

NF in crisis

West  
Midlands  
squad

Race laws

Black groups  
under threat

# Lines of protest

- ▶ Europe's hunger strikers
- ▶ Scottish nationalism
- ▶ Rebellion in Los Angeles



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## EDITORIAL

Unlike in most other European countries, we have developed, in Britain, a vibrant infrastructure of black and anti-racist groups and organisations whose experiences sustain and inform a wider national and international fight against racism. But it is these very groups, based in the community and responsive to the community, which have come under attack from local authority cuts – not so much on the basis of the service they provide, but on the basis that it does not conform to the town hall tenets of what that service should be. In other words, these groups are being told that they could have the money only if they are accountable to the fund givers in the first place, and not to the community. (See *Anti-racist groups cut*, p12.)

If this is the type of control that local authorities exercise of their own volition at one level, the Community Care Act institutionalises that control at another – by replacing grants, which are not necessarily tied, with contracts, which are, by definition, tied. (See *Black communities care*, p12.)

The struggle of anti-racists, then, has to be extended to take on not only the racism of town hall bureaucracies but also the privatising contract culture of the Community Care Act and its like.

And it is in recalling such struggles from the past that we mourn the deaths of Vishnu Sharma, Kath Locke and Rashid Mufti, three stalwarts of the anti-racist movement. ■

## Airlines challenged

**CARF believes that a court ruling in Germany may have opened the way for airlines in the UK to challenge the British Immigration (Carriers Liability) Act of 1987.**

Following an action by Air India and Air France, the Federal Administrative Court in Berlin has ruled that legislation penalising airlines for carrying people without proper documentation violates Germany's constitutional right of asylum.

CARF has written to Sir Colin Marshall, chief executive of British Airways, and to the airline staff unions, the British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA) and the Civil Air Transport section of the TGWU, urging action.

One of the ways the government has tried to keep refugees out of Britain

has been to impose fines on airlines carrying people without proper travel documents. British Airways and other large airlines have paid millions of pounds in fines. British Airways has told CARF that it deplores the fact that airline staff have been turned into immigration officers and that it now intends to quote the German decision in discussions with the Home Office.

Airlines operating in Germany have shown that they are willing to reject this role; we would now hope that British airlines and their staff will follow this lead. ■



# NF in crisis

This year, the National Front celebrates its 25th anniversary. Not everyone, though, will be coming to the birthday party. Whilst Ian Anderson is busy perpetuating the myth that, under his leadership, the party has grown in stature and is 'back on track', behind the scenes his enterprise is fast going off the rails.

Indeed, it is beginning to look as if Anderson might be celebrating the NF's anniversary alone. Steve Brady, until recently deputy chair of the NF, editor of *Vanguard* and a key link figure with Ulster loyalist circles, has resigned. Another key resignation is that of Mark Cotterill, south-west regional organiser and previously thought to be a rising star in the NF. Tina and Martin Wingfield, as well as Nash, have also bowed out.

Yet, despite all this, the *Flag* paints an idyllic picture of party unity—graphs chart the intricacies of the NF's election bid, and there are no less than four pictures of a victorious Ian Anderson. During the election campaign, writes Anderson, 'gradually doors that had previously closed to us' began to open. 'Schools, colleges and libraries started to take our literature. Teachers, lecturers and librarians contacted our head office to query points on our policies.' Furthermore, 'the manifesto has been greeted with acclaim even by some of our opponents.'

According to Anderson, 'recruitment rising from the general election' is good and he is eagerly 'looking forward to the European elections next year'.

## Who gains?

Anderson is, of course, living in cloud-cuckoo land. For the question on everyone's lips is who will gain from the NF's demise. For some time now, the BNP has been swallowing up the NF's membership (rumours are rife that whole branch committees, including Derby, have gone over to the BNP).

But not all is stable in this camp either. Some of the BNP leadership are unhappy with the calibre of new recruits, as exhibited both by events in Sunderland during the election and recent moves by skins in the Midlands to set up their own independent political group, possibly under the Blood & Honour label.

**Officially, both the BNP and NF are declaring their election results to be an important moral victory. But, behind the scenes, the NF is experiencing a crisis.**

But, in terms of the NF's more experienced and politically adept organisers and propagandists, the BNP is not the most likely option. It is well known that Brady has been moving in Western Goals circles. The debate amongst these recent NF defectors has centred on the need to forge new forms of far-right alliances, based on loose 'movements' with no membership and concentrating on issues, as opposed to centralised parties with a recognisable chain of command. And if this proves to be the way forward, then it is Western Goals which is likely to act as the focal point for a more fluid, and thus harder to pin down, far-right force.

## BNP attack

A leafletting drive of the recently launched Reading BNP led to a vicious assault on a black couple. A 30-year-old woman, who doesn't want to be named for fear of reprisals, was attacked by BNP thugs when she opened her door after a leaflet attacking multiculturalism had been posted through her letterbox. The fascists armed themselves with bottles and tore apart a fence to use the panels as clubs. One BNP member tried to hit her boyfriend with a bottle and she was struck in the face.

## KKK materials seized

As we go to press, we have learnt that a large consignment of KKK materials has been seized and a prosecution is imminent.

## Irving challenge

Anti-fascists are gearing up to picket a 'Revisionist seminar' in London on Saturday 4 July at which David Irving and Kirk Lyons (lawyer to well-known revisionist Fred Leuchter) will speak. Ring CARF for details of protests.

## NF members desert a sinking ship

For myself, I shall concentrate much more on my personal life and other interests outside politics, sadly neglected these past 20 years of active Nationalism. But perhaps I shall help out with some writing - such as *Roots of the British*-type booklets - and in intellectual and cultural non-party "metapolitical" circles. Thereby still contributing in some way, however slight it may seem, to creating the conditions for the growth of a party such as the NF, by helping break the intellectual and cultural ice which lies across its path. It goes without saying that I have no intention of joining - or forming - any rival party, nor shall I support or aid any faction within the Party. Indeed, I wish the Party well, and only regret that I am no longer able to offer it the level of commitment and faith it so clearly deserves.

With best wishes,

*Steve Brady*  
Steve Brady.

cc: Members of the National Directorate (CONFIDENTIAL)

## Extracts from Steve Brady's resignation letter to NF chair Ian Anderson

Well I think the NF's situation now is even worse, than then. Our General Election votes were appalling and in my local area Torbay, it was a disaster, seeing in my view we did one of the best campaigns. What makes it even worse is seeing that votes for Nationalists all over Europe are going up, but ours in Britain are going down.

The NF's new 'nice' image, did not work with the voters, even the neo-Nazi BNP got a higher average vote. In the eyes of the voters our image is still dreadful. This is not your fault or the fault of any of today's leadership, but the fault of past 'leaders' like Tyndall and Webster, who threw away any chance we may have had for success in the 1970's and have damned us to futility ever since.

Try as we may to clean up the image, to escape the ghetto, as the Party has done sincerely for the last few years, it is no good, the public take no notice. The votes slide inexorably downward. Intelligent members quit in despair, few new people of any calibre join, a vicious circle is created in which we fail and

Yours sincerely,

*Mark Cotterill*  
Mark Cotterill, (Torbay NF Election Agent).

Copies also to: NF Directorate members, Branch Organisers, Election candidates.

PS. This letter is strictly confidential, do not show it to non-NF officials.

**CARF has also received a copy of Mark Cotterill's resignation letter**

# Asylum-seekers strike for freedom

Refugees throughout Europe – forced to live on the margins of society, denied basic human rights and living in constant fear of expulsion – are resorting to the ‘hunger strike’ as the only means of drawing attention to their predicament. CARF exposes Europe’s shame and argues that the refugees’ courageous protests should be put to the forefront of the anti-racist agenda.

On 5 June 1992, a 36-day hunger strike ended, with as little publicity in the press or other media as when it began. It was undertaken by 62 Kurdish men and women from Turkey, in an attempt to persuade the Home Office to allow their families to join them, and to draw attention to the harsh laws on family reunion. By the end, several had had to drop out because of serious illness, and others were suffering from headaches, dizziness and severe stomach pains. But 13 had, by their protest, been acknowledged as refugees, or had been given permission to bring their families here. Several more secured an undertaking that their cases would be reconsidered.

