



CAMPAIGN AGAINST
carf
RACISM & FASCISM

No 19 March/April 1994 80p

John Monks
interviewed

Building

From Red Scar Mill to Burnsalls

anti-racism

Fascism in the
labour heartland

in the
trade union
movement

Muhammad Idrish on fighting racist laws

Discrimination • Low pay • Harassment at the workplace

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EDITORIAL

Back to basics

IN THIS, the 125th year since the formation of the trades union movement, the TUC has decided to call a demonstration in east London against the rise of racism and fascism in the former heartland of the labour movement.

The spur to the demonstration is the election of a BNP councillor for the Millwall ward and the need to unite to prevent any more such fascist candidates from being returned in the May elections. But CARF hopes that the TUC's Unity demonstration on 19 March will be followed by the adoption of a concerted anti-racist and anti-fascist programme at a national level, accompanied by a resurgence of anti-racist activity amongst rank and file trade unionists.

What the bases for such a programme could be are indicated in this edition of CARF. On the question of fascism, we hope to see the TUC respond to the call from Tower Hamlets trades council for resources to be put into the community and for the creation of an unemployed resource centre. The decline of manufacturing industry in the docks area, the governmental neglect of local needs, compounded by the divisive and corroding policies of Tower Hamlets council, have taken place amidst the virtual annihilation of a trades union base in the East End. And with this erosion of trades union consciousness has gone a failure to build organisations capable of working in poor communities to undermine the 'Rights for Whites' message of the BNP, or to take the fight against racism down to where it really matters - the workplace, the dole queue and the housing estates.

The TUC has also indicated that it wants to work in solidarity with the victims of racial violence. This means having a presence in those areas notorious for racist attacks; and it means the TUC adding its not inconsiderable voice to campaigns to defend those communities, such as that of the 'Tower Hamlets 9'.

But even this is not enough, for the TUC has wider responsibilities, not only to its membership but to other, non-unionised workers, as well as to the unemployed. Discrimination and racial harassment at the workplace are still rife but the unions' response is woefully inadequate. And if the trades union movement is to protect the new army of mainly black, Third World, migrant, refugee and female workers, it needs to move beyond the narrow confines of its present approach to anti-racism which consists of equal opportunities and more black representation within union structures. Equal opportunities for the UK's low paid, sweated workers are meaningless when they are denied the first opportunity as workers, the right to join a trade union. And if the trade unions are to fight for this fundamental right it means going back to the very basic lessons of struggle, organisation and defiance which lie at the very heart of labour history.

Racism is inextricably linked to the fight against low pay, poverty and workplace exploitation. If anti-racists and trade unionists can find common cause, we will, in the process, strengthen and solidify both our movements. ■

unite TUC
against
.....
RACISM

join the TUC
in a national
demonstration
on saturday
march 19

racism is an evil
which should have
no place in society

Assemble: 11.00 am
Spitalfields Market
(off Commercial Street)
London E1

March: 12.00 noon

Rally: 2.00 pm
London Fields
(off Mare Street), London E8

Fascism in the labour heartland

Since the election of BNP candidate Derek Beackon for the Millwall ward last September, racist violence in the East End has increased threefold. How are trade unionists responding to the fascist threat in the May local elections?

Mukhtar Ahmed suffered horrendous injuries including skull fractures when he was attacked by twenty white youths in Bethnal Green in February. He spent several weeks recovering in the Whitechapel hospital, where Quddus Ali, thankfully now out of intensive care, is still receiving treatment. But these are only the most publicised of an endless catalogue of attacks which are carried out by organised gangs of marauding white youths. And the violence is moving across the borough to areas previously considered safer such as Stepney, Poplar and Bethnal Green.

To put all the violence down to the BNP would be wrong. But BNP tactics – of singling out areas with high levels of racist attacks and polarising the communities still further so as to generate a ‘race war’ – are certainly paying off.

Labour divided

The BNP must be delighted with the state of local Labour party politics. After Millwall candidate James Hunt was accused of faking canvass returns showing the BNP pulling ahead, the Labour party set up an internal investigation that has never reported openly or commented on the widely held belief that two of its own election leaflets on housing the homeless pandered to the ‘Rights for Whites’ sentiment. Now, Hunt has publicly torn up his Labour party membership card and, with other right-wingers in the Millwall branch, has gone off to form the East London People’s Alliance (ELPA) which will be campaigning on the issue of the ‘hidden homeless’.

Local anti-racists fear that ELPA could siphon off just enough votes from Labour to allow the BNP to take all the Millwall seats, giving it a three-two majority on the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Council and control over housing and the neighbourhood’s £12 million budget.

Two traditions

But the BNP is only the symptom of a wider racist malaise in the docks area of east London. There are two traditions here. On the one hand, it is an area with



Young Bengali people held a vigil for Mukhtar Ahmed on 11 February. Attacks on young people in schools and colleges are increasing. In February, Asian students at Poplar’s Tower Hamlets College were attacked by a large group of white men, armed with staves, iron bars and accompanied by dogs

Picture: Darren Jakobsen

some of the strongest labour traditions and history of working class agitation in the country. On the other, in the 1974 general election, a total of 5,000 Newham residents voted for the National Front, the largest NF vote in the country.

The destruction of much of the docks area during the second world war, and the subsequent industrial decline and government neglect, have accentuated the second tradition at the expense of the first. So, recognising that the changing nature of employment in the docks area predicates against large-scale industrially-based trade unionism, how do we reactivate these socialist traditions and working class consciousness?

Fighting for the socialist tradition

Some of the unions are fighting back. Jean Geldart, branch officer of Tower Hamlets UNISON, a fifth of whose members are black, told CARF: ‘If the BNP win the other two seats on the Isle of Dogs and gain control of the neighbourhood, they will have access to all the social security records and personal information about residents and workers. If this happens, UNISON will take a position of complete non-cooperation, even though this is unlawful.’

Other trade unionists want a more concerted approach, including mass leafleting drives and a TUC directive to members that racism and fascism are incompatible with union membership.

Tower Hamlets trades council have asked the TUC for more resources and an unemployed resource centre in the area. ‘With mounting unemployment, we need to create a socialist alternative so that young people in particular are not attracted to the apparently radical alternatives offered by the fascist thugs’, Phil Edwards, secretary of the trades council, told CARF. ‘But since we put the demand to the TUC we have been given the maximum grant under its current rules, amounting to £250. We cannot even begin to mount a real campaign with such a paltry sum. But we are determined to find some way of generating within the movement itself the resources and the political understanding needed to make this possible.’

Meanwhile, the BNP understands that it is fighting the left tradition. An election promise is to change the name of the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Council from Jack Dash (the Communist dockers leader) to Oswald Mosley house and to fly in Lady Mosley from France as a special guest at the renaming ceremony. ■



Mukhtar Ahmed

Picture: Phil Maxwell



From Red Scar Mill to Burnsalls: black workers today

Equal opportunities policies, race committees, quotas for black representation – these union strategies don't make any difference if you're working in low-paid, sweatshop industries.

Non-unionised and cut off from the trade union movement, the UK's army of the low paid is increasingly black, Third World and female. But go on a trade union equal opportunities course and you will undoubtedly hear the argument that in unionised workplaces, black people have a high level of membership and that black communities as a whole have a higher proportion of union members than the national average.

Hierarchies of labour

This argument hides a myriad of truths. Firstly, although today, black workers are well represented in manual and traditionally unionised jobs such as the car industry, transport and public services, workers here tend to be from the older, more established black communities. Newer arrivals, particularly refugees and migrants, are disproportionately found amongst the non-unionised. To this is added the younger generation from the Asian and African-Caribbean communities, as well as those 'shaken out' by the drastic job cuts of the last fifteen years.

