamlined and



The challenge

The events of September 11 and their aftermath, in terms of government policy, have thrown up a series of contradictions for anti-racists about freedom of expression, human rights, religion and Islam, in particular. CARF asked veteran campaigner and anti-imperialist writer A Sivanandan for some pointers.

CARF: You have, for a long time, warned us against the growing anti-Muslim racism in this country. We remember a meeting in Camden town hall against the Gulf War when you ended your speech with 'We are all Muslims now'. Are you in favour of the new legislation in the UK to outlaw incitement to religious hatred?

A Sivanandan: No and Yes. First, we have to distinguish between our long-term goal – which is the creation of a broad-based secular society – and tackling the immediate problem – which is how to protect people on the ground who are being attacked because they are Muslims. Hence, at the same time as fighting fascism and racism in the specific (which means not opposing the incitement to religious hatred law in principle), we have to balance it with a wider recognition that, in the global age, the state has to become more secular, not less. State religion is an anachronism in a globalised society, and rights, not religion, should determine social conduct. So that any piecemeal reform we undertake now should not undermine the more wholesale reform to come.

Besides, laws such as this are a two-edged sword. Don't forget that the first prosecutions under the incitement to racial hatred provisions were of blacks, although the law was supposed to protect them.

CARF: What about the fact that here in the UK, far from secularising society, the government is actually planning to expand the role of religion with an extension to the number of religious schools?

AS: Once again, we have to look at this in a two-fold way. A democracy should not apportion rights on the basis of religion; it should, instead, de-institutionalise religion altogether, make it a private matter, not a matter for the state. Our problem is that ethnic race pundits have been pushing the government for equity within the given set-up, without wanting to change it altogether. Their argument goes: if you have Christian church schools and Jewish schools, then it is only fair to have Muslim schools. At that level, of course, it appears to be a reasonable request. But, at another level, it is saying that the answer to discrimination (allowing only certain children into a school) is more discrimination (allowing more groups to have exclusive schools). I believe that no school should be allowed to discriminate in its selection process on the basis of religion. In fact, we should do away with denominational schools altogether.

appeal rights curtailed. And as appeals will probably be heard at 'reporting centres', it will be easy for rejected asylum seekers to be immediately arrested and detained for removal.

No chance to integrate in the community, no chance of public support, just bundled out of the country even before information can get out to meddling supporters in refugee solidarity groups.

It is the government's use of the 'War Against Terrorism' to curb public scrutiny of the asylum system and to impose more detention, more camps and faster removals which is most worrying. By Blunkett's pronouncements, and by his proposal to introduce identity cards for one group in society only, he has further institutionalised xeno-racism against asylum seekers. Only, this time, foreign asylum seekers are not just economic scroungers and illegal immigrants but, more threateningly, criminal conspirators and terrorists, 'the enemy within'.

Information on US taken from *The Nation* (www.thenation.com). See in particular 'All in the name of security' by Bruce Shapiro (*The Nation*, volume 273, number 12, 22 October 2001).

No appeal for Samar and Jawad

Samar and Jawad campaign



Campaigners hand in a petition to Downing Street

On 1 November Samar Alami and Jawad Botweh, two Palestinians serving sentences in British jails since 1996, heard the news they dreaded: the Court of Appeal had denied them all grounds for appeal against their convictions and sentences.

Samar and Jawad were sentenced to 20 years imprisonment after being found guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions in 1994 outside the Israeli embassy and at Balfour House, in north London. The two have always maintained their innocence and their appeal was based on the grounds that the convictions were unsafe, in part due to the fact that the prosecution failed to disclose evidence to the defence.

Concerns have been raised about the case because of the way that public interest immunity certificates were used to block disclosure – both during and after the trial – of information, including intelligence that may have been relevant to the investigation of the bombings. According to former MI5 agent David Shayler, the security services had received a warning before the attack on the Israeli embassy. The warning, which was not acted on, appeared to come from a political group with which Samar and Jawad had absolutely no connection.

Freedom and justice for Samar and Jawad,
BM box FOSA, London WC1N 3XX
web:www.freesaj.org email: postmaster@freesaj.org.uk

Challenge of September 11



Take religion out of state structures and institutions. Complete the Reformation by disestablishing the Church of England. Take religion out of the public domain, out of education, work, politics and parliament. That, however, is the long-term goal. In the short term, we have to temper the ideal with the real. We should help communities which have been disadvantaged educationally (even if defined in religious terms) to improve standards of schooling irrespective of their religion. In that sense, we have to support the creation of more religious schools if that is the demand from those communities. But, perhaps, certain new conditions should be attached. Jewish, Catholic, Muslim schools should be told that they have to open their doors to everyone (as some Anglican schools do); that they have to teach the National Curriculum; that their primary purpose is not a religious one. In other words, Muslim schools, like Anglican schools, should be able to teach Muslim values but not enforce the observance of religious ritual in school time.

CARF: But isn't that a form of discrimination – when you don't allow people space or time off to perform rituals which, after all, are part of their religion?

AS: No, not if it discriminates against others in the process. Of course, everyone should be guaranteed his or her civil rights, including the right to freedom of religious expression. But each person's civil rights need to be weighed against the civil rights of others. Your freedom ends where mine begins. Hence, the freedom to express your religion ends at the point that it becomes anti-social or interferes with your work or puts others at risk.

In the final analysis, we have to make a distinction between the right to a belief (a civil right) and the ritual of religion (which can affect the civil rights of others). Where rights clash with rites, rights must prevail. Else, we move the axis of religion itself from tolerance to intolerance, from an open system of thought to a closed circuit of dogma.

CARF: Are you going along, then, with Huntington's argument that there is a 'clash of civilisations' between the West and Islam?

