Licence to kill

The death from asphyxiation of Nigerian asylum-seeker Marcus Omafuma, during deportation from Austria on May Day, was inevitable because European governments increasingly take the view that it is acceptable to chain, gag, sedate and place cushions over the faces of deportees, and that death or serious injury is the price that must be paid to execute tough deportation policies. The killing of Semira Adamu, during deportation to Togo in September 1998, by police officers who smothered her face with a cushion, shamed Belgian interior minister Louis Tobback into resigning. Austria’s interior ministry, headed by Social Democrat Karl Schlögl, said it was ‘deeply sorry’ for the death of Omafuma, who was bundled on board a Balkan-Air flight from Vienna to Sofia in chains and with his mouth sealed with gummed tape. The ministry claimed he died because he put up ‘heavy resistance’, and had made so much noise that cabin staff insisted he be silenced or they would not take him. Viennese airport staff deny that Omafuma was violent. But Schlögl has made it clear that he has no intention of resigning – and according to opinion polls he has 88 per cent of the country behind him.

Police killers must be charged

Omafuma is the fifth person to die in Europe during deportation (see table) (although there may well have been more*). But what justice have the bereaved families of Semira Adamu, Kola Bankole, Joy Gardner, Arumugam Kanapathipillai and Omafuma received? To date, not one single member of the deportation police has been successfully prosecuted for these killings, not even for the lesser offence of manslaughter. In the UK, where an inquest into the death of Joy Gardner has yet to take place after six years, lawyers acting for her son, who was five when he watched his mother being bound and gagged with 13 feet of tape by a special deportation squad, have launched a civil action for the psychological damage caused by her death.

Omafuma’s case bears remarkable simil-

* According to information recently made public by Amnesty International, a Moroccan died in 1982 and a Zairean in 1987 when the ‘cushion technique’ was used in their deportation.

Training – no solution

Instead of calling an immediate halt to the practice of violent deportations, European governments are suggesting that all that is needed is better training, as though the efficient application of state violence was the answer. The Austrian interior ministry has announced that in future, the better-equipped anti-terrorist and riot police, WEGA (a huge proportion of whose membership support the extreme-Right Freedom Party) will be used to carry out deportations.

Belgian anti-deportation activists are particularly critical of a philosophy professor who has agreed to preside over a
It has happened again: another deportee has died in Europe

state committee to define when the use of force is justified and to advise on training the police in deportation techniques. But the cooption of academics as apologists for deportation is not new. Recently, Helen Dupuis, professor of ethics at Leiden University, called for the immediate closure of all Holland's borders so as to protect the public from abusive claims from 'people who arrive into the country in Boeings and who are not in genuine need'. In 1993, Dupuis was a member of an advisory committee on deportations, formed after a Romanian asylum-seeker suffered brain damage when his mouth was sealed with tape during a deportation attempt.

At least, in the UK, immigration officers are resisting incorporation into the deportation process. The UK immigration officers' union, the ISU, has made it clear that its members want no part in government proposals to train them in restraint techniques and the use of CS gas to enable them to carry out arrests and even deportations.

Campaign priorities

Campaigners in Austria have demonstrated in their thousands on the streets, occupied the Social Democrats' headquarters and announced a permanent vigil outside the interior ministry until Schlägl resigns. As a result the government has announced a temporary halt on all deportations. But the pressure has to be sustained. After the death of Semira Adamu, the Belgian government placed a two-month moratorium on all deportations. One month later, deportation police came for a 20-year-old pregnant Rwandan refugee. Their deportation attempt failed. But the woman miscarried.

Austrian airlines are the campaigners' next target. Pressure on airlines has been mounting across Europe since 1996, when the Dutch Autonoom Centre's occupation of Martinair led the company to stop group deportations to Zaire and the Democratic Republic. Similar protests in France led Air Afrique and Air France to announce an embargo on deportations to Mali. In October, in an unprecedented show of solidarity, around 1,000 airport staff at Brussels national airport joined members of the Collectif Contre les Expulsions in a minute's silence in memory of Semira Adamu. Dutch anti-racists have now switched their attention to Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) which carry out nearly 2,000 deportations each year from Amsterdam's Schiphol airport. To date KLM has reacted arrogantly to the Autonoom Centre's protests, arguing that as a business, its priorities are dictated by economic reality. KLM may have cause to regret its arrogance. At the annual Tourist Fair in Utrecht, the Autonoom Centre caused it maximum embarrassment by exposing this side of its business. Protesters dressed as KLM pilots managed to persuade the press and public that they were KLM employees outraged by KLM's collusion with deportations.

The solution Belgium is adopting, which may be copied by other states, is to stop using commercial airlines in favour of military or private jets. If this is the shape of things to come, then who will know when violence and death occurs? And where will we direct our protests?

Further information from the following e-mail or web addresses:
Austrian anti-deportation information service: arge.ucv@bluewin.ch
Austrian Anti-TSA web page: www.illegalierte.at
Autonoom Centre: sk@k4all.nl
United: antenne.an, http://www.xs4all.nl/united
What welcome for war refugees?

We are told that NATO’s war against Milosevic is unique in that it is waged purely for humanitarian reasons. If only policies towards the victims of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia matched this rhetoric.

By the end of 1998, around 250,000 of the 2 million ethnic Albanians in Kosovo had fled Yugoslavia. Roughly 40,000 had gone to Montenegro (whose population is 640,000). Similar numbers had fled to Sweden, to Greece and to Germany, mostly illegally, and around 20,000 to Switzerland.

No haven from ethnic cleansing

But what reception had Kosovo Albanians received in western Europe prior to the war? Sweden and Germany signed readmission agreements with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1996, and began repatriating Kosovo Albanians despite reports that a quarter of those repatriated were questioned, tortured, threatened or incarcerated on their return. In Austria, only 10 percent of Kosovo Albanians’ asylum claims were successful. The Swiss government sought to repatriate 14,000 Kosovo Albanian failed asylum-seekers and signed a readmission agreement with Yugoslavia in 1997, but suspended repatriations in June 1998. It was seeking to resume repatriation in April 1999. In the UK, where about 10,000 Kosovo Albanians had arrived, mostly illegally, and claimed asylum, an immigration appeal tribunal decided in 1997 that all Kosovo Albanians were genuine refugees. The home office refused to give refugee status immediately to the 7,000 outstanding claimants, saying it would deal with them on a case-by-case basis.