As manufacturing industry has declined, exploitation in the growing private service sector has rapidly increased. Nearly half the hotel industry's workforce, for instance, which relies heavily on low-paid casual labour, comes from black, migrant and refugee communities. Of 700,000 workers involved in contract cleaning, 75% are female, mostly from migrant communities such as Latin Americans and Moroccans. Certain 'ethnic' groups shore up specific low-paid industries. Statistics show that 11% of Pakistanis work in the textile industry (compared to 1% of whites); 41% of Bangladeshis work in catering (compared to 4% of whites). Home-working is particularly prevalent amongst Asian women, as shown by a 1990 survey in Bradford which found Asian women, working in the home, earning as little as £1 an hour.

Lessons of black history

Secondly, the argument about black membership ignores the fact that throughout the course of the 1960s and '70s, black activists actually brought unionisation to certain firms. And yet, if the trade unions could acknowledge the dynamics of this black working-class struggle, they could draw invaluable lessons for future campaigns for unionisation and against racism.

Black workers who came first in the post-war years, and especially the late 1950s and early 1960s, did not enter those industries which had large, well managed and well-unionised workforces. They came primarily into small industries with poor, hazardous and unhealthy working conditions.

There has been an impressive history of black workers' struggles in the UK since the 1950s. Although Grunwicks is the struggle that most readily springs to white trade unionists' minds, there were many earlier fights: at Rockware Glass, Woolfs, Courtaulds' Red Scar

Mill, Qualcast, Perivale Gutermann, Mansfield Hosiery, Crepe Sizes, Harwood Cash, British Celanese, STC, Imperial Typewriters – and more.

Without the support of the trade union movement and because of a racism which corralled them into certain industries and certain housing areas, there grew up in Britain extremely strong black workers' organisations, incorporating traditions gleaned in the fight against colonialism. It was organisations like the Indian Workers Association and the Pakistani Welfare Association which sustained men on strike and carried the story of the strike from town to town across England.

These workers organisations in the 1960s and 1970s had much to teach the labour movement. For just when white workers were being tied down into social contracts over wages, the black workers' organisations were breaking the bonds of labourism and connecting the fight against racism in all aspects of their lives to the fight against exploitation as workers. On one day an

Tory attacks on the right to organise

Industrial action and picketing

The UK is one of the few countries in Europe in which there is no right to strike enshrined in law.

Employment Act 1980

■ Secondary action in support of other strikers severely restricted.

■ Picketing is restricted to own place of work – 'flying pickets' effectively outlawed.

Code of Practice: picketing numbers limited to six.

Employment Act 1982

Changes in definition of 'Trade Dispute' making strikes for purposes other than related to 'terms and conditions of employment' such as against government policy (including privatisation) unlawful.

Trade Union Act 1984

Ballots to be held for all industrial action.

Public Order Act 1986

Catch-all public order offences, and new police powers to stop and search and

set up road blocks. Introduced following miners' strike.

Employment Act 1988 ('scabs charter')

Restricts unions' rights to discipline members who fail to take part in, or support, industrial action (used in a series of NALGO strikes in 1989).

Employment Act 1990

Reverses the Trade Disputes Act 1906 and makes Trade Unions liable for unofficial actions of members, such as 'wildcat' strikes on London Underground in 1989.

Secondary action completely outlawed.

Other rights

■ Abolition of closed shop (though laws enacted 1980–1993).

■ Increased qualifying period for claiming unfair dismissal from six months to two years.

■ Abolition of Wages Councils and minimum wage protection: Wages Act 1986, Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993.

IWA secretary might be on a picket line, the next day he might be marching across London to protest at the 1971 Immigration Bill, and that night he might be talking to parents about the iniquities of having their children bussed from the area to other schools.

From workplace to community

Today, with the decline of the UK's manufacturing base – and the creation of low-paid non-union ghettos deliberately encouraged under the slogan of 'competitiveness' – the nature of employment may have changed, but some of the old lessons of community organisation remain. Namely, that the trade union movement has no hope of bringing unionisation to the new sweatshop industries unless it works in cooperation with communities (or activists within it) and links unionisation to a whole host of issues – discrimination in pay and conditions, segregation in shift work, racial harassment at the workplace, health, safety standards, cultural rights, religion, etc.

There were initiatives in the 1980s based on such an approach. Community and political groups worked in conjunction with the trade union movement to stimulate and maintain basic unionisation amongst Turkish and Kurdish garment workers in east London. Groups like the Service Workers Advisory Action Group (which produced an excellent magazine, linking the struggles of the low-paid) worked with Latin American and other contract cleaners, producing hundreds of leaflets in Spanish and Arabic, distributed late at night or the crack of dawn. The Tower Hamlets Law Centre started a campaign to ensure that low-paid workers received their entitlements to pay and holiday. Posters advertising the campaign were widely distributed throughout the borough. 1300 postcards printed in Bengali as well as English were delivered to people's homes encouraging them to check their pay packets.

However, without long-term commitment at a national level, such approaches have inevitably fizzled out, to be replaced by the more top-down poster advertising approach recently adopted by the TGWU and the GMB. At the same time, the law centres, low pay units and trades councils, that could best serve local communities, have been starved of funds, and in many instances closed down. Local trade unionists and community activists desperately need



Mark Salmon



the national support of the TUC both in terms of people and resources. But even the basics don't seem to be happening. One woman at a low pay unit told CARF that 'there is no new research, no new studies on low pay, no systematic collection of data. If we can't even identify the issues, where do we begin in organising against low pay?'

Shifting priorities

If the trade union movement wants to tackle the creation of low-paid, racially-defined ghettos in employment, it has to shift its priorities. It must encourage community initiatives rather than fearing where they might lead. It must offer resources and must be willing to stick with the local and community groups when the inevitable industrial disputes arise. This means working jointly to build solidarity and, most importantly, confront anti-union legislation.

For if anti-union laws, especially in relation to secondary action and mass picketing, are a major problem for relatively strong, already unionised groups of workers, they are a catastrophe for those workers newly struggling for basic rights.

Union leaders must recognise that serious work in this sector will bring them close to, or right into, conflict with the law. If they cannot find legal ways to organise effective solidarity then they must begin to prepare now for effective action which breaks the law.

Attempts to unionise the low paid lead to reactions that trade unions today

are ill-fitted to handle. Employers in the sector will often respond to calls for union recognition, or for negotiation, on what unionised workers would see as minor and quite normal issues, with wholesale sackings or selective intimidation. The newly unionised workers for their part expect what is now their organisation to take prompt and effective action.

The recent Burnsalls strike in Birmingham is a classic example of the failure of conservative trade unionism. Despite active support from local trade unionists and from black communities and groups across the country, the strikers were, in the end, abandoned by the union. It was not the GMB leadership, despite their fine words, which kept the support going but a network of community groups and of rank-and-file trade union activists.

If we look across the Atlantic we see a model of employment where large sections of the workforce in the US – principally black, minority and women – have simply been abandoned by the unions. We do not want a trade union movement that reflects the employers' racial and gender hierarchies but one capable of challenging the status quo in the best traditions of labour history and activism. ■

For further information on black workers struggles consult the magazines of black organisations like the Indian Workers Association, the Black Unity and Freedom Party and publications from the Institute of Race Relations including *Race Today* (1972-1974), *From resistance to rebellion* by A. Sivanandan, CARF publications *Southall: the birth of a black community* and *Newham: the forging of a black community*.

INTERVIEW

CARF speaks to John Monks, General Secretary of the TUC

CARF: Why has the TUC decided to call a march against racism and fascism in east London now?

JM: Because we were absolutely shocked by the election of a fascist councillor in the by-election in Millwall. And because it happened in the year of our 125th anniversary.

The movement which led to unions for the semi-skilled and the unskilled started near Millwall. The TGWU and the GMB both started in that part of London. NUPE was born just across the river, south of the Surrey Docks. So the election of the first openly racist and fascist candidate in a very long time took place in what we regard as the labour heartland.

