

Newham Monitoring Project
ANNUAL REPORT 1990

KEEPING
THE
FIGHT
ALIVE!



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1 INTRODUCTION

It is with immense satisfaction that the Management Committee of Newham Monitoring Project presents this, our eleventh annual report, *Keeping the Fight Alive*.

These are difficult times. Even a cursory reading of this report will show that racism in Britain corrupts every walk of life. Indeed, the situation appears to be getting worse. Racist violence is on the rise in Newham and nationally, and the National Front and the British National Party - for years largely inconsequential forces - are becoming increasingly active on the streets and in local elections.

The institutional response has been predictably disappointing. The police, in particular, seem more interested in glossy publicity campaigns and steering attention away from issues of 'hard policing' - such as police racism, brutality and malpractice - than in genuinely tackling racist violence. In Newham, less than 7% of 'racial incidents' reported to the police result in arrests.

In addition, the police have been building fortress police stations across London that look like shopping malls on the outside but actually contain hundreds of underground cells and highly sinister 'big brother' technology. Stoke Newington and Edmonton already have such stations. A new one is scheduled to open in Forest Gate later this year. NMP is concerned that while the police talk publicly about community policing and preventing crime, in reality, they are preparing for what they see as major civil unrest in east London in the years ahead. The black community, as always, will be targeted and the first to suffer the consequences.

The alarming trends discussed above are mirrored internationally. Euro-racism has taken root: all black and 'Third World' people in Europe are now portrayed as immigrants and refugees, terrorists and drug-dealers. The Gulf War has further inflamed the situation, sparking a racist backlash rooted in popular anti-Arab/anti-Muslim racism. The future is grim: as popular racism is systematically institutionalised, state

repression, oppressive policing and immigration controls will intensify.

The catalogue of racial and police harassment cases documented in this report demonstrates the urgency of building on the gains that NMP has made over the past ten years. In 1990, NMP's campaigns in defence of Mr Altaf and Mr Govindan, who were victims of racist violence and police criminalisation, were triumphant. Both men were acquitted in court and are now going to sue the police. Their commitment is an inspiration to all those innocent people who have been framed by the police.

NMP has managed, against all odds, to keep the fight alive. We have gone from strength to strength, and in celebration of our tenth anniversary, we organised an anti-racist festival in July 1990 that was attended by 15,000 people. The event was a tremendous success and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who came.

But plenty of work remains. Racist attacks and police harassment still happen every day in Newham. And fascism is resurgent.

We must, therefore, learn the lessons of the 1980s: only through community self-organisation can we as black people challenge the institutionalised racism that is corrupting society. More and more black people throughout Europe are now realising this. Herein lies our fight-back.

Finally, our thanks go out to all those people who have given to the Project of their limitless time, energy and support, particularly the workers - Asad, Barry, Lisa and Rajiv - whose contribution has been indispensable. This report, which has been written by them, is a testimony to the undaunting perseverance of Newham's black community to combat racial and police harassment.

Newham Monitoring Project
Management Committee

2 CASEWORK

The cornerstone of NMP's existence remains the practical support and advice that we provide to people suffering from police and racial harassment. This approach, based on the centrality of casework, distinguishes us from the paternalistic approach of social advice agencies such as victim support schemes, on the one hand, and the knee-jerk interventionism of the 'white left', on the other. For our approach is more fundamentally community-based, reflecting the experiences of black people. It is an approach that uses casework as the starting point to determine campaigning and educational priorities.

The failure of a solely institutional approach to the ever-increasing number of racial harassment and other cases is that it merely 'contains the problem' without strengthening the community. It is only through linking institutional measures to community action that the struggle against racism will become effective and proactive rather than merely a defensive response with no long-term strategy to guide it.

The approach we take to each individual case that comes to NMP's attention is determined by the needs and wishes of the individuals and families themselves. We seek to provide a structure whereby those at the centre of an attack can have real control over the direction their case takes, through continuous dialogue and feedback with the various agencies and individuals involved. It is only by empowering people that we will begin to empower the community.

1989. In fact, these figures would have been even higher if we had classified repeated incidents on whole families over numerous years as separate attacks - as it is we treat them merely as one case of harassment. We still believe that these high figures represent only a small proportion of the real number of attacks occurring in the borough.

FRAMEWORK OF CASES

The framework of NMP's work continues to be modified and adapted to meet new challenges but its core remains as follows:

In all **racial harassment** cases our role has been to:

- 1) Adequately support and advise the victim.
- 2) Bring as much pressure to bear on the police to try and ensure that they take action, arrest the perpetrator(s) and bring the correct charges.
- 3) Pressurise the local authority and relevant agencies to meet their responsibilities to local black people whether they are council tenants or not.
- 4) Get councillors and MPs to intervene and ensure that cases are handled satisfactorily by the police and local authority.

* While these cases do not fit neatly into the categories of either racial or police harassment, they are related to more general problems which disproportionately affect the black community of Newham, on both a race and a class basis. The type of cases we have dealt with highlight the widespread institutionalised racism that the black community faces in relation to issues ranging from poor housing to bad education.

BREAKDOWN OF CASES

Cases reported to the Project

Racial Harassment	163	(48%)
Police Harassment	132	(39%)
Other*	144	(13%)
Total	339	(100%)

There was a steady increase in the number of cases reported to NMP during 1990 - casework is up by 15% on

In all **police harassment** cases our role is to:

- 1) Try and secure the release of a detained person as soon as possible or, if this is not possible, to make sure they are legally represented.
- 2) Make sure that those involved receive proper legal advice from a sympathetic solicitor.
- 3) Ensure that people who sustain injuries while in police custody receive immediate medical attention once released.
- 4) See that any necessary photographs are taken of injuries incurred while in police custody.
- 5) Make formal complaints on behalf of the victim.
- 6) Pressure council officers, councillors, MPs, etc to investigate police malpractice with the view to making sure that officers who perpetrate racial harassment and beat up black people are penalised.

with are taken up as a direct result of people visiting our office after seeing one of our rights cards or posters. These are widely displayed throughout the borough, in libraries and community centres and in various statutory offices. The informal network that has been created through NMP's outreach work is the other main avenue through which people come into contact with NMP.

