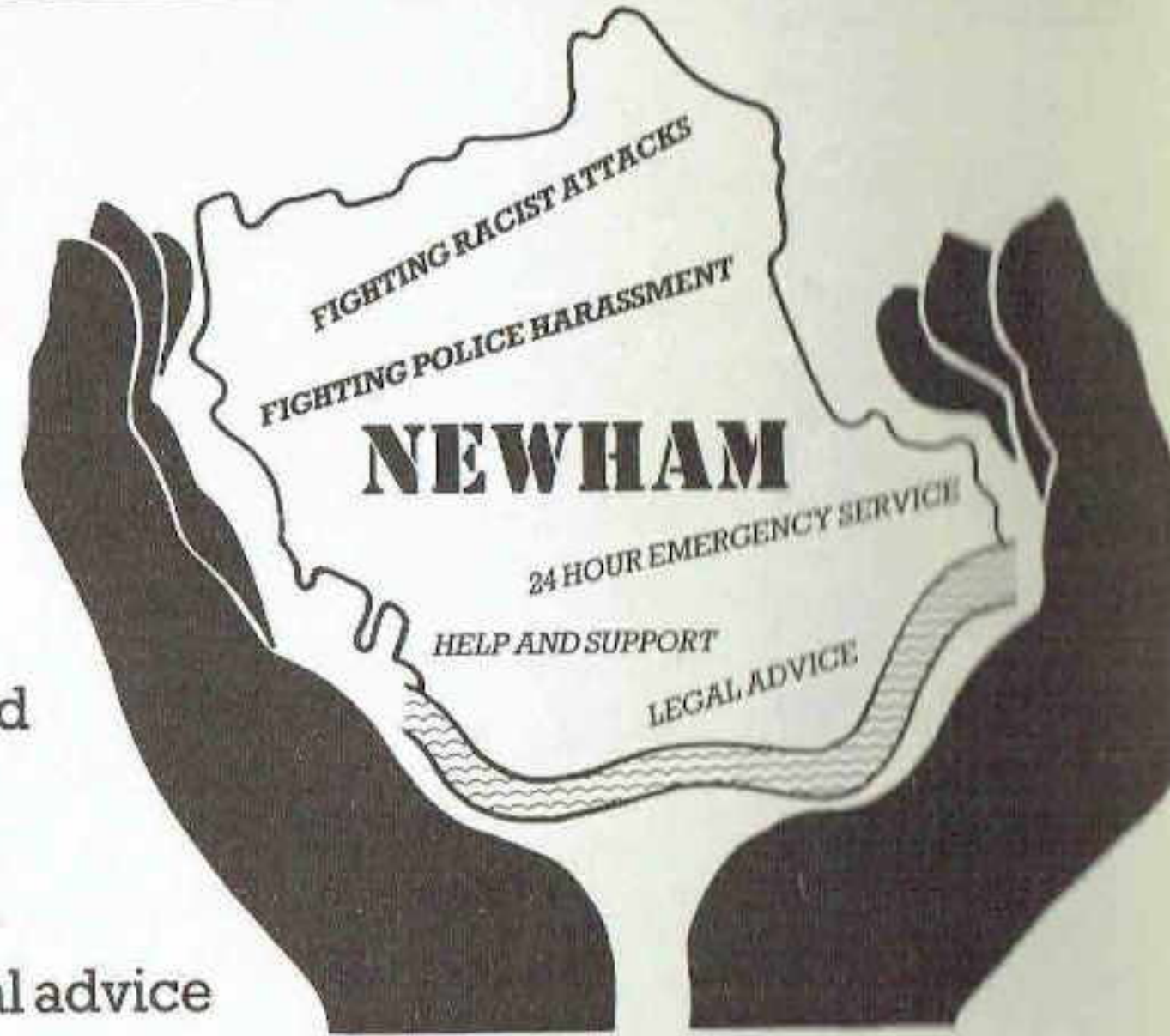


NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

NMP is here to

- help you if
- you have been racially attacked – on the street, at school, at home – or racially abused
- help you if
- you have been harassed by the police on racial grounds
- you have been unjustly arrested and need legal advice and representation
- you think your rights have been abused by the police
- you have been racially abused or assaulted by the police or unnecessarily detained without charge



NMP

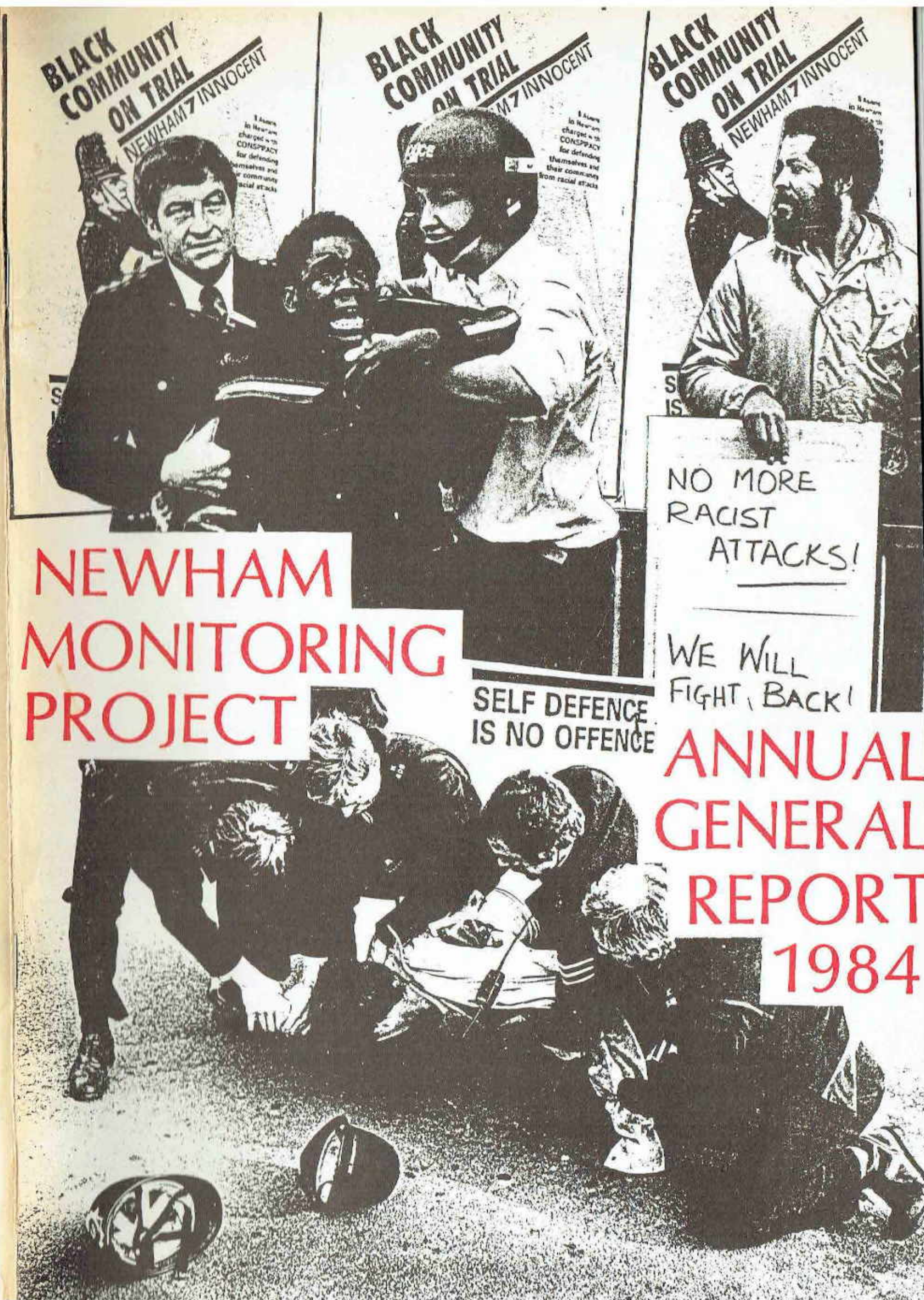
We can also

- help you to make a complaint or take out civil/criminal action against the police if your rights have been abused.

HELP CAN BE OBTAINED 24 HOURS 7 DAYS A WEEK BY RINGING 555 8151

NMP

- has full-time workers who can help and advise you if you have been racially attacked or face police harassment
- runs a 24-hour emergency service, 7 days a week, which can give you legal help, moral support, medical help and other necessary assistance if you have been racially attacked or arrested or have been arrested and need legal representation.



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ASSOCIATION

NEWHAM NORTH EAST LABOUR PARTY

NEWHAM WOMENS GROUP

NEWHAM TEACHER

LB NEWHAM SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

LOCAL RESIDENT

STARDUST YOUTH CLUB

LB NEWHAM SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

CASEWORKER

OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT WORKER

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION WORKER

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

285 Romford Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9HJ

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT 1984

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FOREWORD

It is with anger and disgust that we commend the Annual Report to all our readers and supporters at the 1985 AGM. In spite of the publication of the Home Office Report (1981), the GLC Report on Racial Harassment in London (1983) and the PSI Report (1983), amongst other academic studies detailing numerous cases of racial attacks and harassment directed against black people, nothing significant has been done by the Home Secretary or the Police to demonstrate real seriousness in tackling the problem.

We are angry because in 1984 over 180 individuals and families locally have encountered harassment, attacks and false charges and imprisonment, whilst many of the known attackers have not been arrested and have been protected by the Police. On the other hand the AGM is an occasion to note the resistance and support from many people in the local community and nationally. This support enabled us to secure significant positive verdicts in the courts. Therefore we wish to pay special tribute to all those people who have given tremendous time, energy, legal, moral and political support throughout 1984.

Our special thanks also goes to all the workers, management committee, people who helped in compiling this report and others who have given their time and effort (far too many to name) but above all our emergency service volunteers for the tremendous and indispensable service to the Project and the community.

The Project wishes to acknowledge the importance of GLC funding covering capital and revenue since 1982. This funding has enabled Newham Monitoring Project to provide an extremely important service to black families as well as the wider community. Regrettably, the Government's abolition policy and proposals to veto GLC spending will inevitably affect future funding. We however hope to find alternative sources of funding from the local authority. Above all, however, we rely on your future support for the building of a just and peaceful community in which black people can walk and live freely without the fear of racist attacks.

We commend the workers report for careful study, planning and collective action in 1985.

Herby Boudier

Chairperson

Gulshun Rehman

Secretary

INTRODUCTION

"Even as the police and local authorities - or some of them - strive together to bring about a new era of mutual understanding between the police and the public in London, hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money is being distributed from County Hall and certain town halls as a contribution to the most sustained, organised and vociferous campaign against the Metropolitan Police ever witnessed in this capital". Such groups will (our words) "compete with the official liaison committees to capture the hearts and minds of impressionable youngsters in the inner city, especially the blacks, whilst the police make efforts to secure greater harmony".

(Alan Eastwood, Vice Chair of Police Federation, speaking at a fringe meeting of the Tory Party Conference organised by the Monday Club, October 1983).

"They (who seek direct political control over the police) represent the most dangerous influence at work in public life today".

(Willie Whitelaw, Tory Party Conference 1982)

"In every urban area there is a large minority of people who are not fit for salvage. They hate every form of authority - whether it is the police or anybody else. The only way that the police can protect society is, quite frankly, by harassing these people so that they are too afraid to commit crime ... 'Environment causes crime ... a clout across the earhole is the best environment I know of.'"

(Basil Griffiths. Police Federation. Guardian 7.10.82)

1984 has been marked by four significant developments in terms of our work: the passing of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill (which will legalise existing police malpractices), the policing of the miners' strike (which, although may seem unconnected with events in Newham, the implications of which need to be considered seriously by us all) and the drift towards a hard line 'law and order', 'flog them and send them back' authoritarian state, the case of the Newham 7 and the country's first ever eviction by a council on grounds of racial harassment. This report of our work in the year will draw on all these themes but above all, as we said in our 1983 report, it is an attempt to put on paper the experiences of victims of racist attacks and police harassment, cases you will probably never hear of in the local paper, and their resilience and courage in the face of overwhelming odds.

At this juncture, it is essential to look at the history of the Project and its work over the last five years. That the need for a monitoring group like ours exists is best summed up by a local black youth who, along with members of his family, has faced persistent harassment by the police (detention without charge, etc.) over a period of time, and presumably one of the 'impressionable youngsters' referred to by Alan Eastwood, 'Without a group like yours we would have nowhere to go for help'. In face of the developments outlined above and the continuing increase in racist attacks this need, if anything, is going to get greater.

The Project was formed in early 1980, following the brutal murder in broad daylight of Akhtar Ali Baig on High Street North. The basic function, then as now, was to monitor racism and racist attacks in Newham and the response of the police and local authority to such attacks. This monitoring took, and still takes, the form of not just collecting and keeping records but of giving help, advice and support to the victims of such attacks. Increasingly however, a situation was developing where not only were the overwhelming majority of people coming in to see us bitterly critical about the (non) response of the police to such attacks but were complaining of police harassment (defined in the section on police harassment).

Such a situation demanded that the Project actually started taking up such cases: the work of the Project has always been dictated to by its membership and, above all, by the needs of the people coming in to see us. What also became very clear was that it was not just enough to monitor cases and act in a 'social welfare' capacity - if we were going to talk of achieving any fundamental change in society viz. the problem of racism and racist attacks, then it was important to turn cases into issues and get local people to act upon these issues, instead of the Project substituting for them. This was and is being done through campaigns which now forms an important part of our work. Campaigns like the Newham 8 and the Newham 7 have shown the potential of community organisation around the question of racism, and it is a partial result of such community action that institutions and agencies have been made to start responding to the question of racism and racist attacks in a serious, non-tokenistic way.

The basic function of the Project revolves around

- * our 24-hour emergency service which seeks to provide support to those attacked and harassed by racists or face police harassment;
- * providing and organising community support around victims of racist attacks and police harassment;
- * monitoring the activities of the Metropolitan Police 'K' Division in Newham, gathering detailed information about routine policies and behaviour, specific incidents, harassment by the police of black people on racial grounds (e.g. racist language) and the failure of the police to respond to complaints of racist attacks and abuse;
- * collating and publicising information gathered as widely as possible and feeding it to local Councillors, MPs, GLC Police Committee and other interest groups;
- * getting both local voluntary and statutory agencies to take a positive anti-racist stance on the question of racial attacks and harassment;



A. Potheary

Racist Graffiti

Police Harassment continues



K. Arkell/Network

- * initiating, developing and providing support for campaigns around individual cases to confront the forces of institutionalised police racism against black people in Newham;
- * liaising with other organisations in the field so as to have joint united community action wherever possible and map out effective anti-racist strategies;
- * giving talks, lectures, etc. as part of general educational work on the question of racism and the police;
- * acting as a resource centre to service anti-racist activities in Newham;

GLC funding since June 1982 has not only enormously helped us in terms of capital resources but also enabled us to employ a full-time worker in 1982. Further funding in 1983 has allowed us to employ two more workers to fulfil the expanding areas of work within the Project.

The growth of the Project over the last five years as a grassroots based campaigning organisation has reflected the objective situation in the borough - an increase in racist attacks has been matched by a corresponding fightback. This report is an attempt to put both on record, above all it is an attempt to give voice to those who are denied it and whose experiences and sufferings should strengthen the resolve of the rest of us to further strengthen the anti-racist movement in the borough to go forward into 1985.

CASEWORK

Casework is the most basic aspect of our work. It not only provides the basis of our campaigning and educational work, by providing us with an overall picture of police and racial harassment, but is important in terms of the Project's basic function of giving help, advice and assistance to victims of racist attacks and police harassment. No amount of talk about police accountability, policies and codes of practice etc. is of any meaning if and unless it relates to the experiences of people. As we have always argued:

'The victim of such attack, either from civilian racist elements or the police, plays a central role in considering how to respond to his/her case. In each stage, our policy has always been to consult and reconsider both with the victim and with other agencies/individuals concerned. We aim to provide moral sympathy and support, legal and extra legal advice and additionally to consider the use of every possible method in the action to be taken.'

(NMP Annual Report 1983)

It is important to grasp the fact that the stance taken by the Project on a number of issues is related to the findings of casework and the experiences of people. It is they who play a fundamental role in the formation of the policies of the Project - at the end of the day it is their opinion of us and the credibility that they bestow on us that counts above anything else.

The Project basically handles cases of racial harassment and cases of police harassment of black people. Our approach to casework basically relies first and foremost on building up trust and confidence with the family. Their experiences and harassment from the basis of attempts to involve both voluntary and statutory organisations in a co-ordinated attempt to formulate a joint strategy and approach, wherever possible, to solve the racial harassment problem.

In cases of racial attacks our basic function is to put pressure on the police to respond to the attack. If the attack takes place on a council tenant or in and around schools (the majority of our cases fall into one of these two categories) this also means liaising with the appropriate statutory agency insofar as to ensure an appropriate and adequate response from them. As we note in our section on Housing, there has been a positive response over the last year by the Housing Department to these attacks. Too often in the past, unfortunately, such agencies have failed to even recognise racist attacks as racist attacks, let alone devise a strategy to combat the problem. Where we fail to get a response from the police we essentially have to consider a range of options, from pressing for transfers (although we do not regard this as the suitable long-term answer), getting the local authority to prosecute or helping and advising the victim to pursue both legal and extra-legal channels.

In cases of police harassment our main role is of referring people to sympathetic solicitors, advising them on their rights, putting pressure on the police to stop such harassment, helping the defence in cases of people who have been wrongfully arrested, initiating civil action proceedings, helping people to make complaints against the police if they feel they have had their rights abused and again attempting to involve both voluntary and statutory agencies, wherever appropriate, to stop police malpractices and abuses of power.

We do not however see casework in its traditional picture of writing letters and making telephone calls or that containing racism will make it go away. As far as possible we try to campaign around individual and group cases in

the community, where issues have been thrown up by the case, in order to maximise the challenge needed against racism and racist attacks, whether individual or institutional. A fundamental approach of our work also involves trying to get the victims of harassment involved in the Project - this stems from the belief that community self organisation is of absolute importance. The Project cannot substitute for community action at the end of the day; it can act around individual cases, help and initiate campaigns to tackle the issues identified by cases and encourage and develop an understanding of these issues.

In 1984 we handled a total of 180 cases. A simple breakdown shows these cases to be:

Police Harassment	70 (39%)
Racial Harassment	93 (52%)
Other	17 (9%)
	<hr/>
	180

Before we give details of these cases a number of important qualifications have to be made about the statistics.

Firstly the figures give a very narrow picture about the extent of harassment of black people in the borough. The figures refer only to cases which the Project is actually involved in. There are numerous other incidents to reasonably suggest that the figures do not reveal the true picture in the borough. A lot of cases only come to our knowledge after they have taken place and it is too late for us to do anything about it. Sometimes the victim is not aware of the Project's existence or, having already experienced severe harassment, do not want to go through the trauma of what they genuinely regard as a bureaucracy of institutions which have not bothered to do anything for years. Often the individual concerned just wants to 'forget' about the incident.

When talking about racist attacks, in a lot of the cases the family suffers a series of separately identifiable attacks. We do not count these attacks, which take place over a period of time as part of a pattern of sustained harassment, as different cases. Often a lack of physical resources prevents us from making further inquiries into cases we get to know of, hear rumours about, etc. (although we do our very best to ensure that all cases/incidences we hear of are chased up or attempt to ensure that the family is not in immediate physical danger). Again incidents like spitting, abusive language and other minor forms of racist harassment are more often than not not reported to us. One of the basic aims of the outreach sessions the Project hopes to start is to make sure that we get to know of such incidents. Again it should be stressed that the Project is not a general agency dealing with the many aspects and manifestations of racism e.g. discrimination at work - our work is very specific, responding to a situation that in the Newham context demands a 'specialised' agency. We take no pride in saying that Newham and East/Southeast London generally has some of the worst problems in the country viz. racist attacks. It should also be stressed that the Project only helps and deals with cases of people living and/or working in Newham. Cases from outside Newham are referred to appropriate agencies in those boroughs. Again when we are talking of police harassment, our figures do not show that much of this harassment takes place on groups of people and families (i.e. more than one individual is affected). Similarly many arrests are merely not about one person being arrested/harassed but about whole families and friends being harassed by the police. Furthermore a lot of people who have been harassed by racist elements end up being harassed and

even arrested by the police themselves. Again many people/cases that we often hear of after they have taken place, in a social context, etc.) do not report stop and search incidents, incidents where they have been racially abused by the police, etc. Again the numbers game is meaningless in the sense that it is impossible to quantify (a) the psychological tension endured by families suffering from constant harassment, and (b) the tension arising from an environment where you know that you may get beaten up in a pub, walking around in certain areas, etc., because of the colour of your skin.

The victims of such attacks are fighting back - the question of survival dictates that. What we hope the statistics will convey to people who read this report is that a very real problem of racial harassment and police racism exists in Newham and it is important that we use our combined strength to challenge this situation. Regrettably, far too often, people either shut their eyes, pretending the problem does not exist, or worse, when aware, attempt to downplay it. If the residents of a street or estate where a family is suffering from harassment and living under a state of siege were not to turn a blind eye to such a situation and tolerate the thuggery and intimidation around them, then the situation would be greatly improved.

It must also be stressed that this sort of attack, and police harassment of black people, cannot be seen in isolation from the institutional racism of society and the wider forces and factors shaping it, passive racist attitudes need challenging just as strongly as the more physical side of racism.

Cases come to us from a variety of sources. Literature about the Project circulated through voluntary and statutory agencies, individuals, affiliates and supporters mean that the majority of people come to see us directly. Links with other groups ensures that we get to know of all cases as far as possible of racial and police harassment in the borough.

Direct appointments	103	(58%)
Emergency Service (Nightline)	26	(14%)
Newham Rights Centre	19	(11%)
Others (Advice Bureaus, NISAS, Youth Clubs, Social Services, others)	32	(17%)
	<hr/>	
	180	

Our aim is to make sure that even if we can't 'handle' every single case and provide support - because of lack of resources etc. - as the central agency in Newham monitoring such cases we get to know of every single incident that takes place: it remains important that such a record is kept, not just to refute arguments like 'racist attacks don't take place - they are blown up out of all proportions - but that what happens to an individual person in terms of human suffering is taken notice of.

Emergency Service

The Emergency Service and the help it provides to victims of racist attacks and police harassment plays a central role in the Project's work. It remains a unique service, providing help specifically to victims of racist attacks and police harassment.

14% of our cases in 1984 came through the service. Two points need to be stressed here: the statistics here refer specifically to those cases received after 6 p.m. when the nightline service comes into operation. Additionally the statistics again don't show emergency help provided to people whose cases the Project is already handling.

Extensive advertising of the service is still required. In 1985, with new publicity literature, we intend launching a major drive to advertise the service and recruit more volunteers - the service is still not being used in the way envisaged, often in cases where the people have been attacked and not known what to do. It remains an objective in 1985 to ensure that every black person in Newham knows about the service.

The role of the volunteers need stressing. They are all local people - at present we have 50 people participating with another 10 waiting to be trained - who participate out of a sense of commitment. Few of them have any legal qualifications. They are all given a basic legal training in how to deal with calls and are in possession of the Volunteers Handbook which gives them all the information necessary to deal with an emergency call. Training sessions held at appropriate intervals update them on any changes in procedure, law, etc. A lot of the volunteers are also actively involved in other aspects of the Project's work and they all help in publicising the Project, providing support for its activities and giving help whenever required.

As stressed in another section of this Report we hope to integrate them more into the Project over the next year. It remains essential for the Project if it is going to be a self-sustaining organisation that we develop a comprehensive support system, which not only offers victims support but involves members of the Project taking up cases, involving the immediate local community around the case etc. The volunteers are our 'eyes' and 'ears' in the community. We must thank them all for the dedication and commitment in the many ways in which they have supported and built the Project and the service.

The volunteers are backed up by solicitors, photographers, and other local people who are prepared to be called out in an emergency - the second tier system of the Emergency Service. They again play an indispensable role in the Project.