We saw this as a cry of frustration from a working-class area where the docks have declined, and unemployment and deprivation are very high. We believe it's absolutely vital to rebuild that old trade union base that's ebbed away as employment patterns have changed. And we intend to show our support for the anti-racist cause by holding a national demonstration in a locality where there's a particular problem.

CARF: How can trade unions begin the anti-racist fight in areas where racism is most violent?

JM: I think you come across racism everywhere, not just in areas that have been particularly hit by changes in industry. It's a national problem. But the trade union movement has got a particular responsibility in working-class areas. After all, we exist to advance the interests of working people, including those who are out of work, and we can only do that if we're united; if there's common fusion of aims and action across all the workers concerned.

Our message is always going to be: only through unity, through working together, are we going to get anywhere. And if we allow ourselves to be divided, trade unionism doesn't mean anything. So the message to white workers, as well as to black workers, is that prejudices, the temptation to find scapegoats for problems, is rubbish. The only way you'll advance is through common action.

CARF: You're talking about unity between black and white workers. In the 1970s, when the National Front was on the rise, there were trade union initiatives against fascism, but many black workers felt that issues of racism were downgraded.

JM: In those days the view was that the job of a union was to treat everyone equally. Discrimination could not be tolerated, but nor should there be any specific focus on the interests of black workers. In those days the TUC's International Department dealt with those issues almost as an aspect of Commonwealth relationships. That was criticised in about 1974 by the Runnymede Trust and the Race Relations Board, and the responsibility was then transferred to the organisation department.

In fact I was the official in the department who worked on race issues. We decided to combat the NF directly, and we had demonstrations in London and Manchester – I still

remember being pelted by the NF with flour bombs in 1976 as I walked from the bridge over Deansgate, in my home city.

We felt it was necessary to go beyond that and to get the message into the workplace that equality was an issue of trade union organisation. If you were allowing the union to become divided on lines of race, you were a bad organiser, you were playing into the hands of the enemies of the trade unions and of the workers. We found that message much more effective than the ethical one which we tried first. When we said 'It's wrong to be racist', we hit quite a lot of white opposition.

So we took a practical trade union issue, and said look, how are you going to negotiate pay and conditions if you've not recruited the night shift which is of a different ethnic balance? Because they're different, you can't be bothered about their pay, but what will the effect be on what you get, how you'll be treated? I think the message got through to those union activists who might have come from the other side.

The distinctive message we've got for Millwall is that you won't see any improvements down in Tower Hamlets while one part of the community is blaming the other part of the community. You'll start seeing it when they move to an effective alliance across racial groups, and really start putting pressure on the council, the government, the TUC and others to do something.

CARF: There have been criticisms of the way national organisations organise marches in black areas, parachuting in and parachuting out. How do you intend to avoid that?

JM: That has been one of the concerns we have been confronted with. I went down and spoke at the meeting in Stepney reported in the January issue of CARF. I said two things. We weren't coming down if we weren't welcome and we couldn't add something to the local community – that is bring people together. Since my visit we've been working with the communities to get things together. The organising committee is about 40 strong and it's not a traditional TUC union-oriented activity where we would control it all. The group includes ARA, the ANL and various local organisations prominent in the anti-racist struggle.

CARF: The TUC says it's going to take action against racism in the workplace. Have you got any particular proposals?

JM: We're very anxious to enhance the role black workers play in union affairs, and Congress has decided that it will make special seats available on the Council for black workers. We're also looking at how to bring up more black activists to positions within senior levels of the union movement. We cannot afford a situation whereby virtually all senior positions within unions are held by whites in what is a multi-racial workforce. And we are renewing our efforts to make equality a bargaining issue.

CARF: These are very much internal union matters, but what about issues such as low pay, which disproportionately affect black workers?

JM: We are struggling with low pay. The abolition of the



UNIONS • FOCUS ON TRADE UNIONS • FOCUS ON TRADE UNIONS • FOCUS

Wages Councils last summer by the government, which gave minimum protection in industries which are poorly organised, has left no statutory means to advance the interests of the low paid, unless there's a collective agreement covering them. That causes us enormous problems. Unions can act when they've got a grievance or when there are legal rights to force a union to do something. But, what was swept away by the government is the power to do something where we haven't got a collective agreement.

There's a lot of people being let down by the government, by employers, and we're trying to find ways of doing something about that. Unless there's some legal changes, the only way we'll do something about it, is, as it always was, to build up union organisation. And the communities themselves have got to see that the best way of fighting for rights, against low pay, is proper trade union organisation.

But at the moment we haven't got enough black workers organised in the low pay areas. We know from our researches that the density of organisation among black workers is higher than it is for the population as a whole. But that seems to reflect the fact that areas like the Post Office, London Transport, British Rail have traditionally been high in union organisation, while historically a lot of black people have gone to these services, to the education service and the health service. But in the textile and rag trade in east London, our attempts at organisation have not succeeded.

Once I was part of an organising drive in the textile industry, which was going quite well until the recession hit, and then it was wiped out. We had another go in 1989, and that ran right into the recession in 1990. We'll have further

goes in the future, too.

But unions are self-help organisations as well as offering services, and workers must get in the union and start fighting. ■



JOURNALISTS OR POLICE SPIES?

Media hype against anti-racists and anti-fascists reached hysterical proportions in February when newspapers printed pictures, released by the police's 20 strong riot investigation team, of 'riot ringleaders' at the anti-BNP demonstration in Welling.

Last year courts also ordered TV companies to hand over footage of the disturbances outside Whitechapel hospital to aid the prosecution of the Tower Hamlets 9. A special incident room at West Ham police station is screening hours of film.

For the National Union of Journalists to complain that their members are being attacked on anti-racist demonstrations is simply not good enough. It is time for them to mount a *political* campaign against journalists becoming an arm of the state. ■

RACISM IN EMPLOYMENT

The growing number of industrial tribunal cases reported in 1993 shows the extent of institutionalised racism in all aspects of employment practice, from recruitment and promotion to pay and conditions.

12.3.93 Researchers applying for doctors' posts find routine race discrimination in shortlisting.

15.3.93 Report by management consultants says Bradford council is apparently 'flying in the face of its commitment to good race relations practice'. The council has paid out £100,000 for race discrimination since 1986.

15.3.93 Leeds social services department pays £1,500 to black care assistant rejected for jobs.

15.3.93 Hounslow and Spelthorne Area Health Authority pays £27,000 to black health visitor unfairly dismissed after racial abuse by patient.

6.4.93 London Underground agree compensation to 20 black station managers after admitting discrimination in performance-related pay.

19.5.93 Camden council (north London) pays £25,000 to accountant for race discrimination.

25.5.93 Birmingham social services department refused compensation to black residential care workers who claimed race harassment.

15.6.93 Camden council pays £10,000 to housing manager for race discrimination.

26.6.93 London Underground pay £10,000 to black forewoman who suffered racist and sexist abuse by colleagues for 4 years.

26.6.93 Haggars textile mill in West Yorkshire ordered to pay £250,000 to 82 Asian night shift workers for race discrimination. Shifts totally racially segregated, Asians threatened with dismissal if refused extra duties, given less holidays than white workers, no chance of promotion. Cases part of 130 from four textile mills in W Yorks going to tribunal.

7.7.93 Hackney council (east London) pays 13,700 to five black workers sacked in 1991 when new disciplinary code applied retrospectively to them.

2.9.93 Westminster council (central London) pays £5,000 to black woman subjected unfairly to disciplinary procedures.

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CARF



Fight & unite

'Black and white unite and fight' is a popular but abstract slogan for much of the left. Newham Monitoring Project showed how to make it a reality.

A Justice for the Dray Family Campaign was set up at the end of 1992 to demand an end to the prosecution of Tony and Lee Dray, who were, they claimed, viciously beaten by police officers from Plaistow, arrested and charged with affray and assaulting a police officer. This was the latest incident in a campaign of harassment of the Drays, a white working class family from Canning Town in east London. For over a year the campaign has raised the issue of police harassment of young people in south Newham, work which was rewarded by the acquittal of the Drays in November 1993. South Newham Action on Policing has now been launched to demand fair and equal policing for all.