AS: No. That's bullshit. It's ahistorical and superficial. What we are witnessing is not a clash of civilisations but the imposition of one civilisation on another, and the resistance that follows from that. The clash of civilisations theory also implies that the clash is between a superior civilisation and an inferior one. But it was Islamic civilisation that, through its achievements in mathematics, geography, medicine, literature, art and architecture, helped to advance European civilisation. Centuries of colonial oppression and imperialist exploitation, however, have forced certain sections of Islam to retreat into the safety of fundamentalist beliefs. And this has been further heightened by the mass poverty inflicted on Islamic countries by puppet dictatorships installed and/or maintained by western powers for their own interests – principally oil.

Where then can the oppressed find succour, except in religion, 'the sigh of the oppressed'? But what begins as the sigh of the oppressed is transformed, in the hands of the religionists, into the 'opiate of the masses' and gives fundamentalism its impetus. And the West, in turn, has tried to counter nationalist aspirations and communist influence by financing and promoting fundamentalist movements and reactionary regimes. Is it any wonder that, as Malcolm X said in another context, the chickens have come home to roost?

To get back to Huntington, the clash of civilisations theory distracts us from locating the epicentre of the conflict: Israel, which is not only a vivid example of the West's double standards and the humbug of western 'democracy', but also a constant, in-your-face reminder that terror can work if it is properly organised in the guise of a state, under the pretext of survival.

CARF: Moving on to the war, Blair is trying to sell it to us as some kind of humanitarian-bearing, democracy-building initiative. Do you see any truth in that?

AS: Blair, unlike Bush, has been quick to realise that global capitalism has to be reformed to be acceptable. But you don't do that with a bomb in one hand and bread in the other. Certainly what September 11 signalled to me was the fact that unless global capitalism – which is in effect a new mode of production – begins to embrace the poor and corrects the injustices that it breeds, it cannot work. The immediate assault may have been upon 'western civilisation', whatever that means, but the long-term assault is on the global economy.



Jess Hurd/ reportdigital

'A democracy should not apportion rights on the basis of religion; it should, instead, de-institutionalise religion altogether, make it a private matter, not a matter for the state.'

Britain e

by Neil Sammonds

It was shortly after I had addressed several hundred demonstrators outside the Defence Systems Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair in London Docklands that a journalist informed me that a plane had just flown into the World Trade Centre in New York. 'I thought I should let you know,' he said, 'as there are rumours that Palestinians are behind it and you might want to take off your sandwich boards'. My front board carried a picture of a heavily armed Apache helicopter and the slogan 'British parts being used in ethnic cleansing'; the board on my back had an x-ray of a young Palestinian's skull with six bullets in it and the message 'Israeli bullets practised on Palestinian children bought by London's Metropolitan police'. It was fitting that the very same police officers who had heavy-handedly detained hundreds more demonstrators outside Canning Town tube station, who had snatched and snapped in half the Palestinian flag I was peacefully waving ('It could be a fucking weapon', the officer politely explained) buy their soft-round bullets from Israeli Military Industries (via Samson Distraco in Leicestershire) who, incidentally, were showcasing their equipment a mile behind the police lines inside the arms fair's Israeli National Pavilion.

Britain grants export licences

It is instructive that while the TUC conference was cancelled, for the DSEI arms fair it was business as usual. Similarly, for the British arms trade with Israel, despite 650 Palestinians having been killed in exactly a year of legitimate resistance to unrelenting military occupation, it is bloody business as usual. In the last

few years Britain has supported the Israeli military complex by buying bullets, bomblets, grenades and jet-fighter training systems and is in the process of buying the Gill-Spike anti-tank missile.

The categories of the ninety-one military export licences granted for sales to Israel in the first eight months of this new intifada include: large

calibre weapons; armoured or protective goods; ammunition for light arms and large calibre arms; bombs, torpedoes, rockets, missiles, mines; fire control and warning equipment; combat vessels; military use electronic equipment; high velocity kinetic energy weapons systems; military imaging equipment; castings for various weaponry; equipment and technology for production of military goods; software for simulation and evaluation; equipment for development or use of military goods; and armoured vehicles. Yet incongruously, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office states that it will not issue export licences where there is a clearly identifiable risk that the equipment might be used for internal repression or adversely affect regional stability.



So first we need an economic solution to poverty (till such time as we abolish capitalism and therefore poverty altogether) and, second, we need to find an international political organisation (the UN has a built-in American bias) which can represent all countries and give weightage to the poorer countries over the more powerful ones.

Nation states, which are subject to the imperatives of multinational corporations, cannot look after their poor. We need a world government that redresses the imbalances of globalisation, which acts as a countervailing force to multinationals, which upholds the universal values of the enlightenment and allows them to develop in poorer countries and not be destroyed by dictatorships.

The Third World is facing economic genocide in which its own governments are collaborators. Debt has forced these countries into a cycle of ever-increasing poverty. What they produce is barely sufficient to pay back the interest on their debt, let alone feed themselves; so the people are starved yet further. Debt kills off the present generation and the imposition of structural adjustment programmes, that accompany IMF loans, kills off the future generation. It's a choice between starving to death in the short term or in the long term – economic genocide by stealth.

CARF: But why the rise of fundamentalism?

AS: Since the communist parties died, since the post-independence nationalist projects of autonomous development foundered, people have had no alternative value system to turn to, no political agency to organise them. Against the ideology of global capitalism is only the ideology of religion – Mammon versus Mohammed.

But religion comes with a price tag: ritual. And when ritual begins to define religion, it corrupts it. Ritual is based on customs and habit, religion is based on rights and values. Rites separate; rights unify. Rites contribute to superstition and ceremony; rights contribute to universal values. There are no essential differences in the value systems of religions, only in their rituals, social habits and customs.