In March 1998 the situation in Kosovo had become so serious that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees called for an end to repatriation of Kosovo Albanians. In September, as more Albanians were being killed and burned out of their homes in Milosevic’s offensive, an EU home ministers’ meeting expressed concern at ‘the risk of a massive migration outflow’, but did nothing to plan for the
organised reception of the many thousands who would have to flee. All EU member states were keen to keep the 'problem' of war refugees out of their countries. But after the war began, and nightly TV reports of desperate refugees being forced from one overcrowded, stinking, disease-ridden camp to another in Macedonia and Albania revealed the extent of the crisis, the original policy of 'safe havens' for the refugees as close to Kosovo as possible became untenable.

'Temporary protection': the Bosnian experience

Germany's ministers are particularly strident in their demands for other countries to take their share of refugees. Former Chancellor Helmut Kohl described as 'scandalous' other European countries' reluctance to take refugees which he contrasted with Germany's generosity in taking in 350,000 Bosnian war refugees. But of the 350,000 taken by Germany since 1992, barely 80,000 remain. The rest have been forced to leave to prevent their settling in Germany. For Germany is an advocate and a practitioner of 'temporary protection'. Its policy on war refugees is that they must and will return home as soon as the war is over, regardless of conditions back home.

The repatriations of Bosnians began in 1996 and continued until they were made physically impossible by the EU ban on flights by the Yugoslav national airline, JAT, in September 1998 (in response to the worsening repression in Kosovo). Even then, the German interior minister said he would explore ways of returning the Bosnians by land. War refugees - including survivors of torture in the notorious concentration camps, rape victims and people who had become mentally ill as a result of their experiences - were given notice that they had to leave. Planes were chartered and large groups of Bosnians were rounded up for deportation. German official figures indicating that only a few thousand were forcibly removed do not take account of the deterrent effect of the round-ups, the threats of force for those who refused to comply with 'voluntary' departure, or the effect of cutting off social welfare allowances to starve people into leaving. The EU's former representative in Mostar strongly condemned the expulsion of ex-Yugoslav refugees, saying, 'We are sending people back without asking ourselves what awaits them there.'

No settlement rights

The concept of temporary protection emerged in 1992, in the early days of the war in Yugoslavia, as a way for EU

Bosnian war refugees had stayed (after the war ended) and warned the Kosovans that they would be deported after the war. In Britain too, the authorities implement a sort of 'temporary protection' by not removing various groups. At the moment, Angolans, Algerians and Sierra Leonians are among asylum-seekers not being removed.

Germany may be rare in explicitly declaring that those it takes in will have no residence rights and will be evicted when the government says so. But Austria, Switzerland and Sweden also returned Bosnian war refugees, and in the Netherlands the ruling coalition was contemplating deporting those with full refugee status.

A new rootless class

The rightlessness of temporary protection suits Western governments in a number of ways. Apart from strictly time-limiting the commitment to refugees, it means that advantage can be taken of them to fill gaps at the bottom end of the labour market as and when required. Leading demographers and economists have expressed concern that Germany is very short of labour. It needs 300,000 migrants a year, according to the German Economic Institute. Germany pioneered the system of guest workers, whereby the country of origin paid the social costs of rearing and educating workers who then migrated on temporary contracts to Germany. After the contract finished, the worker was sent home. (Ironically, Yugoslavs formed a large proportion of the guest workers migrating to Germany in the 1950s and 60s). The guestworker system seized up when the guests refused to go home; a series of campaigns led to rights of settlement being won. Now, the subjects of temporary protection are the new guest workers, on sufferance, liable to be expelled at a moment's notice for 'delinquency' (fishing without a permit and driving through a red light are crimes which have warranted expulsion) and to be forced out when the authorities deem it fit.

Many other Western European governments find themselves with similar labour problems. The more rights EU citizens get, in terms of minimum wages and conditions of work, the more resort will be had to asylum-seekers and those on temporary protection. The segregation of these groups from mainstream society (in terms of accommodation and benefits), the total control of their movements by immigration authorities, make them an ideal captive labour force for the new millennium.
At a time when the police stand accused of institutional racism, their political use of crime figures (supported by the media and academia) has become a major weapon in their struggle to win back popular support.

The police forces of Britain are currently waging a public relations battle to regain credibility after the Macpherson Inquiry. Crime figures, produced by the police and released to the media along with the police's interpretation of the figures, are playing a major role in it. The picture they give is one in which whites are as likely to be victims of racism as anyone else, young black males are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime, and criticism of the police is hindering the detection of criminals. Like the figures for unemployment, crime figures seem to provide an objective scientific measure of what is happening in society and, for this reason, they can appear to offer an apparently irrefutable picture of reality. The time has come for antiracists to destroy the apparent objectivity of crime figures once and for all and expose just how the police use them to further their own public relations agenda.

Redefining racist crime: the example of Oldham

As an example let's consider some recent events in Oldham. For four years, Gulfran Nazir's family in Limeside, Oldham was subjected to racial harassment by gangs of up to thirty racist youths armed with crowbars and hammers, who tried to attack their shop. Whenever the police were called they failed to turn up in time to make a difference. Finally Gulfran organised with friends to defend his family from the gangs. The result was a running battle on the streets between armed white youths and Asians. The Q Division of Greater Manchester Police, which operates in Oldham, has a history of indifference to racial attacks by whites in the area and Asian youths are themselves regularly harassed by the police (recently a young Asian boy was seriously wounded when, having already surrendered to the police, he was mauled by police dogs). Consequently, there is little faith in the police's ability to tackle white racist gangs. Gulfran Nazir is not alone in feeling the time has come to organise self-defence.

These days when a racist gang attacks an Asian, its members can themselves expect a revenge attack from an Asian gang. But, whereas an Asian victim of a racist attack is unlikely to report the crime to the police – and if they do it may not be recorded as racially motivated – an attack by an Asian gang on a white will most likely be reported and recorded by the police as a racial incident. It is easy to see how this situation would result in misleading police figures for racial incidents which would suggest that whites were the main victims of racially motivated crime.