EMERGENCY SERVICE

The Emergency Service continues to be a unique and vital facet of the work of the Project in providing assistance to the victims of racial and police harassment. It is a service that is used more and more - in 1987 only 8.1% of cases were taken up through the Emergency Service, in 1988 it rose to 10%, and in 1989 it reached 24%. This year it represents 26% of referrals. It is important to note that these statistics do not include cases received during office hours on the Emergency line. Additionally, the statistics do not incorporate emergency aid given to people whom the Project is already helping.

The Emergency Service is staffed by local volunteers. These volunteers are trained in the basic law and procedure of cases and are then armed with a handbook which gives them all the information needed to deal with any emergency case. The volunteers are backed up by a second-tier of volunteers - these include solicitors, photographers and doctors as well as local people who are willing to be called out in an emergency.

The commitment and dedication of these volunteers remains vital to the work of the Project. We gratefully acknowledge the way they have supported and built the Project and the Service.

REFERRALS

Direct	184	54%
Emergency Service (during non-office hours only)	87	26%
Other (advice agencies, housing dept etc)	66	20%

The overwhelming number of cases that NMP deals

Newham Monitoring Project
382 KATHERINE RD, FOREST GATE, E7 8NW



**TROUBLE WITH THE POLICE?
RACIAL HARASSMENT?**

FOR IMMEDIATE LEGAL ADVICE AND
PRACTICAL SUPPORT ANYTIME

RING **081 555-8151** 24 HRS
7 DAYS

3 RACIAL HARASSMENT

During 1990, there was a marked increase in the number of racial harassment cases reported to us. A breakdown of the 163 cases shows the following:

● **Breakdown in terms of manner of referral**

Direct	84
Emergency Service (during non-office hours)	41
Via other agencies	38

● **Breakdown in terms of gender and age⁽¹⁾**

Female	73
Male	65
Children	25

● **Breakdown in terms of nature of racial harassment⁽²⁾**

Physical	74
Verbal	49
Arson	5
Other ⁽³⁾	35

● **Breakdown in terms of location of attack⁽⁴⁾**

Home	84
Street	32
School	12
Shop	11
Work	9
Pub	8
Places of Worship	7

● **Breakdown in terms of area**

Canning Town/Custom House	25
Stratford	14
Plaistow	32
Forest Gate	14
Beckton/North Woolwich	23
Manor Park	15
East Ham	21
Outside Newham ⁽⁵⁾	19

Closer examination of each incident of racial harassment dealt with by NMP during 1990 reveals a frightening trend whereby violent attacks across the bor-

ough - attacks on the home, on the streets, in the workplace, and on places of worship - are increasing. Many of these attacks are of such a premeditated and vicious nature that they have devastated the physical and emotional health of individuals and families.



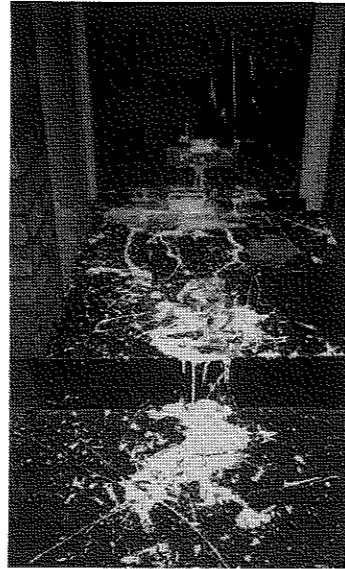
Beaten up by racists

Below we outline some of the attacks that have been brought to the attention of NMP and describe the council and police response.

ATTACKS ON THE HOME

● One August night at around midnight, Mrs Y, who lives in Manor Park, phoned her husband at work to say that some neighbours and their friends were racially abusing her and generally creating havoc. The Y family had been racially harassed and threatened by neighbours before. Mr Y phoned the police before rushing home.

Meanwhile, the doorbell of the Y family's home rang. Mrs Y, thinking it was either her husband or the police, opened the door only to be brutally set upon and battered by several white neighbours. Mr Y arrived



Paint Bombs

Notes for Statistics

(1) Our statistics in terms of gender and age represent the victim and/or person within a family with whom we have had the most frequent contact or who notified us of the incident.

(2) The majority of those who complained to us of racial harassment experienced more than one kind of harassment. We have therefore classified incidents in terms of what the major component of harassment was.

(3) 'Other' includes attacks on property ranging from windows being smashed to cars being damaged to excrement being shoved through letter-boxes.

(4) These figures refer to where the main incident which was reported to us took place. Most cases, however, occur in a variety of locations.

(5) 'Outside Newham' represents the neighbouring boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

shortly afterwards and his presence momentarily deterred the attackers. But as Mr Y climbed the stairs to his upper maisonette flat, one of the neighbours approached, saying 'you're the man I've been looking for,' and punched Mr Y in the face. Mr Y fell to the ground. The neighbour then tried to grab Mr Y, but he managed to get up and run past the neighbour up the stairs. Just as Mr Y was entering his flat, the neighbour caught him and pulled him back out of the flat. A group of 7 or 8 white men proceeded to punch, kick and racially abuse Mr Y. Comments included 'if you call the police again, we'll kill you' and 'f...ing Paki bastard.' Mrs Y was also attacked again and beaten unconscious. While Mr and Mrs Y were being assaulted, other neighbours, hearing the commotion, came out of their flats and were told by the attackers to stay away.

Police officers from Forest Gate arrived shortly after. Three of the attackers were arrested and Mr and Mrs Y were taken to hospital by ambulance. The attackers were charged with causing grievous bodily harm on Mr and Mrs Y; one of them was also charged with threatening to kill Mr Y.

Mr and Mrs Y sustained serious injuries. Mr Y had a black eye (he could hardly open it for weeks), abrasions and swellings on his head, bruising on his left shoulder, left leg, chest, and back and a cut on his left arm. Six months after the attack, he is in such pain that he is still on sick leave from work. Mrs Y, who was hospitalised for a week, suffered severe head injuries. The shock of what happened will remain with her for some time to come.