Defence Fund

NMP is setting up a defence fund to help people who have been arrested and wrongfully charged and who do not have access to Legal Aid - this is usually in cases involving a 'trivial' charge where Magistrates have decided it would be a waste of public money to defend a person on such a minor matter. The majority of such 'offences' also happen to be those where the only evidence offered is that of police officers - what, however, may be a 'trivial' matter for the criminal justice system is very serious for the person facing the charge. It can lead to job opportunities being denied, etc., and is very often the first step in the start of a criminalisation process. Where legal aid is denied, the police know it is an easy conviction for them. They know the person will be unrepresented, usually nervous and often succumbing to inducements offered to 'plead guilty to get it done and over with'. Many, many people have now got a criminal record as a result of this and would not have had one if they had legal aid and been represented.

Money for the Defence Fund will come from our fund-raising efforts, social events and, hopefully, through donations from the community.

RACIAL ATTACKS & HARASSMENT

1984 has seen a continuing and depressing increase in the number of racist attacks reported to us. A total of 93 cases were recorded by the Project. The majority of these cases involve some physical violence or a situation which has become intolerable in terms of psychological suffering. In our experience cases are only reported to us when the harassment has reached an unbearable level. Again, as we stressed in the last chapter, we get to know of incidents which haven't been reported to us plus other 'minor' incidents (although all racist attacks are serious, as far as we are concerned one racist attack is one too many) such as spitting, abusive language which people don't even bother reporting either because they take such harassment for granted as part of the price to be paid for living in a racist society or they feel it is 'not just worth it'.

The majority of the cases reported to us have taken place on people living on Council estates and in Council property. The attackers usually tend to be Council tenants themselves. Other attacks have been on mosques, shops and around schools and pubs.

Attacks on people living in Council property	45
Attacks on people living in private property	15
Other attacks (schools, social centres, etc).	32
	—
	<u>93</u>

It should be stressed that some of these cases are 'group' cases where more than one individual has been attacked and also that in a lot of the cases the individual/family has suffered more than one attack. If these separate incidents, each serious in its own way, were to be taken into account the overall picture in terms of statistics would be even more depressing.

We regard racial harassment as verbal and physical perpetrated on black people by white people, harassment which cannot and should not be confused with ordinary thuggery, intimidation, domestic disputes and likewise which results from ordinary prejudice. Such racial harassment over the last year has ranged from two murders (Eustace Pryce and 58-years old British Rail ticket collector, Mr. P. Bourns) and arson attacks to more ordinary day-to-day harassment such as people's windows being smashed in, etc. Again the tension associated with racial harassment needs to be mentioned - not because the victims want pity but because it is a very real fear of when your window is going to get 'done', whether it is 'okay' to go out shopping in certain parts of the borough or drinking in a particular pub.

The majority of racist attacks, as the above figures indicate, take place on Council property. This has met with a positive response from the Housing Department over the last year, although we must also add that whatever has been achieved to date is only the beginning and a lot more, sustained anti-racist work is going to be needed.

This harassment tends to be concentrated, in our experiences, in certain areas and on certain estates, and it is towards these particular areas that we will be directing our work and energies in 1985. Without wishing to stereotype an area as a 'no go' area we must say that the majority of our recorded cases come from E16 and E12, in particular the Keir Hardie estate, estates in Silver-town and the Docklands area, parts of Plaistow and Canning Town and the Warrior Square estate in Manor Park. It is a sad situation when nearly every black family we know of in the Clements Avenue area is on the transfer list or wants to get out of the area. As one family, the Nazis, commented, 'We

had no wish to move, we quite liked the area, but unfortunately the racial harassment just got out of hand.'

Our work over 1983-1984 in these areas has been more of a casework approach, in the majority of cases, helping families get a transfer in deference to their wishes (as it is they who suffer harassment and are on the receiving end it is they who have to take the decision of asking for a transfer - although transferring families on grounds of racial harassment is not a solution in the long run, we feel that we cannot morally stand in the way of such families and their wishes).

It has become clear that what is now needed is a comprehensive long-term strategy uniting both the efforts of the local voluntary and statutory agencies in those particular areas. A long-term strategy which gives not only practical help and support to such families but also does the 'educational' work of countering racist myths and getting local groups to take on an anti-racist stance is the only answer we feel to the problem of attacks on isolated black families, which is the case in these areas.

The D family have been living in E16 on Council property since 1979. As a result of sustained racial harassment they were forced to ask for a transfer this year. Over the last few years this harassment has included verbal racist abuse, windows smashed, eggs thrown at members of the family, neighbours complaining to them about the smell of their cooking. The children are frequently threatened and have been beaten up occasionally. Threats have been made to set their place on fire.

The identity of the perpetrators is known to the police, yet no attempts have been made to bring a prosecution. We have suggested simple things which can be done by the police, like keeping a watch on the house (which in terms of the sustained harassment is a very reasonable request to make), speaking to the parents of some of the offenders who are young children, etc., action which would greatly help in curtailing the harassment. No action has been taken to date. The response of a housing official was to question the family about the validity of their transfer request and play down the racial harassment. (This we fear on the experiences of other boroughs would be a real problem, in terms of implementing an anti-racist housing policy where officers who may not have the same commitment and integrity as others will not implement the policy in the manner and spirit in which it was conceived - please refer to section on Housing). The Project is helping the family to get a speedy transfer from the area.

Unfortunately, the attitude taken by the Housing Department has still to be matched by the Education Department. Although the level of attacks around schools reported to us has decreased since the Newham 8 case, which forced people to start discussing the issues arising from the case, we have still had serious incidents reported to us, particularly around Little Ilford School. It should be pointed out again that the problem is a general one and not specific to one school. What is needed is a will to recognise:

- that these attacks take place;
- they are racist in nature and not to be confused with ordinary school fights, which is the response of some headmasters and teachers;
- that something has to be done, both in terms of a concrete anti-racist policy to deal with such attacks and give protection to staff attempting to deal with such attacks.

Some attempts are being made by individuals (teachers, councillors) and the Council's Working Party on Multicultural/AntiRacist Education is again a step in the right direction - we hope that the Newham 8 Inquiry will come up with practical recommendations to be implemented by the Council to stop these attacks, and also hope that it will be possible to work out a firm policy with the Education Department. Again it needs to be emphasised that these attacks and the development and implementation of a policy to counter these attacks, if done in isolation of the wider forms of racism outside schools would be counter-productive. Too often 'antiracist' education is seen as stopping at the school gates and no connection is made with the institutionalised racism of society.

S, a 14-years old student at a local school, was leaving the library of his comprehensive school when he was attacked by two white youths for no obvious reason. He was racially abused, hit with a piece of wood, punched and kicked. He had to have five stitches on his head as a result of this vicious attack. The police although informed straight away did not arrive until the next day. Since the identity of the perpetrators is known and although the police won't prosecute, NMP has been trying to get the Education Authority to prosecute. This would be a very real antiracist lead which would have a considerable deterrent effect on other potential attackers.

Attacks around pubs and social centres represent a major problem. Apart from the issues raised by the Newham 7 case (see the section on the Newham 7) and the continuing attacks around the Duke of Edinburgh pub, attacks have been reported to us in and around a number of other pubs and wine bars. A qualification that needs to be made here, just like those of attacks in general, is that these attacks may not be a new problem and it could simply be that people, now they are aware of our existence, have come in to see us about the problem. A number of pubs in the borough have had a notorious past history in terms of neo-fascist activity.

More recently the attacks that have been reported to us have been outside the Tropicana Wine Bar, Queens Pub (Upton Park), Earl of Beaconsfield pub (Plaistow) and pubs in the Stratford and Plaistow area generally.

It is important again to stress that the attacks have not been inside the pub but have been on black people who just happen to be passing by. These attacks have usually taken the form of people drinking outside the pub who have either thrown beer at black passersby, spat at them or physically assaulted them. In one incident on 23.12.84 in a Stratford pub, The Two Puddings, two Asian youths were attacked for no reason at all by racist youths drinking outside who were joined by an estimated 25-30 other youths, some of whom were drinking inside the pub and came charging out. The response of all breweries and landlords is to deny these attacks either take place or are racial and to stress how much they deplore racial discrimination. Again, until and unless firm action is taken by the authorities, prosecuting attackers, withdrawing licences and so on, these attacks will continue with fatal results.

Mr. G, a 58-years old man, was attacked outside the Tropicana Wine Bar around 9 p.m. while on his way home. He was attacked by two white youths outside the wine bar and was savagely beaten. As a result of the attack his jaw was fractured, both his arms were broken at the wrists and his right ear required several stitches, amongst other body and facial injuries. He was hospitalised for six days as a result of the attack. The police's sensitivity to the situation is best illustrated by one episode (not taken out of context): in response to our queries immediately after we were notified of the attack, we asked the police what action had been taken to trace the perpetrators.

They said that they had tried to contact Mr. G in hospital but could not do so as he could not then speak. Mr. G however maintains that no-one visited him at the hospital, and the day when the police said they tried to see him he was able to speak! When Mr. G's son went in to give a statement of what happened, in a subsequent incident, he was told by East Ham police that they were busy and could not therefore take the statement. He was asked to write it up himself and hand it in.

Mr. P was attacked and severely stabbed in the abdomen after being racially abused in the East Ham area. He was hospitalised for two weeks. It was only after pressure from NMP that the police took a statement from him after a matter of some weeks.

Another worrying feature of 1984 has been attacks on halal meat shops and mosques. At least three arson attempts took place against local mosques/temples over the year, with some religious places bearing more resemblance to a fort than anything else. Mosque/temple authorities have often complained to us about congregation members being attacked whilst on their way to prayers, again, although the pattern of these attacks is predictable (usually around prayer times) no action has been taken by the police to arrest the perpetrators. Two halal meat shops were the subject of an arson attack over the year. Although the police and press were quick to deny a racist motive, suggesting other reasons such as business rivalry etc. these attacks have to be seen in the context of a nationally orchestrated campaign by neo-fascist groups and other racist elements who have jumped on board the 'Animal Rights' lobby and in their publications have prioritised the issue. One of the two attacks on halal meat shops, in which we have closely monitored the police investigation and carried out our own, can definitely be described as racist.

The Ordnance Road Mosque in E16 has been the subject of a number of attacks over the last few years, ranging from arson attempts to attacks on people on their way to pray.

The Hindu temple in Stratford has been the subject of similar attacks.

These illustrations are not isolated incidents - they form part of a wider pattern where attacks are taking place with depressing regularity: it is in this context that incidents like the Newham 7 and Newham 8 have to be seen.

For as an article in Race and Class, Winter 1982 issue, titled "The Case for Self-Defence", succinctly puts it:

"No community should have to defend itself. That, in a democracy, is the function of the forces of law and order. But when those self-same forces have repeatedly and over a period of time shown, beyond any reasonable doubt, that they are unable to protect that community, that inability becomes a refusal. If then such a denial of the right to be protected is upheld by judicial decision (or indecision), compounded by bad law and justified by the media (if only by default), such a community is reduced to one of two choices. It can either submit to indignity, harassment, brutalisation and even murder or it can defend itself. It is a choice or rather a 'choicelessness' which no society which prides itself on being free should visit on its citizens, let alone whole communities. For, in the final analysis, the measure of a free society is in the range of effective choices it makes available to its peoples, irrespective

of class, colour or creed. The black community is under attack and, increasingly, a community without redress. The debates on race relations and immigration, whether in Parliament or in the mass media, have from the beginning been couched in racialist terms - the legislation itself sanctifies and legitimises racialism and it finds echo in the overt violence of the streets. There is no room here to convince the liberal or the sceptic through massive documentation that such violence is neither 'isolated' nor 'superficial'. That it has become a way of life for many black people is well documented."

"East Ham and Plaistow areas have been relatively free from racial disturbances in comparison with other parts of the capital and it is possible that racial harassment is more perceived than actual".
(Metropolitan Police East Ham Divisional Strategic Plan 1984, Page 10)

How seriously the police actually respond to racial attacks, in spite of public pronouncements to the contrary, is best illustrated by the above comment from the section on Racial Harassment in the East Ham and Plaistow area divisional plan (only meriting a single page out of the 32-page document) - this is an area with some of the worst and highest number of attacks, not just in Newham but in London.

Our criticisms of the police for not responding to racist attacks is based solely on the experience of the people whose cases we handle and from our monitoring of the case consequently. In 1984 we had a situation where of the 93 cases reported to us:

Cases where the police took action or responded positively	12 (13%)
Cases where no action was taken by the police	63 (68%)
Cases merely reported to us for our information or where the complainant did not wish to pursue the matter further	18 (19%)
	— —
	<u>93 (100%)</u>

It should be noted that of the cases reported to us for our own information (18) and where the complainant had no wish to pursue the matter further, the police had shown no response whatsoever. Even if these cases are excluded from our statistics, the police only responded positively in 16% of the racial harassment cases reported to us.

A number of features need to be drawn out from the statistics. Over the last two decades numerous reports and publications have outlined the scale, extent and violent nature of racist attacks against Britain's black communities, not least the Home Office's own report of 1981 which established that Asians were 55 times more likely to be attacked than any other section of the community and Afro-Caribbeans 36 times. In our own Annual Reports for the last three years we have continually emphasised this non-response of the police. However, what seems to be the case after the Newham 8 trial is that not only has there been a total overhaul of top police personnel but it is significant that the local police chiefs are much more articulate, well adept in public relations and very media-conscious. They have gone on record as

as far as stating that not only are racist attacks a problem but that in the past they may not have responded in the manner they should have. What this tends to do however is, while sounding sincere and concerned, is (1) to gloss over the very real situation that exists, which is still of the police not responding to racist attacks quickly enough etc., but (2) is a very effective way of disarming critics. Words have to be matched by action, action which expresses itself in individual cases: to date this action has yet to materialise.

Attention should also be given to the way in which racist attacks are being redefined - victim as criminal. Thus the Newham 7 (see section on the Newham 7) are equated with the racist thugs from the Duke of Edinburgh pub who attacked Asian youths across the road. There still recur cases where the victim of a racist attack defending himself is then the subject of a police action.

Mr. Wong, a security guard at British Rail, who is in his early fifties, was attacked late at night on his way to work by a group of eight young men, some of whom had been involved in previous attacks on him (the Wong family have been the subject of numerous incidents of racist harassment in the 14 years that they have lived in Plaistow).

The youths were hanging around in a well-known racist pub in the area. Mr. Wong crossed the road to avoid trouble. However some of the youths crossed the road and proceeded to attack him. He was punched, kicked and knocked down. One of the youths grabbed hold of his glasses and broke them. By this time the other youths had crossed the road to join in kicking, punching and assaulting Mr. Wong with sticks etc. In desperation and in self-defence Mr. Wong pulled a small pen-knife from his pocket and stabbed one of the youths in his arm. The gang then fled as Mr. Wong's shouts for help brought several people out of their homes.

Mr. Wong told the police what had happened when they arrived on the scene after a few minutes and made a statement later on. Much to his surprise and amazement he was informed a few weeks later that he was being charged with malicious wounding. At his first hearing an additional charge of possessing an offensive weapon was laid against him. No action is being taken against his attackers.

The Wong's home has been attacked on several occasions. Incidents such as lighted material being put through their letterbox have led to Mrs. Wong keeping a constant vigil throughout the night. Not only has she been subjected to verbal racist abuse when she goes out shopping but she has also been physically attacked, on one occasion being shot at with an air rifle from a passing car.

A defence campaign has been launched around Mr. Wong with the aim of ensuring that not only are the charges against him dismissed but the attackers charged instead.

- treating victims and aggressors equally (the 'BBC' approach of 'impartiality'). From our casework we find that not only do the police treat, in the vast majority of cases, racist attacks as either 'domestic disputes', 'inter-neighbour quarrels', etc., attempts are actually made to downplay the racism in the situation as it exists. The Halal Meat Shop incidents referred to above are immediately treated as something arising from criminal motives,

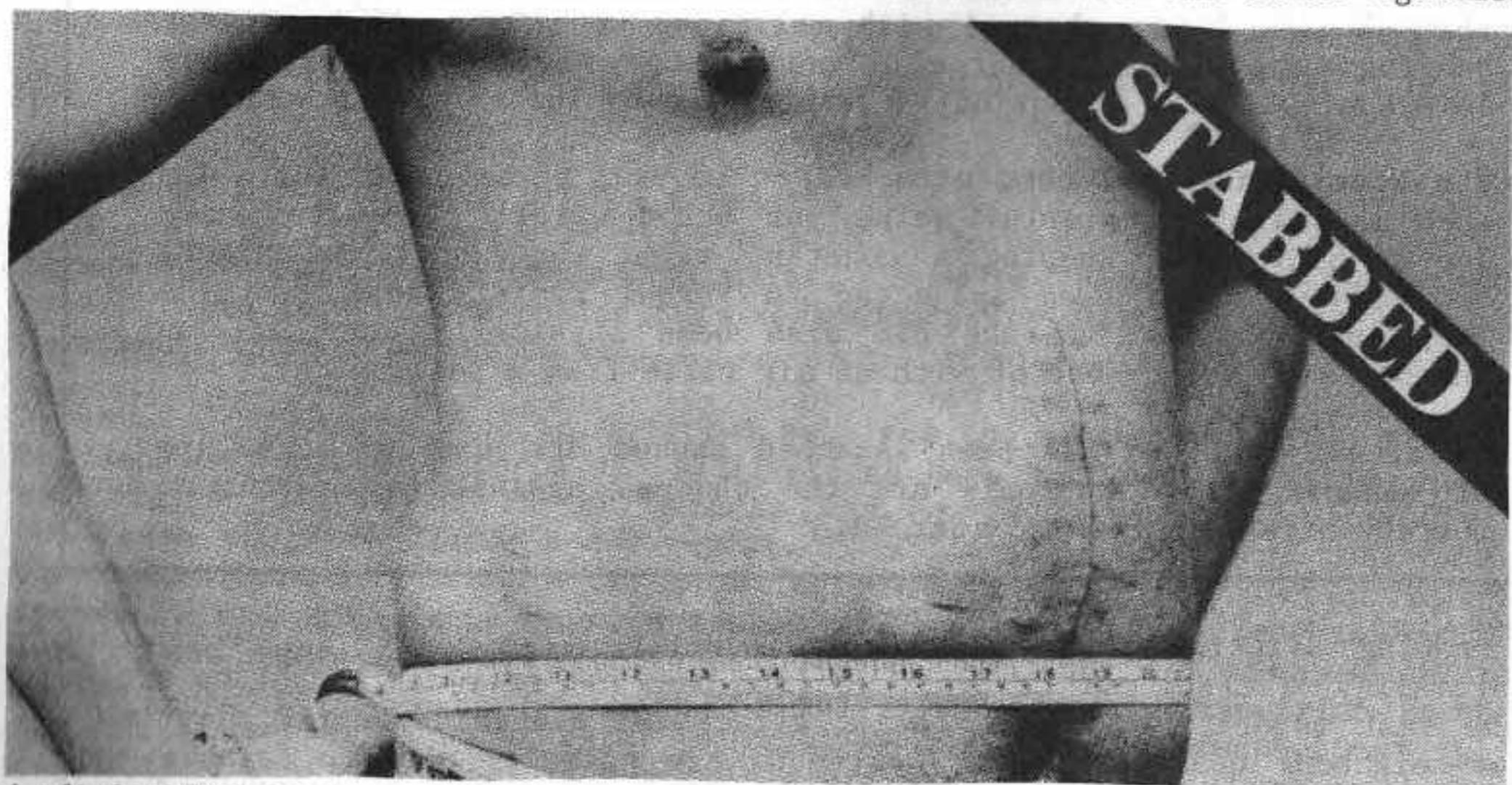
business rivals, feuding partners, etc., while a racist element is denied straight away or doubt cast upon without any investigation being made.

Arson attacks on local mosques in 1984 were actually blamed on the 'trouble' in Punjab, the local police obviously not having consulted their 'community relations' experts, being unaware that mosques are attended by Muslim people. Whatever the complexities and politics of the Punjab situation, Islam does not come into it at all! What this means in practice is that no effort is made to trace or prosecute perpetrators of these attacks. Again the attack on Mr. G (described above) was described as resulting from robbery motives (whereas Mr. G was never even asked for any money).

The common police excuse for not bringing prosecutions in cases of racist attacks is that it is a common assault offence, although there is nothing to prevent them from using such charges. The law between common assault and ABH is consistently rewritten at an artificial level whereas we have always argued that it is important for the police to act decisively in racist attack cases even if the injuries are fairly slight in order to deter potential attackers and be seen to be responsive to the needs of the victim. The police approach tends to be to advise victims to take out private prosecutions rather than do it themselves. Not only is this seen by the attacker as a lack of will to do anything by those in authority but for practical reasons, not least financial, is not feasible. At present we are assisting two families to bring private prosecutions where really there is enough evidence to warrant a police action.

The situation we outlined in detail in our 1983 Report viz police inaction still remains. Overt and covert racist practices still occur, although we have been informed that local officers have been warned about using racist language in public (implying that it would not be improper to use it in the police canteen, inside the station or in private).

Cases like that of Mr. V, who when he reported a racist attack on his home straight away and the perpetrators were still hanging around his house after the attack, did not get any response for two hours after which the arresting officer proceeded to joke about the whole affair, are still the norm rather than the exception. Action more often than not takes place after sustained intervention by the Project, local councillors and MPs and other agencies.



D. Hoffmen

Left for Dead

Simple measures like surveillance of homes under attacks, we have argued, would dramatically cut the number of attacks. The police answer this criticism by pointing out their limited resources, and 'they can't be in all places at all times'. If, however, policing is a matter of priorities and allocating resources accordingly, which is what the police themselves say anyway, then racist attacks in Newham is one of the most pressing priority which to date has merited scant resources. Firm action would deter other potential perpetrators - what this requires however is a will. It is precisely because of that lack of will that racist attacks are judged not to be a priority in terms of resource allocation, arrest and prosecution.

One cannot but help comparing this to the protection afforded to working miners in the current coal strike (including individual protection) from alleged intimidation by striking miners. Yet the black community of Newham (and East London) and the violent nature of the attacks against them, which have been going on for the last 30 years, still waits for this sort of protection.

Our role as a monitoring group will continue in ensuring that maximum community pressure is put on the police to respond to attacks and other racist harassment of black people.

POLICE HARASSMENT

In a situation where the police themselves are guilty of racism and harassment of black people, their failure to respond to racist attacks is not surprising. Police harassment is here defined as police malpractices and abuses of power - stop and search, detention without charge, abusive behaviour by the police, police racism and use of racist language, the use of heavy charges against defendants in circumstances which do not warrant them, strip-searching, physical assaults, home raids, questioning of juveniles without parents being present, statements to plead guilty and made under duress, etc. - arising from the racism, individual and institutional within the police force.

The Project handled a total of 70 cases during the course of the year:

Charged and later released	41 (58%)
Released without being charged	25 (36%)
Unknown (e.g. they have not reported back to us, can't be traced, etc.)	4 (6%)
	<hr/>
	70

Again it needs to be stressed here that a lot of people constantly ring or come in to see us about legal advice. Often our work has tended towards giving advice in fields not directly connected with the Project, the most important help being that if referrals to firms of sympathetic solicitors. We are however conscious of the need to maintain police harassment on grounds of racism as the centrality of our work. Again the statistics do not reveal the real picture - some cases tend to be group cases involving more than one individual, some cases involve the defendants/arrested people coming in to see us for help and advice a number of times etc.

Of those who have been charged (as at 31.12.84), the results are as follows:

Guilty	7 (17%)
Not Guilty	7 (17%)
Cases pending	15 (37%)
Results Unknown	12 (29%)
	<hr/>
	41

The high number of people being detained without charge is equally a matter of concern. Moreover a lot of people never come back because of their past experiences of courts, etc. It should also be pointed out that our experiences over the last five years have shown that more often than not people have pleaded guilty under police pressure, due to bad advice, to get it over and done with, etc. One can only imagine what is going to happen under the Police Act where detention up to 96 hours will be permitted.