Since the hunger strike undertaken by 61 detainees (mainly Tamils) on board the floating detention centre the *Earl William* in 1987, such action has become an increasingly familiar form of protest among asylum-seekers, and it is not confined to Britain.

There have been hunger strikes in France, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany; and in Denmark last year, such an action by 900 Palestinians resulted in the Danish parliament approving a Bill to allow them to stay.

## Criminalisation

You would have thought that the media, always looking for ‘human interest’ stories, would have been queuing up to interview these asylum-seekers. But no – there can be no ‘human interest’ in people who are not seen in human terms. If, individually, asylum-seekers are cheats and economic migrants, en masse, they are likened to a disaster: a ‘flood’ to the tabloids and, to the upmarket liberal press, a ‘tidal wave of misery’ breaking on Europe’s shores.

Such a portrayal invites responses in terms of dams and barriers – nobody welcomes a tidal wave. The detention and criminalisation of asylum-seekers and the denial of basic rights like family reunion is then justified – or tacitly accepted – in the interest of deterring others.

But this has not deterred asylum-seekers from taking action. ‘It is better

to die than to live in this country with no prospect of being with my family again’, said Ali T, on the 26th day of his second hunger strike. He left his wife and four children in Turkey when he fled the country three years ago. One of 650,000 people tortured and imprisoned after the military coup in 1980, he saw first-hand real solidarity from journalists towards those fighting oppression: the Turkish authorities arrested 400 journalists, burned 39,000 tonnes of banned books and newspapers. ‘People here must understand that it is the oppression in Turkey that has brought us here’, he said. ‘Can you imagine why we would leave Turkey, such a beautiful country, brighter, cleaner, to come and suffer here?’

Ali T was among 20 Turkish and Kurdish asylum-seekers who, fearful for their families living under martial law, went on hunger strike in February 1992 to protest at the Home Office’s refusal to allow their families in. Some of the men, like Ali T, had been granted ‘exceptional leave to remain’ – second-class refugee status which allows family reunion only after four years.

The February hunger strike, which lasted for three weeks, resulted in full refugee status being granted in seven cases and in the Home Office agreeing to reconsider, or speed up consideration, of most other cases. Encouraged by that success, the second hunger strike began on 1 May. By then, martial law had been lifted, but the harassment, beatings and detention of the families of ‘missing’ men continued.

## Detention

Detainees, whose situation is even worse, have also used hunger striking as a means of action. N, a Zairean asylum-seeker who was in Pentonville for three months before being released on temporary admission, explains: ‘Fasting is not difficult – you have no appetite.’ Sent there from Harmondsworth because of illness, he was put in a cold cell and allowed only half an hour for exercise. ‘I didn’t know anyone here, so no one visited me. I was treated like a criminal, that was the worst thing.



Jon Walter

People go on hunger strike’, he said, ‘to remind the Home Office that we don’t want food, but freedom.’

It’s difficult to find out about hunger strikes in detention. Many asylum-seekers stop eating spontaneously for a day, or a few days, a week or more, out of sheer despair. And even when a hunger strike is organised by a number of asylum-seekers, it is not often heard about outside the walls of the prison or detention centre.

On arrival, if they have no address to go to or the immigration officer suspects them of intending to abscond, asylum-seekers are held in a detention centre. If there is no room, or they need medical treatment or become ‘disruptive’ – which usually means refusing food – they are sent to prison.

In June 1989, over 300 asylum-seekers were held in prisons and detention centres. Eighteen of them began a hunger strike at Winchester prison, which, within a week, had spread to Dorchester, Gloucester and Exeter. While Home Office minister Tim Renton told the House of Commons that many of the asylum-seekers were economic migrants, the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture reported finding physical evidence of torture in 88% of the people it had examined.

There were further hunger strikes in September and October 1989, involving 19 asylum-seekers in

Gloucester and up to 100 in Haslar, where the Home Office said the detainees were not on hunger strike, but simply refusing meals. In 1990 and 1991, there were more hunger strikes, in Winchester, Pentonville and Haslar, yet the number of asylum-seekers detained continued to rise.

## Support

Because detainees are dispersed across the country, it has been difficult to organise support for them. But strong local support groups have been formed.

The Winchester Action Group for Asylum Seekers (WAGAS), formed in July 1989 during the first hunger strike there, has stood surety for their release, provided clothing so that prison clothes don't have to be worn, and has organised visits to detainees in both Winchester and Haslar. Its campaigning, which has included regular vigils outside the prison, leafleting in the town, picketing official visits to the prison (such as that of the Princess Royal) and obtaining local

press coverage, has achieved the release of a large number of the asylum-seekers held in Winchester prison.

In London, the Zairean Community Association (ZACA), formed in 1991 by ex-detainees to give support to their countrymen still in detention, has recruited 300 members and several full-time voluntary workers to visit and sustain new arrivals and to help them with their asylum applications.

The British anti-racist movement came alive to the issues surrounding refugees in 1991, organising alongside refugee groups against the Asylum Bill and protesting against the institutionalised racism which has led to atrocities such as Hoyerswerda in Germany.

The hunger strikers remind us that, even without a new Asylum Bill, the treatment of asylum-seekers by the governments of Britain and its European partners demands constant and unflagging exposure and resistance. As Ali T remarked, 'They call us mules – and we are. We are stubborn, patient, strong and determined.' ■

## What you can do

- Find out if asylum-seekers are being detained in your local prison or detention centre.
- Offer your support to your local refugee or other support groups. You may be able to stand as surety to get someone released on bail, or help with clothes, or writing letters.
- If no support group exists, contact one of the groups mentioned above for help and advice on setting one up.
- Write to your MP demanding action to stop the detention of asylum-seekers, and calling for the right of family reunion for them and for those with exceptional leave to remain.

*The Action Committee for the Unification of Asylum Seekers' Families (which organised the Kurd's hunger strike) is c/o 84 Balls Pond Road, London N1, tel 071-254 0387/923 1202.*  
*The Zairean Community Association (ZACA), Selby Centre, Selby Road, White Hart Lane, London N17 8JC, tel 081-365 1665.*  
*Winchester Action Group for Asylum Seekers, c/o Wickets, Easton, Winchester SO21 1EG; a London-support group.*

# Press defiles anti-fascist history

CARF reports on new developments in the press and politicians' campaign against refugees

That well-known anti-nazi, Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke, said in a radio interview that politicians in France should consider taking advice from their English counterparts as to how to keep out the likes of Le Pen – not through mass mobilisations but through stricter immigration controls, of course.

Britain is currently in dispute with the European Commission over provisions in the Maastricht Treaty that call for the lifting of border controls for EC residents. Backing Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd's stance, the press has perverted the anti-fascist slogan of the 1930s to argue that 'They shall not pass unchecked' (*Independent* 12.5.92) and 'Illegal immigrants: they shall not pass' (*The People* 12.5.92).

Meanwhile, Geraint Jones (*Today* 12.5.92) decided that a quick history lesson was in order. Synthesising the complexities of the second world war into one startling fact, he argued that it was 'our waters' that 'kept out the

nazis', and that those same waters were now the only defence against 'drugs, illegal immigrants and diseases' (such as rabies). If Hurd's talks with the European Commission fail, wrote Jones gloomily, 'the English channel – which has protected our island for so many centuries – will not be enough to stem the forces of chaos.'

## THE INDEPENDENT

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### They shall not pass unchecked

THERE is much history, a good deal of emotion and some logic in Britain's reluctance to rate those arriving from EC and non-EC countries as Douglas Hurd, the Foreign

## Illegal immigrants: they shall not pass

OFFICIALS of Southwark Council in London have been warned about the way they check whether people asking for emergency housing are illegal immigrants.

One can only pity those millions of 'illegal immigrants' snorkelling across the channel (colliding, occasionally, with the decomposed body of an SS officer and his rabid dog), only to be

confronted, as they pop out of the water at the White Cliffs of Dover by zealous British immigration officers demanding to see their passports. Thank you, Mr Jones, for bringing this to our attention!