And that is why, for me, the most significant thing about September 11 is the challenge it poses to Islam itself: to live up to its own values and principles of universality, which are not only the values and principles of all religions, but also of modernity.

What I am saying, in effect, is that the modernist revolution is not over, only re-charged. It is post-modernism that is dead – at birth.

CARF: You almost sound optimistic!

AS: If we are not to wallow in the sadness of that terrible day and the miseries of its aftermath, we've got to learn to turn defeat into victory. A number of 'hopeful' things came out of it. Most importantly, it dealt a blow to the arrogance of power and showed how the technology produced by global capitalism is also the technology that can strike at its heart. It therefore made it objectively necessary to see that globalisation benefits all the people of the world and not just the West.

And America and the rest of the West, that had been so smug and conceited, can now feel the pains of the Third World. For so long it was America's standard of living, America's morality, America's culture that dominated the world. All this has been challenged; the western world is in shock. People have been woken from the deep sleep of individualism and are taking conscience of society, their society and others'. We have had a whole generation that was rendered so apolitical that it didn't even bother to vote; it thought helping the Third World was wearing a comic nose for one day in the year. Now the Third World is every day. Now the Third World is on the breakfast table every morning. ■

Exporting terror

As Britain coordinates the 'War Against Terrorism' the British role in arming terror should not go unnoticed

That it continues to sell arms and military components to an undeclared nuclear state in a 34-year military occupation and colonisation of neighbouring lands does not, presumably, constitute an identifiable risk. That this state is led by a brutal general who personally killed defenceless old men, women and children in Qibya in 1953 (as documented by the Israeli historian Benny Morris) and whom even the limited Knesset Kahane Commission labelled personally responsible for the Sabra and Shatila massacres in 1982 does not, presumably, constitute an identifiable risk. That we arm a state widely condemned for a policy of indiscriminate use of lethal force against civilians is again, presumably, not an identifiable risk. That of the hundreds killed and



tens of thousands injured nine-tenths have been civilian, forty-five percent under eighteen, and sixty percent were in homes, schools or workplaces does not, we presume, constitute a risk. That the latest arms sales to Israel still include the category ML10 despite specific protestations from Amnesty International – for military aircraft including combat helicopters and military aircraft equipment and widely presumed to be for Apache assault helicopter components – is not, once again, an identifiable risk. Apaches (named by Washington after a people it ethnically cleansed) have fired missiles into civilian areas such as Nablus, where two young children and a journalist were killed in addition to the five Hamas members assassinated against international law.

Spokesmen for Janes Defence and Campaign Against the Arms Trade concur that it is highly likely that British components are to be found in any Israeli weapons systems (such as Apaches, Hueys, Armoured Personnel Carriers and Merkava tanks) and communications systems. Further, a senior IDF official told the BBC that British Land Rovers transport the occupying Israeli soldiers through the West Bank and Gaza, and British transponders co-ordinate helicopter attacks.

Junior Minister with responsibility for the Middle East Ben Bradshaw says that there are embassy staff monitoring the use of British equipment by Israel, and (somewhat contradictorily) that he has taken on trust Israeli assurances that British arms and components are not being used against Palestinian civilians.

But monitoring end-use of arms and components is notoriously weak, a system seemingly wide-open for abuse according to a joint report by Oxfam and Amnesty International. Junior Minister Derek Fatchett admitted as much in 1999: 'No formal mechanisms exist at present for systematically monitoring the use of British defence equipment once it has been exported', he said. Similarly former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook told the Defence Committee last year, 'I have to be candid with the Committee and say, that having licensed equipment there is a limit to the extent to which we can verify where it is or on what plane or where it is flying. We seek to but I cannot pretend to say that I have as good a system (of monitoring) once it has left these shores.' Taking all of this into consideration, is there really no identifiable risk?



Paul Mattson/reportdigital

The role of British politicians

There remains the slightly awkward topic of Ben Bradshaw's and others' trust in Israel. Personnel within the British government are closer to their counterparts in Israel to an unprecedented degree. 57 Labour MPs have made visits to Israel since 1997, the largest number from any British government to date. Four of the previous five Ministers with Responsibility for the Middle East have been active members of Labour



Friends of Israel. And Lord Levy, Tony Blair's Special Envoy to the Middle East, the former chair of the Jewish Israel Appeal, former board member of the Jewish Agency, has both a business and house in Israel and had a son working for the Israeli Justice Minister. Should a rational British citizen have any faith in such a

government's taking on trust Israel's assurances that it is not using British weapons? I rang the FCO to ask whether the government recognised Israel's nuclear capability. 'Britain continues to encourage Israel to sign up to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state', the spokeswoman said. This is an untenable position not held by any expert on defence, nuclear or Middle Eastern issues, and highlights the geopolitical stance of Britain today. If they can't see 200 to 300 nuclear warheads, would they really see a component in a helicopter?

Despite recent, welcome condemnations of Israeli policies by the new Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, Palestinians need action more than words; an arms embargo on Israel would be in line with the mentioned national criteria. Further, a full economic embargo would be in line with article 2 of the EU-Israeli Association Agreement which states trade can be stopped in deference to a country's poor human rights record.