Newham Monitoring Project, whose work predominantly involves campaigning against racial violence and police harassment of the black community, has played a central role in supporting the campaign. This has helped create a base of support for NMP within a white working class community in one of the most racist areas of London.

There are many similarities between parts of south Newham and the BNP's new 'stronghold' in the Isle of Dogs, including a widespread acceptance of popular racism which could provide a recruiting ground for the far-Right. It also faces problems of bad housing, indifference from local councillors and little organised protest to the many injustices the area faces. The trade unions, which once provided this, have largely disappeared, leaving whole sections of the community disenfranchised. It was in this context that the Dray family approached NMP – the only group that was willing to help.

Black experience of community resistance to police harassment was eagerly embraced by young people in Canning Town as a lesson that something could at last be done. This history of resistance is now helping South Newham Action on Policing to shape its own history, and in the process,

many of the prejudices of the local community are being challenged not by sermonising about racism but by the day-to-day experience of campaigning with black people against the injustice which affects so many lives. Around one issue, a degree of unity between black and white communities has been achieved which is not contrived, but rather organic.

RAILWAY DEPOT – WHITE STRONGHOLD

Four Asian trainee drivers were subjected to a 'catalogue of racial harassment' by colleagues when they were sent to Old Oak Common depot, west London, after winning an industrial tribunal against British Rail's promotion policies. An internal report leaked in February reveals that both management and unions were at fault in allowing the situation to develop.

Back in 1991, the four were among eight guards who claimed that BR's qualification tests for drivers were racially biased. BR eventually conceded this and modified the tests, and the men went to Old Oak for training as drivers.

When they arrived, they were allegedly subjected to daily racist abuse and heckling, and to racist graffiti daubed on the buildings. Often they received no training, as white drivers would not take them out. The depot is apparently regarded as a white male bastion and is described as a 'penal colony' by some staff.

The men had no confidence in the ability of their union, the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT), to present their original grievance against BR and had gone to solicitors. The CRE supported the case against BR, and had criticised the RMT for dragging its feet. Over a year

As the May elections draw nearer, NMP is in a position to oppose the BNP in south Newham, having already proved itself as an organisation willing to fight against injustice in the area. For anti-racists, in particular those in trade unions, and progressive local activists, a thousand worthy speeches against racism are no substitute for sustained, local *relevant* political activism. ■

later, in February 1993, the CRE had to threaten an investigation into possible race discrimination before the RMT agreed to a review of its internal structures and its equal opportunities policy.

One year on, in February 1994, the RMT claims the credit for setting up the inquiry, but has not taken disciplinary action against any of its members as a result of the report into Old Oak Common, claiming that 'the majority of those responsible are members of Aslef'. A spokesperson told CARF that the RMT rule book provided disciplinary sanctions for acts of racial harassment, and that reminders had recently been sent to all members. But the union's attitude seems to be that the onus is on black workers to prove the existence of racial harassment. In the wake of a pay-out of £10,000 by London Underground to a black forewoman in June 1993 following four years of racist harassment by colleagues, RMT general secretary Jimmy Knapp said that the case proved the union's willingness to fight for any member, 'but we can only stamp [racism] out if members come to us to complain'. In a depot as hostile as Old Oak Common, where can members complain? ■



'There has been no improvement in the situation for black tubeworkers since the £60,000 payout to 20 black station managers last year' a black tube driver on the Piccadilly line told CARF. 'All we've had is some acknowledgement of the problem but the Equal Opportunities Boards that have been set up on each line are largely cosmetic. I joined London Underground 15 years ago – the lines that were drawn then in terms of how high black people could go haven't changed – if anything they've got lower. Those who got the settlement had had enough and left, so our struggle is starting all over again.'



Racist laws – a trade union issue

Muhammad Idrish told CARF that protecting workers' rights means protecting black members faced with deportation.

I came as a student in 1976 from Bangladesh and married a British citizen in 1977. I was given 12 months' leave to remain on the basis of my marriage. I applied to stay permanently but my marriage broke up and my application was refused. A five-year campaign was finally won in 1986 when the Home Office gave me permanent leave to remain in the UK. Though this was a community based campaign operating from the Handsworth district of Birmingham, my trade union Nalگو (now Unison) played a very positive role to make it a nationwide issue.

Initially it took me two years to get the union to take it up because I could not argue that the deportation was directly a trade union issue. Everybody I talked to felt it was an immigration issue that should be dealt with by immigration experts such as the JCWI, CRE, etc, until some activists in our campaign started to argue that 'If a trade union member gets deported then s/he loses his/her job, therefore loses a basic right to work. If wages and conditions of service are important to the trade union movement then they have a duty to protect members jobs in the first place.'

This was accepted by my branch of Nalگو which put a motion to its annual conference in 1983. I was elected as an observer to the conference and my branch paid all my expenses to attend. I spoke about my case at many fringe meetings. None of these meetings had anything to do with immigration, race relations or racial discrimination at all, but I said what I had to say, constantly arguing the same point again and again. There were a

good number of black delegates at the conference who helped make it into an issue. Lots of technical obstruction was brought in against our motion by the leadership, but on the last day of the conference the motion was debated and passed. From that point on Nalگو played a leading role in the campaign against my deportation. They produced thousands of leaflets and posters which were distributed to almost every local government workplace in the country, they organised speaking tours and held three major national demonstrations in my support, including one on a weekday for which members were authorised to take strike action in order to attend.

These things did not come easily. Very many activists and members of the campaign had to argue with the leadership to get things moving. The success of the campaign convinced members and leaders of Nalگو that it had been needed. And Nalگو gained its respect from the black community. The immigration issue has become a mainstream trade union issue within the union, so much so that headquarters now has an officer part of whose job is to support anti-deportation campaigns and campaigns against immigration control. It is now Nalگو's policy to 'oppose all immigration controls' and refuse to cooperate with jobs which relate to the implementation of immigration controls. A lot is still to be done in Unison but it is now well established that 'issues which concern ordinary men and women' include fighting racism. ■

Muhammad Idrish, chair of Birmingham Unison, is a member of W Midlands anti-deportation campaign

New initiative

The Labour and Trade Union Campaign Against Racism and Fascism writes: 'We were set up by rank and file trade unionists and members of the Labour party, who recognised that the labour and trade union movement needed to play a more central role in the fight against racism and fascism. The original conference was jointly organised by the three trades councils of Bexley, Greenwich and Bromley, the boroughs bordering and containing the BNP's national headquarters.'

'The aims of the campaign are twofold – to put pressure from below on the TUC and Labour party leadership to take positive action against racism and fascism and to take the fight against racism and fascism down to where it matters – the workplace, the dole queues and the housing estates. Most of all the workplace, where black and white workers can most obviously be united by their common struggle for job security, pay and conditions of employment. Our campaign has not been set up in opposition to existing anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations. The LTUCARF aims to underpin their work by taking the message through union branches, trades councils and local Labour parties to working class people who may not take much notice of high profile "political campaigns", but who are directly in the firing line for fascist organisations like the BNP.'

'We appeal to all Labour and trade union activists to join the campaign.' ■

LTUCARF: Box LTUCARF
c/o 42 Braganza Street, London SE17 3RJ



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Criminalising the Kurds

France and Germany have banned the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and numerous other Kurdish organisations. Switzerland and the UK have announced special anti-terrorist measures against them. Are the European powers being drawn into Turkish prime minister Tansu Ciller's plan to crush the Kurdish rebels within the year?

Germany, which played host to the Turkish prime minister in October 1993, was the first to outlaw the PKK and 35 related organisations. In December, police carried out a series of dawn raids in ten states, seizing documents and freezing bank accounts. In North Rhine-Westphalia alone, 600 officers were deployed to raid homes and offices in 19 cities. Kurdish cultural organisations and the Kurdish press agency 'Kurd-Ha' in Cologne were closed down, prompting Kurdish men, women and children throughout the country to try to occupy buildings in defiance of the police order.