Oldham's chief superintendent, Eric Hewitt, regards incidents such as the Nazir case as nothing more than gang violence. He released figures last year which stated that out of 250 incidents in one year, the majority involved violence on whites by Pakistanis. He then used his figures to argue that the real problem was not racial attacks against Asians, but crimes committed by Asian gangs. The local press lapped it up; the Lancashire Evening Chronicle ran a front page story with the headline 'violent racial crime rockets: three out of four victims are white' while the Oldham Evening Chronicle had 'fears growing over plague of racist attacks by Asian gangs'. In the
article itself chief superintendent Hewitt offered his own 'spin' on the figures: 'There is evidence that they are trying to create exclusive areas for themselves... Anyone seems to be a target if they are white. It is a growing polarisation between some sections of the Asian youth and white youth on the grounds of race, manifesting itself in violence, predominantly Asian.' The image conveyed is one of territory wars between rival race gangs, with Asians the worst perpetrators.

At a time when there is for once a move to tackle police racism, the image of gang warfare provides a useful alternative story, one in which the real problem is not racism against Asians but gang violence. The police can then present themselves as caught between two rival gangs rather than, as in the Lawrence case, appearing to be themselves part of the problem.

But behind the headlines about Asian gangs lies a whole history of racism and social exclusion. In 1993, Oldham Borough Council was found to have been operating an unlawful segregation policy in its housing allocation, which ghettoised Asians onto a rundown estate, while whites were given homes in a more desirable area. Two years ago the local racial equality council was shut down, while the council itself currently has no race relations or equalities officer. Meanwhile Combat 18 and the BNP have both had bases in the area. When the police published their figures of racial incidents, the BNP paper, British Nationalist, reported on Oldham with the front page headline 'Ethnic Cleansing in Britain' and organised a leafletting campaign in the area.

London policing going soft?

In a more direct response to the Macpherson report, Scotland Yard released figures to the press at the end of April which claimed that police stop-and-search operations in London had been reduced due to heightened criticism of police racism and, as a result, muggings had increased. Under headlines such as 'muggings soar as police tread softly', the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail and the Evening Standard quoted Glen Smyth of the Police Federation claiming a 'definite link' between the reduction in stop-and-search operations by one third and the one third rise in 'muggings', as compared to the previous year. The figures were said to bear out the warnings by police officials that the Macpherson report would deter officers from stopping and searching black suspects. The police are now apparently 'fearful of being branded as racist'.

However, since the statistics from which these figures were produced are confidential, there is no possibility of an independent assessment of their interpretation. Even from the figures which have been published, we know that the proportion of stops which led to arrests has also risen in the last year, which might suggest that the stops were being more intelligently applied. Furthermore, since the proportion of crime which is detected by police use of stops is so small, it is unlikely that changes in police use of stop-and-search would have had a significant impact on crime rates over a one-year period. It is also worth remembering that since the police control the process by which crimes are recorded (see next page), it is possible that a rise in figures for street robberies could be as much the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy by police officers, who warned that black crime would rise following Macpherson's accusations of institutional racism.

continued overleaf
WHEN WILL WE HAVE RELIABLE STATISTICS FOR RACIAL INCIDENTS?

One of the casualties of the political use of crime figures by the police is that we are seriously handicapped when it comes to having figures about the true extent of racial harassment. The Macpherson report has proposed reforms to the way that the police record racial incidents and suggested a new, more open definition of a racial incident as one in which the victim or any other person perceives a racial motivation. This would, in theory, remove the element of police discretion from the recording process. The potential problem with this is that it allows any incident involving people of different races to be recorded as racially motivated. Police forces like Oldham's are now trying to give the impression that racism and the attempt to defend oneself against it is actually just gang violence and territory wars. And the new definition would feed into this idea by collapsing all incidents into one category of what would effectively be 'inter-racial crime' rather than actual racism. Statistics derived from such a definition would have to be regarded as alleged racist incidents and, in fact, we would be no closer to having proper statistics on the true extent of racial violence and harassment. Even under the present system, many incidents of crime are recorded as racially motivated for no other reason that the perpetrator was black and the victim white.

A truer picture of the level of racial harassment in Britain would only emerge once proper attention was paid to the fact that much racial harassment involves an ongoing campaign of verbal abuse, vandalism or violence by racists who are known to the victim - precisely the kind of experience which does not show up well on either police records or crime surveys, which are both designed to measure the number of discrete, individual criminal incidents.

continues from previous page

Linking race and crime

The release of these figures also serves to fuel the myth of the 'thin blue line' holding back a tide of crime, which is implicitly understood to be black crime. This myth, and the implicit link between race and crime, has been cemented in the public imagination by the regular release, over a period of more than two decades, of racialised crime figures. But, in fact, as recently as 1972, chief constables were reporting to the home office that the African-Caribbean population was a low crime group. However, by 1976, following a series of political confrontations between police and black communities, the Met claimed to have statistical evidence to support the view that black people were more likely to commit crimes, in particular street robberies or what the press liked to call 'muggings'. The emotive reporting in the media of unpublished so-called statistical evidence by the police became a key mechanism by which the police were able to legitimise their criminalisation of black communities generally. This process continued after the Scarman Inquiry in the early 1980s, when crime figures which purported to identify young African-Caribbean males as responsible for most muggings became part of the police's successful campaign to win new powers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. And in 1995, Metropolitan Police chief Paul Condon wrote to a number of community leaders claiming once again to have figures to prove that 'very many of the perpetrators of muggings are very young black people' and asking for support in a major operation to target black youths. Again the figures were based on internally conducted unpublished studies. Again, the press reported the police figures uncritically.

Crime figures as public relations

Whether it is racial incidents in Oldham or muggings in London, police figures fail to convey the full complexity of the actual situation. But the inaccuracy of police crime figures does not simply lie, as is often thought, in a combination of under-reporting of crimes and the necessary simplification of reality which statistics introduce. Recent investigations into the Nottinghamshire force suggest that the recording of crime figures is routinely skewed by forces to control how their daily operations are presented to the outside world.

The particular malpractices revealed arose with the introduction of performance targets for police forces during the 1990s which brought strong pressure 'from above' for measurable results. Much effort has gone into recording and analysing crime figures so as to assess performance. But, as has now become clear, the actual crime figures produced have borne little relationship to reality. Various techniques have been devised by police forces to enable them to give the impression that fewer offences were being committed in their areas so as to suggest improvements in performance. For example, by changing the category under which a crime is recorded its apparent seriousness can be reduced; or secret files of crime records, which are excluded from the published figures, can
be employed to lower the apparent crime rate. Other techniques have been used to doctor the figures for detection, such as persuading those in custody to admit to other unsolved crimes in return for favours.