Following the attack, the Housing Department acted swiftly. Mr and Mrs Y and their 3 young children were temporarily moved to bed and breakfast accommodation. A month later they were permanently rehoused.

Forest Gate CID, on the other hand, told Mr Y that they would notify him and his wife as to when they would be required to attend court to give evidence. But in November, an article appeared in the *Newham Recorder* stating that the case against Mr and Mrs Y's attackers had been discharged at Newham West Magistrates Court. Neither the police nor the CPS had even bothered to notify Mr and Mrs Y. NMP immediately contacted the police, demanding that the charges be reinstated. Clearly, the medical evidence alone was a sufficient basis upon which to prosecute. It turned out that there had been a bureaucratic error - the police had failed to forward key paperwork to the CPS. Acknowledging their mistake, the police subsequently rearrested and recharged the attackers. The case has yet to come to court.

The attack on Mr and Mrs Y was vicious, premeditated and organised. Both sustained ghastly injuries

and the trauma still remains with them. The police response on this occasion was swift and for once the charges brought against the thugs who assaulted Mr and Mrs Y reflected the seriousness of the crime. The fact that such an open and shut case could be discharged in court (albeit due to an administrative blunder rather than yet another prosecution surrender) is unacceptable. Fortunately, after pressure from NMP, the charges were reinstated. One can but hope that justice will now be done and that Mr and Mrs Y's attackers receive lengthy custodial sentences. Only then will a clear message be sent out that racist thuggery will not be tolerated in any shape or form.

● In May, 10-year-old DG was playing outside his home on a housing estate in East Ham. All of a sudden, he was racially attacked by 2 white boys of roughly the same age who also live on the estate. DG was hit in the face with a sharp metal rod. He lost a lot of blood and had to have a number of stitches above the left eye. He was fortunate not to lose the use of his eye.

Although DG and his mother gave the police the names and addresses of the attackers, no further action was taken on the grounds that the culprits were too young. The Housing Department granted DG and his mother an override, thus prioritising their transfer out of the area. To date, however, they have not been moved.

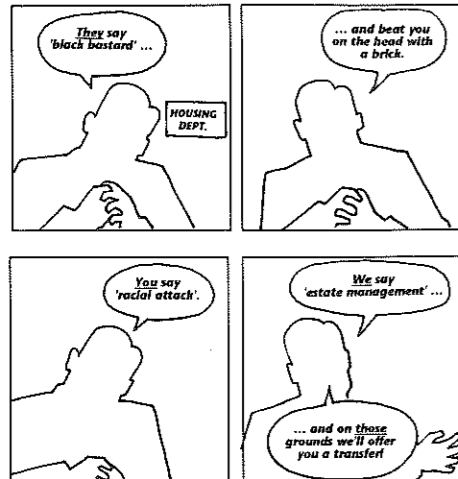
Racist attacks on young children by other young children are particularly cruel. DG's progress at school was affected by the attack and he is still frightened to go outside and play when he is at home. His attackers were never challenged; more than likely they will feel free to beat up other black children in the future. Just because they were too young to be charged with criminal offences should not have precluded some official action being taken - at the very least, letters of warning could have been sent to their parents. Without deterrent action of some sort, the 'problem' is allowed to fester with potentially dangerous consequences.

● In July, FH was set upon in a brutal fashion by 2 of his neighbours in the front garden of his home in Canning Town. There had been trouble with neighbours in the past but this was the first time that physical violence was involved. FH was racially abused before being hit on the head with a brick and a wooden stick. He was hospitalised with serious head and neck injuries.

In spite of FH's injuries, the police did not charge the attackers but instead referred the matter to the CPS for further consideration. The police claimed that the attackers had made counter-allegations and that one of them also had bruising. More than 6 months later, the CPS have yet to reach a decision.

The Housing Department, recognising the seriousness of the assault, awarded FH and his

family an override transfer priority. But they did so on 'estate management grounds', arguing that the assault was not racially motivated but a neighbourhood dispute that got out of hand. In the end, FH and his family made a mutual transfer with a family from outside London and moved out of the area.



FH was clearly the victim of racist violence. It is imperative that racial harassment is recognised as such; merely to contain the situation without tackling the racism of the perpetrators is victim support at its most superficial. While FH and his family, having left the area, are now free of harassment, their attackers, never taken to task by the council or the police, more than likely have been instilled with greater confidence. Thus the threat of reprisals against other black families, in an area already renowned for racial tension, remains.

● RB was living with her one-year-old son in Plaistow. They experienced regular racial harassment from a neighbouring white family who were well-known to the police. On one occasion, a woman member of the white family told RB accusingly, 'you Paki cunt, don't think the police will protect you, you're in the East End now.' On another occasion, the same woman slapped RB and said, 'if I see you on the street again, I'll kill you, you're a dead Paki.'

NMP, in conjunction with the local housing office, put pressure on RB's landlord, the East London Housing Association (ELHA), and the police to take action. ELHA said they could not afford to install security measures to RB's flat and that they would try to move her. The police said that there was nothing they could do but that RB had nothing to fear. One officer actually said, "she (the white woman) could have attacked you if she wanted to, but she didn't" to which RB justifiably replied, 'you're not a woman living on her own... I'm scared.'

RB was moved temporarily into bed and breakfast accommodation, pending an offer of a new flat. She told ELHA not to write to her at the old flat as her attackers frequently intercepted her mail. Unfortunately, that was ex-

actly what ELHA did. As a result, when RB moved into her new flat, she found her old neighbours waiting outside, taunting her. A week later, the word 'slag' was carved into her front door. Things have since quietened down.

Single black mothers like RB are particularly vulnerable to racial harassment as they are seen as easy targets. One would have expected ELHA and the police to be sensitive to this. However, they were not. NMP supported RB in her time of need. But it was RB herself who stood up with determination to the racial harassment she and her baby were facing. Hopefully, they can now live in peace.