Emergency measures

Even as a spokesperson for Turkey's foreign ministry was commending Germany's 'courageous measures', the French government was following suit by proscribing membership of two groups: the Kurdish Committee and the Federation of Kurdistan Cultural Associations and Patriotic Workers which were denounced as 'front organisations for the PKK'. Before the ban was officially announced, 100 Kurds were seized in dawn raids, resulting in charges against 24 people.

In the UK, Special Branch carried out dawn raids, set up a special anti-terrorist squad in Hackney, east London to investigate 'Turkish terrorists' and promised further action in Hull, Harrogate, York and Liverpool. MI5 is said to be keeping a 'watching brief'.

In Switzerland, the minister of justice identified the PKK as 'a real danger to Switzerland's internal security', and announced a series of emergency measures against the group. Entry to Switzerland is to be refused to anyone identified as an officer of the PKK, materials deemed to incite violence are to be confiscated, and internal police surveillance heightened. Greater co-operation with European police forces is also sought.

The hidden agenda

According to the European Convention on Human Rights, freedom of assembly is a guaranteed right which should only be denied to those groups who threaten 'national security' or the

democratic rights of others. The recent desperate measures of some PKK members in Europe to draw attention to the ethnic cleansing of Kurdish villages by the Turkish security forces (the PKK has taken workers in Turkish embassies hostage as well as planting bombs) have given France and Germany the excuse they need to ban the PKK on 'national security' grounds, arguing that European hospitality is being abused when the Kurdish/Turkish struggle is recreated on European soil. However, it would be naive to believe that Europe's measures are directed solely against the leaders of the PKK and not against Kurdish communities as a whole.

A resurgent Turkey

For just as the Iraqi Kurds were used as the pawns of western powers during the Gulf war, squeezing economic and military support for the Kurdish struggle in Turkey is the sweetener Europe is offering a resurgent Turkey. Europe might not want to see Turkey as an equal partner within the EU (this would give Turkish workers the right to live and work in Europe) but it does want closer co-operation with Turkey in accordance with its post-cold war strategic interests. With the second biggest army in NATO and military bases which were of vital strategic importance during the Gulf war, Turkey is Europe's gun pointing at the Middle East. At the same time, Europe

is willing to support Turkey's expansionist goals in its new spheres of influence in the Balkans and the Muslim parts of the former Soviet Union.

Hence Mrs Ciller's reception by European heads of state, who have allowed her to address the European Council in Vienna. In Germany she extracted a promise from Chancellor Kohl that the question of dual citizenship for Turks would be linked with an investigation into Germany's Kurdish community and its support for the PKK. A protest rally organised by the Kurdish community during her visit to Austria was banned by the government on the grounds that it would do 'damage to Austria's image'. Police used brutal methods to clear Kurds off the streets, seriously injuring five people, including one woman who is said to be in danger of losing her sight in one eye.

Ignoring Turkey's human rights record

At the same time as playing host to Ciller, European governments have been turning a blind eye to the current offensive by Turkish security forces against the Kurdish insurrection, which an *Observer* journalist has described as 'ethnic cleansing'. In one of the most brutal and under-reported wars presently taking place in the Middle East, 800 Kurdish villages have been razed and emptied of inhabitants since 1990. More PKK members have been



Gabriela Feldmann

killed in the past two years than in the previous eight years. And if Ciller is going to meet her target of crushing the Kurdish struggle within the year, she must now enlist European aid in drying up all the sources of funding for the PKK. Hence the current fascination by Europe's police and press with the PKK's methods of raising money through tapping expatriate Turkish restaurateurs and businessmen. *Time Out* reports undercover police as

which 88 people, said to be linked to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), were held, put under house arrest and in some cases charged.

Asked in a TV interview what the government intended to do with the arrested Algerians and Kurds, French interior minister Charles Pasqua answered: 'I'm not telling you. That's government business.' When asked if the judiciary might eventually be consulted, Pasqua declined to answer.

German Show trial

A campaign has been set up in Germany to defend five Kurdish people charged with the murder in Berlin in April 1992 of Gerhard Kaindl, a leading member of the neo-nazi Deutsche Liga.

Campaigners believe that the five arrested will face a 'show trial' given the climate of military-style police raids, surveillance and large-scale harassment of Berlin's Turkish,

Kurdish and anti-fascist community which expose the German state's attempts to criminalise these communities and the anti-fascist struggle as a whole.

Kaindl was attacked in a Chinese restaurant by a group of six to eight people wearing masks. Although bystanders were unable to describe the masked gang, the CDU and the police immediately blamed 'militant foreigners' groups on

the leftist scene' and claimed that the perpetrators came from Turkish or Arab circles. In stark contrast to their failure to investigate racist murders, the police set up a special 20-person investigation team and offered a DM10,000 reward for information leading to arrests.

But it was not until November 1993 that arrests were made. According to campaigners, the first man arrested, Erkan, was denied access to a lawyer and beaten until he signed a confession. He is now being held in the Psychiatric Neurological Unit at Tegel prison. A woman suspect has been held in solitary confinement for over two months.

Campaigners claim that the police handed over names and addresses of suspects to the Deutsche Liga. Its paper *Deutsche Rundschau* (German Overview) carried the claim that the names and addresses of Kaindl's eight killers, all members of the Turkish *Antifascist Genclik*, were known to them. The article ended with the threat: 'We will get you all'. ■

Europe's deaths

In CARF No 18 we documented 75 killings that occurred in 1993. A further four deaths took place in December, bringing the death-toll to 79.

Austria: 'Goran', 16-year-old Romany stabbed to death in Vienna by man who worshipped Adolf Hitler and hated 'foreigners'.

France: Gabonese immigration prisoner dies of undernourishment and starvation at Bois d'Arcy prison.

Germany: Gambian asylum-seeker, 19, stabbed to death on train in Hamburg.

Netherlands: 24-year-old asylum-seeker from former Yugoslavia commits suicide by jumping into the sea surrounding the floating detention centre at Hellevootsluis.

The World according to HERODOTUS: 450 BC



The World according to PORTILLO: 1994



Europe's new 'Show Trials'

For those that do come to trial, there is every reason to fear show trials and prejudicial media coverage. The face of European justice towards the Kurds has been seen in Switzerland in the scandalous trial of seven members of *Mucadele* (a Kurdish newspaper linked to the revolutionary left group Dev Sol), on extortion charges. The first trial collapsed (see CARF No 14) when key prosecution witnesses were shown to be liars (one admitted to forging passports, another had contacts with drug dealers). Unbelievably, the judge ruled that there should be a retrial. During the second trial one witness was allowed to testify again; it was held that his earlier false testimony had been brought about by 'stubbornness' rather than any baser motive. Witnesses who attempted to retract statements on the ground that they had made them under police duress were disbelieved, and five of the seven *Mucadele* defendants were found guilty. Two were sent to prison for two years and the remaining three received suspended sentences ranging from 12 to 18 months. The accused must bear the cost of the trial, and those whose asylum claims are pending have been banned from Switzerland for five years.

As the Bern newspaper the *Wol* put it: 'The court acted in the interests of the Swiss state, covering the executive and saving it the costs of any further investigation'. ■

Circumventing Europe's judicial procedures

Anti-racists in Europe need to move now to protect the rights of Kurdish asylum-seekers and refugees within Europe. German anti-racists told CARF that Kurds are terrified that Turkish-German co-operation will lead to large-scale deportations of Kurds to face torture and death in Turkey. And in Switzerland, Kurds described as 'illegal entrants', among them the Secretary of the Geneva-based organisation 'Committee for an Independent Kurdistan', have been dumped at the border by police.