These revelations show that police paperwork can be massaged to give whatever impression is needed and therefore crime figures become less an accurate measure of real crime and more an instrument of public relations. When a major element of police public relations has to do with defusing claims about racism, we should not be surprised to find that police figures are also skewed with regard to race.

Race, crime and the academics

The myth of a causal link between race and crime has been a recurring theme of police public relations offensives. But academic research has also given support to this view. For example, research by David Smith, Professor of Criminology at Edinburgh University, was recently featured in the Evening Standard. Smith has argued that there is reasonable statistical evidence to prove that African-Caribbean males are disproportionately involved in crime; he also believes that there is a causal link between African-Caribbean culture and family structure and higher rates of offending. He believes that, for this reason, the police are right to target black people. For him, stereotyping by race is a legitimate policing technique.

Smith's method is to start with the disproportionate number of African-Caribbean people in prison. The question for Smith is to what extent this disproportion is a result of racism in the criminal justice system and to what extent it is a result of actually higher rates of offending. To this end, he analyses the statistics on every aspect of the criminal justice process and finds the evidence for racism unconvincing. In particular he argues that were racism the explanation then we would expect to see similar numbers of Asians in prison, which is not the case. Having discounted racism as a factor, Smith concludes that the disproportionate number of African-Caribbeans in prison must, by a process of elimination, be due to West Indian culture and family dysfunction.

The 'raw material' of crime statistics consists of a whole range of information about categories of offence, convicted offenders, suspects, victims, their age, area of residence, type of housing, their race, class and gender and how often they go out in the evenings. From data, criminologists attempt to establish patterns and correlations. But in order to establish a correlation between race and crime, race has to be isolated as an independent variable from all the other data collected about the social and economic background of the offender. And to do that is to reify race and treat it as a discrete, mechanical object. Because there is no real scientific basis on which to justify looking at race in this way, the myth about black culture is wheeled out to provide an explanation instead.

The result is that this kind of academic research offers a mirror image of the police's own racism, thereby legitimating it. The police stereotype black people as criminals; the crime figures therefore support this view; the academics then use the figures to endorse the myth of a mechanical link between race and crime which then, in turn, reinforces police stereotyping. The ideological effect of this research is to suggest that black families should stop complaining about racism since they are themselves the cause of black criminalisation.

It would be silly to argue that there was not a problem of crime in African-Caribbean, Asian or any other community resident in Britain. Clearly there is and society needs to tackle these problems. It is also the case that particular sorts of crimes are over-represented in particular areas of particular towns.

To leap from these obvious facts to suggest that, therefore, police are justified in stereotyping whole racial groups would be entirely wrong. First, because there is no general correlation between racial groups and particular sorts of crime; second, because, even if there was a statistical pattern of divergence in the crime figures between different racial groups, it is unlikely that such statistics would be of any help in targeting police operations to detect crime; third, because to do so would be an injustice to black people, and ultimately ends in the disproportionate number of black people who die in police custody or who face illegitimate brutal policing on the streets.
MET POLICE EAT WORDS (WELL ALMOST)

In April, the Met police were forced to apologise for issuing false statements as Roger Sylvester was dying. In what is now a typical police response to black deaths in custody, Roger was portrayed as a vicious and aggressive black man. The Met claimed that a caller in a 999 emergency call alleged that Roger had been acting in an ‘aggressive and vociferous manner’. The police were forced to admit that such a call was not made but refused to accept that this made the statement inaccurate. When these bogus statements were released Roger was on a life support machine, after being retrained during treatment at St Anne’s hospital in Tottenham. As Roger was detained under the Mental Health Act, the police felt it necessary to prove that Roger was in some way deranged.

Roger’s family was still unhappy about the apology, which has been three months in coming. The misleading statement has since been reprinted in papers. (See also CARF 48 and 49)

Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign PO Box 25008, London N18 1WU, Tel: 07031 070442. E-mail: rjsj@hotmail.com

FAMILIES DEMAND INQUIRY INTO DEATHS IN CUSTODY

In April the United Families and Friends Campaign met with Jack Straw to demand an independent inquiry into deaths in police, prison and psychiatric custody. A vigil was held at the same time outside the home office to remember those who had died.

On May 7, friends and family of Brian Douglas held a vigil outside Kennington police station to mark the fourth anniversary of his death.

United Families and Friends Campaign and Inquest can be reached at: Ground Floor, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2PJ. Tel: 0370 432439/ 07917 874212. Inquest tel: 0181 802 7430.

THE POLICE CAR: AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON

Sheffield police in unmarked car injured black student Anthony Green

During the evening of 7 April, Anthony Green, an 18-year-old student of Sheffield College, suddenly found himself a victim of a potentially lethal weapon: a police car.

Anthony was riding his bicycle along Catherine Street in Sheffield’s Pittmoor district, when an unmarked car drove alongside him. A white man jumped out and Anthony pedalled away. The car followed, drove up to his back wheel and knocked him from his cycle. He got up, ran down the road, only to be pursued by the car and run over. At no time did the driver and passengers – all members of the south Yorkshire police – identify themselves. The car was driven away, leaving Anthony lying in the street with serious leg injuries, because of which he spent a week in hospital.

The police claim that they were involved in drugs surveillance work, and offered neither apology nor a detailed explanation of their actions to Anthony or his family. Instead, they invited a ‘focus group’ of influential members of Sheffield’s black community to a briefing at Attercliffe police station, seeking to divide the black community by implying that Anthony was somehow involved in drugs.

It was a desperate and forlorn strategy which angered the community even more. A number of well-attended meetings have been organised and a campaign launched with the full support of Sheffield’s newly-formed National Civil Rights Movement group.

Anthony’s mother expressed the indignation of Sheffield’s black communities when she declared: “The police say it was a case of mistaken identity, but that’s not good enough. There is no truth in the claim that Anthony was approached for questioning and ran away. The police used the car as a lethal weapon.”

Anthony Green Campaign for Justice, c/o National Civil Rights Movement, Sheffield; Tel: 0114 242 9560 or 0181 843 2333.