An interesting footnote to the story is that RB's father who is a police inspector in Hackney rang NMP and thanked us for our good work in assisting his daughter. It's a pity that his colleagues in Newham were unwilling to support RB and chose instead to trivialise her predicament.

ATTACKS ON THE STREETS

● One morning in May, M was walking to East Ham station to catch the tube to work. For no apparent reason, he was violently attacked by a white man who punched him repeatedly in the face, before getting into his car and driving off. M sustained serious head injuries and was rushed to hospital by ambulance.

Fortunately, an NMP supporter witnessed the attack, took down the registration number of the attacker's car and submitted a detailed written statement to the police. NMP also pressurised the police to identify the guilty party and to arrest and charge him.

Over a month later, Plaistow police interviewed the culprit. He did not deny beating M but falsely claimed that M had hit him first. In spite of clear medical evidence (M had serious injuries, his attacker had none), the police referred the matter to the CPS for further consideration. Three months later, the attacker was charged with assault. When the case came to court, although the attacker pleaded guilty, he was fined a mere £15 and sentenced to 6 months probation.

It is outrageous that M's attacker did not get a custodial sentence. Considering the severity of M's injuries, his attacker should have been charged with grievous bodily harm. The police's argument that the CPS decided on the charge is fair enough - the CPS is certainly to blame for the feeble prosecution case brought against the attacker and the fact that he got off so lightly. But why, when the evidence was hardly ambiguous, did the police not charge him initially? The police failed to use powers available to them and instead left it for the CPS decide. Understandably, M's confidence in the police and criminal justice system

lies in tatters.

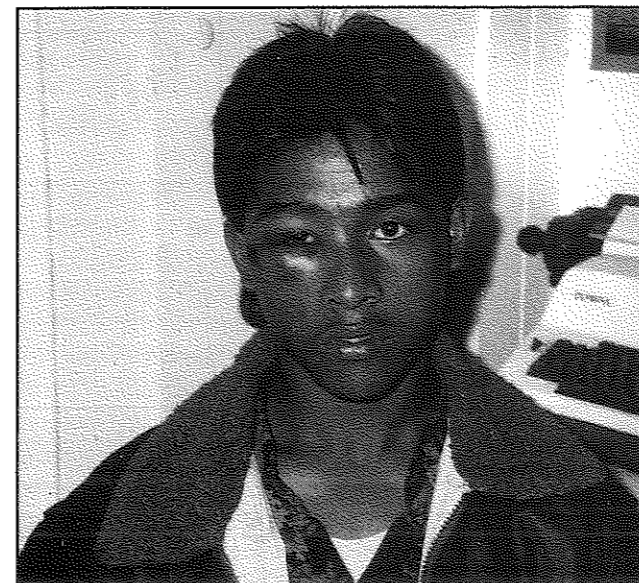
● In the early hours of one February morning, AH was walking home in Manor Park when he was set upon by two young white men. They punched him to the ground and kicked him in the head.

AH was hospitalised for over two weeks. He sustained serious head injuries, including a fractured skull. A police spokesperson commented that 'the savagery of the attack was appalling and it is lucky that the man wasn't killed.'

The police handed the case over to their racial incident squad who made door-to-door enquiries in the area where AH was attacked. They found two witnesses but neither could make a positive identification of the attackers. And AH, who is still under neurological observation, suffered amnesia following the assault which made it unlikely that he could identify his assailants either.

The police did, nonetheless, arrest two suspects, finding blood-stained clothes in the home of one of them. But forensic tests proved inconclusive, we were told, and, as a result, neither was charged. AH's attackers remain free.

The vicious nature of the attack on AH is yet another disturbing indication that no black person is safe on the streets of Newham. AH was, it appears, selected at random. Tragically, he might suffer permanent brain damage as a result of the attack. The police's racial incident squad investigated this case with unusual thoroughness but decided not to prosecute their suspects on the grounds of insufficient identification and forensic evidence. Whether or not the police did all they could do is impossible to tell. What we do know is that two more racist thugs have got away; they will undoubtedly prey on other innocent black people in the future.



Welcome to Britain

● In June, 16-year-old SU was walking home from Little Ilford school with two friends. In Little Ilford park, they were confronted by three older white youths. One had an air pistol, another a wooden stick. They shouted at SU and his friends. One said, 'if you Pakis don't get out of here, we'll shoot you.' Another threw a stone at SU, cutting his leg. When one of the attackers aimed his air pistol at SU, SU's friends ran off, terrified. SU was then hit across the head with the wooden stick and knocked unconscious.

SU had only been in Britain a few months and did not know what to do. His father took him to hospital and the next day brought SU to NMP. We photographed his injuries, took him to his GP and then to Forest Gate police station to make a statement. After hearing the full details of the attack, the desk officer's first reaction was 'what makes you think it was a racist attack?' Although the matter was investigated, SU's attackers have never been caught.

This was an unprovoked, racist attack on a young black person. SU was badly beaten, yet he was fortunate not to have been shot at with the air pistol as well. This is no consolation, however, as SU's attackers have never been caught. SU and his father are understandably bitter about the whole episode.

● In February, LC was driving in the Upton Park area when she found her passage blocked by a van coming in the opposite direction. A white man got out of the van and racially abused and threatened her. He then got back into the van and drove it in such a manner that the bumper of his car was touching the bumper of LC's car. This time both the driver and his passenger (another white man) got out of the van. One of them tried to grab LC through the open window of her car while the other struck the windscreen with an iron bar. When LC got out of her car, she was kicked and punched by the two men and flung to the ground.

LC promptly reported the attack to the police, giving them what she remembered of the registration number of the attackers' van. After extensive pressure from NMP, the police arrested a man a few months later. LC was unable to make a positive identification of him. The matter was subsequently closed.

LC was simply driving along, minding her own business, when she was racially abused and assaulted. That such an attack can materialise out of thin air is worrying.