On a more serious note, what is of concern is the way the press is openly campaigning for local authorities to introduce internal passport checks in areas such as housing. The press has been full of the usual stories of illegal immigrants scrounging off the welfare state, leading the *Daily Star* to comment: 'It makes ordinary people furious that illegal immigrants can flock here to milk the state of benefits.' The *People* (10.5.92) describing a Southwark Council internal memo that told housing officials not to ask their clients to produce passports when checking their eligibility to council housing as 'rubbish', went on: 'If illegal immigrants try to abuse our welfare system', then it is 'the duty of local councils to try to put a stop to it, by whatever means'. ■



# The politics of the LA revolt

## **Black US activist Barbara Ransby writes:**

I have no intention of glorifying or romanticising what took place in LA, nor do I intend to summarily castigate those who participated as mindless thugs and hooligans. The answer is more complex and our understanding of those complexities is crucial.

Within hours of the verdict exonerating a group of white policemen for the videotaped beating of an unarmed black man, Rodney King, black men, women and teenagers, along with hundreds of Latinos, took to the streets of South Central Los Angeles, venting their rage by attacking private property (looting) and, to a lesser extent, attacking white passers-by as individual, although innocent, symbols of a racist white power structure. The LA rebellion lasted over three days and triggered similar uprisings and protests in nearly a dozen cities across the US and Canada, including San Francisco, Las Vegas, Toronto and New York.

There was, indisputably, a direct correlation between the verdict and this explosion of protest. On the other hand, black folks were not shocked at this single blatant instance of brutality. Police brutality is a common occurrence. More specifically, the criminalisation of poverty over the past 12 years, under the guise of the war on drugs, has left all poor people, especially the homeless and those living in substandard public housing projects, vulnerable to virtually every type of police assault imaginable.

## **Constant beating**

For them, there is no Bill of Rights. 'Lock downs' and 'sweeps' are practices which severely curtail the mobility, right to assemble and freedom of speech of predominantly black and Latino public housing residents.

An entire generation of black working-class youth has been written off by the white elites that run the country and by many of their black middle-class cronies who sit in cushy jobs overseeing policies designed to placate, contain and, ultimately, anaesthetise whole communities of impoverished people of colour.

In this social and political context, the beating down of Rodney King was

symbolic of the beating down of black people as a group: the lack of jobs is one blow, the erosion of health care, including the elimination of poor black women's rights to control their bodies, is another; police brutality is yet another blow; the unchecked drug epidemic is a final blow, and the list could go on – more than the 56 fierce blows rendered to Rodney King.

Given this reality, the LA rebellion is not so surprising. In fact, it is a response which has been forecast through the lyrics of popular black rap artists for some time now. Understandably, if you are poor and you see the correlation between that poverty and powerlessness, it is not far-fetched to attack the private property you have been barred from owning and the stores where you are routinely overcharged and under-respected.

To those who said people burned their own neighbourhoods, the irony is astounding. The fact that the businesses within the neighbourhood do not belong to the people who live there and patronise them is precisely the reason people were burning and looting. In fact, some accounts suggest that people deliberately targeted those establishments which were especially unfair and discriminatory.

People were at least trying to fight back – but what made black youth feel momentarily powerful simultaneously

underscored our essential powerlessness. We have anger and frustration and some energy to resist, but it has yet to be channelled into a formidable political force.

This is the pivotal difference between the uprising of LA in 1992 and those of Watts, Detroit, Newark and elsewhere in the mid-1960s.

## **Echos of the '60s?**

Then, the black community was in the throes of a growing and increasingly militant social movement. The lunch-counter sit-in movement launched by black students in 1960 was followed by the freedom rides in 1961. As a culmination of years of struggle and pressure, the civil rights and voting rights acts were passed in 1964 and 1965, respectively.

The flurry of urban rebellions of the 1960s was really an extension of the emerging Black Power and black liberation movement.

The fact that, in 1965, the black community was engaged in a systematic and mass offensive against American injustice cannot be overstated. The young rebels of 1992 have no such legacy in their recent collective memory. This rebellion, although born of the same righteous rage that gave birth to its 1965 counterpart, has occurred at a time of pessimism and despair. It was essentially a defensive



response to escalating attacks and reversals, not an offensive surge to heighten an ongoing struggle.

In the late '60s, the response to Watts was to throw out a few more crumbs and concessions in the form of poverty programmes and token job opportunities for aspiring black elites. The hope was that such a strategy would placate the poor and co-opt the middle class, which it did very successfully for a while. A positive outgrowth was the formation of

militant black community-based organisations, like the Black Panther Party in California and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in the auto plants in Detroit.

But, in the current conservative political climate, where the most consistent increase in government spending on the poor has been in terms of more jails, we can probably anticipate that repression, not concessions, will typify this administration's response. ■

## Fighting nazis – sensitively!

**In 1985, CARF argued that the practice of racism awareness training in the UK did nothing to further the cause of anti-racism. Now, an even more worrying practice is in vogue in Germany – sensitivity training for neo-nazis! (We jest not.)**

Roots, a government-backed project, aims to 'purge neo-nazi violence through re-education'. This project is not an isolated one but part of an alarming trend in social and youth work in Germany which sees neo-nazis as victims in need of psychological help. One of the residents at the Roots project in Marzahn, Berlin, tried to throw a Mozambican man from a tram – now he's busy drinking beer and schnapps and playing football, all with like-minded people. Marzahn is also where Vietnamese worker, Nguyen Tu, was recently murdered by right-wing youth.

One of Germany's leading psychologists, Birgit Rommelspacher, criticises this new approach. 'The new thing we are told is that racial attackers are the ones with problems – social problems, housing problems, employment problems, problems of isolation', she told CARF. 'Since that is the diagnosis, then the cure is to look to their housing needs, find them work and give them social support through groups. And the argument goes that these groups have to offer adventure because the youths' lives are so boring. This kind of thinking implies that these youths are, of themselves, the problem, the only problem.'

'We don't have research on, or a broad movement against, racism in Germany because it is taboo to talk about racism. People say that such talk undermines our understanding of the uniqueness of National Socialism. So, instead of looking at racism, we concentrate on looking at right-wing people. Instead of looking at ourselves

or our society, we visit the burden of racism on to these white male young people. But we then let them off by pointing to their social problems.'



Official skinhead project in Marzahn

The projects are also alarming anti-fascists, who point out that naive social workers, far from 're-educating' against violence, are helping to facilitate it. The *Anti-fa-Info* magazine, warning that Marzahn is in danger of becoming another Hoyerswerda, says that such meeting points are used to plan more attacks. An anti-fascist told CARF that, shortly after reunification, a 'Skinhead Project' was set up in East Berlin and a whole house given over to neo-nazis for redecoration and for use as a youth centre. Despite the fact that the homes of left-wing people and squatters were being attacked, the social worker in charge said that the youths were not nazis – his proof, the skinheads told him so. In the end the neo-nazi premises was mysteriously razed to the ground. ■

## Police attack asylum-seekers

At about 3.30am on 12 June 1992, policemen in full riot gear surrounded three refugee hostels near Freiberg, south west of Dresden. Shouting racist abuse like 'Shit asylum-seekers' and 'Get out', they stormed the hostels.

According to Joss Hess from 'Terre des hommes', a child welfare scheme, the doors of the Granitz hostel were battered down by police; a young Syrian boy who had tried to open a door was beaten whilst his father was held by other officers. A Kurdish man who refused to open his door, because he thought he was facing a neo-nazi attack, was badly beaten up by three policemen. Children were torn away from their mothers (one was thrown to the floor by a policewoman) and the women were forcibly collected, in whatever they happened to be wearing, on the ground floor of the hostel. The men were lined up against a wall and officers then stamped on their toes with their heavy riot boots.

When a vicar from a nearby village protested to the police, he was told that 'those who put up resistance must count on getting beaten on the head'. The Freiberg chief of police justified the raids by citing German anxieties about the criminality of foreigners. Without providing any evidence for the alleged criminality (and no stolen goods were found in any raid), he promised that the raids would definitely not be the last. ■

## Death of a refugee

Refugee Jacqueline Mulata was seven months' pregnant when she arrived with her husband and three children at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport on 7 April from Zaire. Despite her pregnancy, and the fact that she complained of feeling seriously ill, the Dutch constabulary refused her access to a doctor and prevented her husband from buying her medicine at a tax-free shop at the airport. From 7 to 14 April, the Mulatas were kept in the transit lounge of the airport. Refused beds and medical and legal assistance, Jacqueline's condition deteriorated further.