In March, the National Civil Rights Movement was launched in London, with testimonies from families who have been victims of injustice. Since then local branches have been established in Sheffield, Manchester and Plymouth and support is being made available to a large number of individuals around the UK. Contact the National Civil Rights Movement, c/o 14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5AA; Tel: 0181 874 0918; Fax: 0181 813 9734.
ANTI-FASCISM

FASCISTS CONTEST EURO-ELECTIONS

BNP using internet, fax and television

The fascist British National Party (BNP) will be contesting June's European parliamentary elections in what it describes as 'the most sophisticated election and recruitment campaign ever run by a British nationalist party'. It will stand candidates in every English seat and some Scottish ones and already has over 80 definite candidates, although there have been allegations of irregularities. The party has decided to downplay its racism to focus on a 'Save Our Sterling' campaign using an internet Euro-election site and mass fax campaign. The 'law and order' party has also named its Euro-election dream team: John Tyndall, Nick Griffin, Richard Edmonds, Tony Lecomber and Mike Newland - the usual suspects who between them have convictions for firearms offences, bombings, racist attacks and publishing inflammatory racist material. The back-up team consists of rising stars in the party: Phil Edwards (media), George Jeffrey (election fax campaign), Steve Edwards (coordination), Barnaby Orr (brochures) and Simon Darby (website).

The BNP knows that it has no chance of electoral success but intends to exploit the statutory television broadcast to disseminate its propaganda in its biggest ever recruitment drive. The success of this will no doubt influence Nick Griffin's leadership challenge later in the year.

As well as the election broadcast, the BNP will also be entitled to free circulation of 15 million election leaflets by the Royal Mail. However the mail workers union, the CWU, is encouraging its members to invoke their right to refuse to handle material on the grounds of conscientious objection.

EDUCATION

SCHOOL ANTI-RACISM UNDERMINED

Although the home secretary's endorsement of the Macpherson report recommendations encouraged hopes that anti-racist programmes would be incorporated into the national curriculum, recent indicators suggest that this will not happen. Addressing a conference on 'Anti-racist work with white young people', organised by the National Youth Agency on 14 April, Mike O'Brien, secretary of state at the home office, pointedly refused to make any such commitment, suggesting instead that it might find a place within 'citizenship' on the curriculum. Later, education secretary David Blunkett dashed any remaining hopes for anti-racist education when he spelt out his commitment to 'citizenship studies' in terms of formation of identity. According to him, 'We have tended to downplay our culture and we need to reinforce pride in what we have.'

It now seems that the debate about institutional racism has been in vain: we are back to culture-strengthening and identity-formation, with racism, if discussed at all, reduced to an interpersonal problem.

EDUCATION

DOVER TEACHERS AGAINST RACISM

Over one hundred and fifty anti-racists, teachers and trades unionists packed into Dover town hall on 27 April to plan action on the refugee situation. For the vicious anti-refugee campaign, spearheaded by the local paper, the Dover Express (see CARF 48), since the arrival of Kosovan asylum-seekers last autumn, has led to a rise in generalised racism, especially against children.

A single mother with two small children has been attacked twice, her windows were again smashed in the early hours of an April morning. Two Bangladeshi boys were attacked on a train, and in March a young girl from Kazakhstan was beaten and punched in her Dover school and later attacked on her way home.

The meeting heard that schools had absolutely failed to deal with the problem and maintained 'a tight-lipped silence in the face of growing racism'.

ANTI-FASCISM

TAJ AHMED IN PROTEST

Taj Ahmed and Roberto Brollini were jailed for 12 months last January after defending themselves from a racist attack by drunken members of the British National Party. In April Roberto was released on a home detention curfew, which means that he will be electronically tagged. But Taj's request for home detention has been rejected by HMP Kirkham's governor on the grounds that Taj was the 'instigator' of the attack, that he had not addressed his offending behaviour and that his release would jeopardise 'public safety'. Taj has no previous record of violence unlike the fascists who instigated the attack.

The 'Justice for Taj and Roberto' campaign is calling for protests to be sent to Mr A Jennings (governor), HMP Kirkham, Freckleton Road, Kirkham, Preston, PR4 6AB. Fax 01772 689855.
A parallel fight

One of the priorities of the National Civil Rights Movement launched in London on 28 March is to link up with campaigners in the north of Ireland. There are parallels between the institutionalised racism of the police in Britain and the institutionalised sectarianism which underlies RUC collusion with Loyalists and failure to protect Catholic and nationalist communities.

ROBERT HAMILL/STEPHEN LAWRENCE – ONE STRUGGLE, ONE FIGHT

At the London launch of the National Civil Rights Movement, Diane Hamill, the sister of Robert Hamill who was brutally murdered by Loyalists in the Catholic area of Portadown in 1977, spoke movingly of the similarities between her brother’s death and that of Stephen Lawrence.

Robert Hamill was kicked to death in the early hours of 27 April 1997 by a mob of thirty loyalists, in full view of an RUC Land Rover and 200 yards from an RUC station in Portadown. Four RUC officers, who were equipped with body armour and machine guns, did not get out of their Land Rover until after the attack. The facts about the subsequent botched police investigation are tellingly similar to that into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The RUC did not declare a crime scene, collect forensic evidence or take statements. They detained just one suspect, but released him after a few minutes. And the subsequent half-hearted prosecution against six men – all of whom, awaiting trial, asked to be placed on the Loyalist Volunteer Force wing at the Maze prison – resulted in their acquittal on murder charges (although one man was convicted of affray).

Today, Robert’s family face constant harassment not just from Loyalists but from RUC officers who resent their determined fight for justice. And another blow came in March 1999 when their solicitor, Rosemary Nelson, was killed by a car bomb.

A London branch of the Robert Hamill campaign has been set up to assist the family in any private prosecution and to campaign for an independent judicial inquiry into the circumstances of Robert’s murder.

More information from: BM Hamill Campaign, London WC1N 3XX. E-mail: hamillcampaign@hotmail.com

CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN IRELAND DEMAND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

SUPPORT JO REILLY

In May, CARF was contacted by Jo Reilly whose son, Kevin, was stabbed to death in the working-class Tallaght district of Dublin on 15 April 1992. Jo had been keenly following the MacPherson inquiry, strongly identifying with the parents of Stephen Lawrence, whose grief mirrors his own.