Following Washington's lead

Sadly Westminster continues to follow Washington's lead in the Middle East and beyond. It turns a blind eye to the vast array of international laws violated by Israel, to the doubling of settlement-colonies since Oslo, and to Israel's nuclear capability. While the six thousand American deaths on September 11 were horrific, they eerily mirror the number of Iraqi child deaths each month (figures accepted by the previous

UN Humanitarian Coordinators for Iraq Dennis Halliday and Hans von Sponeck and the former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark) as a direct result of British-backed sanctions of mass destruction. If the use or threat to use violence against civilians for political ends constitutes widely overused and misunderstood terrorism (as defined by the ICT), then how does one interpret Madeleine Albright's infamous May 1996 comment on the Jim Lehrer show that the then half-a-million child fatalities from sanctions were a price worth paying to keep Saddam in his box? How should we feel when called upon to back Operation Infinite Justice when fifteen thousand RAF and USAF raids have been conducted on Iraq since the second Gulf War, despite no mandate from the UN and despite Britain's Defence Committee having stated that the legal basis of the no fly zones is dubious? The no-doubt well-meaning journalist who approached me on that fateful day was suggesting it was a time for Palestinians and solidarity groups in the west to keep quiet. But with more non-Arab and non-Muslim westerners asking why people in the Middle East hate the US, it is also a time for renewed debate over not just American but also British responsibility for injustice in the Middle East, especially in Palestine and Iraq. Activists are finding more opportunities to explain the Balfour Declaration, the Sykes-Picot agreement and al-Naqba, thirty-four years of military occupation and colonisation, the inherent weaknesses of the Oslo process, and, what remains under-reported today, Britain's ongoing military trade with Israel.

At the end of the afternoon of September 11 we packed up our placards and journeyed home, away from the now haunting Canary Wharf tower. Almost in its shadow, Israeli arms companies had another three days to exhibit their products tried and tested on a hostaged civilian population. Following the devastation in America that day, Canary Wharf may now symbolise British hypocrisy in the Middle East, and look vulnerable until policies are fundamentally reviewed. ■



Neil Sammonds is a freelance journalist who monitors the Middle East for Index.

Victory over Ilisu dam

Campaigners are delighted that Balfour Beatty has pulled out of involvement in the environmentally, politically and socially disastrous Ilisu dam project. The dam, planned for the Kurdish region of Turkey, would make at least 30,000 people homeless and drown dozens of towns and villages.

Although the British government has steadfastly refused to take a position against the dam in its guaranteeing of export credits to British companies involved, it is significant that Balfour Beatty has, like

the Italian builder, Impregilo, bowed to pressure at shareholders' meetings and the publicity campaign. Campaigners say that the story of the Ilisu dam project shows just how important it is for the government to adopt laws which require British companies to adopt clear ethical standards abroad, as well as at home. British government backing 'should never even be considered in cases which involve such obvious environmental destruction and abuse of human rights', said the director of Friends of the Earth. ■

Trial by jury or by state appointees?

Lee Bridges, of the University of Warwick, examines proposed changes in the criminal justice system

SINCE publication of the long-awaited Auld report on the reform of the criminal courts in September, much of the attention has focussed on just two of its over 300 recommendations, both relating to aspects of jury trial. The first is the proposal that 'perverse' jury acquittals – that is, cases where the jury acquits on grounds of the injustice in applying existing law to particular cases – should be open to appeal by the prosecution. The second is Auld's endorsement for the inclusion of at least three ethnic minority members on juries dealing with cases that involve racial issues.

In fact, the latter proposal was recommended by the 1993 Royal Commission on Criminal Justice but later rejected by the then Tory government, and the current Labour administration has already indicated that it likely to follow suit in favour of preserving the principle of the 'random' selection of juries. But the Auld report demonstrates conclusively that jury selection, as it

recommendations, and all the controversy they will engender, divert attention from a much more serious threat to the jury entailed in Auld's recommendations. Put bluntly, the report represents a greater threat by far to the availability of jury trial for those accused of relatively serious crimes by the state than anything previously proposed by the present or past governments. The threat arises from two proposals in particular – to abolish the right to elect jury trial in 'either way' cases (those which can be heard by magistrates or by a jury), and to create a new 'middle-tier' court to hear the vast majority of cases currently going before juries.

Although he is sharply critical of most of the government's arguments in favour of abolishing the right to elect jury trial, Auld still concludes as a matter of 'principle' that the decision on which form of trial a case should receive should be a matter for the court, not the defendant. Under his recommendations, it would be for a district judge (formerly called a stipendiary magistrate) to decide, in any case where the matter is disputed, whether or not a defendant in an 'either way' case will be afforded the privilege of jury trial. Auld's safeguards are that such decisions should be based on all relevant information, including previous convictions and other circumstances of the accused, and that those denied jury trial should be guaranteed to be sentenced within the limited powers of the court where they are tried.

However, the value of the latter concession to defendants would be undermined by Auld's proposal to create a new 'middle-tier' court, consisting of a professional judge sitting with two lay magistrates, to deal with cases likely to receive a sentence of between six months (the sentencing limit for the current magistrates' courts) and two years. Auld sees such a court as combining the legal expertise of the judge with the community representation provided by lay magistrates. Yet, he acknowledges that the lay magistracy is 'largely unrepresentative', in particular of the young and ethnic minorities, and that those selected to sit on the new 'middle-tier' court will have been drawn from an even more select group, consisting of the more experienced magistrates and those available to sit continuously to hear longer trials.

Statistics in the report show that no fewer than two-thirds of defendants presently tried and convicted in 'either way' cases in the Crown Court receive sentences of less than two years. This means that implementation of the 'middle-tier' court could cut the number of jury trials each year from 28,000 to around 11,000 and the total number of cases in the Crown Court from 95,000 to just 27,000. This is a massive erosion in jury trial and its replacement with trial by a court consisting solely of state appointees – a judge and two magistrates, the latter often selected on the basis of their 'respectability' and long service to one of the established political parties. Public comments from spokespersons for lay magistrates clearly indicate that they would expect such a system to result in many more convictions than before juries. ■

currently operates, is far from 'random'. It is based on entries on the electoral roll, which greatly under-represents ethnic minorities. Auld recommends that jury selection is at least widened to include other registers. He is also in favour of abolishing most of the exclusions and grounds for exemption or excusal from jury service (which result in fewer than a sixth of those summonsed actually serving on a jury). But he would maintain some exclusions, such as those applying to non-Commonwealth citizens and with previous criminal convictions, which may disproportionately affect ethnic minorities.