The Mulatas were then transferred to Greshospitium, the first prison to be built for refugees in Amsterdam. Finally, Jacqueline was allowed to see a doctor. But, despite obviously being aware of her pregnancy, the doctor failed to give her an obstetrical examination and prescribed only medicine and vitamin C for stomach aches. The Mulatas were then transferred to a reception centre for refugees in the north of Holland.

Jacqueline, exhausted by the journey, was unable to walk without the help of her husband. She died on 23 April. ■

# Scotland: a progressive nationalism?

With the alarming growth of racist nationalisms and fascist parties across Europe, hardly a week goes by without some journalist phoning the CARF offices in search of a 'British' parallel. In their rush to find a story, journalists are turning their attention to Scotland and comparing nationalism there to the regional nationalisms of, for instance, the Northern Italian Lombardy League. CARF went to Scotland to hear for itself what activists there had to say.

The most glaringly obvious thing is that nationalist sentiment in Scotland has nothing to do with right-wing or authoritarian ideas. The mass protests in Scotland against the poll tax, the fact that 75% of Scottish votes were against the Tories in the general election, the demand by broad coalitions like Scotland United for a multi-option referendum on Scotland's constitutional future—all arise from a yearning for more democracy, not less.

Nothing could be further from the populist, authoritarian message of Italy's Northern League. Virulently racist (both towards immigrants and poor Southern Italians), the Leaguists, with their proposed programme of privatisation and onslaught on trade union rights, aim at the separation of the richest and most economically advanced part of Italy from the rest.

The Scottish people, on the other hand, bitterly resent their inability to prevent the gradual running down of Scotland by an 'absentee' government they did not elect. The Scottish coal industry has been virtually wiped out and the Ravenscraig and Dalzell steel plants are set to close with the loss of 20,000 jobs as privatised British Steel concentrates itself south of the border.

Unemployment, it is predicted, will reach 13.9% by 2000; homelessness has risen by 91% since 1983; almost 40% of Scottish children live in poverty—and all this in a country rich in oil and set to experience another North Sea boom. As one activist put it, 'Anything's got to be better than 13 years of Tory rule.'

## British fascists oppose Scottish nationalists

The mistake made by journalists—and indeed many anti-nazis, who tend to view any nationalism through an anti-fascist lens—is to lump all nationalisms together, failing to make a distinction between progressive and reactionary nationalisms. As power becomes increasingly centralised in Europe (both at the level of the nation-state and at the pan-European level) and wealth and poverty more unevenly



distributed, all sorts of nationalisms and movements for regional autonomy are likely to grow in strength. All the more reason, therefore, that we judge each movement on its own merits.

In the case of Scotland, the tendency to blame nationalism for a perceived rise in neo-nazi activity displays an ignorance about the nature of British fascism. For British fascists, the idea of the break-up of the United Kingdom is comparable only to the treachery that led to the dissolution of the British Empire.

Article after article in BNP publications condemn those in Ireland and Scotland who seek to break up the Union. 'We are British Nationalists rather than English or Scottish nationalists', says *Spearhead* (December 1991), 'although our British nationalism allows for the splendour of the distinct traditions that go to make up our Kingdom and the richness in diversity that gives it so much colour and produces from it a particular wide range of national genius.'

The multicultural message is clear: 'It's OK for the Scottish to have their cultural artifacts—tartan, haggis, kilts and, above all, the military tattoo—that makes them such a quaint part of British heritage. But if it's political control of their resources that they're

after, then it's "hands off the British Union, pal".'

Stuart Hosie, a national executive member of the Scottish National Party who is active in the anti-racist movement in Edinburgh, says: 'The BNP and the loyalists despise the SNP. They consider the British state to represent a single nation and Scottish nationalists as traitors.' This is borne out by BNP publications that single out the SNP, and its perceived internationalism, for scathing criticism.

## A fascist resurgence?

Another myth, fashionable even within the ranks of the anti-fascist movement in England, is that Scotland is a major growth area for the BNP. This is simply not true. The BNP got some of its worst results in Scotland (the NF didn't bother to stand). Englishman David Bruce, from Cheshunt, Herts, did not even turn up for the count in Edinburgh West, where his pathetic candidacy resulted in 133 votes. Nor did the BNP hold a single political meeting in this constituency.

BNP publications describe Scotland as 'difficult terrain' to work in, a euphemism for 'We're not getting bloody anywhere here'. Even the idea that the BNP has made strong links with Ulster loyalists needs constant monitoring, says Dave Hewitt of the Scottish Campaign Against Racism in Football, who points out that, publicly at least, the official Orange Lodge has distanced itself from right-wing organisations. 'Obviously there are links between the BNP and the loyalists', says Dave Hewitt 'but our job as anti-fascists is to frustrate those alliances. Sensationalising the idea makes that task more difficult.'

## Racism is a Scottish problem

Of course, all this does not mean that a Scotland with a strong sense of national identity and a strong left tradition is, therefore, naturally free of racism (or, to make the comparison, that because Italy's Northern League is racist towards the poor South,



southerners are not racist towards black and Third World peoples). In countering press misrepresentation of Scottish nationalism as racist, Stuart Hosie argues: 'Racism did not come to Scotland with one particular political party. Racism is rife in all white, western societies.'

This is something that black activists would agree with. But, for them, the time is now ripe for a more concerted anti-racist and internationalist perspective within the ranks of nationalist organisations which would also entail looking at what is specific to racism in Scotland.

Joyce McMillan, in a *Scotland on Sunday* (22.3.92) commentary, struck a chord when she wrote that, if we continue 'to opine that racism is an English disease, we are colluding in lies about ourselves which will ultimately help no one. But if we face it, deal with it, then we will show that the Janus face at the head of our movement for self-determination is, at this crucial moment, leading in the right direction.' As she implies, racism and colonialism in Scotland cannot be dismissed merely as an English import.

Scots took part in and benefited enormously from the British empire, argues anti-racist educationalist Andrew Johnson. 'Scots were extensively involved in the acquisition, development and enforced possession of a British empire. Shipping and trade in Glasgow and Edinburgh were built on trade with the West Indies. And Scots played a prominent role in slavery, in the running of plantations, both as artisans and wealthy absent beneficiaries back in Scotland.' Yet all this is barely touched upon in the Scottish education system, leading Andrew Johnson to conclude that 'there is an official culture of silence about racism in Scotland'.

Therein lies the specificity of Scottish racism: a failure to admit of its existence save as an export from outside. Thus, at the point at which Scottish nationalists idealise Scotland's past, they too might collude with this official culture of silence. There are indications that the SNP is beginning to recognise this. At its 1991 annual conference, it passed a motion recognising that 'racism is not an "English problem", but that Scotland is a racist country and that the SNP must commit itself to fighting racism now and in a future independent country.'

Satwat Rehman of Lothian CARF is anxious that the motions are now transferred into concrete policies.

Whilst recognising that Scottish nationalism is unfairly characterised by its detractors, this cannot mean, she argues, that black people, out of a misplaced loyalty, stay silent on issues of racism.

'There are a lot of black people who have never felt Scotland is their home - where do we fit in in terms of Scottish nationalism?' says Satwat. 'We do feel a sympathy with Scottish nationalism; what happened in the Highland clearances echoes much in our colonial past. But because of our experiences of

racism, we know that it is not enough for Scottish children just to learn about the Highland clearances; they must learn too about the other dispossession that are happening in the Third World today. Scottish nationalism must become firmly anti-racist and internationalist in outlook, must acknowledge the black presence in Scotland instead of chauvinistically overlooking our contribution, and face the fact that, whilst the Scots may have been oppressed by the English, they too reaped the profits of imperialism.' ■

## Muirhouse shows the way

The first anniversary of the Muirhouse Anti-Racist Campaign (MARC) will be celebrated with a huge party in August. CARF spoke to some of the residents on Muirhouse, a housing estate in Edinburgh, and asked why this predominantly white community decided to come together in a unique campaign to fight racism and fascism.

Muirhouse is one of five housing estates in Greater Pilton, Edinburgh, an area of predominantly low-rise council housing that stretches over three miles. Designated as an EC Poverty Area (one of four such areas in the UK) male unemployment in Muirhouse runs at 24%.