Kevin was just 16 when a neighbour armed himself with a knife and went on the rampage, purely because Kevin had refused to fight with him the night before. Thanks to the Garda’s failure to gather evidence and call key witnesses, Kevin’s killer walked free from court. As far as the Garda were concerned, Kevin was from the wrong side of town. Those who live in the Tallaght, it seems, should not expect justice. Jo has been fighting relentlessly for seven years to get the case re-examined. But like Doreen and Neville Lawrence, he is facing a police force which closes ranks to protect its own. Jo’s complaint against the Garda is typical of the hundreds of complaints that the under-resourced ICCL (Irish Council for Civil Liberties) receives each year. According to ICCL’s Judy Walsh, the lack of an independent system for investigating the police means that of 1,500 complaints made against the Garda in 1998, only one was upheld.

The ICCL has submitted evidence to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and is preparing evidence for the UN Human Rights Committee and hopes that this, alongside the establishment of a new Human Rights Commission, will begin to rectify what Judy describes as Ireland’s ‘complete absence of a culture of human rights’. In the meantime, Jo, who is considering a civil action against Kevin’s killer, and wants to link up with the civil rights movement in the UK, needs support.

If you would like to contact Jo Reilly, please write to him c/o CARF

ICCL can be contacted at Dominick Court, 41 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1. Tel: 00 35 31 48 11713.
FRIENDS OF THE GARVAGHY ROAD

A Friends of the Garvaghy Road support group has been formed in Britain to assist the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition in their struggle to overcome sectarian intimidation in Portadown.

The marching season in the six Northeastern Counties of Ireland is now well underway, with 50 marches set to take place between April and July. While the Orange Order seems to be split on plans for 100,000 members to march on Drumcree on 12 July, the Parades Commission may well rule in favour of allowing its controversial parade through the Catholic Garvaghy Road on 4 July. During such parades, Catholic homes and businesses are attacked as the RUC places the Garvaghy Road community under effective house arrest in order to allow the march to proceed. In previous years, residents have been injured by plastic baton rounds in RUC attempts to contain their protests. In 1998, prior to the Orange Order march to Drumcree, which passes through the Garvaghy Road, Loyalists firebombed the home of a family – the father of whom was Protestant, the mother Catholic – murdering the three young Quinn children. In calling for an immediate ban on the Loyalist marches, the Portadown nationalist community points to the increasing harassment of Garvaghy Road residents in the run-up to the marching season, and to the fact that nine Catholics have been murdered in sectarian attacks in Portadown in recent years.

The Friends of the Garvaghy Road support group sees strong parallels between the Catholic communities’ struggle against Loyalist parades and the anti-fascist struggle in the UK and the right of black communities to live free from the threat of fascist incursion. As spokesman Frank Small points out, ‘Racist marches by the BNP or the NF through Brick Lane, Brixton, Handsworth or Southall would not be tolerated. And the same applies to Portadown, where they are happening almost on a daily basis.’

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CAMPAIGNS AGAINST RACISM LAUNCHED IN IRELAND

Following an accelerated rise in anti-immigrant hysteria, reflected in increased levels of racist abuse and attack on Irish streets, a National Federation of Campaigns Against Racism was launched in Ireland in March this year. St Patrick’s Day, 17 March, and the European-wide Action Week Against Racism (13-21 March) were used as platforms for the launch. On 15 March, simultaneous protests calling on the Irish government to Let Asylum Seekers Stay were held at Dublin, Cork, and Shannon airports. The protests were covered by both RTE and TV3 (the two Irish TV channels) on their main evening news programmes. The airport protests highlighted the outrageously hypocritical stance of the Irish government which, at a time when thousands of Irish emigrants were welcomed home for the St Patrick’s Day festivities, was pursuing with determination a policy intent on deporting as many asylum-seekers as possible. A second protest on the theme of Refugees Are Welcome Here was held on 19 March outside the Department of Justice Refugee Application Centre in the centre of Dublin. It was attended by more than fifty asylum-seekers from the Roma community in Ireland and was supported by the Irish Traveller Movement. The protest was covered by TV3 and several national newspapers and called upon the Irish government to ‘recognise the humanity of asylum-seekers in Ireland by treating them sympathetically rather than as hordes of threatening invaders; cease the attempt to introduce even more draconian anti-immigrant legislation; grant the right to work to asylum-seekers while awaiting a decision on their cases; actively promote ethnic diversity as a positive development for Irish society; campaign against racism rather than accelerate its rise by pursuing a policy of mass deportation; regularise the status of asylum-seeking children who are parents of Irish-born children’.

The Federation welcomes all open, democratic and non-political organisations. Already Anti-Fascist Action, the Association of Nigerians Asylum-Seekers in Ireland, the Anti-Racism Campaign (Dublin), the Association of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Ireland, the Community of Romanians in Ireland, Galway Against Racism, Immigrant Solidarity (Cork), Mid-West Against Racism (Limerick), Residents Against Racism (Dublin), and the Roma Support Group (Monaghan) have affiliated. The Federation aims to coordinate activist groups nationally and to build resistance to racism, deportations, and the introduction of anti-immigrant legislation. Over the coming months it will seek to build networks with other groups in the EU to challenge the development of Fortress Europe. The Federation is committed to defending the free movement of people, opposing all restrictions on the right to travel, and reining the distinction between political and economic immigrants. In its view the definition of ‘genuine refugee’ has become a mere smoke screen to enable western governments to deny refuge to those fleeing persecution, war, famine and desperate economic circumstances.

The policy of exclusion is reflected in a 90 percent rejection rate in Ireland, which unsurprisingly mirrors the EU average. In the case of Ireland, which has only 7,000-8,000 asylum-seekers, such a ratio of rejection is even more alarming. This is especially so given Ireland’s long and extensive history of economic migration.

Protesters outside the Department of Justice in Dublin

Friends of the Garvaghy Road, EM Box 5519, London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 01 811 442 8778
**ASYLUM RIGHTS**

**AROUND THE COURTS: ASYLUM-SEEKERS CRIMINALISED**

The first destitute asylum-seekers are beginning to appear in court for crimes of poverty, CARF heard of a 17-year-old Algerian asylum-seeker who was up before the magistrates for pickpocketing. The magistrate heard that it was the youth's first offence, committed out of desperation because he had absolutely no money. The probation report warned that, because he had no prospect of getting any, he was likely to commit further offences - whereupon the magistrate sentenced the youth to nine months in Feltham Young Offenders' Institution.