But there is an important sense in which these



S. O'Neill

Blunkett expands asylum-prison complex



Yarl's Wood Campaign

Campaign to Stop Arbitrary Detentions at Yarl's Wood, PO Box 304, Oakley, Bedford MK43 7WB.
Tel: 07786 517379.
www.stoparbitrarydetentions.atyarlswood.co.uk

ASYLUM seekers in Britain are increasingly facing a system of imprisonment, detention and slave labour. This despite the government's softer language on asylum at the Labour Party conference in September, when it feared a fight with the grassroots membership. Then David Blunkett conceded that the practice of putting asylum seekers in prisons was 'a scandal that shouldn't have happened'. He promised to have the practice, which earlier this year affected up to 800 asylum seekers, ended within four months. However, although the Home Office may now not wish to imprison asylum seekers alongside convicted criminals, its appetite for expanding detention centres – prisons in all but name – continues unabated. The current target is to have 4,000 asylum seekers held in detention centres.

The latest detention centre – set to be Europe's largest – is being built at Yarl's Wood in Bedfordshire. 900 asylum seekers will be incarcerated there behind three lines of secure walls more than five metres high, in buildings constructed on Ministry of Defence land – closed to the public and subject to the vagaries of the Official Secrets Act. The security devices being installed

at Yarl's Wood include microwave detection units and pan-and-tilt dome cameras, of the kind normally found only in highest-security prisons. The centre will be ringed by chain-link fence two and a half metres high topped by three lines of barbed wire. According to the government, this prison is not a prison.

Perhaps most worryingly of all, the government intends to hold entire families, including small children, behind the barbed wire of Yarl's Wood. The 1998 White Paper on asylum allowed for families to be detained for a few days prior to a deportation, once all legal challenges had failed. But now the government has indicated that families may be held simply because 'claims need to be clarified'. That means that children as young as three months old or women up to seven months pregnant may be held at Yarl's Wood, even while they are still pursuing their asylum claim.

A captive labour force

Plans to build the Yarl's Wood detention centre with a budget of £8 million and open it in October have now been eclipsed as the costs have spiralled to £80 million and builders working on the site expect to be there till past Christmas. In the meantime nine asylum seekers have been held since 19 November. When the centre is fully operational, Group 4, which will run the place as a profit-making business, hopes to employ detainees for £15 a week doing cleaning and cooking. Although such employment would normally violate minimum wage legislation, similar plans at the newly rebuilt Harmondsworth detention centre, near Heathrow Airport, have already been given the green light by the Home Office. UK Detention Services (UKDS), the private company which will operate Harmondsworth, has already won a concession to pay detainees working there just 34p an hour, £3.76 below the current minimum wage. UKDS is a subsidiary of Sodexho, the multinational corporation which has already been paid £2.6 million to operate the government's asylum voucher scheme, at an almost 50% profit margin. ■



Voucher review



Refugee support organisations cried victory when home secretary David Blunkett announced in October that he proposed to scrap the 'humiliating and demeaning' voucher system.

But the celebration is premature. For in its review of the voucher system the Home Office made it clear that it would never again return to the days when asylum seekers could claim social security benefits (albeit at 90 percent of their normal value), or work to support themselves. Asylum seekers who are not self-sufficient will in future have to live in camps, 'accommodation centres', for the most part converted barracks, out in the country miles away from anywhere. They won't be locked in, but if they leave they won't be eligible for any further support, and will have to resort to begging, illegal work or crime to stay alive.

The new accommodation centres will be phased in

over a number of years, so during that time there will be four different schemes of support operating, two run by local authorities and two by NASS – a bureaucratic nightmare likely to leave many wrongly deprived of support.

Blunkett makes no bones about the deterrent purpose of the scheme, designed to 'send a signal to people throughout the world that the United Kingdom is not a soft touch'. It is to be part of a system which will track asylum seekers from arrival to removal, which includes induction centres, reporting centres for those who don't require support, and removal centres to detain people after refusal of their claim. The scheme will result in the institutionalisation of most asylum seekers, and in their almost total segregation from British life. What sort of victory is this? ■

REVIEW

Banged Up



Banged Up, the play about the incarceration of black men, currently touring the UK, is didactic and brilliant. In fact it is brilliant because it is didactic. *Time Out's* reviewer, who carped at its 'agitprop sledge-hammering', lack of 'positive message' and 'cultural vacuum', completely missed the point. This is not comfortable arty theatre but a campaigning tool, written

by Colin Prescod and performed by Duende, which faithfully draws on harsh life experiences of prison.

For Alton Manning, on remand at Blakenhurst (private) prison, it meant an 'unlawful killing' by warders after resisting the indignity of an intimate anal search. For Satpal Ram, who was sentenced to 11 years for killing a white racist in self-defence, it has meant a 15-year stretch, during which time (and with over 60 moves between prisons) he has honed his resistance into a vociferous politics. For George Jackson, an 18-year-old, sentenced to one year to life for stealing \$70, it meant writing two of the most incisive political books about state power, *Soledad Brother* and *Blood in My Eye* – and then being shot dead by guards in 1971.

This is not an action play. In fact it all takes place on one set – a prison cell – and in one mind, Udhams (ie Satpal's) – though there are two actors on stage (the second being Pat [Alton]) and a third voice in the theatre, that of George Jackson. It is a play about why black men end up in jail, what is done to them, how they are brutalised and killed, transformed and

politicised. And it is the same experience across communities (Asian and African-Caribbean) and across continents – so long as you are black and poor.