ATTACKS IN THE WORKPLACE

● MA worked for a chemical company in Stratford. One evening in May, a white colleague, who regularly

made racist comments in the past, ordered MA to sweep the floor. MA replied that the supervisor had given him other duties. The colleague then kicked MA on the back of his leg. When MA reported the assault to his supervisor, he was told to forget it and carry on working. A few minutes later MA's colleague kicked him again. The supervisor told MA to have a shower and go home and let the foreman sort things out the next morning.

Later, when MA was leaving, the same colleague attacked him again outside the factory, punching him repeatedly in the face. MA sustained serious head injuries. He went straight to West Ham police station and reported what had happened. An ambulance came and took him to Newham General hospital.

A few days later the police arrested and charged MA's assailant with assault.

MA's employers were totally unsympathetic. When MA told the foreman and the director that his doctor had advised him to take two weeks off to recover from his injuries, they threatened to sack him. They also pressurised MA to drop the charges against his racist colleague. A week later, MA was notified that he had to appear before a disciplinary hearing for failing to carry out his supervisor's instructions and for the 'alleged' altercation with his white colleague.

NMP, in conjunction with Newham Black NALGO, supported MA and accompanied him to the hearing. In spite of the fact that the attack on MA was witnessed by other staff, it was concluded that there was 'room for considerable doubt as to what occurred'. MA was warned that any further misconduct could lead to instant dismissal.

Soon after, MA was offered a better job with another company and left. The criminal case against his attacker has yet to come to court.

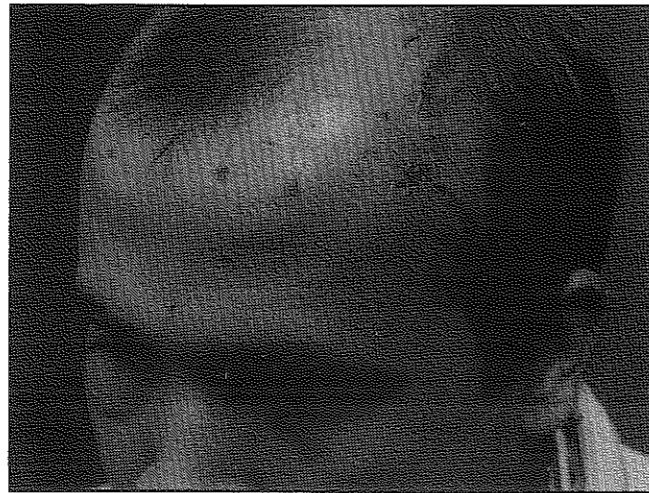
MA was not in a trade union. He was therefore unable to rely on an organised response to what amounted to management victimisation of him for reporting a racist colleague to the police. MA was treated disgracefully by his employers who ultimately collaborated with his attacker. NMP and Newham Black NALGO's presence at the disciplinary hearing most probably averted his dismissal. Hopefully, MA's attacker will be convicted when his case comes to court; at least, then, some justice will have been done.

● DS works part-time as a waiter at an Indian restaurant in Chingford. One evening in November, two white customers got into an argument with DS's boss about their bill, saying they would pay it the next day. Suddenly, one of the white men started pushing and shouting at DS's boss. When DS walked by, the other white man punched him in the eye. DS's boss ran to the kitchen, chased by the man who had

hit DS. The other man grabbed DS by the collar and pushed him towards the front door, shouting 'open the door'. Suddenly, the man who had chased DS's boss into the kitchen ran back out and smashed a glass on DS's head. Both attackers then ran off, without having paid their bill.

DS was taken by ambulance to Whipps Cross hospital where he received 22 stitches to his head and treatment for a black eye. DS is still undergoing shock treatment because of memory loss and occasional black-outs.

Chingford police interviewed DS, his boss and several customers who witnessed the attack. The attackers were eventually traced and have been charged with grievous bodily harm. The case has yet to come to court.



Black eye and 22 stitches

Violent beatings such as this are definitely on the increase throughout East London. DS, like others who have suffered a similar fate, continues to live with the repercussions of what happened. He has yet to recover fully from the attack and the experience will remain with him for some time to come. The police responded efficiently in this case and we hope that the prosecution will be vigorously pursued so as to ensure that lengthy custodial sentences are imposed on DS's assailants. DS deserves nothing less.

● GH, an elderly black shopkeeper in East Ham, was the subject of two serious racist attacks in 1990. In May, she sold a toy car to two boys, after demonstrating, in front of witnesses whose details she has, that it was new and in perfect condition. The next day, the boy's mother, a regular customer, came in with the car, claiming it was damaged and demanding a refund. When GH refused, the woman called her a 'bloody Paki bitch' and, after threatening her, proceeded to batter her face with the car, splitting her head open and causing severe facial swelling, the scars of which are still visible.

GH phoned the police and gave the investigating officers the names and addresses of the attacker and the witnesses. No action was taken; one officer actually said the attack was 'not serious'.

A month later, GH refused to serve the niece of another customer who owed her a substantial amount of money for goods she had bought on credit. Fifteen minutes later, the girl's aunt came to the shop with two men. One man threatened to teach her a lesson she would not forget while the second man shouted 'you bloody Paki, I'll tear your clothes off and smash your face in'. Then, the woman, using her bangle as a knuckle-duster, hit GH on the head and punched her in the stomach, throwing her spectacles to the floor. The second man picked up a pair of scissors which were on the counter, lifted them and thrust downward toward GH's head, shouting 'you bloody Paki, I'll kill you'. A customer who witnessed the whole incident intervened to protect GH. If it was not for her, GH would almost certainly have been stabbed. When another witness went to phone the police, the attackers smashed up the shop before fleeing.

Plaistow police, after interviewing GH and the customer who helped defend her, arrested the woman and one of the men. The woman admitted assaulting GH and was charged with common assault. The man denied taking part in any assault and was only charged with threatening behaviour.

When the case came to court, the CPS offered both attackers bind overs, arguing that the man arrested was not the one who had tried to stab GH with the scissors. The attackers were therefore never prosecuted.