Again the statistics need further qualification. In a lot of cases the individual(s) have suffered from more than one type of police harassment as the following figures reveal. These statistics also refer to those people who have been charged but have suffered harassment in addition.

Detained and later released	53 (76%)
Stop and Search	8 (11%)
House Raid	11 (16%)
Strip search	1 (1%)
Passport	3 (4%)
Abusive and racist language	21 (30%)
Physical harassment	16 (23%)
Other forms of harassment	11 (16%)
	<hr/>
	124

The (non) policing of racial harassment has been well documented in the preceding chapter. Although as a result of community pressure and campaigns like the Newham 8 and Newham 7 the police's attitude has become more cautious (only because they are aware that groups like us and Newham Rights Centre are monitoring them), cases of overt police racism remain.

F, a local youth, who has frequently been stopped and searched by Forest Gate police, was 'hanging' around outside the Wimpy Bar in Green Street, a popular rendezvous for local Asian youths who don't have any community centre in the borough to go to. This place in common with policing practices directed against the black community, has been the subject of considerable police surveillance and harassment. After the Newham 7 incident in April 1984 the police's approach has changed from overt aggression towards more 'psychological' forms of harassment, e.g. constantly passing by the Wimpy, parking outside and, in the words of F, 'staring hard at us'. When F questioned this form of what he regarded as intimidation, the officer in question racially abused him (in front of a number of independent eyewitnesses). The other police officers then joined in by laughing loudly in appreciation of the racist comment.

Mr. M, a Newham resident, was arrested outside Ilford Telephone Exchange and taken to Ilford Police Station. Mr. M's demands for an explanation as to why he was being taken to the station were ignored.

He stated that he was an epileptic, producing his disability card. He also said he wanted to see a doctor because he could feel a fit coming. He was, however, refused a doctor and put into a cell. Whilst in there he had a fit. His request for water was again refused. The officer at the station proceeded to tease/torment Mr. M by emptying a glass of water in front of him onto the floor. Mr. M was then asked to sign something without even being told what it was. He refused and was put back into the cell. When he asked for water again he was told that he could not have any until he signed the statement. Eventually, an hour later, he signed the papers still not knowing what they were and only then was he allowed to leave the station. He was also racially abused. Mr. M wears a turban, he was threatened with the removal of his turban and told that his hair would be cut.

The police informed NMP, after Mr. M came to see us, that he was being cautioned for drunkenness. (One of the requirements for

administering a caution is admission of guilt - Mr. M strongly denies ever having made such an admission. In fact he was not even told why he was being arrested and whether he was being charged or not.

The case is now the subject of a complaint against the police.

What can be drawn from our statistics is that police harassment still continues and the situation will undoubtedly get worse under the provisions of the Police Act. The above cases cannot be seen in isolation: several parents have told us that they are either moving out from Newham or considering doing so, as their sons are constantly being stopped and searched, 'picked upon' etc. What also tends to be the case is that once a youth has been arrested or questioned, he is from then on the subject of police surveillance in one form or another (this sort of police practice has to be seen in light of new policies of targetting and surveillance, the redefined role of District Support Units etc. which are looked at in depth in another section). Detention periods still range in length from 2/3 hours to two days, juveniles are still questioned without parents/guardians being present, people are still detained without families being informed (in fact we have had cases, as in the past, where the police even denied holding someone when in fact they were), the same people are frequently being arrested on the same offences, usually traffic, where legal aid is denied and it is usually the word of the police against the defendant, and charges still brought against defendants when the circumstances either do not warrant them, or, in some cases, their severity.

N, a local Asian youth, when acquitted by a magistrate on a theft charge, was told by the arresting officer on his way out of the court, 'We are going to get you sooner or later'.

Such complaints about police malpractices and racist behaviour are far too many to dismiss N's episode as either an exaggeration or an aberration on the policeman's part. Numerous academic and in depth studies, not least the PSI report, commissioned by the police themselves, show such behaviour to be widespread throughout the Met.

Apart from the Project publicising such cases to make sure that the issues raised are not swept under the carpet and initiating and organising community campaigns around these issues, the only resource left to victims is the complaints procedure and/or civil action. The effectiveness of the latter is discussed elsewhere, the former is almost meaningless. In fact victims tell us that they are not really interested in making a complaint because its total inadequacy is widely realised and because they feel that it could be grounds for future harassment. A complaint is investigated by another police officer and, despite the token independence of the final arbiter (the DPP and/or the Police Complaints Board), the number of successful complaints both locally and at a national level remains pathetically small. Of the 13 outstanding complaints in 1983 only in one was there any recognition that the police may have been wrong - albeit grudging. A typical example is where the Project made a complaint on behalf of someone who had been subjected to abusive language and threats by a police officer from Forest Gate Police Station. The reply of the Complaints Board stated:

'The officer denies making the abusive remark ... or shouting at you. He also denies threatening to arrest you ... There is no independent evidence to resolve the matter. While the Deputy Commissioner does not consider the evidence sufficient for a disciplinary charge, it would appear that the

officer naturally speaks in a loud voice and may have been unintentionally abrasive'.

As at 31.12.84 14 complaints have been lodged with the local police, results of which are still pending. Civil action proceedings are at present being taken against the police in one case, where a person was detained for 18 hours without being told why and later released without being charged.

Three specific features can be drawn out from our work around police harassment:

(a) Petty harassment is generally increasing whilst reported incidents of physical violence by police officers have decreased. We would like to think that the latter is because of the publicity given to past cases of police brutality and the campaigns built around them e.g. Defend the Owusus, the Power family, Newham 8, etc. Cases tend to be of the following nature:

- (1) Mr. H was charged with assault after refusing to be arrested unless the police would state what he had done. The magistrates dismissed the case in ten minutes.
- (2) 7 Asian youths - some as young as 12-13 were arrested on High Street North at 11 p.m. for no obvious reason other than presumably being out on the street at that time of the evening, an 'offence' in the eyes of some local policemen. They were then driven to Beckton in the South of the borough and left stranded in the middle of nowhere. The youths had to make their way home on foot.
- (3) Police arrested a 17-year old at his home at around midnight after he was alleged to have been involved in a fight. The house was searched (although no warrant was produced) and the family was made to stand outside in the cold for an hour whilst the search was taking place. The youth was detained for 15 hours and then released without being charged.

(b) Attention again must be drawn to what can best be described as 'family' cases - i.e. where those arrested are all members of one family, with one arrest setting the chain for more. A feature of such cases tend to be where an individual is assaulted, the home raided and other members of the family get arrested in the course of protesting at the infringement of their civil rights. Following the case of the First Avenue 11 (1981-1982) - see NMP Annual Report (1982) and that of the Shaws (NMP Annual Report 1983), we have since had the case of the Owusus and the Powers. Both cases were outlined in depth in our 1983 Annual Report and came up for trial in 1984. In both cases, the defendants were all severely assaulted by police and in the Owusu case, Mr. and Mrs. Owusu, and in the Powers' case, Mr. Power, his son and daughter - and then charged, amongst other things, with assaulting the police. Both cases were total victories - apart from complaints we are considering legal action against the police ourselves. Again the pattern of harassment continues, (where a black person is either in trouble with the police or wins a court case, and where the police try to 'get' him/her after that, and the harassment continues), has featured with the arrest of John Power since his acquittal. The police have charged him with a theft meant to have occurred back in 1980!

(c) We still get frequent complaints - highlighted in our 1982 and 1983 Reports - about the use of police helicopters in home raids or flying at a dangerously low level. The Met helicopters are essentially observation platforms and chase vehicles which help ground units. A Guardian article on 21.1.1985 outlined the dangers of using such helicopters in operations of this nature - they are the least safe way to fly - one Met machine

crashing last year and the Government Inquiry's results nervously awaited at Scotland Yard. The use of helicopters has again got to be seen in the context of the redefined roles of DSUs (see later section) on the ground and their increased usage is predictable, as they will be used more and more in 'ordinary' burglary investigations.

Although the police maintain that machines only dip below 800 feet when directly involved in an incident, we have not found this to be the case from the complaints made by local residents to us. The effect is to intimidate and alarm them.

In police harassment cases more often than not the most useful role we can play is ensuring that people are referred to sympathetic solicitors, solicitors who are not going to see the case in a purely legal sense or from a solely commercial motive and will not be reluctant to criticise and challenge the police if necessary. Too often cases have been lost where black people, the victims of the sort of incidents described above, have not had the legal back-up necessary. Our work primarily consists of providing statements and other valuable information to solicitors, often from notes taken by our Emergency Service volunteers. The Project's emphasis on campaigning work tends to complement the work done by solicitors: we see both as equally important in ensuring that not just is justice seen to be done but that the issues raised are debated in public and every attempt made to avoid a repetition. The statistics and information gathered by the Project also tends to be of use to defence solicitors as is the detailed information about police activity and behaviour in the borough we attempt to gather from police harassment cases.



M. Abrahams/Network

Police put the boot in

HOUSING AND RACISM

In our last Annual Report we concluded the section on housing by condemning Newham Council 'for not being able to put into practice a more sensitive and workable antiracist housing policy.' It is a more than welcome change therefore to actually congratulate the Council and particularly its Housing Department for the considerable progress and antiracist initiative that it has shown over the last year.

While much attention, and especially some irresponsible media coverage, has concentrated mainly on the eviction, this has tended to obscure other improvements and achievements that have taken place. Of course, a lot still needs to be done - the struggle against racism is an unceasing one and though we can look back with satisfaction over the last year there is certainly no room for complacency.

The Eviction

Newham Council made history by becoming the first local authority in the country to carry out eviction proceedings against a racist tenant - the McDonnells of Clements Avenue, E16. While the eviction order was granted in late November 1984 for

- numerous incidents of racial abuse on two Asian families;
- late parties which caused nuisance to others;
- incidents in 1983 when a party was followed by violence, nuisance and racial abuse.

the family actually moved out in January.

The eviction followed a Council warning in September 1984 that people guilty of persistent harassment could face eviction proceedings. Media coverage (see section on the media) has portrayed the family as victim of a harsh Council decision, concentrating more on the human angle side of 'a family having to leave their home in the winter' etc., it has totally overlooked the reasons for what was not only a bold move but a very correct response on the part of the Council. For two years the McDonnell family had been responsible for persistent harassment of Mr. Naz and Mr. Singh and their families, Asian families living in the same block. The Monitoring Project handled the cases of the two families (as well as numerous other cases in the vicinity) - in the end they had to move out of the area because of the harassment. The same fate was inevitably going to be that of any other black family who would have moved into the block. In Newham right now we have a situation where almost every black family in E16 and E13 (and parts of E12) suffering from racial harassment is on the transfer list - what was happening and is still happening is that large areas of Newham have effectively become no-go areas for black people. When you get a situation in which families in E12 - a fairly pleasant and 'safe' residential area - start asking for transfers a point is reached where you cannot run any more and have to stop and make a stand. What critics of the eviction have to take into account is the fact that it is precisely families like the McDonnells who are turning Newham into a ghetto - black and white - and it was about time that instead of the harassed family having to move out, it should instead be the offending family.

The eviction can be effective in a number of ways:

- (1) it shows the Council's determination, as the main landlord in the borough, to stop racial harassment;



A.Potheary

Sign of terror on council estate

- (2) it serves as a deterrent to other perpetrators - a lot of the racial harassment, in our experience, comes from next-door neighbours who will now have to grasp the fact that they cannot go on making the lives of their black neighbours a misery;
- (c) it encourages, as we have experienced in Newham after the eviction, a mood of confidence, both amongst the harassed families and black and white antiracist organisations and certainly brings more security to the harassed family;
- (d) racist Council tenants now have to understand that they have one of two choices: either they curb the physical, overt aspect of their racism or they stand to lose their Council flat.

A.Potheary



NF members protest against eviction of racist family

Demands for Councils to take such a positive antiracist stand are nothing new. The Monitoring Project itself has advocated recourse to such actions since its early inception as it had to be clearly demonstrated to racist families like the McDonnells (who as in a subsequent television programme made clear their intense dislike of 'Pakis') that their racism could not be tolerated. We have always advocated racial harassment as a specific clause in the Council tenancy agreement, the occurrence of which would be grounds for eviction. The problem, however, to date has been councils who have adopted such policies on paper but have failed to implement them in practice, hence the even greater significance of Newham's decision to evict.

Consider the harassment suffered by the Nazis and the Singh families - spitting, abusive language, threats, excreta put through the letterbox etc. - and the Council's decision to evict is logical, praiseworthy and a step in the right direction. Two more eviction proceedings are being considered at present by the Council.

It is important, however, to also stress the other factors leading to the eviction. While the Council and the Housing Department have demonstrated courage, it has to be seen as the logical conclusion to the fightback and resilience of the victims of racial harassment themselves and the buildup

of community pressure and organisation, resulting from campaigns like the Newham 8 and Newham 7 and the struggles of black and white antiracist people in the borough over the last few years. It is ultimately only that pressure and organisation which is the real guarantee of ensuring that such progressive decisions are not a 'one-off' situation but maintained.

Other Anti Racist Steps

While the eviction has cornered all the press attention, attention needs to be drawn to other equally praiseworthy initiatives which have been carried out over the last few months and which we are proud to have been involved in helping to initiate: -

- (1) Racist graffiti has now been removed on most Council property. Previously such graffiti used to remain for months and often years. Whilst providing good filming material for television companies it certainly helped in sustaining an environment in which racists could attack at will;
- (2) Posters outlining the Council's firm antiracist policy and the Project's 24-hour emergency service are to go up in housing offices around the borough - these will also be in different languages.
- (3) Four staff have been appointed, one in each housing office, to deal specifically with racial harassment. While we believe that antiracism cannot be institutionalised in one individual alone but has to run through every policy and practice (e.g. housing allocation) of the Council, again the officers will be of enormous help in combatting racial harassment;
- (4) Families seeking transfer as a result of severe racial harassment have had their applications dealt with much more speedily and given Category One status, and with a recognition in most cases of the issues involved. The Project does not feel transfers to be a long-term solution as in one sense it means evading the very concrete question of (a) creating ghettos and (b) what is to be done about the perpetrators (here again the recent eviction is of considerable significance). However, if a family feel physically threatened and asks for a transfer we feel obliged to take that request as our paramount consideration;

The role of the police needs challenging here. If the police responded to racial harassment in areas like Clements Avenue in the first place (and we have been bringing these cases to their attention for a long time now) then the problem of transfers would never have arisen in the first place. The police themselves have gone on record as supporting the eviction: one can only hope that their actions will now reflect those of the Council;

- (5) Letters are to be sent to every Council tenant about the Council's determination to tackle racial harassment and consequent publicity in the Council's newspaper again is of considerable help.

NMP, Racism and Housing

Our main work in this field over the last year has been threefold:

- (a) bringing cases to the attention of the Housing Department for prompt action, liaising with housing officers to alleviate the racial suffering of the family concerned and generally acting as a pressure group;

- (b) meetings with the Housing Department to help in the formation of a positive antiracist housing policy. The draft of this policy is at present undergoing public consultation. If adopted, amongst other measures the Council will:

- (i) take steps to prosecute either through civil or criminal courts;
- (ii) take grounds for possession of the property laid out by the Housing Act 1980;
- (iii) put pressure on the police to take action where circumstances are such that a criminal prosecution should be brought;
- (iv) take positive steps to trace perpetrators where their identity is not known;
- (v) take steps to transfer any victims of racial harassment who requests it to suitable alternative accommodation with a timescale determined by the circumstances of the case;
- (vi) take immediate steps to repair property damaged as a result of racial harassment and make efforts to recover the cost of damage from the perpetrators;
- (vii) be entitled to give compensation to tenants moving because of racial harassment;
- (viii) amend the tenancy agreement to make racial harassment a specific ground for repossession;
- (ix) take steps to effectively publicise its policy and steps to remove racist graffiti within 24 hours of notification, if physically possible.

- (c) Working with tenants' associations, community workers and other community organisations in the areas with the highest number of attacks to get a long term community response to isolate the more active racist elements and minimise their influence.

The work over 1984 has been 'patchy' - contact with individuals etc. and more on a casework basis. We are currently, however, trying to initiate meetings in E12 and E16 which hopefully can be the basis of a long-term localised antiracist response to the problems of racial harassment in the area concerned. These localised responses, drawing on the strength and experiences of groups and individuals working/living in these areas, and at present isolated, will hopefully be supplemented by outreach sessions of the Project in those areas and an attempt to get local families and people on our Emergency Service to form the basis of community support to the victim and form the offensive against racist elements.

This type of a long-term co-ordinated community response is absolutely vital - without it any Council policy, no matter how good on paper, is not going to be as effective as it should be. It is also this sort of community pressure that will guarantee implementation of Council policy and give it the effective community backing needed.

Our role as a monitoring group remains unchanged. We will continue to act as a local pressure group, ensuring that policy is implemented at all levels and working jointly with the Council, wherever possible, and tenants associations/other community groups to form a long-term strategy. It is also

necessary to ensure that the initiative shown by the Housing Department over the eviction is reflected at all levels in the Department and spreads to other sections of the Council as well.

Much has been achieved so far and certainly one can look back with satisfaction at the progress achieved to date. However a lot more still needs to be done to reverse the trend of transfers/ghettoes/no go areas that has built up over the last two decades and ultimately ensure that the problem of racial harassment on Council property is solved once and for all.

EDUCATION AND RACISM

The field of education and racism may not at first sight appear connected to the Project's immediate work. However, we have attempted to devote time and resources to it for two basic reasons:

- (1) a good number of our cases are racist attacks in and around schools (especially Little Ilford, Trinity and Langdon);
- (2) in the sense of a long-term strategy to combat racial harassment, it remains important to ensure that antiracist education becomes the norm rather than the exception. Moreover this antiracist education policy is not just about syllabuses and curricula: it has got to be comprehensive enough to include:
 - (a) a firm antiracist policy to deal with racist attacks in and around schools, give protection to teachers attempting to take action against such attacks and connects with wider issues of racism outside school (as antiracist education does not just begin or end at the school gates), and
 - (b) a policy of 'no police in schools' - a stance now taken by Newham NUT, the rationale for such a stance being explained in the section on Multiagency Policing.

Our education work has mainly revolved around our participation in the Council's Working Party on Antiracist/Multicultural education, assisting in two conferences on Antiracism in Education for parents and for sixth formers (where we brought up the issue of racist attacks and the police) and distribution of the Project's own policy document on antiracist education, large chunks of which are now being adopted by some schools. The proposals which have so far been considered by the Working Party viz racist attacks are fairly positive and will go a long way towards alleviating the present situation. However, we must also express concern at a failure by some sections of the education authority to grasp the urgency of a need for a clear and detailed antiracist policy in light of the lessons thrown up by the Newham 8 case. We have attempted to raise the issue of a substantial number of recorded attacks in and around Little Ilford School to arrange a series of meetings with the Education Committee to adopt a stance similar to the Housing Department but without much success. This remains a matter of pressing concern; attacks will continue until and unless those in authority recognise the need for such a dialogue and exhibit a will to do something instead of sweeping things under the carpet under the guise of "it's being blown up out of all proportion".

In 1985 we will continue to press for such talks so as to get a positive workable policy. We are also currently in the process of initiating a private prosecution to help the victim of an attack at Little Ilford School where the police have refused to prosecute.

The other area of concern is the failure in some schools to observe the NUT's policy of 'No police in schools'. This needs a major educational campaign, as the issues raised can easily be misrepresented as 'extremist' talk, something which will have to be taken up as a matter of urgency if the policy is to be effective. An absurd situation exists right now where in spite of a mass of evidence of police brutality and malpractices, police officers still are invited to give talks or lectures to schoolchildren whilst anti-racist groups often face a host of problems in doing so (often only being invited in the interest of 'maintaining a balance'!)

The Project has taken a keen interest in the debate around Multicultural and Antiracist Education as it is clear that it is only the latter which attempts to comprehend the realities of a fear of racist attacks faced by black schoolchildren and gives an effective solution.



A.Pothecary

Anti racist education the way forward

DEFEND THE NEWHAM 7

"A massive campaign is needed not only in Newham but throughout the country to defend the Newham Seven, Asian youths from East London who face serious charges when they go on trial in September.

Let us be perfectly clear, what is at stake is not just the liberty and well-being of these seven brave young men. What is on the line is the liberty and well-being, indeed the life, of every single Asian in the country. When racist thugs terrorise our community; when our children are afraid to go to school; when we are afraid to go out to do the shopping; when our homes are vandalised and set on fire; and when the powers that be do not lift a finger to defend us there is only one thing that stands between us and the fate of the Jews in Nazi Germany. That is the courage of a growing number of our young people who are determined to fight back; who are determined to establish not merely our right to live here, but our right to live here with dignity and in peace.

White racist society cannot abide the militant and courageous fight-back of our youths and has tried to criminalise it by every possible means. This attempted criminalisation failed in the trials of the Bradford 12 and the Newham 8, not least because the community rallied to defend its defenders. But as we approach another test case, we must not assume that our enemies have not learned lessons from their defeats. We must organise as never before to defend the Newham Seven."

(Asian Times Editorial 6.7.84)

At the end of the Newham 8 trial, as we reported in our 1983 Annual Report, Judge Lymberry made a plea for 'responsible people of whatever colour' to try to 'direct their endeavours to put aside bigotry and prejudice and get their feet on the path of reconciliation'. We also reported the campaign's response to this plea for reconciliation, that 'the reconciliation has to come from the police', as a view which we felt, given the long and documented history of racism in Newham, the lack of police response and total lack of accountability of the Met as being in our opinion more nearer the truth.

It gives us no great pleasure in being proved right for as the case of the Newham 7 demonstrates the judge's pleas seem to have fallen on deaf ears as far as 'K' Division are concerned. The case of the Newham 7 not just raises the issue of racist attacks, lack of any response from the police and the right to self-defence but a whole host of issues, not least the regular recourse to heavy, political charges time and time again such as conspiracy and affray. The use of these laws need to be carefully studied, for whichever way one looks at it, in such context their use tends to be highly political. The charges of affray and conspiracy were traditionally used (against white people) in quite different ways.

Affray was used after gang fights - rival gangs of teddy boys or mods and rockers - and its use against black people in the last decade has been novel in that each incident (apart from the Terry May killing in Thornton Heath which was a traditional use of affray) involved the police as the 'rival gang' - although they, of course, were not charged. Its usefulness lies in the fact that no specific assault has to be proved; all that has to be shown is that the accused have been involved in a fight which has frightened onlookers.

The charge of conspiracy has had a more controversial history, owing to its political use against blasphemy, outrages of public decency, purveyors of

subversive literature and, more recently, against the 'Angry Brigade' and the Shrewsbury Building Workers (as well as the Bradford 12 and the Newham 8). Conspiracy as a charge needs less proof than the related actual offence and can be used when no evidence of the actual offence can be obtained; it can carry a heavier sentence than the actual offence); it can involve any number of persons, it has to be tried before a jury; it often involves a 'show' trial adding to the apparent seriousness of the case, and it can lead to new and dubious police methods of obtaining evidence (e.g. the surveillance by video cameras in the Lewisham 19 case). The events surrounding the arrests of the seven, their subsequent treatment and police behaviour after the incident in themselves raise a number of serious questions which form the basis of the Newham 7 Defence Campaign and its development as a nationally based campaign and which are examined in the following sections. We need here to look at two simultaneous developments, that of the case itself (the legal side) and the campaign (the political side).

The Facts and the Campaign

The seven youths - Parvaiz Khan (17), Zafar Khan (18), Amjad Ali (21), Khan Bahadur (22), Jyoti Rajappan (17), Jamal Chaudhri (19) and Habib Mohammed (18) - were arrested after a series of racist attacks in the Forest Gate and Upton Park areas of Newham on the 7th of April 1984. At least five attacks took place on Asian people by white racist thugs driving around in a car on the day:

- (1) 16-years old Pavinder Sain was dragged into the car whilst walking down St. Stephens Road and assaulted with a claw hammer;
- (2) 16-years old partially disabled Sohal Butt was dragged into the car, taken to Wanstead Flats and had his glasses taken off before being kicked, punched and assaulted over the head with a hammer. A local white resident who witnessed the incident immediately notified the police about the incident and details of the car;
- (3) 19-years old S.D'Souza was assaulted and kicked around by the same gang of racist thugs;
- (4) 25-years old M. Iqbal who was assaulted with a hammer on Cecil Road, with his teeth and mouth being injured. When his brother-in-law ran into a nearby house for help, the gang chased him and proceeded to smash in the windows;
- (5) 16-years old L.Din who was also assaulted with a hammer.