Down the road in Uxbridge, magistrate's court, almost 50 percent of court business is taken up with forgery and counterfeiting charges against asylum-seekers who use false passports to get to safety. Frequently those picked up are Kosovan Albanians who are in transit to Canada and are stopped while boarding planes at Heathrow when the forgeries are detected. The reason why they need false documents is that they're not allowed on the plane unless they can produce a passport with a visa for the country they're going to, and as refugees they can't get visas. Article 31 of the Geneva Convention on Refugees says that refugees should not be subjected to penalties for illegal means of travel, but that hasn't stopped Uxbridge magistrates from sending hundreds of asylum-seekers to prison for between three and nine months. In July, a group of refugees will be launching a test case in the High Court to challenge the practice of criminalising asylum-seekers.

**ASYLUM RIGHTS**

**'AIDING ILLEGAL ENTRY' LAWS MUST GO**

Bridget Seisay, a 30-year-old black British woman from South London jailed in Belgium for three years for trafficking in human beings, has become the latest victim of Europe's draconian 'aiding illegal entry' laws.

In the last issue of CARF, we reported on Bridget's arrest at passport control at Brussels railway station when she attempted to board a Eurostar train with a woman she had recently met in Germany. It turned out that the woman, Martha Conteh, was travelling on a false passport. Despite the fact that Martha, who immediately sought political asylum, made clear to the police that Bridget had no knowledge whatsoever of her predicament, the Belgian authorities insisted on imprisoning Bridget and setting her in motion the bizarre charge against her. Since then, Martha Conteh has gained asylum in Belgium.

Bridget now languishes in a Belgian prison, separated from her 2-year-old son, while her lawyers launch an appeal. According to Stephen Jakobi, director of Fair Trials Abroad, Bridget's conviction is 'utterly outrageous' and one of the 'worst miscarriages of justice' he has ever seen. He has accused the Belgian authorities of 'institutional racism' and the British press of ignoring her story because she was black.

What Bridget's case reveals is the crazy injustice of laws adopted across Europe on aiding illegal immigration - laws that institutionalise injustice. In France, women who marry non-EU citizens have found themselves prosecuted for aiding illegal entry. In Germany, in Dresden alone four taxi-drivers have been jailed for picking up passengers who have no papers. One of the ironies of Bridget's case is that it comes after sustained pressure from the British government on Belgium immigration officials to step up passport checks on Eurostar passengers, claiming that too many 'illegal immigrants' were entering the UK from Belgium. The imprisonment of an innocent UK citizen is, in part, the result of British belligerence. Aiding illegal entry laws are unjust laws that penalise the innocent - while the human traffickers and criminal mafias who exploit and even kill asylum-seekers seeking a safe passage to Europe get off scot free. These laws must go.

**Arrest for helping asylum-seekers**

Another law which invites miscarriages of justice is the provision of the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act against 'facilitating the entry of asylum-seekers'. When the provision was introduced, ministers said that the new offence was to catch racketeers. It was not a criminal offence to help asylum-seekers reach Britain, they said, unless it was done for profit.

Why then did the CPS and the police decide to bring a case against a man who had bought airline tickets for a friend and his family who were fleeing a middle Eastern state, to enable them to come to Heathrow where they claimed asylum? In bringing the case, the prosecution claimed that it was not their responsibility to prove that the man had gained from facilitating their entry; rather, he had to prove that he hadn't. Thankfully, the judge at Harrow crown court disagreed with the prosecution and the jury subsequently acquitted the man. But he had spent five months in custody waiting for the trial to come to court.
HARDEV SINGH DHESI 1934–1999
A PIONEER OF ANTI-RACISM IN EAST LONDON

On the evening of 24 April, as a nail-bomb ripped through the heart of the East End, Hardev Singh Dhesi, a pioneer of anti-racism in east London — suffered a fatal heart attack in Ilford shortly after giving a speech at the Sikh festival Vaisakhi. The moment of his death was indeed ironic, for Mr. Dhesi was always first to lend his support to the victims of racism and bigotry.

Hardev Singh Dhesi is perhaps best-known as one of the founders and the first chair of the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP), a pioneering racial harassment monitoring project formed in 1980 shortly after Akhtar Ali Baig was stabbed to death in East Ham by a skinhead.

Coming to Britain

Fired with an enthusiasm for British socialism, Mr. Dhesi, a teacher in the Punjab, had arrived in the UK in 1965. But in the UK his qualifications were not recognised and, like so many of the professionals of his generation, Dhesi had to do manual work. Working in the factories of east London, though, meant he soon found himself relied upon by the new immigrants who, barely literate in English, could not fill in social security forms, apply for jobs or go to the doctor. After working on the Asian night shift at a rubber factory, handling dangerous chemicals without protection or supervision, Dhesi joined the East Ham branch of the Indian Workers' Association. He was later employed as a bus-driver by Wolverhampton Transport. A mild-mannered man with a respect for British democracy, Dhesi experienced his political baptism of fire in 1968 when he organised a demonstration against Wolverhampton's MP, Enoch Powell, only to find himself beaten up by the police.

Fighter against racism

Dhesi had no intention of becoming a community leader or settling in the UK, but circumstances deemed otherwise. When in April 1977, three Asian brothers, who had phoned the police after being attacked by a gang of white youths, were arrested in East Ham and convicted of causing grievous bodily harm, Dhesi rallied to the family's defence. After he was elected General Secretary of the Virk Brothers Defence Campaign, he mobilised the Sikh community at the Barking Gurdwara and raised £4,000 in just two weeks. The Virk brothers' case was a key moment in the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities' struggle for self-defence, and one of the first to change the face of east London — then a hotbed of racist and fascist activity.

In June 1980, after Akhtar Ali Baig was stabbed to death by a teenage gang, it was Dhesi who formed the Steering Committee of Asian Organisations and encouraged the community elders to pay the fines of the 52 young people arrested during pitched battles with the police. Young Asians, fired by self-defence struggles in the East End, Southall and Bradford, were becoming increasingly frustrated by the elders, but Dhesi always commanded respect. When NMP was founded in 1980, Dhesi acted as father figure and political counsel to a whole new generation of Asian activists. Then in 1985 racists firebombed the home of the Kassam family, murdering Shamira Kassam and her three young children, and Dhesi was called into action again, supporting Mr. Kassam when the police, without a shred of evidence, charged him with murdering his own family.