If the future of Kurds in Europe generally is insecure, what of those arrested in Europe over recent months? What sort of trial will they get? Indeed, will they get a trial at all? Campaigners in Austria fear that the 16 Kurds arrested following the protest rally in Vienna will be deported under Austria's tough new aliens' laws. And the signs for the Kurds arrested in France are not good, to judge by the precedent set by French treatment of Algerians. In December 26 Algerians were expelled from France on a specially chartered flight, some restrained in body belts, after nationwide police raids in

Campaigns & Reports

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Ian Stuart Memorial gig

The anticipated Blood and Honour memorial gig for happily deceased Skrewdriver lead singer Ian Stuart Donaldson met a similar fate to previous efforts when it was cancelled on 15 January.

The concert had been booked to take place at the Piper pub in Becontree, Essex. Anti-fascists had mobilised in Becontree to oppose any fascists who turned up for the gig. They also assembled in Bow, east London, where around a hundred Combat 18 members – 'stewards' for the planned concert – were drinking at the Little Driver pub. Confronted by about 200 hundred anti-fascists they decided to keep their heads down and left it to the riot police to obligingly round up the demonstrators.

The anti-fascists in both Becontree and Bow were rounded up by police and herded onto an empty 'football special' train which took them non-stop to Earls Court station.

This provocative policing, with hundreds of demonstrators being taken against their will and dumped in central London, culminated in running battles with the police in which several demonstrators were injured.

That evening hundreds of Blood and Honour skinheads arrived at Waterloo's Wellington pub. Fighting broke out between nazis and police and a number of nazis were arrested including two from Belgium and one from Germany.

On the same day, following the cancellation of the concert, thirty-two nazis were held and questioned in Nottingham after an attack on the Mushroom bookshop where computers were smashed and books destroyed. That night nazi skinheads also went on the rampage in Ian Stuart's Derbyshire home town, Heanor, where he had lived after leaving London. Four people were injured.

No remorse – no concert

The efforts of Edinburgh AFA and Scottish journalists ensured a second flop for the fascist music scene on 11 February. A No Remorse concert booked at the Tower Tavern in Selkirk as a 'twenty-first celebration with skinhead disco' was cancelled at the last minute. The landlord, when asked if he knew of the nature of the event replied that he did – but he needed the money. However, after local journalists showed an interest he decided that he needed the bar takings rather less than he needed the bad publicity.

BNP outlaws C18?

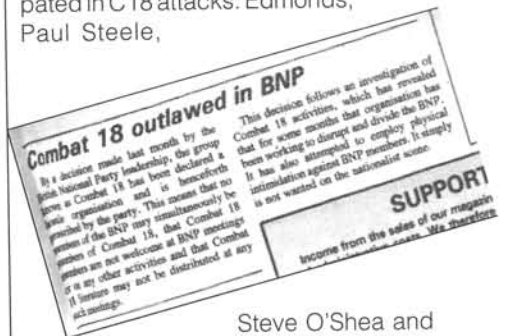
The BNP have issued a statement in their papers declaring Combat 18 a 'hostile organisation' and proscribing it. The statement says that 'no members of the BNP may simultaneously be members of C18, that C18 members are not welcome at BNP meetings or on any other activities and that C18 literature may not be distributed at any such meetings' (January *Spearhead*).

The statement is widely perceived as an attempt by Tyndall to distance himself from the violent activities of C18, and the publicity that has accompanied it. It also reflects concern by the BNP leadership that C18 has been deeply infiltrated by police informers.

The outraged tone of the piece, which accuses C18 of 'working to disrupt and divide the BNP' and of attempting 'to employ physical intimidation against BNP members' rings a little hollow in the light of well documented joint BNP/C18 activities.

Only last month BNP/C18 member, Simon Chadwick, was found guilty of affray for an attack on a Jewish solicitor and SWP member, Danny Phillips, in Mansfield. Chadwick is still to be sentenced along with three other BNP members.

Ian Dell and national organiser, Richard Edmonds, have also participated in C18 attacks. Edmonds, Paul Steele,



Steve O'Shea and

Simon Biggs have been joined by John Morse who all now face charges of violent disorder following a vicious attack on a black man in east London last September.

Whicker's friends sentenced

Key C18 organiser and UDA man Eddie Whicker was charged with possessing firearms last June. Although all charges were dropped against him, two of his 'colleagues' were jailed at Birmingham crown court for possession of revolvers and semi-automatic weapons. James McCrudden, from Belfast, was jailed for 30 months and Frank Portinari, a school caretaker from Kentish Town, was sentenced to five years. The court was told that Portinari had bought the guns for the UDA in Belfast.

No more bloody Saturdays?

The mass fascist attack on the annual Bloody Sunday demonstration failed to materialise in January. Ian Anderson's National Front, determined that we should not be allowed to march the streets of London, called for a mass mobilisation against the march. What a shame he called for it on Saturday January 23 – one week before the Bloody Sunday demo actually took place. The fascist presence on the day of the march was limited to a few groups of nazis wandering aimlessly around London muttering under their breaths about 'red IRA scum'. ■



Wayne Bellamy

■ Westminster Tories – the hidden agenda

Much has been written about the Westminster Tories' 'Homes- for-votes' scandal. But little attention has been focused on the targeting of black people – and in particular refugees – by Westminster, and its role in the development of national Tory policy on refugees.

The description of homeless persons in Westminster by Tory councillors as the 'tinted person in the woodpile' reveals a lot about local Tory attitudes both to homeless people and to black people: both groups were and are treated with contempt. And woe betide those who fell into both categories: both black and homeless.

Of Westminster's homeless, nearly a quarter were refugees, asylum-seekers or immigrants. From 1986 onwards, Westminster has been 'deporting' its homeless people out of the borough into outer London boroughs like Hillingdon in the west, and to east London boroughs and Essex. But this local solution was not enough: the Tories of Westminster, who had the ear of central government, wanted some central solutions. To that end, they began heavy lobbying to restrict the housing rights of immigrants and refugees.

In October 1991, Sir Bernard Ingham, Westminster City Council's public relations consultant and ex-press secretary to Margaret Thatcher, describing Westminster's homeless as 'a blot on the domestic and tourist landscape', picked out 'those who call themselves refugees from abroad' for particular condemnation. 'Britain, and to a degree, Westminster – as the traditional home of the lost dogs of this world, cannot continue to allow itself to be exploited, if it is to provide sanctuary for those genuinely in danger of persecution or even of their lives,' he said, in a speech which called for reform of housing and social security laws which 'invite abuse'.

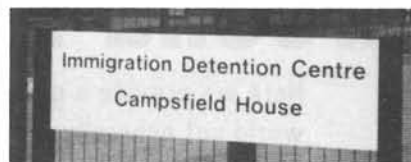
The theme of abuse by refugees was taken up by council leader David Weeks in March 1992, who warned that London would be 'swamped by refugees in five years'. He said Westminster had housed 280 refugee families in the past three months, representing a third of the total homeless, and complained of the impact on local schools.

These attacks on the housing demands of refugees, immigrants and asylum-seekers were not just off the cuff speeches by hard-pressed local leaders, but were part of a co-ordinated lobbying effort. Westminster drew up a Homelessness shopping list for early change, a confidential document which called on ministers to make it harder for homeless 'immigrants' and other Tory betes noires to obtain council homes.

The strategy bore fruit. The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act, which got through parliament in 1993, reduced homeless asylum-seekers' rights to housing by their local authority. In April 1993, following a test case in the Court of Appeal, the Department of the Environment issued instructions to local authorities to inquire into immigrants' status, by means of passport checks if necessary, and to inform the Home Office of any apparent irregularity. In January 1994, housing minister Sir George Young announced plans to curb the rights of all homeless people in line with the reduced rights of asylum-seekers. And in February, Social Security minister Peter Lilley announced residence tests for welfare benefits so as to exclude what he called 'benefit tourists' from abroad.