Fifty years ago Colin Prescod's mother Pearl, an actress and singer from Trinidad, was, along with other black artists, struggling to get venues for black productions and parts for black players. Today's generation has still to fight – but this time against postmodern constructions which reduce blackness to identity and the race issue in theatre to one of integrated casting.

As the present war heralds yet more incarceration of minorities, enforces yet more surveillance, justifies the removal of rights and encourages non-accountability, the issues that *Banged Up* tackles become more and more pertinent. If you missed the play first time round, it will be showing in Liverpool in the new year. ■

For details of showings contact Duende Theatre Company, 25 Hawkes Street, Birmingham, B10 9SA.

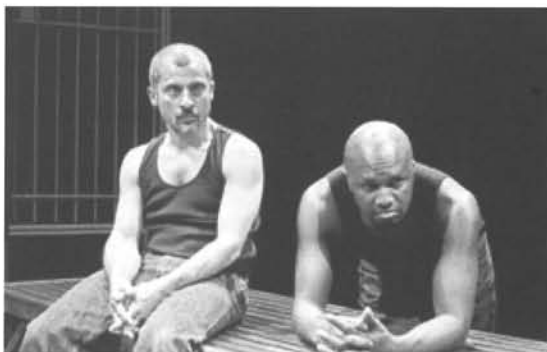
Tel: 0121 773 8542

Web: www.duende.co.uk

Free Satpal Ram Campaign (London), PO Box 30091, London SE1 1WP.

Tel: 07947 595367

Email: freesatpalcampaign@hotmail.com



Second inquest: Prison service negligent



Keita Craig

At the beginning of October, a second inquest was held into the death of Keita Craig, who was found hanged in Wandsworth prison in February 2000. The original inquest, held in April 2000, returned a verdict that Keita had killed himself while the balance of his mind was disturbed. However, this verdict was quashed by

the High Court after his family challenged the coroner's decision not to allow the jury to consider a verdict incorporating neglect (see CARF 61). The second inquest reached the same verdict, but added the rider that neglect was a contributory factor to the death.

Keita, who suffered from mental health problems, was remanded into custody from Richmond magistrates court. In the cells at the

court, after he tried to bite and claw open his wrists, he was assessed as a suicide risk and Wandsworth prison was informed. His shoelaces were also removed while he was held at Richmond. However, when he was transferred to Wandsworth, after seeing a doctor who had access to documents which stated that Keita was a suicide risk, he was placed in a cell without suicide watch and his shoelaces were returned to him. He used them to take his life.

Keita's grandmother Erin Pizze (a pioneer campaigner against domestic violence) commented, 'We will never recover from his death, not just because we loved our beloved child, but also because we were exposed – as are so many other grieving families – to the full horror of the institutional cruelty inflicted upon those who are unable to best take care of themselves.' ■

Christopher Alder victory



Christopher Alder

The five officers charged with misconduct in public office in connection with the death of Christopher Alder in the custody suite of Queens Street police station in Hull, will now also face charges of manslaughter.

In October, the CPS applied to the court to add further charges of manslaughter after receiving medical

evidence from the family lawyers (see CARF 58 & 64). This evidence suggested that Christopher could

have been resuscitated, had anyone bothered to check him in the eleven minutes he lay unattended on the floor of the custody suite.

PCs Nigel Dawson, Neil Blakey, Mark Ellerington, Matthew Barr and custody sergeant John Dunn will now be tried on manslaughter charges in April 2001.

The family had also hoped to have the case moved to a different venue, such as Leeds or Hull, where an inquest jury would have been more likely to include black people. However, Judge Henriques rejected the suggestion, and the case is set to be tried in Middlesbrough. ■

Contacts:

■ Inquest, Ground Floor, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2PJ.
Tel: 020 8802 7430 / Fax: 020 8802 7450
Email: media@inquest.org.uk
Web: www.inquest.org.uk

■ Justice for Christopher Alder Campaign c/o Red Triangle Cafe, 160 St James Street, Burnley, Lancs BB11 1NR.
Tel: 01282 832319 / 07855 991749

■ Migrant Media, 90 DeBeauvoir Road, London N1 4EN.
Tel: 020 7254 9701 / Fax: 020 7241 2387
Email: migrantmedia@pop3.poptel.org.uk / info@injusticefilm.co.uk
Web: www.injusticefilm.co.uk

■ United Families and Friends Campaign c/o Inquest, Ground Floor, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2PJ.
Tel: 07770 432439
Web: www.peopletribunal.com

Stop-and-search payout

Alister Phillip, a sports instructor and maths lecturer, has been awarded £32,750 by the Metropolitan police, after successfully suing them for a series of physically and verbally abusive stop and searches in south London throughout the 1990s. Young white male officers persistently harassed Mr Phillip during stops which were carried out on the grounds that he was 'suspicious looking and probably has, or is about to, commit a crime'. But Mr Phillip's lawyer Joanna Fine believes that the only reason why Mr Phillip was stopped so many times was because his appearance – black, tall and athletic – fitted a stereotypical image of what a young, white police officer finds a threat. She concludes that 'If Mr Phillip had not been so level headed and physically fit, I do believe that he would now be another police statistic of yet another black man either seriously injured or killed while in police custody.' ■

Further information from Alister Phillip: aawp@totalise.co.uk

Injustice – on release

Migrant Media's film *Injustice*, on black deaths in police custody, is to go on general release, despite the Police Federation's best attempts to get the films' showings censored (see CARF 63). Since the film was released in July, numerous showings have been cancelled by cinemas unwilling to take the threat of legal action by the Police Federation solicitors.

The film will be shown at the Prince Charles Cinema in Leicester Square, London, until further notice. ■

Two more black deaths

As CARF goes to press, we hear of two more black deaths in custody.