**The next time you talk about the problems of racism on white housing estates, remember the activities of people on Muirhouse who are setting the standard for us to follow.**

MARC was launched in September 1990 after a small band of BNP supporters became active on the estate. One day, after the principal family involved, the Camerons, strode arrogantly through the estate shouting 'We've got the Jews out of Muirhouse, now we'll get the blacks as well', local people decided enough was enough.

Local resident Chris McCracken, and his pregnant wife Maria, originally from Botswana, were being racially harassed by the BNP. 'We had to drive a wedge between the fascists and the white unemployed youth', says local activist Willie Adams. 'About 70 people marched to the fascists' house to confront them. There were about 16-20 fascists outside, but when they saw us they hid. So people began to shout "Look at the master race now".'

More action was to follow. At one public meeting, the Camerons'

stepmother broke down in tears apologising for her delinquent stepsons' behaviour. After Chris McCracken was threatened with a knife, MARC organised a support network. It was only strong community pressure that forced the council to rehouse the McCracken family.

For Maureen and Jayne, two young mothers on Muirhouse, regularly abused and threatened by the fascists because of their stance, the reasons why they decided to stand up and fight are quite clear. 'We fought because it's our community', says Jayne. 'We don't want to bring up our children with filth like that telling us how to bring them up and who they should play with.'

'In fact,' says Willie, 'we could say thanks to the BNP because they gave us the inspiration to do something. There's so many issues to fight in this community, and we would not have come together so quickly if it wasn't for the BNP.'

Now the activities of the BNP, on Muirhouse at least, have died down. But over on the Wardieburn estate, also in Greater Pilton, a KKK cell is operating. Very few black families live on Greater Pilton and MARC is strengthening its efforts to make contact with them. Says community worker Karl: 'Black families aren't using community resources. Racial harassment means they live under an informal curfew. Those perceived as newcomers are the most vulnerable.'

Muirhouse residents are now orienting themselves towards long-term anti-racist work. A community education project has been set up and a video of MARC's campaign against the BNP has been made. ■

MARC, PO Box 474, Edinburgh EH11 2TQ

# Racism in the squad

The scandal of the West Midlands serious crime squad has received extensive media coverage, but a key issue – that of racism – has scarcely been mentioned. CARF shows how central it was – and is – in the criminalisation of the black community and the miscarriages of justice that follow.

On 5 May, Robert Haughton became the sixth black man to be released from a long jail sentence as a result of the inquiry into the West Midlands serious crime squad. On the same day, the new Director of Public Prosecutions, Barbara Mills, announced that there would be no criminal prosecutions of any West Midlands officers.

Three years after the squad was disbanded and 53 officers transferred to non-operational duties, forensic evidence has secured the release of 11 men who, between them, have served over 30 years' imprisonment. One hundred and thirty-seven officers have been served with complaints, and 53 files have been sent to the Crown Prosecution Service following the £4m Shaw inquiry, which investigated allegations ranging from assaults, threats and placing plastic bags on prisoners' heads to secure 'confessions', to tampering with evidence, fabricating statements, perjury and extortion of public funds to pay bogus informers.

The issue of racism has been almost absent from the press coverage of the West Midlands affair, despite being within the remit of the Shaw inquiry. More alarming still, it is not on the agenda of the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice. Analysis of the West Midlands cases – of those released and of those still in custody protesting their innocence – shows racism as the hidden agenda behind much of the behaviour of the West Midlands police.

Of the 107 complaints the inquiry dealt with, over 40, including those of the six released, were from black people – clearly a quite disproportionate number. The evidence shows that invariably the police targeted black males in their 20s who were known to them.

Robert Haughton is typical when he described how he 'had run-ins with the police when I was young and had been in Borstal for petty theft'. Or take Valentine Cooke, who said: 'My name just fitted the bill because the squad wanted me...'

● **Identification** Hassan Khan was freed in March 1991 after his 22-page confession to an armed robbery was rendered unreliable by ESDA testing.

Eight of the 14 witnesses to the robbery described the robber as white, but Hassan Khan was convicted. In addition, he had had two toes amputated six weeks before the robbery, and his foot was still in bandages, making it impossible for him to escape as alleged. On his release Mr Khan commented: 'I was set up for a crime that I would not, did not and could not have committed.'

● **Confessions** ESDA testing in West Midlands cases relying on confession evidence has shown that confessions were fabricated. Expert evidence has revealed the lack of the distinctive speech patterns and colloquialisms which mark genuine confessions, except that in the case of Afro-Caribbean suspects the word 'man' is stuck on the end of many sentences, showing a distinct lack of imagination on the part of those who fabricated the statements.

● **The defence** The final common feature in the West Midlands cases is the difficulty many had in securing a properly prepared defence. In the first place, all the accused were remanded in custody – black defendants are twice as likely to be refused bail as white defendants. On remand, many became demoralised and debilitated, clearly disadvantaged in their ability to prepare for trial. Not surprisingly, those fighting the police in such circumstances have, as Robert Haughton put it, 'no self-confidence left and don't think anyone will believe them'.

There are, in addition, consistent complaints about the quality of legal

advice and representation, and the failure of defence lawyers to challenge the prosecution case adequately, either because of a lack of ability or, more often, a lack of commitment.

This theme is not limited to West Midlands cases. It is confirmed by a report by the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) on 22 prisoners at Long Lartin, of whom seven were black, whom NAPO believes were wrongly convicted.

The case of Satpal Ram (see *CARF* No 8) is the clearest example of how inadequate legal representation can result in serious injustice. In 1987, he was convicted of the murder of a man who, along with six others, had racially abused and attacked him, stabbing him twice in the neck with a broken glass. In resisting, Satpal Ram fatally wounded his assailant. He spent 8½ months in custody before his trial, during which time he was visited only once, for 45 minutes, by his barrister – who then, he says, told him at his trial that he was not going to plead self-defence.

The Court of Appeal, in dismissing Satpal's appeal, has refused to pass judgment on the competence of his barrister. Satpal Ram remains in prison, his legal remedies exhausted.

## A systematic process

What emerges from an analysis of the West Midlands cases is an insight into the systematic criminalisation of black communities. This process gathered momentum in the 1980s, partly to create scapegoats for spiralling crime rates, but also as a means of controlling and suppressing resistance to impoverishment and marginalisation, particularly after the inner-city riots.

The police are at the forefront of this process, where guilt is related to the colour of a person's skin and the neighbourhood in which they live, and is decided not in court so much as on the street, in the back of a police car, or in a police cell.

The failure of the DPP to bring criminal prosecutions against any West Midlands officers perpetuates that process. ■



Robert Haughton

# The makers of black history

**We are in danger of forgetting key figures in the making of black history, even as it is made. In the last few months, three stalwart fighters for black community – Vishnu Sharma, Kath Locke and Rashid Mufti – have died and yet these deaths have gone practically without public notice.**



Vishnu Sharma (front centre) leads 1960s march

Vishnu Sharma, who died on 22 April, came to Britain in 1957 as a seasoned political campaigner already involved in the Indian struggle for independence, the Communist Party and peasant movements. Applying that political expertise to Britain, he joined the British CP, found work in a Southall factory, organised one of the earliest black strikes at Rockware Glass, and supported disputes such as at Woolfs rubber factory in 1965.

From local trade union activist, he rose to leadership of the Indian Workers' Association – a national body which always had its strongest base in Southall.

But Vishnu's vision of a better society was not a restricted 'workerist' one. From 1966, when the education minister decreed that schools could not have more than one-third Asian children, Vishnu led the campaign against the bussing of Southall's children outside the area (a practice which was only ended in 1977) and helped set up a local Saturday school to give the children a sense of their community. In 1962, when the first Immigration Act was passed, Vishnu led the protests outside Downing Street.

By the mid-1970s, he was working with the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination for laws to outlaw racism. And, after the Wilson Committee in 1967 into appeals procedures,

it was Vishnu who, with Mary Dines, set up the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

In later years, he became an authority on the many black struggles in Britain in which he and others had played a part. CARF was amongst those groups which benefited from his considerable gifts as an oral historian. He was unstinting with his time, ever ready to look out a photo or a document to highlight an episode. And, unlike many of his contemporaries, Vishnu bridged the generations. He was there on the streets to commemorate in 1989 the murder of Blair Peach; he was always there too to give incisive advice on new problems to the new community activists.