More attacks followed in the course of the day orchestrated by other racist thugs drinking in the Duke of Edinburgh Public House, the evening culminating in Asian youths outside the Wimpy Bar on Green Street being attacked by 15-20 racists from the pub, some of whom even ran across the road to the local Tesco's to get gardening implements to use against the Asian youths! When the youths defended themselves and a short fracas ensued, the police arrived on the scene almost immediately and arrested one of the youths as well as three white racists.

Over the next few weeks more arrests took place with seven Asian youths being arrested altogether. Only two youths were granted bail with the result that five of the seven spent up to seven weeks in remand. Their treatment, as contrasted to that of the three white racists who were not remanded in custody and let out on bail immediately, is best summed up, in our opinion, by the statement of the Newham 7 Defence Campaign "The fact that the police took so long in deciding what charges to bring, and kept people who are innocent until proven guilty under English law in prison for seven weeks

is scandalous - it seems nothing has been learnt from the Newham 8 case.' Week in, week out defence solicitors saw their bail applications rejected by Magistrates who gave the impression of already having made up their minds before the hearing and who did not even take steps to question the prosecution as to the basic accuracy of many of the statements being put forward. What was even more disgusting was the total lack of concern to relay information to worried parents and relatives, some of them who did not even know of the arrests and bewildered as to why, in spite of bail assurances, sureties offered, etc., their sons were being remanded in custody. It is worth stressing that at this stage the charges against the defendants ranged from possessing offensive weapons to criminal damage, charges not serious enough to warrant detention for such a long period.

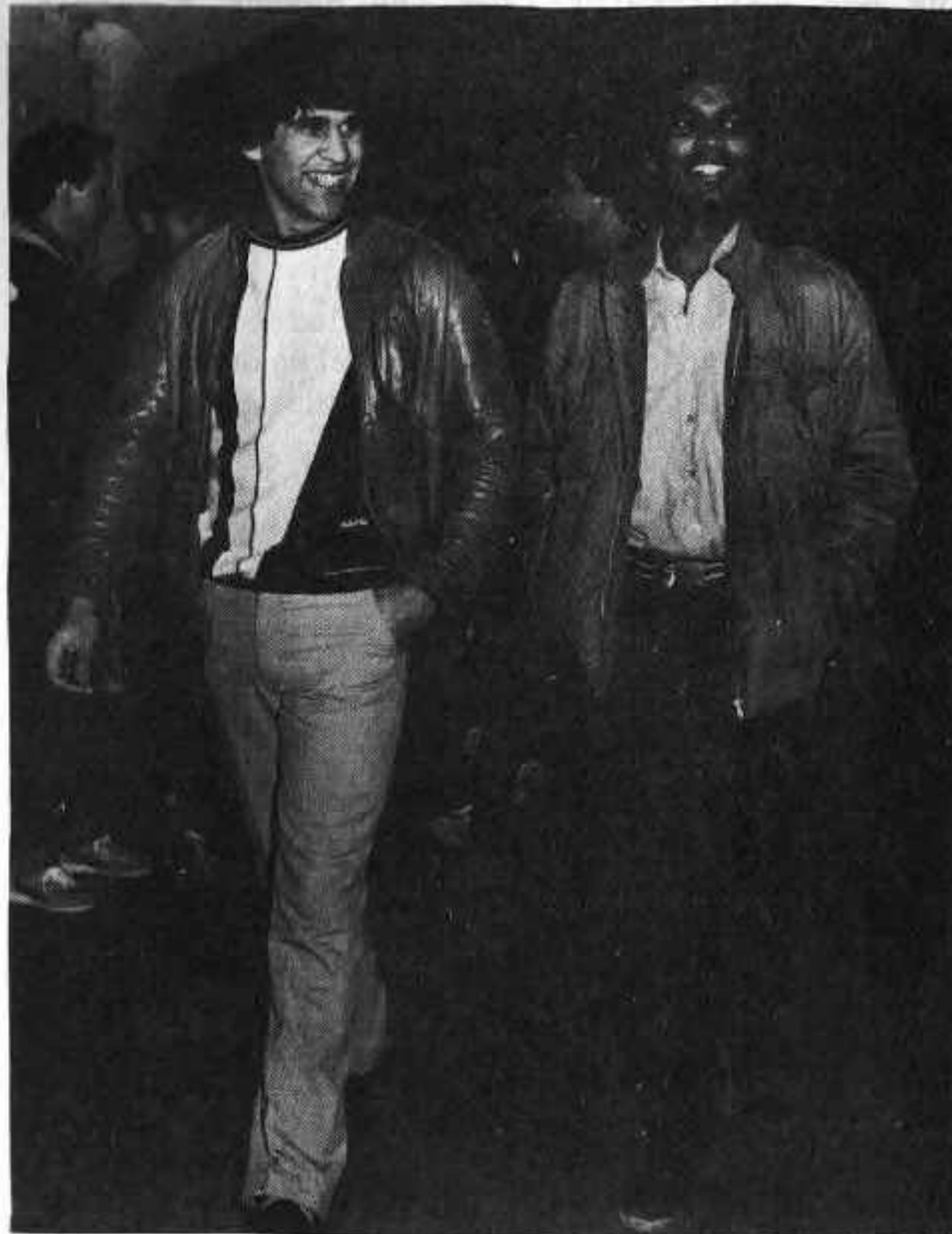
The prosecution's sole basis for remanding five of the seven Asian youths rested on the flimsy grounds that they were still preparing the case - it was only after defence solicitors went to the High Court to secure the release of one of the five that the others were eventually granted bail. Subsequently all seven were charged with conspiracy to cause criminal damage and affray in addition to other individual charges.

Throughout this period the Project gave help, basic legal advice and support to the defendants and their parents and assisted the efforts of defence solicitors to secure bail for the defendants. Before outlining the simultaneous development of the campaign alongside legal developments it would be essential to explain our commitment to and involvement in the campaign which has taken up a considerable amount of time and resources in the last quarter of 1984. As a community based grass-roots campaigning organisation we feel it essential to identify the issues by casework, generalise the lessons of individual cases and initiate, develop and assist appropriate community responses. As we argued in our 1983 Annual Report, to not positively identify ourselves with the numerous local victims of police racism is to maintain a silence which, with the passing of the Police Bill, is something we cannot afford to do. The Project also shares the basic premise of the Newham 7 campaign - of any community defence campaign for that matter - that it is not just the seven who are on trial but the entire black community. The strength and depth of local anti-racist feeling, especially of the black community, around the case will need to be clearly expressed and made visible to judge and jury when the trial starts in May.

The campaign was launched from a public meeting attended by about 100 local people on 15.6.84, to the building of which we contributed. Intensive local work preceded the committal hearing on September 14th 1984. In view of the implications of the conspiracy and affray charge and the issues raised by the case as a whole, the decision of the campaign to organise on a national basis has been vindicated by the support it has received to date from black groups, trade unions, political organisations and womens' groups around the country. In the course of the building to the committal hearing on 14.9.84 the Project and its full-time workers gave talks at meetings both locally and nationally on the case and its implications and racism and the police in Newham.

200 people picketed Stratford Magistrates Court for the committal hearing: the conspiracy charge against six of the seven was dismissed by magistrates. This in itself raises a number of questions not least as to how strong is the prosecution evidence if such a theoretically major charge can be dismissed in such a manner, but also on what basis did the police decide to bring such a charge?

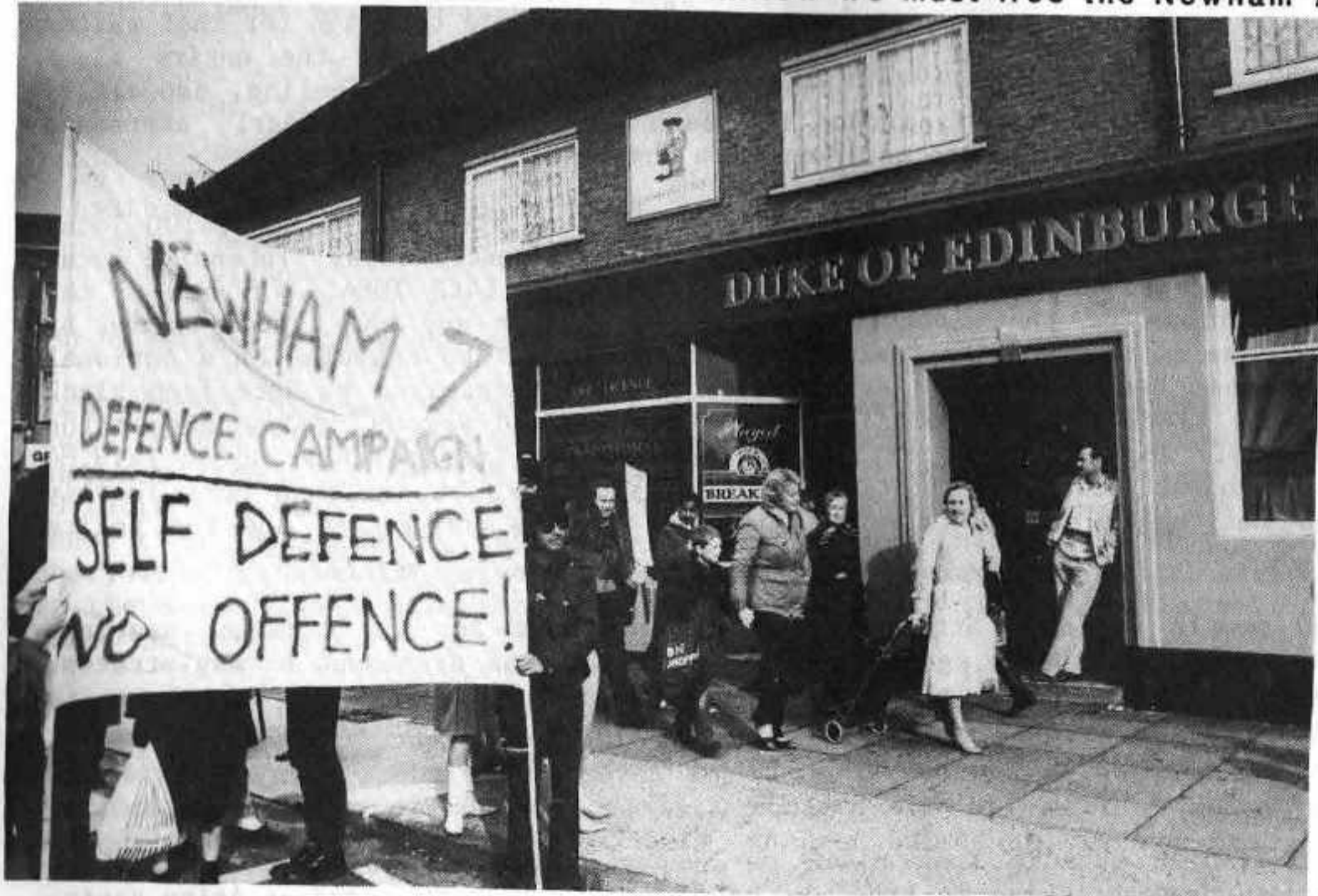
More racist attacks took place on Sunday, September 16th, again by white racist thugs drinking in the Duke of Edinburgh pub and aimed at Asian youths and passersby. At least five Asian youths were injured - one seriously -



Newalline

Newham 8 walk free....

....Now we must free the Newham 7



A.Pothecary

as a result of these attacks. What made an intolerable situation worse was that the police although called immediately by local people who witnessed the attacks did not respond until local Asian youths, with help from the Project, went to the police station to demand that action be taken against the perpetrators of the attacks, some of whom were still drinking in the pub (in contrast to their almost instantaneous response on the 7th of April, when the Newham 7 were arrested). It was only as a result of this pressure that the police went to the pub and arrested three of the racist youths. An earlier response would certainly have ensured the arrest of more of the perpetrators, some of whom had already left the pub by the time the police arrived.

In light of the continuing attacks from the pub and the lackadaisical response from the police - another Asian man was seriously injured in an attack outside the same pub in August - and to make sure that the racists arrested did not get away with relatively light charges - an all-too-bitter past experience - the Newham 7 Defence Campaign organised a mass picket of the pub on Saturday, November 3rd. This again was supported by the Project as we felt that (a) only organised community action was going to do anything to stop these endless attacks going on; (b) in contrast to what some people were advocating, we could not afford to wait until February 1985 to challenge the license of the pub as by that time a much more serious incident could have occurred. 150-200 people picketed the pub which was completely shut down for the afternoon. The picket culminated in a protest march to Forest Gate Police Station as earlier in the week a Halal Meat Shop had been the subject of an arson attack (see section on Racist Attacks).

Political Implications

Undoubtedly the trial in May 1985 will give us an opportunity to take stock for the future and put the Newham 7 in a historical perspective. At the same time it is important for us as a community group monitoring racism to draw lessons from the stages the campaign has passed through so far.

The whole basis for using major charges such as conspiracy needs closer examination. That barely three months after the Newham 8 case when by all accounts 'K' Division stood totally discredited for its negligent attitude to racist attacks and that such charges had not stood up at all in that case, that the police could contemplate using similar charges all over again can make us think of no other motive than that suggested in the statement issued by the Newham 7 Defence Campaign: 'The feeling of the black community is that the police are now taking their revenge for the acquittal of the Newham 8 by constant harassment and the use of oppressive charges like affray and conspiracy'. Secondly, the arrests of the three white racists raises issues which give the Newham 7 a distinctive difference from defence campaigns of the past. By placing the three white racists alongside the seven defendants in the dock, the police are attempting to portray the issue as one of 'gang warfare'. This is a clear attempt to depoliticise the case, can be seen as part of a concerted attempt to redefine racial attacks, treating victims as 'criminal', treating both the victim and the aggressor equally and denying a racist motive to the incident. So in response to criticisms of their role in the case to date the police have responded by saying: 'Well we have also arrested three whites.' It will be a major part of the campaign - and the monitoring project finds this the same situation in its day to day work - to get over to the judge, jury and the state that in no way can the defence of the seven - self-defence - be equated with that of the aggressors, the three arrested racists. This point cannot be overstressed as now all over the country the police have seized on the idea that in any racial confrontation, both sides are equally to blame. The rationale is that neither side can accuse them of favouring

the other - the 'impartial' or 'BBC' approach to racist attacks. The use of the affray charge again has to be seen in this context - while the police were quick to use affray charges against the seven, as the Newham 7 Defence Campaign pointed out, the community still waits in vain for similar charges to be used against the racists who went on the rampage against Asians on September 16th (the three racists arrested so far have only been charged with ABH).

Again, although the identity of the racist thugs in the car involved in the attacks on April 7th 1984 has been pointed out to the police, for some strange reason it has yet to be acted upon. Indeed a feature of the case to date is that it is the campaign which seems to be doing most of the investigative work to apprehend the culprits involved in the attacks on April 7th. Questions must be asked of a legal system where the onus of chasing up these vicious racist thugs is left to the people who were assaulted and attacked (and since arrested) in the first place.

The value of concerted community action and self-organisation which ultimately is going to be the real guarantee to put a stop to these attacks was starkly illustrated by the picket of the Duke of Edinburgh pub. Not only have the attacks stopped but as a result of community action, the 'authorities' have been forced to take steps to ban a number of racists from the pub, stop people from drinking outside (who were largely responsible for abusing black passersby) and strictly limit the issue of cues to customers (as these again were used as weapons by the racists).

The picket, called as a last resort, achieved what months of letter writing and talking failed to do and demonstrated the potential of mass community action to isolate the racists, the Project again helped to build support for the day.

Just as the Newham 8 case raised issues concerning racism and education, the Newham 7 case in its own way has illustrated the problems of racist attacks and racism in community meeting places and social centres. The Project is currently involved in helping a local Afro-Caribbean youth who faces charges of assault against a racist pub landlord, who over the past few months since taking over that particular pub, has barred dozens of Afro-Caribbean youths, a lot of them long standing regulars. The landlord has also been in the habit of using racist language, setting his dog loose on black people, etc. Again community action has led to a large-scale boycott of the pub with a demand for the racist landlord to be sacked.

There are a number of other social institutions in Newham which still remain no-go areas for black people and are openly used by racists to organise and recruit members. In a recent radio programme (LBC - 15.1.85), a listener from East Ham rang in to say how in his local he was aware of sums of money being offered by racists and neo-fascists to go out and perpetuate attacks on black people. Again, time and time, we have drawn such places to the attention of the police without much action on their part - the consequences can be openly seen in cases like that of the two Asian youths viciously assaulted by a 20/30 strong racist mob outside a pub - 'The Two Puddings' - on Stratford Broadway on December 23rd, the pub being only three minutes from West Ham Police Station. Most of the assailants had been drinking inside the pub and are known to be regulars. Again the Tropicana (see section on Racist Attacks) - less than a minute's walk from East Ham Police Station - has been the scene of vicious racist attacks. Far-right publications clearly contravening the Race Relations Act, continue to be sold in pubs without any action by the police, pubs which have been the scene of racist attacks in the past.

It will be a major aim of the campaign to highlight these issues and put it on the local political agenda, just as the Newham 8 did with the whole issue of racism/racist attacks and education.

Future Plans

In view of the above the fact that the Newham 8 inquiry (see section on 'Work with other groups') still has not got off the ground is regrettable.

The Newham 7 campaign will continue to organise around the issue of the seven defendants and racist attacks in and around pubs, making links and alliances, locally and nationally, in the months leading up to the trial and the national march in support of the seven in late April 1985. Given the issues raised by the case, the Project will give all possible support to the Campaign. It is absolutely essential for the anti-racist movement that the right to self-defence, established in the Bradford 12, Newham 8 and numerous other cases that the black community has had over the last two decades, is upheld.

THE POLICE ACT (1984)

On 31.10.84 the Police Bill became the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 - to give it its full title. Although the bulk of the powers will not be available to the police until Autumn 1985, according to the Home Office, the implications of the Act need to be clearly analysed as it is likely to have far-reaching repercussions.

Amongst the provisions are:

(1) Power to STOP AND SEARCH you in the street and other places and stop and search any vehicle in which you are travelling on reasonable suspicion that you possess an offensive weapon, equipment for stealing or stolen goods. You can also be subject to stop and search on reasonable suspicion that you possess controlled drugs under drugs legislation. A police officer who is not in uniform must first produce some identification that he/she is a police officer, but only an officer in uniform can stop a vehicle. Before a search is carried out you should be told

* the officer's name and station to which he/she is attached

* the purpose of the search and the reasons for making it, and that you are entitled to a copy of the record of the search that should be made, but only if you ask for one.

(2) Power to establish a ROAD BLOCK for an unlimited period and stop any vehicle to see if it is carrying a person who has committed, is intending to commit or is a 'witness' to a serious arrestable offence or is an escaped prisoner.

(3) Power to ARREST YOU FOR ANY OFFENCE, no matter how trivial it is, if you fail to give your name and address to the police or if they don't believe the one you give. This would also be the case if the officer believes it is necessary to arrest you to stop you committing an offence of highway obstruction or an offence against public decency.

(4) Power to DETAIN YOU FOR UP TO NINETY SIX HOURS (FOUR DAYS). The first 36 hours would be without legal help for anyone. It is not being unrealistic to suggest pressure and other factors that may induce people to admit to something they have not done, sign confessions etc. We know of several cases where people have admitted to something or replied exactly as the police want them to, because they can no longer stand the isolation of being kept in a cell for a long period. And if illegalities take place even now, one can only imagine the situation when the Act comes into operation. The 96 hours of detention will be punctuated by two reviews, one at 36 hours and one at 72. These reviews will be conducted by the Magistrates Court sitting in private; the detained person will be entitled to be present and to be legally represented. However, again experience has shown that most magistrates are unlikely to disagree with police recommendations and endorse requests for a further period of detention on past occasions. The safeguards thus become meaningful.

(5) Power to STRIP SEARCH you in the police station.

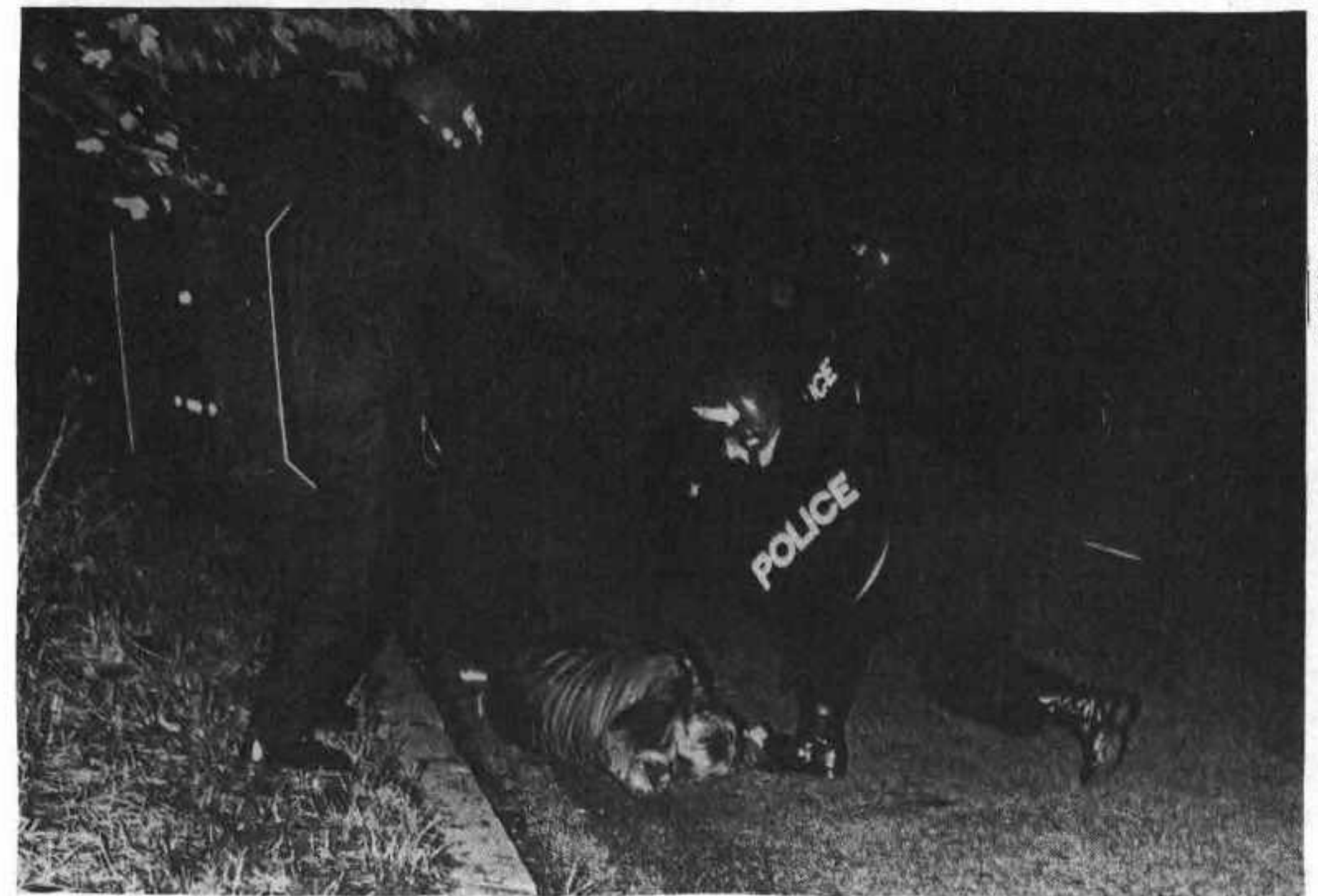
(6) Power to subject you to an INTIMATE BODY SEARCH of body orifices such as the mouth, anus and vagina where the police suspect that you are hiding a weapon that could be used to cause injury. The search can be carried out by a person not necessarily medically qualified. However if the police suspect you of hiding a CLASS A drug and of dealing in drugs you can be searched in the same way but only by a doctor or registered nurse at a hospital.