A 25-year-old black man died in the custody of Brixton police on 22 November. The man was a passenger in a car stopped by police. The driver of the car was arrested for motoring offences and the passenger for alleged drugs offences. They were taken to Brixton police station, where they were searched. Police allege the man became 'agitated' and was restrained for a short time. He told officers he had swallowed crack and was taken to hospital, where he later died.

On 25 November, police and immigration officials called at a house in Streatham Hill. While officers were questioning five men at the address, one fell from a third floor window as police attempted to detain him. The PCA is investigating the deaths. ■

MURDERS

Shiblu Rahman murdered by racist(s)



Shiblu Rahman

At the beginning of October, the trial began of 23-year-old Dean Cox, 18-year-old Terry Cooper and two unnamed 15 and 16-year-olds on charges of murder and GBH with intent (see *CARF* 61).

The men all denied charges relating to the murder of 34-year-old Bangladeshi chef Shiblu Rahman in April 2000. Shiblu was beaten and stabbed to death in the early hours of the morning, in Bow, east London, as he returned home from work.

Witnesses told the court that they heard Shiblu shouting for help and saw a gang of white men punching and kicking him, shouting 'Shut up you Paki'. Shiblu was heard to plead for his life: 'Why me? What have I done to you?' Although he had been stabbed in the back and chest, he managed to crawl to his home and raise the alarm.

At the end of November, the 15-year-old defendant was found guilty of murder. Terry Cooper and the 16-year-old were cleared of

murder but found guilty of manslaughter. The 16-year-old was also convicted of perverting the course of justice, after burning clothes that were worn in the attack. Dean Cox was cleared of murder, manslaughter and GBH with intent. The men were remanded in custody to await sentencing.

After the case, Detective Superintendent Peter Ship, who investigated the murder, said the attack was purely racial; 'the trigger point for this murder was that this man was Asian'.

The doctor who examined Shiblu at hospital, said that had he arrived at hospital sooner, he could have survived his injuries. The ambulance took over 45 minutes to arrive. The family are hoping the coroner will reopen the inquest so that the circumstances behind the death can be investigated.

Black Racial Attacks Independent Network (BRAIN), Suite 4, 63 Broadway, London E15 4BQ.
Tel: 020 8555 8170
Email: brain@nmp.org.uk

Tariq Javed murdered for £2



Tariq Javed

In October, three men stood trial at Manchester Crown Court for involvement in the murder of Tariq Javed. Tariq, a 46-year-old taxi driver, was found murdered in November 2000 in Bury, near Manchester (see *CARF* 59). He had been punched, kicked, stamped on and then robbed. 30-year-old Jason Power and 21-year-old Mark Baker denied charges of murder and, with 17-year-old David Hawkins, charges of robbery.

The jury heard that on the day of the murder, the men had been out celebrating Baker's 21st birthday. They caught a cab home and on the way decided not to pay the £2 fare. The car stopped at a junction and a fight broke out. Witnesses saw the men attack Tariq as he sat in the car. They then pulled him from the car and gave him a further beating. The men then ran over him as he lay injured on the ground before stealing Tariq's jacket and driving off in his car. Tariq died within minutes of the attack, suffering skull fractures and injuries to his face and ribs. The accused

men also attempted to burn any evidence by setting the car alight. However, police forensics found Tariq's blood on the bottom of the car.

A 15-year-old girl, testified that she saw the men kick and stamp on Tariq before Baker reversed the car over him, threatening another witness with the words 'Keep your mouth shut'. Baker alleged that Tariq had grabbed his friend, Power, and started fighting with him, and that he had had to intervene to help his friend. However, the jury rejected his version and found the two men guilty of murder and robbery. They were jailed for life. The judge directed the jury to clear Hawkins on the robbery charges, after legal submissions were made on his behalf.

Speaking after the case, Detective Inspector Bill Beddows said there was no evidence to suggest that the murder had been racially motivated.

Question: Would they have done the same to a white taxi driver?
Answer: Not likely. ■

campaigns & reports

Justice for Abdi Dorre



On 24 November, the family of Abdi Dorre held a vigil and picket outside a Northampton police station to try to get police to re-investigate the suspicious death of Abdi, a Somali, in the Lounge night-club, Northampton in August 2000 (see *CARF* 59).

31-year-old Abdi died in hospital after being found with serious head injuries at the bottom of stairs at the club. Hospital staff alerted the local police, but they did not bother to investigate thoroughly, assuming that Abdi's death was an accident. It was only after the family pressured the police that arrests were made, but even then the suspects were later released without charge.

At the inquest in May 2001, without a jury, the coroner recorded an open verdict. He heard that the police did not carry out any forensic testing of the crime scene and that there was a fourteen-minute gap in CCTV coverage of the scene which was explained away by club staff with different excuses at different times. A friend of Abdi's also revealed that Abdi had had problems with staff at the club before. Another witness alleged that Abdi was racially abused and pushed down the stairs. The witness had repeated the allegation to the police no less than 26 times, to no avail. Now, the family has launched a campaign to seek a proper investigation of the death. ■

The Abdi Dorre Family Campaign, c/o Somali Community Association, 31 Farthing Grove, Nethfield, Milton Keynes MK6 JH.
Tel: 07751 252157

National Civil Rights Movement (NCRM), 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA.
Tel: 020 8843 2333/Fax: 020 8813 9734
Email: info@ncrm.org.uk
Web: www.ncrm.org.uk

diary of race and resistance

OCT - NOV 2001

RACISM

21 SEP Vandalism force a nursery in Kingston to close after spraying racist graffiti and causing other damage

24 SEP Employment tribunal awards black teacher Priscilla Bennett £45,000 damages against Fryerns school, Basildon, which failed to protect her from children at the school who abused her