NMP made official complaints to the police and the CPS about the sloppy police investigation which allowed the attackers to go free. We received an unprecedented four-page letter from the Crown Prosecutor in which he concluded that offering bind overs to GH's attackers was indeed the 'wrong decision'.

Once again the perpetrators of a brutal racist attack have got away with it. No amount of apologising by the CPS will change the fact that GH's attackers have triumphed and GH has been left afraid of reprisals. The failure of the police to protect GH and take action against her attackers is obvious. In spite of independent witnesses, the police and the CPS were unable to put together a prosecution case that demonstrated a genuine interest in punishing racists who prey on innocent black people. Another opportunity to challenge racist violence has been squandered.

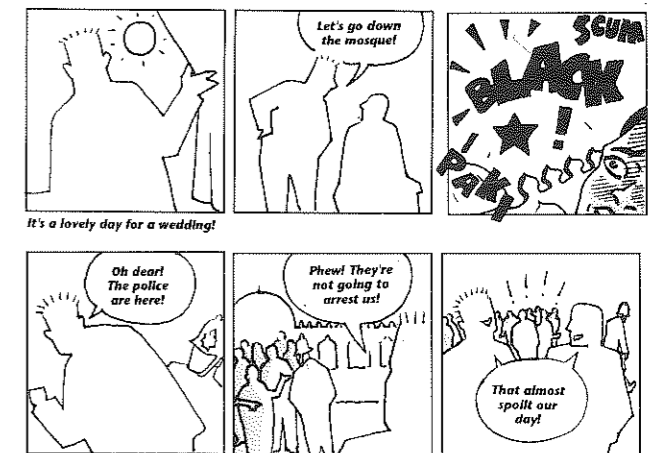
ATTACKS ON PLACES OF WORSHIP

● One Sunday afternoon in September, fam-

ily and friends gathered for a wedding at the Muslim Community Centre, Canning Town. People came from as far away as Rochdale and Southend.

As guests were going into the Centre, a group of white men came out of the Raffles pub across the road and began shouting racist abuse and hurling missiles at the guests. One of the white men ran across the road with a spade and started smashing the cars of guests. Two cars were badly damaged and wedding decorations were ripped down. Several guests were physically assaulted as they retreated behind the front gates of the Centre.

When officers from Plaistow police station arrived on the scene, the attackers were still standing across the road from the Centre. Several of the guests who had either been attacked or had witnessed the entire incident identified the culprits, giving their names and addresses to the officers as willing witnesses. But in spite of all the evidence - the smashed cars, assaulted guests and the identified perpetrators - the police made no arrests.



A few days later, Mr Malik from the Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association (who own the Centre) addressed a meeting of Newham's Police Community Consultative Group (with over 100 members of the local community present) about the attack on the wedding and the failure of the police to take action. He was told by Superintendent Ball that the police would not tolerate such attacks on mosques and that immediate action would be taken. The next day Newham's only Urdu-speaking police officer visited the Muslim Community Centre, guaranteeing that the police would arrest and charge those responsible for attacking the Centre. To this day, however, only one person has been arrested.

This incident represents yet another cowardly attack on one of our places of worship (elsewhere we document the attacks on mosques up and down the country following

the outbreak of the Gulf War). What should have been a day of celebration was marred by the actions of well-known local racists and the failure of those Plaistow police officers who arrived on the scene to arrest them. Since then, numerous other attacks have occurred, some of them on young children.

The police, particularly the racial incident squad, have been forced to respond as a result of consistent pressure from NMP and Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association. Senior officers have been going to the Centre, promising to sort out any problems confronting the Centre's members. Moreover, Chief Inspector Ibbetson, who replaced Superintendent Ball as Newham's principal Community Liaison Officer, is alleged to have asked mosque leaders not to report any incidents to NMP. If this is true, it makes a mockery of police claims that they want to build better relations with the black community. And it demonstrates the extent that the police are willing to go to engage in divide-and rule tactics to gain credibility within the black community.

Despite the determination of the Centre's members to fight on, the situation has deteriorated even further as a result of institutional inaction. Now growing concern about the safety of their children has led mosque leaders to consider moving their Centre away from Canning Town into an area where more black people are concentrated. That things have reached this stage is unfortunate. Nevertheless, we must continue to defend the Centre and demand police action against those local racists who have attacked it with impunity.

UPDATE FROM 1989

Below we look at recent developments in several cases discussed in last year's annual report. First, we examine an extraordinary case which took further twists and turns during 1990 and raised many questions about the efficacy of the council, police and legal response to racial harassment.

THE D FAMILY

● The D family endured some of the most terrifying and systematic racial harassment from their next door neighbours, the Simmonds family, that NMP has seen in recent years. Although many other residents — both black and white — on the Cyprus Estate, Beckton were abused, threatened and assaulted by the same villains as well, the D family were singled out for the most persistent and violent harassment. On many an occasion, Mr and Mrs D and their two young children became virtual prisoners in their own home, isolated and frightened for their lives. To catalogue all the attacks on the Ds since 1989 is beyond the scope of this report, but the following represents a selection of the attacks they faced:

- physical assault on Mr and Mrs D
- frequent threats of physical violence, arson and murder (weapons used included knives, air rifles, pick-axe handles, garden forks and baseball bats. Rottweiler dogs were also used to intimidate the D family)
- vandalism of the Ds' car (tyres slashed, windscreen smashed and bodywork damaged)
- burglary of the Ds' home, entry being gained through an adjoining loft with the Simmonds' home
- continual noise nuisance, drunkenness and racist abuse
- damage to the Ds' home (including garden fence and back-door broken)

Police response

The response of the police throughout the time that the D family were living under siege was mediocre and dismissive. Eventually, the Ds had a panic button installed, giving them direct access to the local police station in case of attack. However, in spite of the fact that literally dozens of incidents were reported, the police only arrested the Simmonds once. This was in June 1989, after Colleen and John Simmonds attacked Mr and Mrs D outside their home with a knife and were charged with assault. But this particular case has never come up for trial. The CPS put it on hold pending the resolution of other prosecution cases against the Simmonds for a variety of offences.