Even if the leaders of Westminster Council are condemned and surcharged, the policies to which their lobbying gave birth, the removal of rights from the immigrant and refugee community, stand as their ugly memorial. ■

Close down Campsfield



Latest reports indicate that the 200 places for immigration detainees at Campsfield detention centre in Oxford are all full, but local anti-racists along with the Trades Council are continuing the campaign to close it down. Over 100 people picketed its gates in January and regular vigils are planned outside the centre on the last Saturday of every month. Campaigners are also petitioning the town centre every Saturday to demand

- the closure of Campsfield detention centre
- an end to detention under the Immigration Act
- the repeal of racist immigration laws

A demonstration is also planned for June to mark the 6 month anniversary of the first detainees at Campsfield.

● Asylum-seekers in detention launched a number of hunger strikes in February. Nine Algerians and a Chadean were released from Pentonville prison 12 days into an indefinite hunger strike against their detention and the conditions under which they were held. Their release followed a picket by refugee groups. A further thirteen Algerians, detained at Haslar, began a hunger strike in mid-February and were dispersed into various prisons. Four were deported to Algeria where the authorities refused to accept them for want of identity documents and sent them back to Britain. Another nine detainees were on hunger strike at Campsfield at the end of February. ■



For more details contact Campaign to Close down Campsfield, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford. Tel: 0865-724452.

Manchester club raided

Following a brutal police attack on Black people outside Checkpoint Charlie, a Manchester nightclub on 21 January, the Action for Black Justice has been launched. People leaving the club were attacked by police dogs and beaten with truncheons. One man required 16 stitches, a pregnant woman who was punched in the stomach suffered a miscarriage, two men were bitten by dogs, a woman taking photos was slapped by a WPC. To add insult to injury charges of assault and public order offences have been brought.

After a mass meeting attended by black people from all over the city an emergency support and pressure group was launched.

Action for Black Justice demands that all charges are dropped, that disciplinary proceedings are brought against police officers involved and a public enquiry into police misconduct is launched.

Action for Black Justice, c/o Joanna Woodstock, Amani Centre, Shoreham Walk, Moss Side, Manchester M15 5LE.

Around the courts

Here we provide a glimpse into the legal world not generally offered in the press. Contributions from readers are welcome.



■ No better than a dog

Manchester stipendiary magistrate Derrick Fairclough caused widespread outrage when in January 1994 he likened the death of a Somali refugee boy to that of a dog. Giving PC Cliff Allen a conditional discharge and three penalty points for knocking down 12-year old Maalim Abdulkadir, who died after the accident, the magistrate said that if the officer 'had collided, for example, with a dog rather than a youth of east African origin, then this incident would have received no publicity and he most certainly would not have been prosecuted'.

■ 'Britain is too generous'

Full-time magistrate and part-time judge Roger Davies is no stranger to controversy and is well known for his insensitive and rude outbursts to defendants, lawyers and court staff alike. Recently, from his Horseferry Road magistrates court bunker, he has been venting his spleen at foreigners. 'We are mad in this country. Other countries aren't as generous as we are. It is high time something was done about dishing out money in this way,' said the learned magistrate in relation to welfare benefits being available to people with non-Anglo-Saxon origins. Dealing with a Somali refugee, he asked, 'Why haven't you got a job? There's work out there, plenty of work. Try Marks and Spencer for a start ... or try British Rail, or London Transport.' Australian defendant Tim Cabassi was more fortunate when he appeared before our learned friend for the thoroughly jailable offence of using a dead man's birth certificate to obtain a British passport. 'Instead of sponging off the state, here you are working - that's commendable!' Mr Cabassi got off with a £100 fine.

■ Marylebone magistrates 'sussed out'

During the recent trial of a young businessman for obstructing police, the officer involved was asked why he had stopped and searched the defendant and his car. The car, a fairly expensive VW Golf, was parked on a yellow line and the defendant was just about to drive it away when he was stopped. The officer said he was suspicious that the car might have been stolen because there were no number plate etchings on the windows, and the number plates themselves did not advertise the garage where the car had been purchased. Now, the police must have 'reasonable suspicion' before searching a car, and if they didn't, the defendant could not be guilty of obstruction. In order to get round this irksome law, the magistrates decided that the car had not after all been searched, merely 'examined'. The defendant was black, and gave evidence that he was constantly stopped in his car for no good reason. He was too young to remember the now repealed 'sus' law, whereby the police used to stop and search mainly young black men for no particular reason. But the magistrates weren't, and the court clerk should have known better. ■

■ Ishtiaq Ahmed is innocent

On 17 October 1989 Ishtiaq Ahmed was arrested at the home of his girlfriend Angela Motherway in Reading, and accused of the murder of one of his tenants. On 31 January 1991 he was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.



Ishtiaq, his girlfriend and his family have always maintained his innocence, and a campaign has been formed to get his case reopened. The campaign claims that:

- the conviction was based on weak, contradictory and unreliable 'circumstantial' evidence;
- Ishtiaq's girlfriend was threatened and intimidated into changing her alibi statement to make it a better fit with the prosecution version of events;
- Of the officers in charge of the case, one has been suspended and another was dismissed;
- The judge prejudiced the trial by warning the jury that a large crowd of black people would attend and try to intimidate or 'noble' them;
- In his summing-up, the judge ordered the arrest of a black member of the public for taking notes.

Ishtiaq's girlfriend, who was arrested with him and was threatened with charges of harbouring unless she co-operated, alleges that the police approached the case with the purpose of getting her boyfriend convicted. Both they and the trial judge were, she believes, guilty of racism, and the trial was severely prejudiced by the judge's references to unknown black people (clearly emanating from the defence) out to noble or intimidate jurors. Her boyfriend and his family were referred to in terms which made them sound like Mafiosi.

Ishtiaq is serving his sentence in Wormwood Scrubs while the campaign works to secure his release.



Darren Jakobsen

On the 29th of March a day of action will be held in support of the Tower Hamlets Nine, six of whom still face charges of violent disorder. There will be a mass picket of Thames Magistrates Court on Bow Road, where the committal hearing is to take place. For details, ring the campaign on 081-548-0099

For further information or messages of support, contact: The Ishtiaq Ahmed Campaign, c/o A Motherway, 9 Salisbury Road, Reading RG3 1BH, tel: 0734-589087. ■

■ Nottingham unites

Nottingham United against Racism and Fascism is a new initiative called by Nottingham and District Trades Union Council and the Nottinghamshire Anti-Fascist Alliance. The original aim was to establish an ad hoc group to build for the TUC's March Against Racism in London on March 19. Despite reservations about the march, few would deny that there is potential for a massive show of opposition to racism and fascism. Also in the week prior to the first NUAR meeting, a local demonstration was called for February 26 in response to local racist attacks and the Nazi attack on the Mushroom bookshop.

At the first meeting of NUAR, nearly 100 people representing 20 different organisations pledged to build maximum support for both events. The wide range of support that this initiative has attracted, will, hopefully provide the foundations for a closer working relationship between anti-fascists, black community groups and the broader labour movement – a much needed development in Nottinghamshire. It is also the first major anti-racist initiative to be called by the labour movement locally for some years. Although NUAR was established largely with 19 March in mind, we hope that the benefits last long after the TUC demonstration.

NUAR, PO Box 179, Nottingham NG1 3AQ. ■

The Tower Hamlets Trades Council is currently preparing a pamphlet on fascism and the workers movement in East London (price £1.50). Further information from Tower Hamlets trades council, Davenant Centre, 179/181 Whitechapel Road, London E1.

SOLIDARITY NOT sympathy

A campaigning video from the Rahman Family Defence Campaign outlining the racist history of immigration controls and the struggle of the Rahman family against their deportation to Djibouti. Ideal for use at Trade Union and Labour Party meetings. Running time: 20mins. Available for £10 from the Rahman Family Defence Campaign, 16 Wood Street, Bolton BL1 1DY. ■

NOTICEBOARD

12 March Poetry and music at the Davenant Centre, Whitechapel Road, London. Proceeds to Tower Hamlets 9 Defence Campaign and CARF.