Striving for unity

In later years, Dhesi concerned himself more with the religious and cultural affairs of Redbridge's Asian community. But his stance against Khalistani separatism (which lost him popularity within the Sikh community) was typical of a man whose opposition to racism, fascism and communalism came from the depths of a gentle nature that strove for the unity in action of all peoples.

The loss of Hardev Singh Dhesi symbolises the passing of a generation of community leaders who served the anti-racist cause humbly and with no sense of self-aggrandisement. We may never see the like of him again. ■

Unmesh Desai
RACIST ATTACKS
APR 1 CPS decides not to prosecute man arrested and charged for racist murder of 32-year-old Farhan Mire in December last year because of a lack of evidence APR 23 Two brothers, Shane and Calvin Charles, jailed for three years for racially aggravated assault after vicious racist attack on 36-year-old Jess Minnades which left him with a fractured skull APR 26 Three men, Darren Hancock and Daniel Richards, both 18, and 19-year-old Mark Richards, remanded in custody after arson attack on store owned by Asian family in Cardiff MAY 3 Priscilla Nkwenti and her 10-year-old daughter shot outside their home in Stretford, Manchester in attack which police say may be racially motivated... Three black men racially taunted and robbed by gang of 30 white youths as they leave nightclub in Corby, Northants... Shastriji Manish Bhai Pandya, a Hindu priest, attacked by five white youths armed with nails and wire near his home in Northam, Southport MAY 12 18-year-old Kenneth Wooton jailed for three months for racially abusing undercover Asian detective in operation Jasmine targeting racists in Sunderland MAY 18 Paul Knight, 35-year-old schizophrenic, remanded for assessment to Broadmoor for stabbing 56-year-old Reni Surage in the back.

POLICING
APR 1 Anti-social behaviour orders (introduced under Crime and Disorder Act 1998) become available to police and local authorities APR 7 19-year-old Amit Sharma wins £8,000 damages in out-of-court settlement for attack by plain-clothes police in north west London which left him with a limp APR 8 M25 Three case sent back Court of Appeal by Criminal Cases Review Commission APR 13 Raphaell Rowe, one of the M25 Three, to sue home office for alleged beating by prison guards at Wormwood Scrubs in 1993... Greater Manchester police agree to pay £30,000 in out-of-court settlement to Mark Ellison who claimed assault, false imprisonment and malicious prosecution... Home office refuses public inquiry into the death of Blair Peach because too much time has elapsed APR 14 Home office sets ten-year target for police force to recruit more than 8,000 black police officers APR 24 Hundreds march in Southall to commemorate 20th anniversary of the death of Blair Peach APR 26 Chief constable of Merseyside admits his force is institutionally racist MAY 6 Scotland Yard announces launch of 20-man national anti-terrorist task force to investigate neo-Nazi organisations MAY 7 Friends and family of Brian Douglass hold vigil outside Kennington police station to mark fourth anniversary of his death MAY 10 Scotland Yard pays £100,000 in out-of-court settlement to black estate agent Colin Tomlinson, who claimed he was unlawfully arrested and falsely imprisoned in 1994 MAY 18 Home secretary Jack Straw announces the end of right to trial by jury for ‘minor’ offences including theft.

LAWRENCE INQUIRY
APR 1 Sir William Macpherson denies that his report was hijacked by his advisers or that he was biased APR 8 Granada TV airs interview with five men accused of murdering Stephen Lawrence, despite protests from the Lawrence family APR 9 Lawrence suspects issue statement condemning TV interviews saying they feel ‘betrayed’ APR 12 Old Bailey judge orders handing over of ten hours of unseen video footage from Granada TV interviews with five Lawrence suspects to Scotland Yard, with a view to bringing charges APR 15 Picket by civil rights demonstrators outside HQ of Talk Radio as Gary Dobson gives two-hour interview protesting his innocence APR 18 Revealed that men accused of murdering Stephen Lawrence were given two-week holiday by Granada TV costing £3,580 after first televised interview APR 21 Writs for damages issued by Lawrence family lawyers in High Court against the five accused of his death, and the Met police for bungling the investigation... Lawyers for Duwayne Brooks also start legal proceedings against Met for misfeasance in public office, negligence and against the five for assault APR 22 Tory MP Gerald Howarth denounces Macpherson report's criticism of the police as a 'protesque overreaction' APR 26 Detective Inspector Benjamin Bullock, sole Met police officer to face internal disciplinary proceedings, launches bid to avoid hearing MAY 6 At road rage trial involving attack on Asian motorist, Clifford Norris suggests that his brother David, one of five accused of Stephen Lawrence's murder, was driving when the assault took place MAY 10 Clifford Norris cleared of possession of a knife in alleged attack on Asian motorist.

IMMIGRATION
APR 25 161 Kosovian refugees arrive at Leeds/Bradford airport... UN calls on the UK to take more refugees APR 27 Immigration officers attempt to deport eight months pregnant woman in dawn raid on her home in Croydon, south London.

FASCISM
APR 1 Darren Theron, arrested in M15 raids on C18 activists, prematurely discharged from army after C18 links revealed APR 17 Nail bomb planted in Brixton market injures 39 people APR 18 C18 claims responsibility for Brixton nail bomb in phone call made from road where Stephen Lawrence was murdered APR 21 NF calls off St George's Day march planned for 24th in Worcester APR 23 Police reveal that C18 and three other neo-Nazi groups have claimed responsibility for nail bomb bombing APR 24 Second nail bomb explodes in Brick Lane, east London, and injures six APR 30 Bomb explodes in Admiral Duncan, gay pub in Soho, central London, Injuring 68 and killing three, Andrea Dykes, John Light and Nicholas Moore... Right-wing extremists White Wolves claim responsibility for bombs... Man arrested in connection with bombings MAY 3 22-year-old David Copeland of Farnborough charged with planting three nail bombs and murder of three people, remanded in custody at Belmarsh prison.

SPORT
APR 1 Editor of Wisden cricket magazine, Matthew Engel, claims that 'cricketing apartheid' has become an 'accepted practice' in English clubs MAY 17 Revealed that cricket fans from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are being tested on their knowledge of the game and players - although South African, Australian and New Zealand fans have not been tested.

RESEARCH
MAY 19 Report by chief inspector of prisons Sir David Ramsbotham reveals rising suicides in prisons, and criticises treatment of families after suicides. The report leads to ban on use of strip cells.