Colleen Simmonds, her older son, and their friend Clive Wilson were arrested and charged with violent disorder, criminal damage and threatening behavior following an attack on another family in Beckton, the M family, in May 1989. They led a gang of about 20 youths who racially abused the Ms, set two rottweilers on them, smashed several windows of their home and car, and assaulted Mr M with a baseball bat and scaffolding pipe.

But Colleen Simmonds and her older son received non-custodial sentences and probation in February 1990 at Snaresbrook Crown Court following a CPS deal with the defence counsel. Clive Wilson, who incidentally is black, was imprisoned for 23 months.

In an unexpected development, Colleen Simmonds stabbed her husband John 17 times in March 1990 and was charged with attempted murder. In the following months, things quietened down as Colleen Simmonds was on remand in Holloway prison and her husband was recovering in hospital. The Ds had some trouble from the Simmonds' sons, who are now aged 17 and 15, respectively but not nearly on the same scale as before.

But astonishingly, the CPS made another deal with Colleen Simmonds' lawyers when she appeared at the Old Bailey in August 1990. In spite of her lengthy

criminal record, the CPS dropped the charge of attempted murder and instead she pleaded guilty to grievous bodily harm with intent. She was sentenced to three years probation, ordered to reside where instructed by her probation officer, and released.

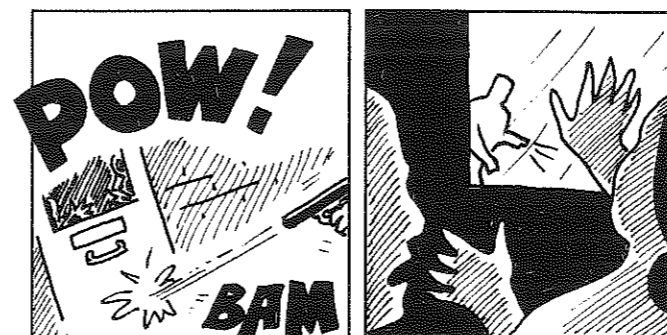
The same evening, Colleen Simmonds showed up outside the Ds' home in a drunken stupor, threatening to kill the Ds and burn their house down. During the next few months, the Ds were again subjected to regular harassment by the Simmonds family. One incident, in particular, demonstrated the volatility of the situation.

One evening in November, the Simmonds' younger son came out of his house and started calling Mr D a 'fucking Paki cunt'. His father John threw two cans at the Ds' front window. Mr D phoned NMP's Emergency Service line. Our volunteer reported the attack to the police and contacted several second-tier volunteers to go to the Ds' home. Meanwhile, the Simmonds' younger son got an air rifle and shot at the Ds' front window, luckily missing the glass, the pellet ricocheting off the window frame.

When Plaistow police arrived, they refused to arrest the Simmonds' younger son despite the fact that Mr D and Mrs D's niece had witnessed him firing the air rifle at the window. An officer said there was not enough evidence.

Soon after, a NMP Management Committee member arrived at the Ds' home. When he told the police that he was from NMP, an officer asked him why he was interfering. He replied that Mr D had phoned NMP's Emergency Service for help. When it became clear that the police were not going to take any action, he made arrangements for other NMP supporters to come to Beckton so that the Ds would not be alone and vulnerable. The police threatened to arrest him and any other person from NMP who showed up, for breaching the peace.

Five of us came, nonetheless, and the police simply left, promising extra patrols. We stayed with the Ds until 3 am.



It's fun to shoot my neighbours' home ... especially when they're inside!



Legal Action

The Ds have pursued every avenue to get the Simmonds to stop harassing them. Council departments, including housing, social services, legal, environmental health and the police unit, have been approached. Several councillors and MPs have made representations on their behalf. But the Simmonds have managed to evade punishment and capture on most occasions.

In 1989, Newham council's legal department took out an injunction against Colleen Simmonds to leave the Ds alone. She was told categorically at Bow County Court that if she violated the injunction, she would be imprisoned. However, on both occasions that she appeared at the High Court for breaching the injunction, the judge let her off, giving her final warnings.

The housing department recommended instituting possession proceedings against Colleen Simmonds (the council tenancy being in her name) way back in 1989. But by the time possession orders were obtained and the case scheduled for trial, it was October 1990. At Bow County Court, Colleen Simmonds did not contest the possession order on the grounds that she was no longer a secure tenant, her probation officer having instructed her to reside with her mother in Plaistow. Newham council, to its credit, argued that it wanted to prove in court that Colleen Simmonds was guilty of racist conduct meriting eviction — the reason being that she would then be unlikely to be eligible for council housing in the future. The magistrate, however, accepted Colleen Simmonds' 'no contest', granted Newham council possession and ordered the Simmonds' property to be vacated within 28 days.

The Simmonds refused to desist from further harassment of the D family. And as they did not move out within 28 days, the council applied to the court for an eviction warrant. The Ds were forced to take out private injunctions against Colleen Simmonds and four other members of her clan in order to protect themselves from more attacks.

Finally, in December 1990, the bailiffs came and boarded up the Simmonds' property. Although the Simmonds no longer live in the area and things are slowly returning to normal, members of the Simmonds family show up once in a while and harass the Ds. But the larger struggle to free the Ds and others from daily abuse, threats and violence has at last been won.

What shone through the dreadful ordeal that the Ds went through for nearly two years was their courage and determination to do everything they could to oppose the Simmonds' campaign of terror and not be driven from their home. Their resilience is a tribute to the black community and a lesson for all of us.

However, many questions must be raised about the institutional response to the racial harassment faced by the D family. While the council's housing and legal departments did in the end obtain a possession order against the Simmonds, the inordinate delays involved were potentially life-threatening, unnecessary and inexcusable. Furthermore, the Simmonds were notorious troublemakers; yet they had been transferred to Beckton from Plaistow, where they had caused many

problems as well. How were they able to slip through the net on so many occasions?