(7) Power to SEARCH YOUR HOME even though you are not suspected of any offence.

Further information about the provisions of the Act can be obtained from the Project. The Police Act will legalise existing police illegalities and malpractices, all well documented, extend the powers of the police in some fields and further increase police confidence and dramatically weaken the rights of the individual. 'Safeguards' that have been offered to give people increased protection in their dealings with the police lack statutory backing and therefore any teeth. Even the one change welcomed by sections of liberal opinion has to be put into context: Lord Scarman's amendment of making racially discriminatory behaviour by the police an offence against the police discipline code soon to be laid before Parliament. It would still be the police hierarchy deciding what constitutes a racially discriminatory offence. So for example a 'community' involvement Inspector based at West Ham Police Station told the Project that the use of the word 'Paki' was perfectly acceptable to him as it was an 'East End way of identifying people'. This may then explain the common use of such language by 'K' Division officers, something which isn't appreciated by the people it is directed at. Besides, although the government argued that such behaviour is already an offence under the existing code, instances where a police officer has been disciplined on a charge with a background of racially discriminatory behaviour are unknown even though such behaviour is well documented.

Again racially discriminatory behaviour by individual officers cannot be isolated from the institutionalised racism of the police force.

The only redress available to an individual against abuses of the Act is to make a formal complaint - which the police will investigate themselves - or sue the police in civil courts for which you are unlikely to get legal aid.



Policing the '80s

J. Sturrock/Network

The Police Act: A Political Context

The Police Act extends police powers in a massive manner. However, the importance of the Act actually lies beyond its provisions. When seen alongside the reorganisation of policing priorities and the penetration of the community in a number of ways that has occurred throughout 1983 (see our last Annual Report and the section on Multiagency Policing for examples) it can be said to pave the way for a police style state.

The police claim that they need the Act to fight a rising crime wave - indeed it is not common knowledge that it was the ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) (who have shot into national prominence during the Miners' Strike) who actually asked for the provisions contained in the Act. However, apart from the statistical arguments about a rising crime wave and the way in which crime statistics are manipulated by the media and the police to create a wave of hysteria and clamour for more 'law and order' policies, we have to ask ourselves whether the Police Act will actually do anything to control crime. In a situation where police pay and personnel has gone up and they have access to the most up to date technology, at the same time the clear up rate (that is the % of crime reported that is successfully solved - 80% of crime is estimated not be reported) remains at an appallingly low 17%.

The powers in the Act are not only ineffective in checking crime (how is detaining someone for up to four days going to help) but greatly increase the chance of an innocent person being wrongly convicted. Rather than stop crime the Police Act will be added to a range of repressive legislation. The SUS Act, now replaced with the Criminal Attempts Act, was used against black people. Conspiracy laws have been used both against black people and trade unionists. Even the blasphemy laws, dating back almost to the Middle



J. Sturrock/Network

Stop and Search increases

Ages, have been wheeled out and used against gay people. The Act follows closely on the heels of the Nationality Act, the Employment Act and repressive trade union legislation and the government's cutback on living standards and cannot be seen in isolation. It has to be seen as part of a whole series of moves over the past two decades dating back to the 1962 Immigration Act to increase police powers and limit democratic rights within the criminal justice system in order to control social unrest caused by an increasingly serious economic crisis. We have also seen attacks on the jury system (majority verdicts, reduction of defendants' rights to challenge potential jurors), reduction in the right to elect for trial by jury and advance notification of alibi defences giving the police/prosecution ample and unfair opportunities to harass and discredit witnesses.

The Police Act then has to be seen against the background of a series of repressive legislation, increasing unemployment and social unrest which have in turn led to a reorganisation of policing priorities. It in effect allows the creation of a legal framework to control groups and individuals mounting legitimate resistance to the attacks on our democratic rights and standard of living.

Already the way in which the Act is likely to be used can be seen in the policing of the miners' strike (an excellent recent study is a book titled 'State of Siege' by S. Miller and M. Walker) - roadblocks, detention without charge, snatch squads, stop and search, etc., experiences which the black community has had for years now. Not a single decent argument can be advanced in support of the Act and how it can be used to stop crime. The Act is a threat to all sections of the community - black people, trade unionists, women - and represents a slide into authoritarianism that is no longer possible to remain silent about.

Newham Campaign Against The Police Bill

The Newham Campaign Against the Police Bill was launched at a conference held by the Project on 'Racism, The Police and Education' on 1.10.83. The Project played a key role in initiating and sustaining the activities of the Newham Campaign Against the Police Bill. Apart from supporting the activities of the National Campaign Against the Police Bill, which during the course of 1984 organised two major demonstrations with Labour Party backing, the Campaign produced and disseminated literature on an extremely wide basis throughout Newham so as to make people aware of the draconian powers that the Bill proposed.

Credit must be given to the Police Sub-Committee of Newham Council who decided to back up their opposition to the Bill on a practical basis by making available resources to the Newham Campaign. In conjunction with the Police Sub-Committee, a leaflet explaining the proposed new police powers (also printed in Punjabi and Urdu) and its implication was distributed to every single house in the borough. An extremely well-attended rally was organised by the Newham Campaign with help provided by the Project on 18.1.85. C. Griffiths from the GLC Police Committee Support Unit put the Bill in a politico-legal context with a local black resident of Newham, O. Owusu, outlining his experiences. A speaker from the Troops Out Movement explained the way in which policing tactics in this country had been developed and perfected in Northern Ireland. An additional series of discussion meetings on 'What the Police Bill Means', 'Multiagency Policing', 'The Police Bill and lessons of Northern Ireland', 'Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and Community Policing' and 'Policing the Black Community' was held in the first quarter of 1984. The programme of events culminated in a whole day conference held under the theme of 'Repression - Culture and Resistance' which drew 300-400 local people, mainly youth, and helped to present the implications of the Bill in a vivid and illustrative form.

It must be again stressed that what by all accounts was a successful campaign in terms of informing and educating local people about the effects of the Act was considerably facilitated by the help given to the Campaign by the Police Sub-Committee of the Council.

The Project's full-time workers also gave numerous talks to local groups - both voluntary and statutory (from Newham Docklands Forum to Newham NALGO and Labour Party wards) on the Bill.

MULTIAGENCY POLICING

Our last Annual Report looked at the beginnings and development of multiagency policing in a much more sophisticated and organised way. A lot of our work in 1984 has concentrated around publicising the growth of such schemes, the police ideology behind it and what can be done to challenge such schemes.

What is Multiagency Policing ?

The multiagency approach and community policing schemes - often seen as 'soft' policing - has been primarily fostered by Newman and ex-Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, John Alderson, who calls it 'proactive' policing to distinguish it from preventive policing:

'Proactive policing sets out to penetrate the community in a number of ways. Unlike reactive policing, and to some extent preventive policing, proactive policing envisages a more pervasive effect. It seeks to reinforce social discipline and mutual trust in communities, while having due regard for legal discipline as it always must.'

The basic premise of Newman is that since all sections of the community and the police have an interest in ensuring that crime is prevented and detected, they should be able to work out an agreed strategy enlisting public goodwill to achieve the common goals. So he writes:

'Problems identified locally will be tackled systematically by co-ordinating the contributions of police, public and local agencies. The concept of a corporate strategy is vital.'

Thus statutory and voluntary agencies are expected to co-operate with the police in attempts to prevent and deal with crime.

'The police policy formulated must be expanded to acknowledge and influence policy decisions made by all other agencies who provide any kind of service to the communities. Where the policies are incompatible and police must make forcible attempts to convince other parties as to the value of a co-ordinated approach.'

(Newman)

In essence the multiagency approach adds a social dimension to the old 'physical' side-locks, bars and bolts - of crime prevention. This means that the responsibility for preventing crime is to be shifted from the police on to local government, welfare agencies and local communities. What is particularly pernicious, as some may argue that there is nothing wrong in sharing information with the police if it is going to lead to a reduction in crime, is that this multiagency policing is directed by the police. Newman himself has been very clear about the real aim of the multiagency approach:

'It would be better if we stopped talking about crime prevention and lifted the whole thing to a higher level of generality represented by the words social control.'

(Financial Times 23.8.83)

Multiagency policing takes a number of forms, some of which are outlined below:

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme (NWS)

In our last Annual Report we outlined the inherent dangers in NWS which the Met is trying to push so enthusiastically these days. Experience is proving these fears to be well-founded. An article in 'Policing London' No.14 (published by the GLC) quotes at length the views of a local authority tenants' liaison officer reporting the situation in his borough. On one of the borough's 'worst' estates:

'The Crime Prevention Officer and his deputy together with the Home Beat Officer, appeared at a tenants' associations enlarged meeting which had been originally called to discuss the Housing Department's rehabilitation programme and proceeded to impose a discussion on NWS on the meeting. Due to the fact that petty and not so petty crime has been a genuine problem for tenants over many years, they were more than prepared to accept a direct approach from the police offering solutions. In addition if the carrot had not worked the following stick was offered. "If you do not accept the scheme, we shall simply go down the road, offer it to the next estate, who will accept it and the result of that will be that their crime and their criminals will be pushed on to your estate."

The rationale about NWS is that the community through existing structures such as tenants associations, polices itself and passes on information about anything suspicious to a collator at the local police station. However, experience has shown the police to be actually involved in promoting them. The initiative to create the schemes forms a new aspect of multiagency policing, involving the police in actually creating agencies to supply them with information as well as encouraging existing bodies to give it to them.

The basic fears and reservations about NWS remain:

- (1) Put bluntly the community is being asked to 'spy' on itself. Neighbours are being asked to pass on hearsay information to the police.
- (2) The Scheme is in practice led and directed by the police who also appoint the 'warden' or 'contact' or vet their appointment.
- (3) The people supplying the information are not accountable to anyone for the information they pass on. They are guaranteed confidentiality by the police and will never therefore be held responsible to the people concerned for anything they may say about them.
- (4) Fear was expressed about the inherent danger in the sort of people who are likely to participate in these schemes (people who may already have inbuilt prejudices and stereotypes against black people, youth, women, etc.). In our knowledge very, very few black people have come forward to join the scheme. At a much acclaimed meeting to set up such a scheme in the Forest Gate area, there were only about 3 black people - this in an area with a very high black population. The meeting was used by the local police chief to attack unrepresentative politicians and 'extremists' of any kind - the Councillors for that area for a scheme meant to be community-initiated were not even invited to the meeting.
- (5) Again fear was expressed that better-heeled, more civic minded suburbs would take the initiative, thus creating a class bias. This again has tended to be the case.
- (6) One effect would inevitably be the greater criminalisation of young people in general and black youth in particular. An insight was provided

by a police officer in Camden who when asked what constituted 'suspicion' recommended that the NWS participant should call the police if they heard or saw something suspicious and saw a black person running away.

- (7) Although a lot of the information passed on to the police will be 'trivial', the police have said that the information will be fed into local microcomputers, which in turn will be linked to central police computers. This fits in with Newman's strategy of 'targetting and surveillance' which aims to draw on as much data and intelligence about the community so as to build a detailed picture and thereby identify potential criminals and make arrests after surveillance.
- (8) No proper check can be kept on the accuracy of the information collected. As police records are exempted under the terms of the Data Protection Bill, the people concerned will never know what information is held about them or be able to correct anything that is wrong.

The scheme lends itself to 'grassing'. Although the police obviously deny this and make it very clear that they do not want such information right at the start of the meeting, they remain in the position of accepting any information provided by members of schemes, not just that relating to a crime. As Chief Inspector Gerry Casey of 'M' District said: 'A lot of their (the local Council Police Sub-Committee) arguments are based on the idea that people are going to be 'grasses' on their neighbours. But the point of the exercise is that we do get information'. (South London Press 24.8.84).

According to Policing Wandsworth No.4 (Summer 1984), at a meeting of local residents around NWS the local PC suggested that type of information the NWS could pass on. Apart from keeping eyes and ears open, the keen PC wanted to know if there were 'any communists living nearby'.

More information about NWS, their implications and effects in practice is being collated by the Liberation Education and Research Trust Project on NWS,



Community Policing ?

S. Benbow/Network

(9 Poland Street, W1) whose London-wide survey suggests that such schemes enjoy a 'honeymoon' period after which participants lose interest and schemes either stagnate or collapse. In Newham itself eight schemes have been set up in the West Ham Division and thirteen in East Ham Division. By all accounts police targetting of these schemes need serious qualification. It is the better-off areas that have seen the greatest participation, very few black people participate and certainly they do not take up the question of racist attacks, one of the biggest problems in Newham. Again, although police fed media reports acclaim the schemes as a success in cutting down on crime, the accuracy of such reports remain in question.

Our view is that NWS is an exercise in intelligence gathering which fits in with Newman's overall plan for policing London (see later section), does nothing to solve the appallingly low clear-up rate of reported crime and diverts attention from the key question of accountability of the Met.

The Project participated in a London-wide conference organised by the NWS Research Project, has circulated its document on the scheme extensively and given numerous talks on the subject to local groups and tenants associations.

We have always striven to see NWS not as an isolated development but related to aspects of contemporary policing and the Newman plan for policing London.

Instant Cautioning and Multiagency Panels

This again should be seen in the light of multiagency policing outlined above. A document which has been extensively circulated, locally and nationally and which outlines the implications of instant cautioning and multiagency panels and the context in which it has to be seen is enclosed as Appendix I.

Newham has been selected as one of the trial areas: our work has consisted of publicising the final scheme, again giving talks to various groups and individuals and helping to develop community understanding of the issues at stake. We have also contributed an article on the issue to Childright, the magazine of the Childrens' Legal Centre.

Very briefly, (as the issues are adequately covered in the Appendices) instant cautioning has been introduced throughout the Met area for the first time offender. This means that rather than being referred to the Juvenile Bureau for a lengthy investigation and home visit, the Inspector on duty may decide to caution the child immediately, as soon as his/her parents come in to collect him/her. The criteria on evidence, admission and parental agreement still apply, and the caution as now, may be cited in the juvenile court.

Some serious offenders and those accused of more serious offences will still be referred to the Juvenile Bureau. It is intended to establish a number of pilot juvenile liaison panels in different boroughs. Each panel will consist of representatives from Social Services, educational welfare and the police. The panel will advise the police on whether to caution, although the final decision will still be with the police.

As our document argues, whilst it may be generally considered desirable to keep children out of the courts, it is still important to look critically at the means intended to achieve this end. The introduction of the new policy would lead to an increasing number of juveniles being brought into the juvenile justice system. Where juveniles would previously have only been given an informal 'ticking off' there is now a cheap and easy procedure for police officers to administer a formal caution which can result in juveniles being fingerprinted and also have a record on police computer.

The introduction of the new policy will give the police increased control over the prosecution and hence the judiciary process. Instead of the courts which are the proper place for cases to be decided and sentences given, through this new policy, the police are going to decide these at the police station.

In addition, multiagency panels will also shift the responsibility of 'policing' juveniles onto local government departments who through these panels will act as 'agents of the police'. This initiative again has to be seen in line with Newman's strategy in shifting the responsibility for crime prevention from the police alone on to other social agencies. The recent launch of NWS throughout London with its shift in responsibility from the police to the community (i.e. the 'victims' of crime) is another example of this approach.

This multiagency approach marks a new stage in co-operation between state agencies with the police in the centre. In the context of the Police Act and Data Protection Act this development would further increase police powers at the expense of individual liberties and rights.

Police Consultative Groups

One of the main campaigns mounted by the Project this year has been around the police consultation exercise at present being carried out by Newham Council.

That the Council is actually carrying out such a consultation exercise, in spite of pressure to set one up by the police, often using the forum of the Newham Recorder, is something to be welcomed: the experiences of other London boroughs which have rushed into setting up such consultative groups and which have nearly all had bad experiences is a lesson that needs to be taken into account. The Project published a document, after informal consultation amongst local black and anti-racist groups/individuals, outlining the politics of the police consultative group and why, from our point of a group monitoring racist attacks it had to be opposed and campaigned against - this document is attached as Appendix II to the Report. A public meeting with about 50 people attending was held on 4.6.84 with Errol Lawrence from Camden Council for Community Relations speaking. The document has since then been extensively circulated around Newham and the Project and its workers invited to give talks on the issues raised.

We saw (and still see) the campaign as basically:

- (1) An educational campaign - even if a police consultative group is set up in Newham, we felt that the success of our campaign should be judged by the debate around policing issues that it provoked. To that extent the Campaign has been remarkably successful in getting local organisations to seriously talk about policing issues (without being labelled 'extremists' straightaway), even if they essentially disagree with us.
- (2) A community group monitoring racist attacks and speaking from the black experience of policing, exposing the cosmetic nature of such exercises - how they will do nothing to solve racist attacks, the police already know the problem too well, no special forums are needed to talk about these attacks, what is needed is action, and how they can be used to whitewash police inaction in dealing with racist attacks.

We have repeatedly stressed that we will continue to liaise with the police on the question of individual racist attacks and cases - the interest of the people who come to see us dictates that - but we are not going to be 'sucked' into any cosy chats which don't achieve anything. For the last 30 years black

people have been telling and talking to the police about racist attacks, what should and needs to be done, etc. If all the evidence and reports that have been piling up over this time about the scale and extent of racist attacks fails to shake them into doing something, then nothing will. Again, as the Newham 7 case has demonstrated, the mobilisation of community forces (e.g. the Duke of Edinburgh pub picket) remains a one effective guarantee of forcing the authorities to respond.

Two points need to be stressed here:

- (1) the eagerness of the police to set up the consultative group - an understanding needs to be developed of why this is the case, a point which is picked up at the end of this chapter;
- (2) attempts to set up a police consultative group should be seen in the light of Newman's plans for policing London - this is again picked up at the end of this chapter.

Racial Incident Prevention Panels

This is another multiagency approach to the policing of racial violence - Newham, Ealing, Greenwich, Barnet and Tower Hamlets apparently are the five districts chosen to 'pilot' Racial Incident Prevention panels. The idea is that panels will include police, local authority officers, teachers, community relations councils and 'black' organisation in a special 'problem solving approach'. This again has to be seen as a version of the police consultative group - a talkshop and cosmetic exercise at the best and an outright attempt by the police to shift the blame of not responding to racist attacks off their back at worst.

There is, in fact, nothing 'special' or 'problem solving' about this approach. The black community has always been treated as a community apart, to be liaised with through the community relations structure. Community liaison officers have been appointed in each district to deal with 'race relations' - 'special' officers with a 'special' responsibility to the black community that can be conveniently bypassed by regular officers on the beat. The point is that the police have never treated racism seriously, and it is the approach of ordinary officers who do not respond to racist attacks, treat the victims as the aggressor or question them as to their immigration status that needs to be challenged. When its recently released divisional plan for East Ham or the coming year talks of the East Ham and Plaistow areas 'being relatively free of racist incidents' - an area where in November 1984 a 16-years old Afro-Caribbean youth was murdered - and where every single case reported to the Project is also referred to the police for action (indeed people come to see us precisely because of police inaction) then it is hard to see how the Racial Harassment Panels can be anything but a legitimising cover for police inaction.

Similarly, the pilot schemes initiated between the Housing Department of Newham Council and the Police in Clements Avenue, E16, and the Warrior Square estate, E12, to combat racial harassment needs to be treated with caution. It is precisely because the police have totally failed to respond to these attacks in the past that they have become no-go areas. What is needed is sustained community pressure - both from voluntary and statutory agencies - to force the police to act.

Police in Schools

Multiagency policing has been most marked in determined police efforts to establish liaison with schools and youth clubs, particularly those in deprived areas. Police involvement in schools has taken the form of talks on road

safety, quizzes, disco competitions, etc. These schemes while being welcomed by some teachers have been criticised by others as propaganda. It remains the aim of the Met to visit 'every class in every school in London at least once a year'. (Chief Inspector Vidgam of the Community Relations Branch). Police activity in schools and Education Department - police collaboration needs to be closely monitored if we are to avoid a repetition of incidents like in Southall this year where a black schoolkid at Dormer Wells School was called to Southall Police Station to find that the police officer interviewing him had his school file in front of him, or what happened in Tottenham in April 1984 when the head of an infants' school called in police to lecture four and five year olds after she claimed that four black children had 'money on them which they should not have'. The children were lectured to by a PC who said the next time there were allegations of children taking other's money 'they would be behind bars'. The story achieved national focus with the Haringey Black Pressure Group on Education stating 'without even consulting the parents or investigating the story, the police have been involved as the youngsters have been turned into villains in the school's eyes'.

A worrying situation still exists. Two cases in particular we wish to highlight are:

- (1) Where the parents of a 10-year old schoolgirl came in to see us to complain about their daughter's (and the whole class's) fingerprints being taken (as a demonstration) and being shown police equipment viz. truncheons, how handcuffs were put on, etc. The atmosphere was described to us as 'intimidatory'.
- (2) Where a 14-year old school student assaulted at Little Ilford School, the police although called did not arrive until the next day. To date no prosecution has been brought against the assailants whose identity is known.



Promoting an image

(see article at end of chapter)

It was precisely as a result of incidents like the latter and the issues raised by the Newham 8 case that Newham NUT adopted a policy of 'No police in schools'. Until and unless the police start to respond to racist attacks, stop harassing black youths and challenge their own racism, the loss of confidence of the black community in them and when public confidence overall remains very low, and in the face of no police accountability, then their aims and objectives in coming into classrooms need to be seriously looked at. Things like teaching traffic codes etc. often can very easily be taught by schoolteachers.

In light of police statements about 'the potential for multiagency involvement in education' (Bramshill Police College Conference 1982, 'The Urban Future - Inner-city Conference) and particularly in a speech by Leon Brittan, Home Secretary, outlining the official thinking on the role of police in schools to the Magistrates Association on 27.7.84 where he talks of police participation being 'a real help with the problem of delinquency' a different light is cast on stated police objectives of going into schools. Brittan continues 'Further work is now in hand which I hope will result in the development of closer links between schools and the police. Other social agencies should also be involved in school crime prevention work' and more remarkably when he considers the formal teaching process to be 'less of a factor in guiding young people away from delinquency than the respect for authority and the development of acceptable standards of behaviour on which schools 'like society' depend for their proper functioning. Indeed £45,000 has already been committed in principle to a pilot scheme to detect and reform 'embryo criminals as young as nine years old'.

What is very important is that teachers and schools do not allow themselves to be used as part of the multiagency policing now being developed. The activity of police officers in and around schools without any proper control is of much the same concern as the general problem of racist attacks upon black schoolchildren. Guidelines to control the activities of police in schools are of a pressing priority if they are not going to be given an opportunity to put over a picture of a non-racist, non-sexist, 'caring' police force which in reality, unfortunately, (a) does not exist, and (b) has other priorities.

Bringing it all together: The Newman Strategy

This was formally unveiled in 1983. According to Newman some 70% of uniformed police activity is devoted to 'responding to demands from the public'. It is because of these demands that the police are unable to do their job, to prevent and detect crime. In order to perform this task more effectively, Newman's plan calls for the help of the community in policing itself, through 'Neighbourhood Watch Schemes', consultative committees and through the 'corporate' approach involving local government and other agencies. Consultative committees are identified as a 'vehicle for directing the overall strategy'. It is clear, however, who will be leading those committees:

'A focus on consultative committees to discuss and develop the reduction of criminal opportunities and develop crime prevention by asking District Commanders to identify specific problems to the committees'. (Newman)

Once 'problems' have been identified this way, they will be tackled systematically by 'co-ordinating the contributions of police, public and local agencies. The concept of a corporate strategy is vital'.

This corporate strategy in the multiagency approach using the energies of all state agencies and employees as well as those of local residents to help the police in the policing of the community - hence Newman's by now famous expression, 'social control'.