Unlike Vishnu, Kath Locke and Rashid Mufti never gained national prominence, but committed themselves to their cities of Manchester and Liverpool.

Kath, coming to politics a decade after Vishnu, was, in the late 1960s, a member of the Universal Coloured People's Association and, later, a key regional organiser for the Marxist-Leninist Black Unity and Freedom Party. But it was in two community campaigns that Kath made her mark in the early 1970s. She helped found the Moss Side People's Association to fight against the destruction (known as redevelopment) of the area and, in 1971, during the occupation of the

Carmoor Road Centre, formed the first multi-racial play group in Manchester.

From then onwards, she campaigned against the stigmatising of black children as ESN (educationally subnormal) and the failing of black children by the schooling system. She was also active in numerous defence committees, anti-deportation campaigns and self-help groups.

From 1982 to 1991, she worked at the Trade Union Basic Education Project. But it was her work with and for black women which will be longest remembered. In the 1970s, she was one of the founding members of the unique Abisindi Women's Cooperative, a women's advice and cultural centre in Manchester. And at her retirement party earlier this year, black woman after young black woman stood up to 'testify' about the way that Kath's example of struggle had influenced their political lives.

Rashid Mufti, who died aged only 51, went to Liverpool in the mid-1970s as a lecturer. A founding member, and later chair, of Merseyside Anti-racist Alliance and the Charles Wootton Centre (named after the black man killed by racists in the riots of 1919), he supported many local anti-deportation campaigns (including that of Anwar Ditta) and community defence campaigns (including that of the 'Bradford 12').

After the 1981 uprising in Liverpool, it was Rashid who spoke out for the city, helping to found the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee and later to create the Liverpool 8 Law Centre. For a spell in the 1980s, he moved to London to work in the council offices of Camden. But he never felt at home there and soon returned to Liverpool, whilst using his national contacts to keep the particular problems of Liverpool on the national agenda.

'Principled and non-sectarian' were the words that the friends of Vishnu, Kath and Rashid, who helped CARF compile this piece, all chose to sum up with. Perhaps these words were also chosen because they acutely describe the qualities which are so sadly lacking in our times. ■



# Anti-racist groups cut

**A new wave is sweeping through local government. And it is black and anti-racist organisations that are being swept to one side. Groups servicing the community and providing an infrastructure for the anti-racist movement are threatened with closure.**

In the last few months, many organisations, including Leicester Racial Attacks Monitoring Project (RAMP), Birmingham Independent Immigration Support Agency (IISA) and the London-based Institute of Race Relations (IRR), have had major sources of funding cut. What all these groups share is a strong sense of independence, and a refusal to adopt a patron-client relationship with their funders or to be part of the politically acceptable race relations industry.

## Axing independence

Birmingham IISA (formerly JCWI West Midlands) provides advice and representation for all communities affected by immigration laws. Following the May county council elections, the Tories hold the balance of power on the West Midlands Joint Committee (which represents seven local authorities) that funds IISA, alongside groups like the Midlands Refugee Council and the West Midlands Low Pay Unit. These groups have been accused by the Tories of being part of an 'anti-government propaganda network' – this, it would seem, is the only justification behind the proposed axing.

Critics of the London Boroughs Grants Scheme have accused it of lacking political vision in suspending, for the second year running, the funding of the Institute of Race Relations, well-known for its educational books against racism, its journal *Race and Class*, and for holding Europe's largest library on black and third world studies. The LBGS has, in effect, told the Institute to spend its reserves (held to finance removal necessitated by the Channel Tunnel rail link at Kings Cross) on salaries. Says Institute director A. Sivanandan: 'We are being told that the way to run the Institute is to run it down.'

## Leicester RAMP

Out of the three groups under threat, the situation faced by Leicester RAMP, which for six years has been providing support for the victims of racial harassment, is the most desperate. All funding from the Leicester city and county councils will cease from 31 August and this independent project will be replaced by what the



local authorities see as a more acceptable 'in-house' racial harassment project.

For at least two and a half years, RAMP has been at odds with the local authorities as to who controls the project – the community it serves or its funders. In 1989 the local authorities imposed on RAMP a management board with six councillors to oversee the running of the project. RAMP had no say on these appointments but, as the councillors frequently did not even turn up for meetings, it carried on regardless.

In August 1991, RAMP's annual report drew the ire of Labour and Tory councillors alike, who even considered taking a libel action. The reason: RAMP had criticised the council's responses to racial harassment!

The situation seemed to calm down after the completion of an 18-month evaluation of RAMP's work. Suddenly, however, the local authorities recommended that RAMP be axed on the ground that it had 'lost the confidence of the city and council councils'. But, as RAMP worker Harinder Kang points out: 'If the city and county council withdraw RAMP's funding on the basis of lack of confidence, they are expressing a lack of confidence in their own elected members. Besides which, RAMP is not there to serve the council but the community that suffer from racial attacks and harassment.'

This is a view shared by Vandna Gohil, deputy director of Leicester Voluntary Action, who points out that two other black organisations, the Highfields Workshop and Bengali Youth and Cultural Shomiti, have also had their funding cut.

At the moment, another Leicester organisation, the Highfields Youth & Community Centre, is challenging Leicester city and county councils in judicial review. ■

CARF readers should write protesting at the treatment of Leicester RAMP to:  
Councillor Peter Soulsby, Leicester City Council,  
New Walk Centre, Wellford Place,  
Leicester LE1 6ZG  
The Leader, Leicester County Council,  
County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester.

# Black communities care

**For over two years, a quiet battle has been waged by black individuals and organisations against the government's community care proposals. CARF talked to people involved.**

As with health, education and transport, the government is handing aspects of social care over to 'market forces'. The residential care of the elderly, the long-term mentally ill, children and the chronically sick will no longer be provided by central government departments. Instead, each local authority will buy care from anyone – whether private company or community organisation – provided that the price is right.

Local authorities are supposed to have consulted with local communities

about their needs before drawing up plans. But black people all over the country tell CARF this consultation has been a complete sham. 'Needs', says Adele Jones of the National Institute for Social Work, 'will be assessed in terms of ongoing use of services and we know black people's access to services is restricted already because of racism.' Part of Adele Jones' job has been to inform black groups about the implications of community care, for they had been completely left out of the reckoning.

## Black groups fight back

In a few places, black groups have come together in community forums to comment on plans and lobby the local council for appropriate services. The Black and Ethnic Minorities Community Care Forum of Newham, for example, has met for two years and made detailed comments on the care plans, forcing the council to listen.

Barry Mussenden explained why he has worked so hard for the Forum: 'I am there because the black community is under attack. Groups that took years to develop could be no more. Community care means the privatisation of care. In the long term, it is very dangerous because it means that the independence of black groups is being whittled away.'

## Contracts kill communities

Beneath the debate about community care is the debate about the funding of the black voluntary sector. For the care proposals pave the way for councils to move away from grant-aiding groups altogether. The new arrangements mean a group will enter into a contract with the council to provide a certain, clearly designated and quantifiable service at a particular price. And black groups believe that this will spell the end of many black projects.

Loraine Martins of the London Voluntary Service Council spoke for many black organisations: 'Ten years ago there was a proliferation of black groups, but now, because of the cuts, there are very few. Where councils have already funded

groups via contracts, it has forced them to change. They have to compartmentalise what they do and this runs counter to the black perspective which is holistic, flexible and, therefore, responsive to needs.'

For the large white voluntary groups, like MIND or Age Concern, the problem with community care is that it is underfunded, but they are playing ball with the government. The fact that black groups are small, understaffed and under-resourced means that they are not in a position to bid for contracts.