7 OCT Ian Duncan Smith orders three Tory MPs to resign from far-Right Monday Club

9 OCT 19-year-old Asian man suffers abdominal injuries after gang of white youths stab him in Blackburn; three teenagers later arrested ■ 29-year-old Asian woman attacked by gang of 15 white youth as she stops her car at railway crossing in Gloucester

21 OCT 40 arrested for racist chanting at Stoke City v Port Vale football match in Staffordshire

25 OCT Two inquiries into murder of Surjit Chhokar published; one criticises initial decision to charge only one person for his murder, the second finds evidence of institutional racism. Colin Boyd, Scotland's senior law officer, agrees to review High Court and internal Crown Office procedures

5 NOV Asylum seeker hostel in Pendleton, Greater Manchester, housing Iranians and Afghans, repeatedly rammed by car as gang of armed men try to break in; two men suffer injuries

7 NOV Attack on 14-year-old boy with rounders bat at South Chadderton school, Oldham, fractures skull, treated as racially motivated by police

15 NOV 55-year-old Iranian woman stabbed in the face in racist attack outside her home in Worthing, Sussex

16 NOV Black builder, Kelly Davis, accepts £790,000 damages from Bath and North East Somerset Council for race discrimination in persistent refusal of planning permission between 1989 and 1991

19 NOV AEEU shop steward Rhys Williams forced to resign after *Searchlight* reveals his BNP membership

IMMIGRATION

20 SEP Home Office announces new targets for arrests of asylum seekers from 10 to 100 per day

26 SEP Two teenage Afghan asylum seekers deported to France after paddling 14 miles across Channel on inflatable dinghy ■ Six Iraqi stowaways found hiding under a lorry in Suffolk are detained under the Terrorism Act 2000

29 SEP 26 Sri Lankan stowaways taken to hospital after being found squashed into a lorry in Dover

1 OCT Government introduces £2,000 fines for Eurotunnel for every stowaway found on its property ■ High Court quashes government ban on Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan

3 OCT David Blunkett promises party conference radical overhaul of voucher system

4 OCT 'New and improved' Harmondsworth detention centre reopened with space for 550 detainees

8 OCT Wackenhut UK makes planning application for service station in Great Gransden, near Cambridge, for exclusive use of escorts moving immigration detainees around the country

11 OCT Shafiq ur Rehman loses appeal against deportation on national security grounds ■ Chair of Victoria Climbié inquiry, Lord Laming, orders investigation into allegations that London borough of Brent social workers dump unaccompanied child asylum seekers in bed and breakfast accommodation

15 OCT David Blunkett unveils new anti-terrorist measures, including exclusion from refugee status and internment for suspected terrorist asylum seekers ■ Diane Abbott MP calls on Immigration Service to explain why more Jamaicans are being refused entry to UK

19 OCT Home Secretary wins appeal against High Court ruling that detention of asylum seekers at Oakington to process their claims was unlawful

24 OCT Research by British Medical Association and Medical Foundation for Care of Victims of Torture reveals that asylum seekers' health put at risk by dispersal and voucher system

26 OCT First set of 20 immigration officers for new 'snatch squads' complete training course at Hendon police college ■ Home Office announces citizenship and English classes for immigrants who wish to become UK citizens ■ 11 stowaways attempting to flee from police by swimming canal in Sussex, are arrested and detained after three-hour chase

28 OCT Six Roma take Home Secretary to High Court after British immigration officers stationed at Prague airport refused to allow them to travel, although they held valid documents ■ Eurotunnel erects two 40-foot watchtowers near Coquelles terminal to stop asylum seekers stowing away on trains

29 OCT Home Secretary announces plans for more reception centres and ID cards for asylum seekers

31 OCT Home Office reveals that Passport Agency has carried out secret trials of ID cards

4 NOV Home Office announces use of language tests in pilot scheme for asylum

seekers thought to be pretending about their nationality

13 NOV 28 Chinese stowaways treated for dehydration after found crammed into specially adapted compartments in a coach in Dover ■ Eight stowaways arrested after found clinging to side of train travelling through Channel tunnel

15 NOV Home Secretary announces commitment to join UN refugee resettlement scheme to receive quota of refugees nominated by UNHCR officials

16 NOV French rail company SNCF announces it will spend £1.5 million securing Frethun depot in Calais to stop stowaways

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1 OCT Scotland Yard launches investigation after CCTV footage shows police officers attacking a young black man in Brixton and assaulting a white couple who intervene to help

3 OCT Second trial begins of Leeds footballers Jonathan Woodgate, Lee Bowyer, Paul Clifford and Neale Caveney who deny charges of GBH with intent and affray in connection with attack on Sarfraz Najib in January 2000

5 OCT Judge orders Home Secretary to hold public inquiry into murder of Zahid Mubarek at Feltham Young Offenders' institute, ruling that right to life under European Convention on Human Rights requires independent investigation

12 OCT Two Asian men appear in court on charges of distributing material likely to lead to racial hatred and possession of racially inflammatory material, after giving out leaflets in 2000 encouraging a holy war

21 OCT *Sunday Telegraph* reveals that special Scotland Yard operation called Operation Full Circle is monitoring 24 people suspected of aiding and abetting Al-Qa'ida

22 OCT Rev Peter Tullett begins case for constructive unfair dismissal against Home Office, claiming victimisation by prison staff for revealing brutality at Portland Young Offenders' Institute

28 OCT *Independent on Sunday* reveals that Wormwood Scrubs prisoners have made further allegations of physical and sexual assault by prison officers, as Paddington police continue investigating 52 allegations in earlier inquiry

19 NOV 200 British men thought to be fighting for Taliban in Afghanistan face arrest for treason if they return to UK after Special Branch and Immigration Service given lists of suspects

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