D.Hoffman

Waiting for action

NWS form an important part of this crime prevention plans with other measures to include increased recruitment into the Special Constabulary, especially from among the ethnic minorities and a programme to 'educate' the public that the increase in crime is a matter for both the police and the public. Again opinion polls will play an important part here in legitimising police operations. The police's primary role would be public order and strategic crime detection, and especially 'street crime'. Targetting, surveillance and intelligence gathering are to be used to bring potential criminals to the attention of specialist crime squads. Again the role of the much-beloved home beat officer is in a similar vein. A recent study of Scottish police revealed for example that these officers were being instructed to 'secure the services of at least one observer in every street... someone who knows the inhabitants and is inquisitive enough to find out what is going on and who is willing to pass on such information'.

The clear links between the Newman strategy and the Police Act is seen in the re-vamped role of the District Support Units (DSUs) who will now concentrate on 'anti-burglary patrols', 'rowdiness patrols', 'searches', 'road blocks observation', 'execution of warrants', etc. (precisely areas where the Act gives the police extended powers) as well as being prepared to intervene in any public disorder. As an article in the Journal of Law and Society (by Bridges and Burges) - Summer 1983 - argues "taken in conjunction with the Police Act, this new strategy for the policing of the inner city with its growing unemployment and disaffection implies not so much the creation of a police state but of numerous localised police states. The police in each district will have considerable authority, both legally and in organisation terms, and be able to control their communities through increased local surveillance and deployment of their own riot trained and equipped mobile squads. (This was borne out by an announcement in early January 1985, of a reorganisation of the Met which will give Chief Superintendents a considerably enhanced role - NMP). At the same time local police commanders will have available in consultative committees and neighbourhood watch schemes their own legitimatising structures and mechanism for the 'directed' parti-

icipation of the public and other agencies."

Multiagency policing, the Police Act, NWS, the paramilitary role played by the police in the Miners' Strike and measures, supposedly directed against 'criminals' but being used against groups and individuals active in the Peace Movement, trade unions activity, exposing police racism etc., should give us all cause for concern, a concern which needs to be acted upon in defence of existing civil liberties. The dangers of creeping state authoritarianism cannot be ignored. It is important that current day policing strategies and the rationale behind it are the subject of considerable and open public discussion, hence this particular chapter in our Report.

Police and schools — the boys in blue move in

The role, if any, the police should play in schools is an emotive issue. Hackney and Lambeth National Union of Teachers argue that, in the face of police racism, the police have no role to play, and in April 1982 they decided to ban the police from speaking in schools. This infuriated the National Association of Head Teachers and the (then) Under Secretary of State for Education: "What kind of anarchic society do they think they are helping to build", asked Dr Rhodes Boyson, "when they teach our children not to co-operate with the police?"

In a recent article in *Police Review* (Vol.91, No.4716) which shows that the police, like Dr Boyson, are well aware that it is important to bring their influence to bear on people involved in education. Inspector W. Pedan, of Lothian and Borders Community Involvement Department, concludes: "we should consider including police officers among the lecturers at teacher training colleges so that teachers too might benefit from being caught young". Inspector Pedan also recommends more liaison with teachers in the preparation of crime prevention teaching packs and that every school should nominate a teacher to act as a police liaison officer.

EDUCATING AGAINST CRIME

The Department of Education and Science (DES) has now published a report on police involvement in schools: *Police Liaison with the Education Service*. It argues that schools must play a larger part in developing greater respect for law and order among the young, because of the growth of crime amongst young people. This has set fire to an already controversial issue, all the more poignant because of cases like the Newham 8 and recent events in Brondesbury and Kilburn High School. Here, police behaved aggressively to black school children after breaking up a fight which had been started when they were ambushed by white youths.

The incident at Chingford High School (see over) is not exceptional either. After a local "mugging", the Head of John Kelly School in Kilburn gave police the names and addresses of all the black children who wore ear- and nose-rings. (The description of the mugger said he was wearing an ear-ring, but no mention was made of a nose-ring.) Subsequently, the police turned up at the home of a black youth who wore a nose-ring, took him to the police station — where they questioned him without his parents being there. Scotland Yard has since apologised for the treatment of this

child, but Brent local authority and the DES defended the decision of the Head to give information to the police.

When black youths have defended themselves against racist attacks, they have often found themselves on the wrong side of the law. A recent report published by the Home Office Research Planning Unit shows that black men are two or three times more likely to be stopped and searched than white. Can this same police force be trusted in schools?

POLICE LIAISON — A RESPONSE TO SCARMAN

There are already arrangements for liaison between police and schools, made largely in response to the Scarman Report of 1981 and part of the model of "community policing". The DES report details the findings of an enquiry by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools into these liaison arrangements and which concludes that police input into schools needs strengthening (as part of the emphasis on crime prevention work). The mechanism should combine consultation with local authorities, and informal contact between police officers and teachers. On the one hand in-service training is recommended for those teachers and youth workers involved in co-operative work with the police and in designing courses and teaching materials on law and order. And on the other hand Home beat officers should be encouraged to drop in for "a cup of tea and a chat" with staff and pupils alike.

This will appeal to many teachers, unwillingly caught up in the debate over police in schools. Many teachers in inner-city areas do not live near where they teach, so they have probably not witnessed stop-and-search operations directed mainly against young black people; it is unlikely that they or their acquaintances have been stopped by the police themselves. If they have been trained to take a 'multi-cultural' approach to teaching, racism for them has become a question of prejudice — something which can be taught away. So

police racism is reducible to the question of a few prejudiced individuals; and more contact with the police — educating them about prejudice while they educate us about crime sounds like a really progressive idea.

COMMUNITY POLICING

This masks the true nature of community policing and crime prevention work. Community policing, despite its high-sounding claims, is not an alternative form of policing. It acts alongside operations like stop-and-search and fire-brigade policing, seeking to penetrate the community by breaking down the barriers between police and social agencies, such as schools, to spy on the community under the guise of offering a protective friendly approach.

This is precisely the approach the DES report describes. Headmasters and certain teachers sit on crime prevention panels, where "difficult" localities and "problem" schools are identified and discussed in an attempt to gather intelligence and anticipate dissent. This process, which involved only a few chosen teachers, is hidden from the ordinary teacher's view: to him or her there is nothing sinister in discussing "problem pupils" with the police in an atmosphere of mutual concern. In reality, however, home beat officers are trained to gather intelligence and to pass this information on to a "collator" at their local police stations. In fact, a few teachers have already complained that information passed on in this way has been used for purposes they had not initially envisaged. What is worrying, is that the DES has accepted uncritically the police definition of what police involvement in schools should be.

The report describes other forms of police intervention complementing these arrangements. There may be an "expressed concern" (presumably voiced by teachers participating in the crime prevention panels) over, say, levels of vandalism. Police presence in the school is then increased over a number of weeks. It is not hard to imagine a situation whereby schools, like localities, are swamped by police and where the police presence compounds the problems of children defending themselves against racism. Will police operations like that in March 1981 at Archway School (North London) where, following a bogus 999 call, a helicopter landed in the playground and the school was swamped by police, become commonplace? It is a question which all involved in education must ask themselves.

ELCARAPH

In face of the mounting racial violence, documented in earlier sections, and with the increasing authoritarianism of the British State, the massive increase in police powers and erosion of existing civil liberties through the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, various campaigns and monitoring groups, NMP amongst them, in East London, have joined together in an attempt to build a long-term campaign against racist attacks and police harassment.

ELCARAPH arose from joint campaigning work, cutting across municipal boundaries, by Police Bill campaigns in East London. On April 25th a rally of about 200 people was organised by constituent groups on the theme of 'Policing and the Miners' Strike' - to bring to the Labour Movement the experiences and fightback of black people against police harassment and draw out the political implications of the Miners' Strike.

In the face of burgeoning racist attacks, with the antiracist movement in East London passing from one summer to the next with its accompanying racial violence, without any effective fightback, the need was perceived to build a long-term co-ordinated movement across East London, with areas providing support for each other, cutting across the municipal boundaries which so often act as an artificial barrier and building up an effective antiracist network across East London. The idea was that ELCARAPH would not be a substitute for the absolutely essential local work to be carried out in each borough by the constituent group but more of an umbrella network co-ordinating an effective East London fightback, which would also at the same time give assistance to areas where there is strong racist/fascist activity but a weak or divided antiracist movement or no monitoring group. Again, in light of the abolition of the GLC, it was presumed important to begin as a matter of priority the job of building a long-term independent grassroots based anti-racist movement - the antiracist fightback cannot be allowed to die with the possible loss of funding.

NMP has been active in building support for ELCARAPH initiatives in Newham. Apart from building local support for the above-mentioned rally which was held at East Ham Town Hall, we have been participating in regular meetings of ELCARAPH. We helped build support for the 250-strong conference 'Fighting Racism Today: Building a Mass Movement' on Sunday October 21st from which a number of practical initiatives have emerged. Working groups have been set up to monitor and fight racism in the media, racism on Council estates and racism in schools. We have also helped build support for all ELCARAPH initiatives to date:

1. Helping CAPA - Community Alliance for Police Accountability (Tower Hamlets) - to respond to an horrific level of attacks on the Bethnal Green estate, two minutes walk from the police station! ELCARAPH's role was to co-ordinate the support to the families under attack and challenge the racism of the Tenants' Association.
2. Taking on the East London Advertiser: a group going under the innocent sounding name of Fairplay has begun to organise a blatantly racist and offensive campaign in Tower Hamlets and elsewhere. The East London Advertiser carried an article not only uncritical of Fairplay and its inflammatory message, but which itself used dishonest, distorted and non-existent 'facts', figures, pictures and quotes to give credibility to the racist sentiments expressed. Since November, two successful pickets of the Advertiser have been arranged by CAPA and ELCARAPH.

ELCARAPH has also supported all the mobilisations and initiatives of the Newham 7 Campaign to date as well as the mobilisation by the Newham AntiRacist

AntiFascist Committee on December 10th 1984, in support of Newham Council's eviction policy.

We also contribute to, and distribute locally, ELCARAPH's quarterly bulletin.

Over the next few months ELCARAPH will be looking at ways and means of taking on racist harassment in Canning Town, Greenwich and Leytonstone (where there have been a number of recent firebombings). ELCARAPH will also be concentrating on publicising and campaigning against new multiagency policing schemes and the Police Act, both of which removes us further from the question of police accountability.

WORK WITH OTHER GROUPS

The problem of racism, racist attacks and the police is not just in Newham nor can the fightback against it be confined to geographical boundaries. Obviously our main body of work is in Newham but we endeavour to keep working links with organisations both London-wide and nationally.

Greater London Council

We liaise regularly with the GLC Police Committee Support Unit and the Ethnic Minorities Unit. This exchange is of mutual benefit: apart from contributing articles and information to 'Policing London', we keep them informed of developments viz. racist attacks and police harassment in Newham and they in turn act as our first source of information when the need arises. We also benefit from the regular newspaper cuttings bulletin sent out by the Police Committee Support Unit and other information on an ad-hoc basis. The staff of the Police Committee Support Unit have always been extremely helpful and especially the officer we liaise with.

We are also members of the GLC AntiRacist Year Police and Housing Working Groups.

Newham Council

We are co-opted members of the Police Sub-Committee of the Council. Again co-operative links exist with the newly appointed officer: the Support Unit is still in its early stage and we hope to forge an effective working relationship with the officers. We also endeavour to keep links with the Race Relations Unit and the Community Relations Sub-Committee. It should be stressed that we do not see our work as overlapping that of the Police Sub-Committee Support Unit but as a complementary one - we act as a casework agency and also as a campaigning group, organising in the community around grassroots issues, and in most cases being the source that people first come to. We envisage our relationship with the Police Sub-Committee Support Unit as one of keeping them informed of developments as and when they take place and when we first get to know of them, and providing them with information we gather from our monitoring work.

The Project is also represented on the Council's Working Party on Multi-Cultural/AntiRacist Education as well as on its proposed Victim Support Scheme.

Other Groups

Useful working links exist with, amongst other groups, the Institute of Race Relations. We benefit from their constant help and advice and the information provided by their Police-Media Research Project. We also work closely with Campaign Against Racism and Fascism and Searchlight. Working links exist with All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism, Childrens Legal Centre, Cities of Westminster and London Public Order Research Group and the Libertarian Research and Education Trust's Neighbourhood Watch Project.

We are members of the Legal Action Group and are also affiliated to National Campaign Against The Police Bill and London Campaign Against the Police Bill. Our involvement in East London Campaign Against Racist Attacks and Police Harassment is mentioned in a separate section. We remain affiliated to the London Federation of Police Monitoring Groups and help other groups (or call on their assistance) whenever possible e.g. at present we are helping the Wandsworth Policing Campaign with a video film they are producing on policing issues.

Close links however exist with the East London monitoring groups, particularly CAPA, Hackney Police Monitoring Group and Waltham Forest ELCARAPH/Waltham Forest Police Monitoring Group. Apart from mounting joint campaigns on common issues wherever possible, these contacts provide a forum to share and learn from each other's work and experiences.

As part of our attempt to forge closer links with local groups we send representatives to the Management Committees of Eve Road Centre for the Unemployed and Aram House (a local hostel for elderly homeless Asians) and the Newham Save the GLC Campaign.

OUTREACH WORK

Outreach and Development work has always been an area of prioritisation for the Project and will be even more so in 1985, when the Project will face a host of difficult circumstances arising from the introduction of the provisions of the Police Act and the proposed abolition of the GLC.

The Project puts a heavy emphasis on outreach work for a number of reasons:

- (1) Most people, and especially young people, are not aware of their rights. It is only by going out to them, to schools, community groups, etc. that we can make people aware of their existing civil liberties.
- (2) It is the only way we can counter the bias of the media and the establishment that seeks to make an 'extremist' of anyone attempting to talk about the police and racism.
- (3) Our strength at the end of the day comes from the community and the people. NMP is nothing if it does not get support from these people; by going out to give talks etc., making people aware of our existence, initiating and encouraging a debate around racism and the local police whilst at the same time learning from people's experiences and letting that influence our work, and trying to draw them into our work.

It is on this basis - of the hundreds of cases we have handled over our five years of existence - and links with local groups and organisations, and especially with local people who are not in any group, that no-one has been able to question our credibility and representation to date. This does not mean that representation in the Project is perfect: we are constantly striving to involve more people in our work but the extent of the links we have developed over the last few years is witnessed by the constant stream of people coming in to see us, once we have helped them or they have become acquainted with our work, on a regular basis to help us with our work.

The development work of the Project over the last year has concentrated mainly

- (1) around the numerous talks we have given to both local and London-wide groups. We have visited and given talks to two of the four social workers' teams in the borough and visited a fair number of youth clubs. We have also given talks on NMP and related issues to IT workers, school students, groups of teachers, probation officers, trade union branches (including the full meeting of Newham NALGO on the Police Bill), Labour Party wards, NRRRA, NCRE, two of the three Centres for the Unemployed and to students at North East London Polytechnic. In addition a considerable amount of our time is taken up with assisting and helping students doing research work into the field of police-community relations and local groups/individuals seeking information.

The Project's workers have also given talks on the Newham 7 case and issues arising to numerous antiracist and black organisations and helped and liaised with antiracist organisations monitoring racist attacks and police harassment on a national basis.

We have also given talks to a number of Asian Womens Groups in the borough - a lot of whom suffer from racial harassment themselves. This is an area, along with youth clubs and social centres used by local Asian and Afro-Caribbean youths that we would like to visit and strengthen links over the next year.

- (2) Public meetings and the AGM: The Annual General Meeting of the Project, held on February 15th 1984, at the Harold Road Centre and attended by

about 45 local people set the tone and direction of our work over the year. It again helped in attracting new people to the Project and ensuring the election of a broadly-based Management Committee. Cllr. Ron Augley (Newham Council) spoke about the Multicultural/AntiRacist Education Committee being set up by the Council and the importance of community organisation in ensuring that antiracist strategies were adopted at all levels. Courtenay Griffiths from the GLC Police Committee Support Unit spoke on 'Policing in the 1980s' and Gareth Pierce (solicitor) reflected on the Newham 8 case and the use of conspiracy and affray laws against black people. The talks helped set the scene for the Project's work in 1984.

The Project organised a public meeting on Tuesday 31st January on the theme of '1984 ... Black People and the Police in Newham' with about 100 people attending to hear Paul Boateng, Chair of the GLC Police Committee, Colin Prescod (Institute of Race Relations), Osei Owusu and the Power family (local victims of police harassment). The Project was also heavily involved in organising and supporting public meetings of the Newham 7 Defence Campaign and Newham Campaign Against the Police Bill.

In addition, quarterly open meetings of the Project have again been important in attracting fresh support from local individuals and organisations and in some cases encouraging a more active participation in the Project.

The Project also actively participated in - and learnt from - Community Weeks at Forest Gate School and at Eastlea School. We hope to participate in more of such 'mass' events. Outreach work has also been facilitated through constant liaison with advice agencies and other advice sessions in the borough. Through our support for campaigns mounted by other organisations in the voluntary sector, and others such as 'Save the GLC' we have managed to get ourselves known to wider audiences.

- (3) Publicity Literature: Through the use of Emergency Service literature and other basic literature about specific issues e.g. the Police Bill, the Police and Young People and regular mailings to all affiliated groups and supporters, we maintain an effective communications medium with local people. Although 'Newham Monitor' has not appeared on a regular basis this year - a failure on our part - we have regularly produced bulletins around relevant issues - Newham 7, Police Bill, etc. The last Annual Report was distributed to 1500 groups and individuals in the borough and alongside regular reports of our work we endeavour to keep an up to date picture of racist attacks and police harassment in the borough and disseminate information to local groups and other interested agencies.

We are in the process of printing new publicity literature for 1985. Emergency service posters/leaflets, a general poster/pamphlet about the Project, a bust card entitled 'NMP and Your Rights', specific bulletins on the Police Act, Multiagency Policing, etc., aimed at trade unions, Labour Party wards, black organisations and tenants' associations, regular quarterly production of 'Newham Monitor', along with the NMP exhibition 'Racism in Newham' and dossiers on Racial Harassment in Manor Park/Canning Town will be our main tools for outreach work in 1985. We also hope to use our audio visual equipment to produce short strips of film on legal rights, the Project, etc. for use in local youth clubs and schools.

Outreach work is of crucial importance if the Project is to survive and grow in strength to meet the challenges of the next few very difficult years in terms of a crisis of policing.

NMP AND THE MEDIA

The question of the media and its bias always raises controversy. Being 'hardened' by our views and comments frequently being distorted or used 'out of context' does not mean that we regard publicity as unimportant or dismiss the media out of hand.

We feel that publicity is important because:

- (1) Racist attacks and police harassment should not be taken for granted. Too often people are embarrassed to raise these issues for fear of being labelled 'extremist' or 'antipolice' or out of a sense of 'guilt'. On the contrary we feel it is extremely important to raise these issues in public to make people aware of what is going on and simultaneously raise and encourage debate about what can be done.
- (2) The problem remains of ensuring that our views do not get distorted or we are not misquoted, and of course, we are also very aware that we have no control over editorial policy. At the same time given the present lack of accountability of the Met and their failure to respond to racist attacks, the least we can do is to draw public attention to a serious case - publicising cases and the issues raised is one of the few tools at our disposal.

We have continued to receive publicity - most of it favourable - about our work. After our heavy criticism of the Newham Recorder in our last Annual Report viz. their capacity to distort the truth, racist and stereotype coverage, solid and uncritical pro-police bias etc., things improved for the first few months - the Recorder simply stopped reporting anything about us! Although its coverage of our events and activities still leaves much to be desired (articles usually start by referring to us as 'controversial' - the question of who decides we are controversial remains unanswered). What is more important is their coverage of racism and racist attacks in general. This has to be seen in the light of current-day police-media relationship and the part the media itself plays in legitimising policing operations and racism, as well as that of society. We print at the end of this section an article from the CARF (Campaign Against Racism and Fascism) section of 'Searchlight' magazine, March 1984, which develops an antiracist critique of the Recorder's coverage of the Newham 8 case and which elaborates on the latter point.

The media's coverage of racist attacks and the police response can be seen in three categories:

- (a) Their coverage of black victims - what happens to such people is either not reported or marginalised but even worse racist attacks are simply either denied a racist motive or portrayed as 'gang warfare'. A classic example of this was the coverage of the racist murder of 14-years old Eustace Pyrc. So for example the Recorder of 6.12.84 which first mentioned the case makes no reference to the racist tauntings of Eustace's murderers, which provoked the stabbing in the first place and the notoriously racist area in which it took place. Similarly coverage of the Newham 7 incident has been totally one of presenting it as a fight between two gangs.

When Asian people were attacked by racists from the Duke of Edinburgh on Sunday September 16th 1984, the Recorder of the 20th simply chose to report incidents of black youths on the rampage after a festival in a local park (this fitted in with police tactics, callers from the national media about the attacks being told instead about 'mobs' of black looters causing disturbances in and around the East Ham and Upton Park area).

That racist attacks tend not to be reported as such is best illustrated by an article in the Recorder of 4.10.84 which talks of an attack on an Asian shopkeeper by a gang of 20 youths. The attack, reported in a straightforward manner, was in fact the culmination of sustained racial harassment of the family but this was totally ignored in the report.

- (b) Their coverage of racist attacks - while stories released by the police press bureau get uncritically reported, no attempt being made to check the accuracy, stories about racist attacks and police harassment, with a few notable exceptions (the 'Guardian' occasionally) never get reported. Where they are reported, apart from the above mentioned distortions, the coverage concentrates on treating the two parties as equal. Three examples in particular stand out:

- (1) On 5th May 1984, Mr. Gangadharan was attacked by two white youths outside the Tropicana Wine Bar in East Ham and beaten so badly that it was feared he might never work again. The Recorder reported that the youths demanded money and implied that the motive for the attack was robbery. In fact no money was demanded. When the family and the Project complained to the Recorder, its response was that it got the facts from the police. The police admitted to having made a mistake, promising to make a statement to the Recorder correcting the facts which were that it was a straightforward racial attack (which they still haven't done to date), saying that a new Press Officer had just taken over and hence the mistake! Not only is the case part of a growing practice to redefine racist attacks but the role of an uncritical media, which never bothers to ascertain the full facts, is clearly brought out.

- (2) Under the blazing title of 'Death Case Torment - Suicide Ordeal' on its front page, the Recorder reported the sufferings of the father of 24-years old skinhead, Mr. Molloy, who has been charged with the racist murder of 59-years old Peter Burns, a black ticket collector at Seven Kings Station. By showing the story from the angle of human sympathy for the racist and not mentioning anything about the racist circumstances surrounding the murder - a NUR circular threw light on the murder: a gang of five drunken white youths began to racially taunt Mr. Burns and one of the youths, James Molloy, then pulled out a large metal stake from the ground and stabbed Mr. Burns in his eye. The case of the white 'victim', in fact the aggressor, being treated on the same basis as the other party racially attacked is further illustrated by,

- (3) the coverage of the McDonnell family and their eviction because of persistent racial harassment. On its front page of 17.1.85 while very correctly mentioning the disruption of a Newham Council meeting by NF members as being carried out by racists, an item under 'Banished by the Law' in the inside pages shows the family as being the 'victim' of a harsh local authority - not just the Recorder but most other media coverage has concentrated on seeing the family as unfortunate victims of a 'get tough policy' without putting into context the numerous cases of harassment of black families by the McDonnells who all had to leave the area as a result and who in effect are the real victims.

- (c) Their coverage of the police: - In line with most local papers no mention has ever been made in the Recorder of the Police Act and its effect in a borough like Newham. It continues to regurgitate police-fed stories without critical comment and label as 'controversial' anyone - whether it be NMP or the Police Committee of Newham Council - saying anything to the contrary.

The success of policing schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch and other 'community policing schemes' is taken for granted, in spite of evidence to

the contrary. In the Recorder of 26.4.84, a special feature on NWS says that the 'success has been amazing'. The police view of the scheme is quoted at length and the article concludes that NW is fast becoming one of the police's major weapons in the fight against crime. No view is taken from anyone with reservations about NW and the fact that it has not worked at all in working class areas.