But their opposition lies elsewhere: the proposals and the ethos behind them will destroy the very impetus of black voluntary work. For black groups arose, in part, in response to racism. And, as well as existing to provide the services that mainstream society has denied black people, they are also there to research, to innovate and, above all, to campaign on behalf of black people. ■

## Race laws – any point?

**There has recently been discussion about petitioning the European parliament for race discrimination laws to be extended to cover the whole of Europe.**

**CARF asked A. Sivanandan, a leading analyst/critic of race policies, what he thought about the campaign.**

In the first place, I don't like the term petition. To petition is to beg, to be a supplicant. And you don't beg for your rights, you demand them. In the second place, I would have thought that such petitioning of the European parliament should begin in Europe, where no such legislation exists. In Britain, we have legislation, however ineffectual. So if we petition Brussels for similar legislation, we are basically holding up our own legislation as a model – which is rubbish on a number of levels.

First of all, the law here is ineffectual. As I have said before, not only does the law have no teeth, it also has no gums. You have only to look at the record of the Commission for Racial Equality to see that the 1976 Race Relations Act has made absolutely no difference in terms of racial discrimination in the things that matter, in the things that improve the life chances of ordinary black people – in housing, employment, education, health and in relation to the criminal justice system.

Secondly, let's take the argument that, even if legislation is not effective at this level, it could still be a way of teaching people that discrimination is wrong. This might have been true, to some small extent, at the time that the legislation was passed in this country – although, there again, its educative

value was undermined by the weakness of the law (which showed that the government had no belief in its own legislation) and the context in which the law was passed (as an antidote to racist immigration laws).

But the position in Europe today is entirely different. People are not ignorant about racism or racial discrimination. They choose it, they are unashamed about it, they borrow from their past traditions to uphold it, they vote racist parties into parliament. Hence, the argument that legislation has an educative function is no longer tenable.

Besides, what has such legislation in Britain achieved except the creation of a race relations industry and a black bureaucratic class to go with it?

The only legislation that we can ask for is that which outlaws racism, makes racism a criminal act. And that is not something you petition for, that is not something a government will hand you on a platter. It is something you have to fight for, and mobilise public opinion around, as part of a larger anti-racist struggle. And one of the demands of that struggle could be such a law.

The demand for anti-discriminatory legislation, in other words, should be a tactic within a larger strategy. And it should be a demand, not a petition.

You can't petition racists. ■

## ■ Inquest to reopen?

Nothing will bring back Orville Blackwood, who died after a massive tranquillising injection at Broadmoor hospital on 28 August 1991. But his mother may be one step nearer finding out exactly how he died and one step nearer preventing such a death befalling another black youth. The original inquest, which was extremely rushed by the coroner who did not allow certain evidence about Broadmoor and previous deaths to be heard, brought in a verdict of accidental death. After months of campaigning against that decision, Orville's mother, Clara Buckley, has been given leave by the High Court to apply for a judicial review into the original inquest. ■

## RACIST MURDERS

**Sarwar and Dada  
brutally murdered by  
racists**

### NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

**Assemble 12.30pm  
Saturday 22 August  
Plattfields Park (Platt Lane entrance)  
Wilmslow Road, Rusholme  
Manchester  
Join the March for Justice!**

*For further information*  
MS and SD Memorial Committee, c/o WFA,  
9 Lucy St, Old Trafford, Manchester M15 4BX

**NEWHAM**

# No justice, no peace

The 'March for Justice' in Newham in support of the Deane family and to 'Remember Sahitharan' (see *Carf* No 7) attracted over 4,000 people. But the fight for justice continues. Whilst Tony Deane was found guilty of assaulting the police in July (Tony's father, Arnold, was acquitted), one of the men arrested for Sahitharan's murder has been acquitted.

'Whereas a black youth is railroaded through the magistrates courts on trumped-up charges', says Hossein Zahir of the Newham Monitoring Project, 'Andrew Noble, one of the two white men sent for trial for the murder of Sri Lankan refugee Mr Sahitharan, has been released by magistrates at committal.' Noble's acquittal shows up the inadequacies of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), say campaigners.

One would have thought that when the CPS took over prosecutions from the police in 1985, this would have led to more committed action against those accused of racist murders. This has not proved to be so. The Newham Monitoring Project (NMP), which monitored Noble's trial and that of co-accused Gary Hoskins, points out that the CPS:



- failed to challenge the men's bail applications;
  - failed to make an application for the court gallery to be cleared of Noble and Hoskins' friends and family, even though prosecution witnesses felt intimidated;
  - failed to appoint a special prosecutor.
- What makes the acquittal so difficult to bear is the fact that the owners of the pub

where Noble claimed to be at the time of the murder are themselves facing criminal charges of GBH and administering a noxious substance after a racist attack in which a man was beaten senseless and had ammonia sprayed into his eye.

The trial of Hoskins continues. ■

For further details contact NMP: 081-555-8151

**PECKHAM**

# Campaign for Ivan Fergus

Two hundred people packed a meeting in Peckham, London, on 3 June to hear about the wrongful arrest and conviction of 15-year-old Ivan Fergus. In January 1992, Ivan was convicted of assault with intent to rob and sentenced to 15 months' detention at Orchard Lodge, a 'secure' children's unit.

On 25 April 1991, Ivan, then only 13, was arrested while waiting at a bus stop on his way to school and taken to



Lewisham police station, for an assault which had occurred a month earlier. The attacker was described as being aged between 16 and 18, 5ft 11ins in height, of light complexion, with stubble on his face. The prosecution case depended wholly on the victim's identification of the assailant, as no forensic evidence was found. Ivan is described by his mother, Nellie, as dark, 5ft 7ins, and has never shaved in his life, a fact attested to by the family doctor. The attacker was also described as having zig-zag hair cut markings on the side of his head, while Ivan had no such markings at the time.

The meeting also heard of the apparently appalling incompetence of Ivan's solicitor. Alibi witnesses who could have confirmed Ivan's whereabouts at the time of the assault were never called and, on Ivan's conviction, no appeal was lodged, even though this was requested by his mother and a barrister had identified legal grounds. Indeed, Ivan's probation officer and staff at Orchard Lodge, and even the Crown Prosecution

Service were unhappy about the quality of the identification evidence on which Ivan was convicted.

Nellie Fergus movingly described the turmoil into which the family have been plunged. She became too upset to continue, and a friend took over for her. After listening to newly-appointed solicitor Gareth Peirce, and other speakers, the meeting decided on an immediate protest outside nearby Peckham police station.

An orderly, dignified but militant crowd marched to the police station and protested outside. The police, under pressure, agreed to a series of meetings, at the first of which Chief Supt Checkley of Peckham Division expressed his 'surprise' at Ivan's conviction and sentence, given the quality of the evidence.

The Justice for Ivan Fergus Campaign intends to campaign for Ivan's release and to have his conviction quashed. ■

For further details contact Justice for Ivan Fergus Campaign, c/o 192 Evelyn Street, London SE8 5DB. Tel: 081-692 1308.



# Stop deportations

The campaign against the threatened deportation of Mamta Chopra is gathering strength. A very successful public meeting was held in Bradford in June, and on 4 June supporters from Bradford and London picketed the Home Office in support of Mamta, while MPs Max Madden and Alice Mahon went in to see the Home Office minister. They were told that Mamta can stay – for now. As a result of the widespread support she has received, she has been given permission to stay until the end of July. Her future is still uncertain, and her fight is not over.



Mamta Chopra

Mamta is one of many women who have to choose between being trapped in a violent and abusive marriage and leaving, thus risking deportation. Home Office rules say that wives of British citizens have to go through a 'probationary period' of a year before they can apply to stay permanently, and if, during that time, the marriage breaks down, they have no right to stay. The West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign has taken up the cases of Sally Morton and Prakash Chavrimootoo and her son Prem, who also face deportation because they refused to tolerate domestic violence. The National Union of Public Employees is now backing Prakash and Prem's campaign.

We urge CARF readers to write to your MPs expressing your concern at the racist and sexist immigration rules which deny the women the right to leave violent men on pain of deportation. ■

Mamta's Anti-Deportation Campaign: c/o ARAFA, 31 Manor Road, Bradford BD1 4PS. West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign, 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B19 1NH.

## UPDATE

**Computer game** • CARF's campaign against Amiga Format's racist advertising of a computer game (see CARF No 8) has proved successful. The Director of Public Prosecutions, Barbara Mills, has written to Glyn Ford MEP describing the advert as utterly tasteless and Amiga Format have assured us that the offensive material will not occur again.