19 March TUC national demonstration against racism. Assemble 11am Spitalfields Market, London E1, rally at 2pm in London Fields.

21 March Stop the deportation of Prakash and Prem Chavrimootoo. Picket the immigration adjudicators hearing. 10am, Government buildings, Clay Lane, Yardley, Birmingham.

26 March Close down Campsfield detention centre, vigil outside the centre at 2pm in Kidlington, Oxford.

9 April Communities of Resistance against racism and fascism national rally. Defend Black Communities Under Attack, no deportations, no police frame-ups of black people! Speakers from grassroots campaigns. Organised by the Rahman Family defence campaign. Pakistani Community Centre, Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester 1pm – 5pm.

30 April May Day demonstrations against racism in Nottingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Birmingham.



First Independent Films

Bhaji on the Beach

On *The Richard and Judy Show*, it was described as a really great British film. It was an Asian *Summer Holiday* and a woman's *My Beautiful Launderette*. The reality is more like *Carry On Stereotyping*. As in the Morrissey song 'Bengali in platforms', the comedy is the comedy of what is taken to be an alien community embracing an English tradition – the day trip to Blackpool. It is to make this comedy 'work' that the film needs to accentuate as far as possible the cultural differences between the claustrophobic world the women leave, and the big lights and tacky entertainment of the sea-side. So we get wife-beating and oppressive family lives comparing unfavourably with pleasant English thespians and a male stripper. And yet for all this supposed cultural difference, an afternoon in the sea air suddenly manages to make even the clichéd moralising Asian aunties go wild over a man taking his clothes off. Ha ha.

As shown by films like *Wild West*, you can make films about Asians embracing activities that they aren't normally associated with – even Country and Western music – without the jokes being at the expense of stereotyped Asians. But then it's unlikely that such a film would get as ecstatic a review from Richard and Judy. ■

JAN 3 Jewish cemetery in East Ham, London is desecrated with swastikas and nazi graffiti. **JAN 6** Tower Hamlets council refuses permission for Victoria Park to be used for either TUC demonstration in March or ANL carnival in April. **JAN 7** French Interior minister Charles Pasqua says in TV interview that planeloads, boatloads and trainloads of illegal immigrants will be sent back until they 'get the message'.

JAN 14 John Major rejects calls for adoption of Europe-wide directive against racial discrimination...

German officials say that disabled girl who had swastika carved on her cheek probably inflicted the wound upon herself. **JAN 10** Liberal Democrats decide not to expel two party members accused of racism in Tower Hamlets by-election. **JAN 14** Security is stepped up at Jewish housing association estate in Leeds after two attacks in four days. **JAN 15** *Blood and Honour* gig fails to go ahead in London after anti-fascist protests in which 6 fascists, including 2 Belgians and a German, are arrested... two shop assistants and a disabled customer are beaten up when nazis attack radical Mushroom Bookshop in Nottingham. **JAN 16** *Sunday Times* report claims that Ku Klux Klan is to fund BNP election candidates in Britain. **JAN 17** Two German nazis are jailed for a racist attack on Duncan Kennedy, a member of the US Olympic team visiting Oberhof... Conservative controlled Brent Council announces closure of local Community Relations Council. **JAN 18** Welsh nazi Alan Beshella found guilty of public order offences after hanging an effigy of a black man from his washing line... Nazreen Pearce is sworn in as Britain's first black woman circuit judge. **JAN 19** Chairman of Chelsea football club condemns racism amongst fans as 'highly offensive'... civil servant Sharon Bajwa Ali awarded £1,000 damages for racial discrimination after she was refused leave to celebrate Eid. **JAN 20** Education Secretary John Patten says that there is nothing wrong with using the term 'little black Sambo'... Trevor Palmer, Swindon Town fan, banned from professional football matches for three months for shouting racist abuse at Newcastle United's Andy Cole... Home Secretary refuses to grant Winston Silcott leave to appeal. **JAN 21** Analysis of 1991 census data reveals that nearly two-thirds of immigrants are white... two Dunfermline football fans ordered to do 120 hours community service after chanting racist abuse at Falkirk black striker, Richard Cadette. **JAN 22** German police break up neo-nazi propaganda and weapons distribution network.

JAN 24 Home Secretary tells parliamentary Select Committee that there is no evidence of an increase in racist crime since increases in police figures can be explained by better reporting and recording... Tower Hamlets Labour candidate James Hunt resigns from party shortly before he is due to be interviewed in internal party inquiry. **JAN 25** Manchester shop worker deported to Pakistan while judge was still trying to decide whether he should be allowed to stay. **JAN 27** Social Trends survey says that blacks are eight times more likely to be in jail and face almost double the chance of being victims of violent crime than white people... report from the Board of Deputies of British Jews says that anti-Semitic incidents in Britain have increased by 85% in

eight years... Tarlochan Singh Gill has a life sentence for murder quashed after spending 10 years in jail on the basis of a West Midlands serious crimes squad investigation. **JAN 28** European Commission report proposes that immigrants resident in Europe should have the right to travel and seek employment in other member states... Liberal Democrats challenge Labour party to publish the results of their internal inquiry into racism in Tower Hamlets. **JAN 29** Immigration officials uncover more than 20 suspected illegal immigrants working at the Home Office in London. **JAN 30** Iranian family, including 13 month old baby, chased and beaten by racists on their way home from a birthday party in Liverpool. **JAN 31** Police and immigration officials launch nationwide hunt to track down 275 'missing Jamaicans' even though im-

migration minister, Charles Wardle admits that 269 of them are in Britain legally... French police shoot dead a black teenager for allegedly driving a stolen car... eight Algerian asylum seekers begin hunger strike in protest at their treatment in Pentonville prison. **FEB 1** Education Secretary John Patten orders schools to hold daily assemblies which are predominantly Christian in nature... Metropolitan Police Commissioner Paul Condon says that police officers suspended over the death of Joy Gardner are unlikely to face criminal charges and special deportation squad is to receive training in the use of restraining body belts... riot charges are dropped against the 'Tower Hamlets 9' - 6 still face charges of violent disorder. **FEB 2** Public inquiry is demanded after allegations of police brutality outside Check-point Charlie night club in Manchester... CRE begins investigation into case of Pakistani doctor who has unsuccessfully applied for more than 1,000 jobs. **FEB 3** Operation Jackpot inquiry names 45 police officers in Stoke Newington drugs corruption scandal... court hears how 16-year-old Hertfordshire schoolboy was beaten by fellow pupil's father for having a black friend. **FEB 4** Foreigners are corrupt, says Cabinet minister Michael Portillo... Social security Secretary Peter Lilley announces plans to establish residence tests for more state benefit claimants. **FEB 5** 12 illegal immigrants arrested by police at M4 service station after police make 'routine check' on transit van... confidential BR internal report reveals catalogue of racial and sexual harassment. **FEB 6** Jean-Marie Le Pen is re-elected as President of French National Front. **FEB 7** Three Germans receive jail sentences of 8 to 14 years for killing a man they thought to be Jewish in Wuppertal. **FEB 8** Grimsby Jewish cemetery desecrated. **FEB 9** Tower Hamlets Lib Dem group threatened with suspension unless it accepts finding of inquiry into racism... Revisionist historian David Irving is jailed for three months for contempt of court. **FEB 10** Home Office study says that of 130,000 racist attacks annually, 32,500 are assaults, 52,000 are threats and 26,000 involve vandalism. **FEB 11** 400 attend east London vigil protesting at attack on Mukhtar Ahmed, the ninth serious attack in 12 days. **FEB 17** Tory MP Jonathan Aitken is challenged over his friendship with Robert Edwards, former NF and Tory party member with convictions for distributing racist material... Report on death of Joy Gardner is released including conflicting evidence from seven different pathologists over how she died.

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