Regular feature articles on specific policing operations and specific articles on individual police officers and use of the Recorder by the police to push the Police Consultative Forum without any space given to groups opposed to the forum should be seen as part of a strategy, increasingly becoming obvious, of cultivating the local media, feeding it with 'stories' and using it to legitimise policing operations and racism.

Again we must pick up the failure of the Recorder to cover significant well-attended events like the Newham 7 picket of the Duke of Edinburgh pub (attended by 200 people), which has got to be contrasted with their uncritical and regular coverage of the police.

We have had considerable and more positive coverage of our work in the Guardian, City Limits, Asian Times, Tribune, Morning Star, Caribbean Times, Observer and New Statesman. Searchlight, Policing London and the East End News as usual have always been extremely supportive. Time newspaper also featured us in an article on racist attacks in England.

We have also been featured or helped research for the London Programme, Thames at Six, BBC News, Sixty Plus, Channel 4 News, LBC, BBC Radio London and Radio 4 News and Talks. At present we are helping Yorkshire TV do a major documentary on racist attacks to be shown some time in 1985. We must make a mention of their diligent research and journalistic behaviour which certainly stands out. What has impressed us is that they have spent a good few months actually researching what they hope to produce (instead of the run of the mill programme who want to come in, interview a family and then run away to make a programme) and attempting to understand the experiences of people. Irresponsible media coverage not only plays into the hands of racist sentiments but also gives neofascist groups opportunities to exploit. The recent eviction of the McDonnells is a classic example. Newham NF under the cover of Newham Residents Against Evictions have been featured in both the London Programme and TV Eye without local antiracists being given a chance to put

their views over. Fascist manipulation of the media through one-off stunts etc., is something we need to be ever vigilant about: it can also have serious consequences as witnessed by threats made against local councillors.

What media people need to understand, especially those from television, is that their coverage which might make good viewing for others, can often lead to increased attacks in the area covered and at the same time allow racist/fascist forces to surface and orchestrate events so as to get publicity. Certainly TV Eye's collaboration with white racist tenants in Tower Hamlets and their filming of a meeting arranged by these tenants merits the strongest possible condemnation.

We have also been heavily featured on three videos about Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, the Police Bill and Policing in the 1980s.

The Project's work has also been covered in bulletins of the local Labour Party, trade unions and black groups as well as in the first issue of Newham Council's newspaper, 'Newham News'.

How the media sees Black People

Daily Mail



'Will you tell MacGregor, I'm getting fed up waiting in this hot, stuffy little room!'

4

9 July 1984



'...and lastly, have you got anything good for isomala, indigestion or athlete's foot?'

2

9 March 1984

In support of the GLC's Anti-racist Year, CARF is launching a media monitoring project to campaign against racism in the national and local press. We would like to hear of any work already being done by local groups to combat racism in the media. From this month, 'Between the lines' is being expanded to include work done by the project.

Race reporting: The Newham Recorder and the Newham 8

LOCAL newspapers reflect and strengthen London's endemic racism in a number of ways. They can decide that racist attacks have no "news value" and refuse to report them. Or they can seek to criminalise the victims of racial attacks when they do report them, relying exclusively on the police version of events. Some local papers have become skilled at using suggestive language, emphasis, juxtaposition, photographs, headlines and plain misreporting in ways that denigrate the black community. One of these is the *Newham Recorder*, whose coverage of the Newham 8 case and local racial attacks has been called misleading, biased, hypocritical and scandalous by the Newham 8 Defence Campaign.

It is not difficult to see why. Since 24 September 1982, when eight Asian youths were arrested for defending schoolchildren

and themselves from racial attacks, the newspaper has been concerned to turn public attention away from the fact of racial violence in Newham, to defend the police at all costs, and to insinuate that the supporters of the Newham 8 were up to no good. According to editor Tom Duncan in



a leader entitled "The crime against our police" (28 October 1982), the "red" GLC and the "extremist" Newham Monitoring Project (set up to monitor racist attacks and the police response to them) were trying to force the guardians of law and order to "soft-pedal with certain sections of the community".

In the following month, while the paper carried out police public relations work — "Supercops win the day!" (4 November 1982); "A Bobby dazzler at work, rest and play!" (11 November 1982), — Duncan took up the issue of a "Race hate" demo", a proposed boycott of classes by schoolchildren to draw public attention to violence directed against them which was generally ignored by the police. In a front page editorial, he denounced anyone not solidly opposed to the boycott, including the Chairman of Newham's Education Committee who took "an alarmingly more tolerant view" of the proposed boycott than Duncan wished him to take. Duncan was not interested in the Chairman's reasons for his "tolerant view", nor in the background to the planned strike. He implied that the pupils were simply szipi incited by irresponsible agitators.

A month later, the agitators had a name — the Newham Monitoring Project. On 31 December 1982 the paper devoted half its front page to the decision of Newham's branch of the National Union of Teachers to support the Newham Monitoring Project under the headlines: "Teachers back

rebellion leaders" and "Storm looms as Tory raps 'Left-wing Connection'". The body of the article ignored the issue of racial attacks, but instead lashed out at teachers, who "seem to have got themselves a bad name in the last few years for militancy and left-wing tactics", and at the Newham Monitoring Project, which "helped organise Britain's first pupil strike on 5 November". In fact, the strike was organised by the Newham 8 Defence Campaign: this was not the last time that the *Recorder* would attempt to bring the Monitoring Project into disrepute by tying it up with "disruptive" demonstrations.

Subsequent allegations made by the Newham Monitoring Project at a House of Commons conference that the Newham police were racist, that they often refused to take action in racial attacks, and that Forest Gate police station in Newham had a reputation for intimidation and brutality led the *Recorder* to leap to the police's defence.



Without giving the slightest consideration to the substance of the allegations, without interviewing anyone in the community, or in the Newham Monitoring Project, the newspaper gave the police a clean ticket. Under the headline "Black lawmen slam 'race hatred' slur" (3 March 1983), four black policemen (featured in a large front-page picture) were quoted as saying "allegations of police brutality had been invented by anti-police groups, often from outside the borough" and that they had never seen anyone ill-treated by the police or come upon anyone with that kind of grievance. "It is normally only criminals who put over that viewpoint". (Take note, Newham Monitoring Project).

The MP for Newham East's comments

about the numerous complaints he had received concerning the Forest Gate police station were simply ignored. In his editorial, Duncan relied on nothing more substantial than sarcasm to write off the allegations as "pure fiction" and "mischievous rubbish" and to imply that the Newham Monitoring Project was fostering an atmosphere of "hysteria" for its own dubious motives.



Six months later, the paper again ignored the substance of racial attacks in Newham in its report of a proposed demonstration in defence of the Newham 8 and against the Police Bill. A Chamber of Commerce spokesman condemned the proposed demonstration on the grounds that "it could result in a riot" under a headline proclaiming "Race march fury of trade bosses" (1 September 1983). An almost identical article followed two weeks later, again emphasising the same man's fears of violence, and pointing out ominously that outsiders would be coming for the march from as far away as Bradford, Sheffield and Birmingham, and that schoolchildren would be recruited into its ranks. When the march actually took place, it must have seemed something of an anti-climax to the *Newham Recorder* staff and readership. The report, under a modest headline "Demo wins support", was briefer than those earlier in the month reporting the Chamber of Commerce's "fury" and "fear". The demonstrators "against alleged racism" were "angry" but the march was "peaceful" — nothing like the Chamber of Commerce supposedly had in mind (29 September 1983).

By the time of the September march, the Newham 8 had been awaiting trial for a year. As the trial date approached, the *Recorder* again cast both the Newham Monitoring Project and the Newham 8 Defence Campaign into the role of no-good troublemaker. Again schoolchildren were the issue — not because of racial attacks upon them, but because of a planned picket by them of the Old Bailey at the opening of the trial. The Newham Monitoring Project had made it clear to the *Recorder* that it was not organising the demonstration, but it found itself designated as campaign 'sponsor' anyway (3 November 1983). On the day the trial was scheduled to begin, a

Recorder reporter was on hand to watch the children demonstrate, and to quote the Education Director's view that "they have been encouraged to do this, which is breaking the law, by an organisation which is not particularly interested in the continuity of children's education" and that it would be the subject of a town hall probe. Along with the article the paper printed two photos of the demonstrating schoolchildren, which could have hardly been reassuring to parents already worried about their children's safety.

The *Recorder* sent its reporter to the demonstration, but it did not send one to the trial. On the grounds that it was short of staff, the paper relied exclusively on the Press Association for its coverage of the proceedings. Since the prosecution case was very much in step with the *Recorder's* general line, the paper made the most of its description of events, tacking on the headline "Police Fell Prey to Armed Mob Fury" (24 November 1983). As the *Recorder* had been telling its readers all along, it was the police who were at risk in Newham — in this case, the three plainclothes policemen who were attacked by an "armed vigilante group of Asians". In its coverage of the defence case, the paper didn't mention the defence allegation that the prosecution had based its case on "voluntary statements" which were obtained through fabrication and intimidation. Neither was it interested in following up defence allegations that Asians had led a "nightmarish existence" in Newham, and that they had been forced to take upon themselves the defence of schoolchildren. (Ironically, the issue of the *Recorder* reporting the judge's summing up also contained an article describing two separate vicious attacks on black teenagers

by white thugs (29 December 1983). Nowhere in the article is there any suggestion that these attacks might somehow tie up with the background to the Newham 8 case. But at least racial attacks were at last deemed newsworthy!).

The paper must have found the judge's description of the events in Newham as a "racist vendetta", with two feuding gangs spoiling for a fight, more congenial than the history of racial abuse given by the defence. "There is no doubt", said the judge, "that there have been irresponsible elements in Newham, bent on attacks of a racial character" (29 December 1983). Unlike national papers, the *Newham Recorder* did not elicit any comments from the Newham 8 Defence Campaign in response to the judge's summing up. In fact, at no time has the paper been interested in what the Defence Campaign had to say. When asked about this by CARF, Tom Duncan replied that his paper was simply staying within the law in not commenting when a case is *sub judice*. For this reason the paper refused to report Newham Council's publicly announced support for the Newham 8 Defence Campaign.

But the paper has lacked a similar reticence when the police were criticised by the Newham Monitoring Project or when demonstrations were planned by the Newham 8 Defence Campaign. Then it has been quick to take sides, either directly, or through insinuation. On 8 January 1984, a public meeting in Newham, attended by 70 people, unanimously voted to press the Newham Council to cut off all links with the *Newham Recorder*.

• This month's 'Between the lines' shorts can be found on page 20. Please send contributions for future editions to CARF c/o Searchlight.

RECORD COMMENT The crime against our police

THE Greater London Council have set their sights on controlling the police.

To do so would involve an Act of Parliament and would not be possible unless Labour were in control at both Westminster and County Hall.

That may seem a remote possibility on current political trends, but it is not an impossibility and their desires have to be taken seriously.

If we by their own professed standards, the amount of public money the GLC are spending on propaganda for the case is outrageous. They have had published their documents entitled 'Police in London, twelve pages devoted to discrediting the police and encouraging cops throughout the capital to apply for cash aid to "further the work of their own police force".

One of those already benefiting from the generosity of the Camden police sub-committee. There they are depicted as "a committee of 15 councillors and even co-opted members". One possibility is that the seven additional members would be made up of two representatives of women's groups, one each from the Trades Council, tenants and traders associations, and another Police and Police.

By TOM DUNCAN Editor

THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT the discipline of children in so many homes and schools is such that no longer are they controllable.

THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT their dog have to be padlocked and their windows bolted to the extent that they come virtual

MEMBERSHIP

The hue of that membership could be decidedly red and would see no place for people like leg

EVERY LITTLE TOADY WHO BELIEVES ALL POLICE TO BE HIS WILL BE ABLE WITH THE LIP OF PUBLIC MOUTH TO DENOUNCE HIS SEVENTHMENTS

AND THEY WONDER WHY THERE ARE NO BLACK POLICE . . .



"By Jove, Inspector — I'll wager no other Force can boast a Sanyasi Saddhu, a Papuan Headhunter and an albino Bush Pigmy!"

Derbyshire County Council police committee have written to the Police Federation magazine *Police* to express their disgust at the above cartoon, which appeared in the May issue. Coun. Ron Decker, committee chairman, said that the cartoon was "at least objectionable, might be offensive and some would call it racist". He said he believed that the cartoon would certainly deter members of ethnic minorities from joining them.

Derbyshire Chief Constable Mr Alf Parrish said that he found the whole page of cartoons in bad taste and had passed on his views to the editor, though he added he had no sympathy with the present editorial views of the magazine either. (Derby Evening Telegraph 5.6.82.)

THE WAY WE WORK

The way we work reflects what we essentially see our role: as an independent, grassroots based campaigning community organisation. The nature and pattern of our work, as we said in the Introduction, is determined by the Project's membership and by the people coming in to see us. We see ourselves accountable to these two groups of people. Through regular affiliation campaigns we have managed to secure support from some 41 local organisations and 105 individuals, affiliation being open to anyone who lives or works in Newham and agrees with our aims and objectives as outlined in our constitution. Getting organisations/individuals affiliated to the campaign is not just seen as a tokenistic exercise or securing paper support - we have never seen full-time workers or funding as the panacea to the problems of racism and racist attacks in Newham and have always sought to involve the widest possible number of local people in our work. The problem of racist attacks and police harassment is one, we feel, will only be solved by a community response. The Project cannot substitute for the community, its role and function is strictly defined and it does not have control over events and decisions affected by wider political forces. What it can do, apart from handling individual cases, publicising them and campaigning around the issues raised is to aid and encourage, and act as a catalyst, in the growth and development of community self-organisation (viz. defence campaigns, a strong independent tenants' movement confronting racism on a very positive basis, etc.).

The Annual General Meeting in February gives affiliated groups and individuals the opportunity to review work done over the last year and shape and influence the Project over the next. We also endeavour to organise quarterly meetings to give members further opportunity to question and comment on the work done over the last quarter and adopt perspectives for the next. In addition to regular training sessions for volunteers taking part in our emergency service and meetings to involve them more closely in the Project, we are attempting to develop a long-term support service to case victims based on the volunteers network (see section on 'What Next'). A Management Committee of 14 - 10 elected by the AGM and 4 co-opted - then carries out the policies of the Project, as laid down at the AGM and at subsequent quarterly meetings, and 'supervises' the work of the full-time workers as well as providing them with more active support (we attempt to have the widest possible representation of local groups on the Management Committee).

Through regular public meetings, bulletins, monthly work reports and six-monthly reports and regular distribution of relevant literature and outreach work (viz. talks etc.) we maintain contact with the community at large. The idea is to maintain a two-way flow of information: we get to know of cases and other necessary information, and learn from the experiences of other people and at the same time make individuals/organisations aware of our work and existence, hopefully getting them to participate. Although our work is primarily around racial and police harassment, to see these issues in isolation from the work being done by other groups (e.g. in housing, employment, racism as it expresses itself in other fields) would be wrong. We seek to help such groups wherever possible, through either active support in a particular campaign or giving them access to our resources and by participating on their Management Committees. It is the support from such people and groups that the Project derives its strength from and gathers a lot of the necessary information for its work. Productive working links have been forged in particular with the local Labour Parties (Newham NW and NE), Newham Womens Group, NISAS, Newham Rights Centre, IWA, Gujarat Welfare Association, Newham NALGO, LPYS, Newham Renewal Programme, Aram House and individual NUT branches, social workers and youth workers.

The office is open from 9 in the morning to 6 in the evening. Overnight and at weekends the emergency service is in operation. In addition the full-time workers and Management Committee undertake a considerable amount of evening and weekend work e.g. casework, talking to groups, etc.

Apart from the efforts of the Management Committee it is only with the commitment and dedication of our Emergency Service Volunteers that the Project has grown in strength over the last three years. The volunteers - along with others who do not participate in the Emergency Service - are enormously helpful in another sense too. It is they who do a lot to keep us informed of attacks, help organise for campaigning events, and act as call-out support for victims of attacks. Without their dedication and commitment we could not function - it is as simple as that. This commitment is our main weapon in the monitoring of the activities of 'K' Division with its far greater and more sophisticated resources. That we have monitored it with some effectiveness is a tribute to the volunteers above all.

We have also had the benefit of having two placement workers over summer, Narinder Hothi and Karen Lynch, who took responsibility for advertising the Emergency Service and servicing our recently acquired computer as well as having Aly Mir and Inderpal Rahal in a voluntary capacity with us since November 1984. Aly has been of great help in servicing the computer as well as developing our library/press cuttings system which we hope will become part of a wider and fully developed resource centre over 1985. Inderpal Rahal, a trainee barrister, has been of enormous help with casework.

WHAT NEXT?

1984 in many ways can best be described as a year in which all the hard work put in by various individuals connected with the Project, affiliated groups and other antiracists in the borough over the last few years has started to produce results (without in any way wishing to under-estimate the size and nature of the tasks still facing us). The Newham 8 verdicts delivered in January 1984 not only upheld the right to self-defence and exposed police negligence in handling racist attacks but raised a number of issues around the provision of antiracist education by the Council (or the lack of it). It has prompted the local authority to actually start taking on the whole issue. The Newham 8 campaign and Newham Campaign Against the Police Bill, along with intensive educational work over the last two years, has clearly increased public awareness of the issue of racist attacks and police harassment. Community pressure building up over the last five years and sustained antiracist work, often in the face of overwhelming odds, made Newham Council and its Housing Department aware of the need to take firm action against the perpetrators of such attacks and carry out the country's first ever eviction. 1985 is a year where we envisage further consolidation of the gains achieved over the last year and touching areas where as yet antiracist policies have not been fully developed.

Although Newham Council's Housing Department will shortly be adopting a positive antiracist housing policy - which we warmly welcome - this does not necessarily mean that racist attacks on housing estates are going to cease. Our role will continue to be that of advising, helping and giving support to families who are attacked and ensuring that the policy is implemented in the spirit in which it was conceived. This will entail a 'watchdog' role for us, the nature of implementation being observed through the handling of individual cases by the Housing Department. Through regular meetings with Newham Council, we hope to further the tremendous progress already achieved in 1984. Priority will also be given in 1985 to two specific initiatives in the worst areas in Newham in terms of racist attacks - Canning Town/Plaistow and Manor Park. These initiatives will involve drawing together into a cohesive force antiracist elements in those areas to develop a long-term strategy of countering and minimalising racist influences. Detailed dossiers to be produced on harassment in these areas in early 1985 (containing recommendations and strategies) will hopefully be used as effective tools by local groups.

The dossier, along with an exhibition on 'Racism in Newham' at present being prepared by the Project, will form the main basis of the Project's outreach work in 1985. Our aim in 1985 is to visit every single group - voluntary and statutory - in Newham with a view to securing increased local participation in our work.

We also hope to finish working, with the Newham 8 Campaign, on a documentary film and a pamphlet outlining the implications of the case, which again will be of use as a campaigning tool. As mentioned earlier in the report it is a matter of regret that the Newham 8 Inquiry still has not got off the ground. We will make every attempt to get it going as soon as possible: it is important that the issues thrown up by the case are given a public hearing during the course of the Newham 7 Campaign. The Newham 7 Campaign and the Wong Campaign, because of the fundamental questions it poses, will be another area where the Project will give all possible help and assistance in 1985.

We also hope in 1985 to build and develop our Education work. Alongside attacks on people's homes, attacks in and around schools remain a major local problem. It remains essential for the example set by the Housing Department to be followed in the education field: to this end we will be seeking to

develop a similar set of positive antiracist policies, hopefully in co-operation with the Education Department, for implementation in local schools.

One area, which has not been given the attention it should have over the past year and something we hope to concentrate on in 1985, is the development of a comprehensive support service for people facing racist attacks and police harassment. It is envisaged that this would be based on the volunteers participating in our emergency service. Through this we hope to involve volunteers more fully in casework, improve the efficiency of our monitoring service and offer more practical support to victims. It would also enable us to keep abreast of policing experiments and strategies in the borough and, more importantly, be of crucial importance in ensuring that the Project develops as a genuine community-based organisation. With the development of the support system we also hope to set up regular outreach sessions in various parts of the borough, particularly E16 and E12.

The introduction of the Police Act will undoubtedly worsen an already bad local situation: again a central part of our work will be to monitor the Act and its effects. We will continue to inform local groups/individuals about the implications of the Act - as well as the growth of multiagency policing schemes and assist in the development of appropriate community and trade union opposition.

The development of the Project as a local resource centre is another pressing priority. In addition to a growing library on policing and race issues, as well as a comprehensive press cuttings system going back to 1980, we now have a number of other resources (e.g. Minibus, computer, audio-visual equipment) which, given our impending move to new, more spacious premises, will hopefully allow the Project to be seen as a community resource centre.

The question of the abolition of the GLC remains a pressing one. The Project will continue to function, one way or another, if the funding does go: the



The Struggle Continues

A. Potheary

fight against racism is too important and one of necessity and the work done over the last few years too valuable to let the Project disappear. However, full-time resources does allow the Project to pursue its tasks and objectives much more effectively. To this end we will be seeking assistance from the local authority if GLC funding ceases. Given the fact that racist attacks and racism is a problem much more specific to Newham (and East London generally) than most other parts of the country, we feel that the authority not only has to respond to the needs of the antiracist movement but indeed they are the people we should first look to for help before anyone else. We would ask all our supporters and affiliated organisations to try to make sure this affiliation is successful.

We would hope that the Council will support us as part of a progressive policy to combat racial harassment in the area and as part of its stated policy of making the local force accountable. After all, given that Newham residents spend millions of pounds through rates and taxes for a police force over which they have no control, it's not unreasonable to expect the Council to spend a few thousand pounds making sure that there is an effective watchdog on the behaviour of the local constabulary and its non-response to racist attacks.

At the end of the day, however, there is no substitute for your involvement in the antiracist struggle. The ultimate success of the Project and our work depends on your active participation. The main objective of this report is to persuade you to do so.

IN TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE? RACIALLY ATTACKED?

WE CAN OFFER - HELP
- LEGAL ADVICE
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**24 HR EMERGENCY SERVICE
TEL : 555 8151**



NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Balance Sheet	<u>1984</u>	<u>1983</u>
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors and Prepayments	124	509
Cash at Bank and in Hand	<u>4,566</u>	<u>1,106</u>
	4,690	1,615
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and Accrued Expenses	7,336	759
PAYE and National Insurance Liabilities	<u>3,762</u>	<u>899</u>
	11,098	1,658
NET CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u><u>6,408</u></u>	<u><u>43</u></u>
REPRESENTED BY:		
GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT		
Deficit: Brought Forward	43	-
For the Year	<u>5,120</u>	<u>43</u>
	5,163	43
SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ACCOUNT		
Deficit for the Year	<u>1,245</u>	-
TOTAL REVENUE DEFICIT (see note)	<u><u>6,408</u></u>	<u><u>43</u></u>

Note: The project expects to receive supplementary funding in 1984/85 to finance its Revenue Deficits as 31 May 1984.