**Football** • Students at Sheffield's Earl Marshal Comprehensive School who wrote to Sunderland football club complaining about the racist behaviour of its fans have received a reply from Sunderland's manager, Malcolm Crosby. 'Please send our apologies to members of your school, for the unruly minority who let the club down in everyway', writes Crosby.

Meanwhile, CARF readers have contacted the Sunderland fanzine, *A love supreme*, and an anti-fascist group may be set up at the club next season.

**PC suspended** • Following a complaint lodged by GACARA on behalf of black motorist,

Daniel Goswell, a police constable has been found guilty of abuse of power by a police internal disciplinary committee. PC Trigg has now been dismissed following an incident in which Mr. Goswell received injuries after being hit with a police truncheon.

**Thurrock Youth Club** • In CARF No 8 we reported on the actions of Richard Graham who threatened legal action against a youth club in Thurrock because he said it discriminated against whites. The very same Richard Graham stood as a Conservative candidate in the May local elections.

**YMCA protest** • The newly-formed Project Against Racial Attacks and Harassment have taken up the case of black worker, Sylvia Bridgemohan who says she was summarily dismissed from her post at Waltham Forest YMCA after making a complaint about racism. Regular pickets of Waltham Forest YMCA are being held. PARAH 081-527 1555

## REVIEW

### Reviving investigative journalism

*Unmesh Desai writes:* You can probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of investigative journalists working on mainstream papers in Britain today. *A Climate of Fear* provides proof, if any is needed, that David Rose ranks among the few who seek to report on miscarriages of justice – not after they happen, not when to do so is politically expedient, but at the very point at which injustice occurs. In fact, David Rose (who was one of the few journalists to systematically cover the Newham 7 and Newham 8 trials) has followed the Tottenham 3 cases from start to finish, as detailed chapters on the minutiae of court proceedings show. And in doing so he has added his professional weight to the Tottenham 3 defence campaign, whose intelligent and determined campaigning has been a lesson to us all.

Indeed, the work continues: a campaign has been launched to draw attention to the injustice of Winston Silcott's previous murder conviction and there are, at the time of writing, ongoing pickets of the trial, on charges of perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, of Detective Superintendent Graham Melvin, who led the Blakelock murder investigation.

Written, then, by a mainstream journalist in a popular and racy style and issued by a mainstream publisher, *A Climate of Fear* will not just be read avidly by left and anti-racist activists but

will find a wider audience. Hopefully, David Rose's concrete descriptions of the then Metropolitan Commissioner Sir Kenneth Newman's strategy towards the inner city, based on his experiences in the RUC, will force this readership to acknowledge what the rest of us know at first hand: that black inner city communities are regarded by the police as 'enemy territory', its inhabitants stereotyped as criminals, drug dealers, illegal immigrants, social misfits to be policed by force and not worthy of decent treatment.

It is this all-pervasive logic that caught three innocent men from Broadwater Farm in a web of injustice – and the criminalisation of black communities continues today. The experience of Newham, where Tony Deane, beaten senseless by police, has now been criminalised in the Magistrates Court (see p14), is being repeated up and down the country. But without a responsible, investigative press, without more David Roses and their like, our protest is increasingly falling on deaf ears. Will it take another Broadwater Farm?

All in all, a book that *must* be read by serious activists, as well as by policy-makers and the Royal Commission for Criminal Justice. ■

*A Climate of Fear: the murder of PC Blakelock and the case of the Tottenham 3* (Bloomsbury, 1992) £6.99.

## APRIL

- 15 In first decision on race issue, Press Complaints Commission upholds charges of racially biased reporting against north London's *Hornsey Journal*.
- 16 At first meeting since election, cabinet agrees to give new Asylum Bill priority.
- 17 New Home Secretary John Patten says greater fear of hell and damnation would cut crime rates ... Socialist politicians angered by Paris Court of Appeal decision to throw out case against second world war nazi collaborator.
- 19 Society of Black Lawyers says racial discrimination against black law students is rife in the legal profession.
- 20 Taxi-driver escapes burning house in Rochdale after arson attack.
- 21 Police Complaints Authority will not take disciplinary action against police marksmen involved in shooting of Ian Gordon in Telford in August 1991.
- 22 Police investigate racist publicity campaign in Cheltenham against John Taylor, defeated black Tory general election candidate.
- 24 Crown Prosecution Service to consider prosecution of Bedfordshire Tory MP John Carlisle for incitement to racial hatred following his remark that gypsies 'should be banished to the wilderness'.
- 25 Winston Silcott's lawyers plan fresh appeal against his conviction for murder on grounds of false defence.
- 29 Bexley councillors walk out during anti-racist lobby calling on council to expel BNP from its headquarters in Welling.

## MAY

- 3 Campaigners fight deportation to Caribbean of William Weekes who has lived in Manchester for 14 years
- 4 Brent council take-over of Stonebridge Park business and leisure complex, run by black community since 1981, causes anger.
- 5 After tirade of racial abuse, gang of white youths throw 13-year-old boy off walkway in Ladbroke Grove estate, west London.
- 7 Reintroduction of Asylum Bill to be delayed while Home Secretary carries out thorough review.
- 11 Judith Ward freed by Court of Appeal after 18 years in jail.
- 12 John Major says Britain will fight EC pressure to remove border controls.
- 14 Metropolitan police officer appeals against dismissal resulting from racial abuse complaint to Police Complaints Authority.
- 15 Police Complaints Authority annual report shows complaints up by 12%. ... Home Office rejects claims of black American Adol Owen-Williams that immigration officers refused him entry because he was 'probably a fugitive' from the LA riots ... Ministry of Defence to introduce ethnic monitoring in the armed forces.

- 16 Court of Appeal to hear new evidence in M25 case.
- 17 800 protest against racist attacks in Drummond Street area of Euston, London, after incident when two carloads of whites drove around threatening and attacking local people; local youth association criticises police delay in responding and the charging of an Asian man.
- 19 Department of Social Security Surrey farm raid finds immigrant workers earning 60p per hour.
- 20 Court of Appeal releases Robert Haughton and Delroy Hare, victims of West Midlands serious crime squad, on same day as Director of Public Prosecutions says no squad officer will be prosecuted ... Transport & General Workers' Union demands register of farm gangmasters to help stop exploitation of immigrants and women workers.
- 21 Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke announces inquiry into the police with aim of 'modernising' the service ... Police call for new stop-and-search powers.
- 22 Hunger striking Kurdish refugees gain some concessions from Home Office... Top firms refuse to join study into 'employment of ethnic minorities'.
- 27 Visa restrictions on Poles to be scrapped from 1 July ... Rights Shop in east London with many Asian clients faces closure.
- 29 Cheltenham Tory who claimed racism lost John Taylor his seat faces backlash from local Tory Association ... £470,000 paid in compensation to workers in racial discrimination cases in 1991, more than three times previous year's figure.
- 31 Bonn police ban neo-nazi demonstration against the unveiling of the 'Bomber' Harris statue in London.

## JUNE

- 2 Hertfordshire county council's school admission rules discriminates against Asian pupils, says CRE.
- 5 German parliament passes asylum-seeker law to accelerate processing and expulsion procedures.
- 10 Home Secretary rejects contract compliance to combat discrimination in employment.
- 11 Racism rampant among French police, says International Federation of Human Rights ... CRE says anti-racism legislation must be strengthened to avoid LA-style conflict ... Home Secretary tells Association of Chief Police Officers: 'It is a lesser evil if a guilty man goes free than if an innocent man is convicted.'
- 12 EC ministers reject German proposal for Yugoslav refugee quota system ... Institute of Jewish Affairs to set up commission on the rise of neo-fascism in western Europe ... Arson attack causes extensive damage to Kosher lunch club in east London

- 13 Over 300 people attend first convention of Anti-Racist Alliance in London.
- 15 Norwegian neo-nazi joins with English football fan at start of violence in Malmö during European cup.
- 19 Home Secretary rejects necessity of identity card scheme.
- 20 Crown Prosecution Service drops drug prosecutions because of credibility of prosecution witnesses, all Stoke Newington police officers currently under investigation.
- 25 Tony Deane found guilty at Stratford magistrates court of assaulting the police. Arnold Deane acquitted on similar charges.



Prakash and Prem Chavrimootoo have received the support of NUPE in their campaign against deportation (see p15)

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