Income and Expenditure Account

	<u>1984</u>	<u>1983</u>
	£	£
GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT:		
INCOME		
Grant Income: Greater London Council	36,448	12,092
Fundraising Income and Affiliation Fees	<u>144</u>	<u>196</u>
	36,592	12,331
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries and National Insurance	29,592	9,408
Administrative Services	2,461	-
Rent, Rates and Services	1,092	1,094
Repairs and Maintenance	853	-
Insurance	154	-
Telephone	987	498
Stationery and Office Materials	1,410	161
Postage	620	183
Advertising	592	120
Printing Costs	2,742	459
Photography	111	-
Audit and Accountancy	288	230
Hall Hire and Conferences	114	42
Travel and Subsistence	422	39
Bank Charges and Other Expenses	<u>274</u>	<u>97</u>
	41,712	12,331
DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	<u><u>5,120</u></u>	<u><u>43</u></u>
SUPPLEMENTARY REVENUE ACCOUNT:		
FUNDING RECEIVED		
	3,812	768
SPECIFIED EXPENDITURE		
Equipment Purchases	5,057	67
Equipment Hire	-	535
Printing Costs	<u>-</u>	<u>166</u>
	5,057	768
DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	<u><u>1,245</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

(Affiliation to NMP being open to anyone who lives or works in Newham and agrees with the aims and objectives of the Project as stated in the constitution)

1. INDIAN WORKERS ASSOCIATION (GB) LONDON EAST
2. NORTH EAST LONDON POLYTECHNIC LABOUR CLUB
3. SINGH SABHA LONDON EAST
4. ZEBRA PROJECT
5. STARDUST YOUTH CLUB
6. RENEWAL PROGRAMME
7. INT. ASIAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION
8. RAMGARHIA SIKH GURDWARA
9. COMMUNITY LINKS
10. CUMBERLAND SCHOOL N.U.T.
11. SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NEWHAM BRANCH)
12. NEWHAM COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
13. GUJARAT WELFARE ASSOCIATION
14. EASTWARDS TRUST (HOSTELS) LTD
15. SAHALI
16. GREATFIELD BRANCH (NEWHAM N.E. LABOUR PARTY)
17. NEWHAM NORTH WEST LABOUR PARTY YOUTH SECTION
18. THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF ASIAN ORGANISATIONS AGAINST RACISM
19. NEWHAM N.E. CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY (MANOR PARK BRANCH)
20. NEWHAM SOUTH LABOUR PARTY YOUTH SECTION
21. SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS
22. NEWHAM URBAN STUDIES CENTRE
23. NEWHAM N.E. LABOUR PARTY
24. NEWHAM N.W. LABOUR PARTY
25. UPTON WARD LABOUR PARTY
26. NEWHAM CND
27. NEWHAM CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
28. PAGE ONE BOOKSHOP
29. NEWHAM WOMENS GROUP

30. PLASHET SCHOOL N.U.T.GROUP
31. OUT OF WORK CENTRE
32. NEWHAM IMMIGRATION AND SOCIAL ADVICE SERVICE
33. NEWHAM NALGO - SOCIAL SERVICES SHOP STEWARDS COMMITTEE
34. EAST LONDON A.C.T.S.S. (NEWHAM BRANCH)
35. CASTLE WARD LABOUR PARTY
36. DEAN AND CO.
37. FOREST GATE WARD LABOUR PARTY
38. MILAN GIRLS PROJECT
39. BEHNO KI MILAN ASIAN WOMENS GROUP
40. PLASHET WARD LABOUR PARTY

Appendix I

INSTANT CAUTIONING AND MULTI-AGENCY PANEL

1. INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Police are currently in the process of implementing major changes in policy on how juveniles are cautioned. These new changes would mean a move away from the present format of cautioning and will include two new concepts, namely, instant cautioning and multi-agency panels.

For the successful implementation of this new policy, the co-operation of various statutory agencies such as Social Services, Education Welfare, Youth Services and Probation with the Police will be essential. In view of the implications of this co-operation (in the context of multi-agency policing), the Newham Monitoring Project has thought it essential for there to be a wider discussion of the issues in this new policy.

2. CAUTIONING

Since 1969 the Police have cautioned juveniles (under 17) as an alternative to prosecution. A caution is a 'firm talking to' deliberated by a senior officer to the child in the presence of his or her parents at the Police station. The legal status of a caution is unclear. The Police have no specific powers to caution; however cautions are always cited in the Juvenile court along side, although separately from previous convictions and are taken into account when sentencing.

Police forces vary widely in the extent to which they use cautioning. In 1982 the Metropolitan Police cautioned 39% of the boys and 66% of the girls, which was well below the average for England and Wales of 49% for boys and 75% for girls.

The cautioning rates in the Met vary between districts. According to 1982 statistics, the chance of being cautioned, as opposed to being prosecuted, varied from 50% in Heathrow Airport District to a low of 19% in Hackney. Generally, it is among the inner London districts that cautioning rates are at their lowest. The cautioning rate for Newham is 39%.

The Met lays down certain conditions, based on Home Office guidelines, which have to be fulfilled before a child can even be considered for caution. These are:

1. The evidence available is sufficient to support a prosecution in normal circumstances;
2. The juvenile admits the offence;
3. The parent or guardian agree to the caution being administered;
4. The victims wishes are taken into account.

These are the minimum conditions common to all police forces. The fulfillment does not mean that the juvenile will then be cautioned rather than prosecuted. In fact, the variations in the above statistics suggest that the police may have their own ideas on who should be prosecuted and that cases that might be eligible for caution are not always referred to the juvenile bureau.

Cases which are not subject to immediate prosecution are sent to the juvenile bureau for a decision on whether to prosecute or caution. As long as the basic

criteria are fulfilled the decision on whether or not to caution is within the absolute discretion of the district community liaison officer. In the Met, it cannot be overturned by a more senior officer-Commander or even Commissioner. In practice the decision is made by the inspector in charge of the juvenile bureau who usually accepts the recommendation made by the officer dealing with the case. The whole process takes about 4 weeks. In reaching a decision, the referral officer has 3 sources of information: police records, a home visit and comments from professional agencies like social services, educational welfare, youth services and probation.

3. THE NEW POLICY

The Met is now intending to reshape its juvenile cautioning policy so that social services, probation, education welfare, and the youth services are DIRECTLY involved in round the table discussions with the police on whether or not to caution.

The policy is in two parts. Firstly instant cautioning will be introduced throughout the Met for first offenders arrested for minor offences. This means that rather than being referred to the juvenile bureau for a lengthy investigation and home visit, the inspector on duty may decide to caution the child immediately, as soon as his or her parents come to collect him or her. The criteria on evidence, admission, and parental agreement still apply, and the caution, as now, may be cited in the juvenile courts.

Secondly, offenders and those accused of more serious offences will still be referred to the juvenile bureau. At this point the second stage of the policy will come into operation. It is intended to establish a number of pilot juvenile liaison panels in different boroughs. The boroughs currently selected for these pilot schemes include Barnet, Southwark, Kensington and Chelsea and NEWHAM. Each panel will consist of representatives from social services, probation, youth services, education welfare, possibly someone from the voluntary sector and the police. The panel will advise the police on whether to caution, although the final decision will still be with the police. It will also, it is hoped, be in a position to offer other 'positive' alternatives to prosecution, such as befriender schemes, thus providing the juvenile with 'support' after caution.

How each panel is run will, it is thought, be left very much to discretion of each juvenile bureau, depending on the kind of response they get from the agencies they wish to involve. In Newham the scheme initiated by the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) is already functioning and it is thought that the pilot schemes will, wherever possible, build on existing relations with outside agencies.

4. APPRAISAL OF THE NEW POLICY

When cautioning was first introduced in the Met and other forces, the total number of juveniles cautioned and prosecuted rapidly overtook the number who had previously been prosecuted alone (see Ditchfield, Police Cautioning and the Children and Young Persons Act 1969. Home Office Research Study No. 37) It appears that children who had previously been released without any action being taken or merely an informal warning were now being formally cautioned (the 'net widening' effect). This means more and more children were officially brought into the juvenile justice system.

With the introduction of instant cautioning, net-widening will inevitably increase as a result of :

- a) the speed of instant cautioning process which will enable the police to deal with many more first time offenders than before. In effect this will provide an inbuilt encouragement to police officers to arrest juveniles on the streets

This means that on numerous incidents where juveniles would only have been given an informal warning (which means being kept outside the juvenile justice system), they will now be formally cautioned:

- b) the new process encouraging police officers to interview or question juveniles without a parent or legal adviser present, in order to obtain an admission;
- c) it being even more tempting for innocent juveniles, to plead guilty to offences they may not have committed, on the basis that they will be rid of the matter within the day. Similarly parents may encourage their children to plead guilty and may be more willing to accept the cautioning procedure in the knowledge that the matter would be dealt with then and there;
- d) neither parent nor juvenile having the legal knowledge or advice to judge the strength of any case. The juvenile might admit to the behaviour complained of, but that behaviour need not necessarily constitute an offence;
- e) the lack of independent scrutiny of the evidence in such cases which will enable the police, if they so desire, to arrest and caution on flimsy or insufficient evidence.

The implications of net-widening - more children being brought into the juvenile justice system - are frightening. However, these implications are even more horrific when seen in the context of current policing strategies like the Police Bill and Multiagency Policing. The Police Bill will allow the police to take fingerprints of ten year olds even without their consent or their parents. In addition every juvenile that is cautioned will have records kept by the National Criminal Records Office which is indexed through the Police National Computer. Where before juveniles would only have been given a 'ticking off' or an informal warning for a minor offence, with the introduction of instant cautioning, they can be fingerprinted and also have a record on the police computers.

The dangers of multi-agency panels are even more alarming. Firstly multi-agency panels should not be considered in isolation. It is imperative that it is seen in the context of other policing strategies like consultation committees, neighbourhood watch, etc., and as part of Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Kenneth Newman's strategy for multi-agency policing. This involves incorporating local government departments, other organisations and members of the general public as agents of the police. For example, the members of the proposed multi-agency panels would effectively be party to a decision to prosecute and in some sense act as judge and jury over the young person in his/her absence.

In addition, during the course of multi-agency panel meetings, confidential information and idle gossip could be passed to the police. This information would be far more extensive than that at present given to the police by social services and other agencies on paper. There is no guarantee that this information will not find its way eventually on to police computers.

Furthermore the panels would be under the control of the police, and accountable. The final decision on who should be prosecuted would still rest with the police, who would be under no obligation to take the Panel's advice.

5. CONCLUSION

Two points need to be stressed: firstly, there is a tendency among various 'caring' agencies to regard a caution as something insignificant or a situation where a juvenile has 'got off'. This is a dangerous misconception, especially in the context of current policing strategies.

Secondly, there appears to be an acceptance by these same 'caring' agencies

to this new policy as a fait accompli. This acceptance has led some people to demand safeguards to the proposed policy. This again has to be challenged. Current policing tactics are going to increase the criminalisation of juveniles in our society. As pointed out earlier, where juveniles would only have been given an informal warning they will now be formally cautioned and hence brought into the criminal justice system. The present Home Office enthusiasm for this new policy stems from the fact that it is cheap and eases the pressure on the criminal justice system. Our task should be not to assist this increasing criminalisation of juveniles.

The introduction of this new policy also gives the police increasing control over the prosecution and hence judiciary process. Instead of the courts, which are the proper place for cases to be decided and sentences given, the police are going to decide these at the police stations.

In addition, multi-agency panels will also shift the responsibility of 'policing' juveniles onto local government departments who through these panels will act as agents of the police. This is exactly in line with Newman's plans of policing London. As Newman himself has said, 'crime control is only one element of social control'. The implication is obvious: local government agencies should also be responsible for fighting 'crime'. In light of the miners' strike this strategy is clear. While local government departments act as agents of the police in 'crime and social control', the police can get on with the real business of increasingly becoming a paramilitary force and attending to 'real policing issues' eg policing industrial discontent etc.

In view of the dangerous implications of this new cautioning policy, the Newham Monitoring Project has decided to oppose the introduction of this new policy. It urges all individuals, groups and in particular statutory agencies who are involved with the juvenile justice system to adopt a position of non-co-operation with the police in any form of multi-agency panels and to oppose the introduction of this new policy. We also urge individuals and community groups to write to their local councillors and MPs expressing a similar view and asking appropriate action to be taken to oppose this new policy.

We welcome invitations from any organisations to talk on this paper and discuss these important issues.

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

ACCOUNTABILITY NOT CONSULTATION!

Newham Monitoring Project has been monitoring racist activity in Newham and the police response and police activity generally since 1980.

In the course of our work and based on hard documented evidence we would assert that there is a considerable lack of confidence locally in the police, especially amongst black people. This lack of confidence, not just confined to Newham as recent studies like the PSI Report confirm; events like Grunwicks (1976), Lewisham (1977), Southall (1979), and Brixton (1981); and a growing resentment that Londoners pay $\frac{1}{3}$ of a billion pounds without having a say in how they are policed (especially in view of numerous cases of police racism, harassment, intimidation and corruption), can be identified as the key elements that have propelled the debate around police accountability into public focus in recent years. This document, upon which your views, comments and criticisms are invited, seeks to contribute to this debate.

A number of observations need to be made about the proposed consultative arrangements:

1. It is important to appreciate the clear distinction between accountability and liaison. In rejecting 'cosmetic consultative initiative' by the Home Office the GLC Police Committee policy report defines accountability as 'democratic control'. According to Paul Boateng, Chair of the GLC Police Committee:

"Accountability needs to be distinguished from consultation or liaison. In the context of liaison the functions of police and public are not differentiated and the public is given no power to ensure that liaison results in any form of accountability."

(Policing London No. 2)

According to the GLC Report, 'Making the Police Accountable to the Public', borough police committees, even without statutory powers, can begin to carry out some of the functions of accountability e.g. overseeing police policies and practices and developing their own strategies. The Report stresses the inadequacies of consultation groups/liason committees:

"In essence large voluntary committees in each borough with no power, no clear lines of accountability to the community, no clear relationship with the police, and whose sole function is no more than an exchange of information or views, on terms solely dependent on the police, are not likely to meet current needs. Experience in London has shown and the Scarman report bears this out, that informal voluntary arrangements fail to stand up to the stresses and strains they are meant to counter. Confusion as to the role of the Borough Council, questionable representation of community interests and a lack of institutional or legislative structure undermine the relevance of the Home Office's initiative."

The Council, by setting up a police sub-committee, has indicated its desire to seek democratic control over the activities of the local police. In this context certain questions need to be asked about the proposed consultative structure.

- a) How far will it undermine the Council's demands for full police accountability? Will the proposed consultative arrangement come within the structures of the Council - as the Metropolitan Police are funded by local ratepayers this would seem to be the logical arrangement.

- b) How accountable will the proposed structure be to the Council Police Sub-Committee which we maintain, should be the authority on policing matters in the borough?

- c) What exactly will be the role of the police in the proposed structure?

2. We would maintain that, lacking statutory powers, the consultative machinery would be mere 'talking shop'. In order to avoid this happening, as has been the experience of other consultative committees, what guarantees can be obtained from the police that they will not just take into account the wishes of the committee but actually carry them out. In this context it is also important to remember that what Scarman actually recommended was a statutory body at borough level with 'real powers'. This is NOT what is on offer to Newham. Even if the committee came to the conclusions about the kind of practical changes that are necessary there would be no mechanism for translating these into practice.
3. With regard to the draft terms of reference, the police's own view of the integrity and autonomy of the police force itself will mean that they will be unwilling to discuss so-called 'operational matters'. This would effectively exclude discussion of many crucial areas of police work.
4. Clause Q in the draft terms of reference, which makes the whole thing 'subject to the limitation of the present constitutional position of the Home Secretary as police authority for the Met) would also act as a barrier to any useful discussion, particularly around the issue of accountability itself.
5. Sir Kenneth Newman drawing on the Lambeth Consultative model and his experiences in Northern Ireland, in his interim report to the Home Secretary, makes no bones about the fact that the police/community consultative committees are intended to ensure public consent for policing methods. It is this public relations of police/community consultation which has persuaded the Home Office that the Lambeth experiment should become the model upon which to base consultative arrangements elsewhere in London whether or not local people want it. The Lambeth model remains powerless, enjoying only limited public support with only some of the community representation sitting on it becoming increasingly dissatisfied. Indeed some no longer attend.
6. We fear that the proposed consultative arrangement could be open to manipulation and domination by the police and used to convey a false appearance of community consent to policing decisions which in reality are taken autonomously by the police. The proposed structure would become a platform for selling police-orientated views on policing and has to be seen in the light of present police strategies now being implemented throughout the Met and outlined in Newman's Interim Report. Briefly, this tells Londoners that the police cannot respond to community demands for more responsive and sensitive policing. Rather than taking responsibility for falling detection rates, for example Newman is attempting to shift the blame and responsibility onto local communities. On the other hand he intends to direct police resources at so-called 'more solvable crimes' which will be selected on a points scheme. Many of these 'more solvable crimes' are precisely those which require least effort in terms of detection and investigation.

Other crimes such as burglary, racist attacks and sexual assaults will become the province of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes (NWS) and Crime Prevention Panels. Newman is trying to sell these to local communities as a form of 'public participation in crime prevention'. His hope is that these together with the consultation committees will head off criticisms and at the same time provide more information to local police.

However, in Newham and elsewhere these initiatives have been met with a

wave of public apathy and have generated fear within the black and ethnic communities that NWS in particular will provide another base for racist groupings. Certainly the experience of Tenants Associations, most of which do not even represent local white tenants let alone black/ethnic minority tenants, does not suggest that NWS would function either democratically or impartially. Most people do not even know of the existence of the local Crime Prevention Panel where they have come into operation so far. Although one has yet to be introduced in Newham the community representation in other areas leaves a lot to be desired eg in one London Borough the membership comprises of the Managing Director of TV-AM, a local journalist, a personnel representative from a local brewery and the local police! Just how 'democratic' it intends to be is clearly shown by the fact that neither community based organisations nor the locally elected councilors have been asked to provide representation.

In reality the new policing strategy which is being developed and of which police/community consultation is a part, is not about crime prevention at all, but in the words of the Metropolitan Commissioner himself, has been raised 'to higher level of generality represented by the words social control'. (Financial Times). It is intended that this new strategy - referred to as the 'Multi-agency approach' - will be developed through 'core meetings' of;

"... the police, magistracy, the social and probation services and departments of education, housing and highways... as well as those responsible for planning and the environment and the provision of leisure facilities."

(Policing London)

This means that in turn local communities, local government and welfare agencies will become part of an intelligence gathering network orchestrated by the police. This likely to result in persistent breaches of trust and confidence between the welfare and public services and the communities they serve, which certainly goes against the spirit of accountability the Labour group was elected to pursue.

These 'core' meetings have already taken place in some boroughs and one police force (Northamptonshire) has publicly announced its intentions to set the scheme up on a county basis (Guardian 15.5.84).

In summary, then, police/community consultation committees have to be seen as part of a strategy designed to head off public criticism, to undermine the increasing demand from local communities for police accountability and public control over policing, and to prepare the ground for police control over areas of public service which have hitherto been independent. A crucial aspect of this strategy is to keep 'policing' as an issue, outside of the democratic arena by arguing that the police ought to be above any form of democratic political policy control which local people would be able to influence and question.

Additionally, such a public relations exercise, which would give the impression of winning public consent and legitimising police operations which meet with hostility from the local populace, would conflict with the Council's campaign for accountability. It is difficult to see how these differing perceptions can lead to any useful discussion without one or another side giving up its aims.

In conclusion, we would stress the need for the Council to have proper and detailed consultations with the community before the Council embarks on what we feel is a dangerous course. It is worth bearing in mind that Greenwich Council, a borough with policing problems nor dissimilar to Newham, has rejected the notion of consultation as proposed by the Home Office and decided instead to work through the Police Sub-Committee of the Council.

Clearly police accountability will only come about when a government is elected and committed to enacting the appropriate legislation and to root and branch reform of the police service. This is what we, and presumably the Police Sub-Committee, have been campaigning for and shall continue to do so.

A consultative committee on the lines proposed would undermine the effectiveness of such a campaign and would provide us with only limited additional information. On the other hand it would give the police the facade of credibility they so badly need and they would not have to surrender one iota of control.

We urge you to discuss this document in your community group/trade union/political organisation/tenants association (speakers can be provided) with your friends and neighbours and at work and wherever possible and ensure that the issues underlying the police accountability argument are fully debated. In the light of the arguments we have outlined, we call upon all community groups and local councilors to join with us in rejecting the formation of any police/community consultative committee and instead support the campaign for democratic control of London's police.

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A POLICE CONSULTATIVE GROUP IN NEWHAM

The purpose of the Group is to provide a means of consultation between the community and the Police in order to improve the policing of Newham. To achieve this, the Group will meet to consider, discuss and comment on the following:

- a) the overall priorities for policing in Newham;
- b) the relationship between the Police and the community and their attitudes to one another;
- c) the particular policing needs of sections of the community, such as the elderly, women, ethnic minorities, youth, lesbian and gay people etc;
- d) initiatives in the prevention and detection of crime;
- e) the levels of established and strength of Police in Newham;
- f) the training, equipment, modes of operation and deployment of Police;
- g) problems that arise between the Police and the community, to identify their cause where they arise and to seek ways of reducing such problems;
- h) the promotion of greater understanding by both the community and the Police of policing needs in the borough;
- i) the pattern of crime in the Borough and the Police response to it;
- j) the pattern of complaints against the Police;
- k) advice to members of the public in their dealings with Police and to Police in their dealings with the public;
- l) Police expenditure in the Borough;
- m) the treatment of suspects and prisoners by the Police;
- n) the response of the community and the Police to important incidents in the Borough such as major crimes or public order situations;
- o) the response of the community and the Police about crime, the law, the powers, rights and duties of the Police and the public;
- p) the dissemination of information to the community and the Police about crime, the law, the powers, rights and duties of the Police and the public;
- q) any other aspect of policing Newham that arises, subject to the limitations of the present constitutional position of the Home Secretary as Police Authority for the Metropolitan Police.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

INFORM US OF ANY RACIST ATTACKS (INCLUDING GRAFFITI, ABUSE, DAMAGE OR OTHER INCIDENTS) YOU KNOW OF OR ANY ATTACK YOU THINK HAS A RACIST MOTIVE.

INFORM US OF ANYONE YOU FEEL HAS BEEN HARASSED BY THE POLICE ON RACIAL GROUNDS, HAVE HAD THEIR RIGHTS ABUSED, OR UNNECESSARILY DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGE. IF CHARGED, ASK THEM TO COME AND SEE US. LET US KNOW OF ANY POLICING TACTIC IN THE BOROUGH THAT YOU FEEL NEEDS DRAWING ATTENTION TO.

BRING TO OUR ATTENTION ANYONE WHO FEELS THAT THE POLICE HAVE ACTED IMPROPERLY IN ANY WAY AND WISH TO MAKE A COMPLAINT.

ADVERTISE OUR 24 HOUR SERVICE. WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS - JOIN THE SERVICE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE.

INVITE US TO TALK ABOUT OUR WORK TO A MEETING OF YOUR UNION BRANCH OR ANY COMMUNITY GROUP/POLITICAL PARTY YOU MAY BELONG TO.

AFFILIATE TO NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT, COME TO OUR MEETINGS (DETAILS FROM THE PROJECT) AND PUBLICISE OUR ACTIVITIES IN WHATEVER WAY YOU CAN.

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

285 Romford Road,
Forest Gate,
London E7 9HJ.
Telephone: (01) 555 8151

The Management Committee of Newham Monitoring Project invite you/your organisation to affiliate to the Newham Monitoring Project.

Affiliation to the Newham Monitoring Project is open to any individual who lives or works in Newham.

Newham Monitoring Project exists to monitor racism and racial attacks in Newham, and the response of the police and local authority to such attacks, campaign for police accountability to the public of Newham and organise an emergency service to give help, advice and support to victims of racial attacks and police harassment.

Affiliation to Newham Monitoring Project is open to anyone who agrees with the aims and objectives of Newham Monitoring Project as outlined in the constitution. We hope that you/your organisation will be able to support us on the basis outlined above.

* * * * *

I/WE WOULD LIKE TO AFFILIATE TO NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES AS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION.

NAME/ORGANISATION

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NO:

I/WE ENCLOSE THE APPROPRIATE AFFILIATION FEE (£3:00 Organisation - £1:00 individual).

SIGNATURE

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN THE 24-HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE:

ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO ANNUAL REPORT 1984

1. In list of Management Committee members please add Carol Storer as Co-opted member as representing Newham Rights Centre.
2. In list of staff, after Kaushika Amin (Caseworker) please add, in brackets, 'until January 1985'.
3. On page 14, after line 10, insert sub-heading 'Racist Attacks and the Police'.
4. Staff changes: Carole Burgher (Caseworker - from March 1985)
Sunder Kangesan (Research and Information Officer - from April 1985)
5. Note change of address: 382 Katherine Road
FOREST GATE
London
E7 8NW