But no statutory agency deserves criticism more than the police. At no time did they provide the support or protection that the Ds needed. On many occasions, officers trivialised the harassment the Ds were facing; on others, they never even bothered to show up when the Ds phoned. Many officers were more interested in blaming the council or the CPS for the Ds' predicament than in accepting any responsibility themselves. The Ds were largely left to fend for themselves. NMP visited the Ds regularly, both during the day and late at night, and pressured statutory agencies on behalf of the Ds to take action. We got the media to interview the Ds and publicise their case. But in the end, it was the Ds themselves who fought and won the day.

DAMES ROAD ESTATE

The Dames Road estate, Forest Gate has been a hot-bed of racial harassment since it was completed in 1987. Black tenants have endured racist abuse and intimidation, criminal damage (including burglary) and physical assault (including a stabbing).

● In December 1989, SA, a black tenant who had courageously stood up to the racists and supported other black families in the area, was attacked by his next door neighbour who proceeded to smash all the windows of SA's car, threatening him and his family with a gun. When the police arrived, they found an imitation gun in the house of the attacker. SA insisted that it was not the gun with which he was threatened. The attacker was eventually charged with criminal damage and threatening to kill SA.

One evening six months later, the police contacted SA and told him that he had to come to court the next morning to give evidence against his attacker. But when SA arrived at court, the attacker had already pleaded guilty to criminal damage and the police and the CPS had dropped the charge of threatening to kill altogether. The attacker was given a non-custodial sentence.

FS and his family also suffered racial harassment from local white villains, culminating in an arson attack on their home late one evening in October 1990. A live firecracker was thrown through the letterbox which caught fire on the carpet.

FS saw a man through his living room window running into a house across the street. FS and his wife were able to put the fire out but there was smoke everywhere.

When Forest Gate police arrived, they said there was insufficient evidence to make any

arrests. A few days later, DC Howard came over and suggested that the arson attack was probably unintentional, a prank as part of Guy Fawkes celebrations. When FS questioned his reasoning, DC Howard replied that 'we have to work according to British law, not Indian law'. No further police action was forthcoming.

Both the A and S families were transferred from the Dames Road estate as their safety could no longer be guaranteed. Newham council is currently pursuing eviction proceedings against two white families on the estate who have been the source of much of the racial harassment.

The problems of Dames Road estate are on-going as the remaining black tenants continue to suffer racial harassment. If the council succeeds in evicting the trouble-makers, the situation will undoubtedly improve. However, the response of the police leaves a lot to be desired. In the case of the A and S families, their response was disgraceful. As long as police officers treat black people in this fashion, there is always the danger that the tensions that exist between the police and the black community will ignite into something more explosive.

4 POLICE RESPONSE TO RACIST ATTACKS

1986

Formation of Newham Organised Racial Incidents Squad (NORIS)

1987

Launch of pioneer police racial harassment campaign in Newham and Ealing

1988

Revamping of NORIS, to cover broader spectrum of racist attacks

1989

Launch of Metropolitan police 'Racial Attacks are against the Law' campaign.

Despite these initiatives, the police figures for 1990 still fail to show any significant improvement in the police's appalling track record for tackling racial harassment and prosecuting racist attackers. For the police anti-racist campaigns have been exposed as a glossy publicity stunt aimed at promoting the public image of the police. All our initial reservations regarding these campaigns have proven to be well-founded.

With the emphasis on encouraging greater reporting of racist attacks, police campaigns have focused on the wrong end of the problem. The recent 'Racial Attacks are Against the Law' campaign, for instance, was not based on real action, or on any changes in operational policy aimed at actually improving the police response to racist violence. Thus, whilst officers smugly proclaim that the Met are 'cracking down' on the problem, the police who arrive at the scene of a racist attack still fail to recognise the racist motive of a crime, take statements or conduct an investigation; and too often they continue to display a hostile attitude to the victims.

Ironically, despite the more sympa-

thetic and understanding approach of NORIS, this squad has actually served to exacerbate the problem of an unresponsive and complacent police force. More and more officers called to the scene of a racist attack abdicate their responsibilities, using the argument that this is a problem that can be left to the Racial Incidents Squad to investigate. This then results in a time delay in which vital evidence or key witnesses are lost not to mention the attackers themselves. So despite the positive NORIS response to the attacks on the 'Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association' (see chapter on racial harassment), mosque leader Mr Malik is still left to reflect that 'if Plaistow police had acted in the first place instead of ignoring the attacks, the problems would never have got to this stage'.

It is also interesting to note that Newham is the only borough with such a squad in operation. We believe that this is no accident. Whilst the four officers who comprise the squad may

Facts and figures

Throughout Metropolitan police Area 2 (Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Barking and Dagenham, and Havering), the official figures for 'racial incidents' reported to the police between January and October rose from 491 in 1989 to 655 in 1990. Over the past year, almost one in three racist attacks across the capital occurred in east London. After a considerable decline over the previous three years, the number of 'racial incidents' reported to Newham police has also risen, but more disturbingly, the police clear-up rate has actually dropped - of the 191 cases reported to Newham police in 1990, there were only 13 arrests (less than 7%). Thus it can be seen that even when the Met's own figures reveal a dramatic increase in 'racial incidents', the police are still failing to show any genuine commitment towards tackling the root of the problem and arresting perpetrators.



be sincere in their commitment to tackling racial harassment, the purpose behind the formation of NORIS is not so much to tackle the racists as to counter the influence of NMP. For the police seem increasingly to fear the strength of NMP in the borough and are forever seeking ways to undermine our role in serving the black community.

All these initiatives will continue to be viewed as a public relations exercise until the police can demonstrate a clear and consistent improvement in both the number of racist attackers they prosecute and in the overall response of all police officers to racial harassment. However, there is another issue that the black community will never allow the police to escape from: how can black people under attack be expected to have any confidence in the police when the police are one of the main attackers and persecutors of the black community? For police anti-racist initiatives to be taken seriously they must first address the issue of racism within their own ranks. The cases of the 'Altaf/Khan family' and 'Mr Govindan' (see following chapters) reveal that the police response to racist violence is often even more racist, and more damaging, than the original attack. These two cases demonstrate that, despite all the rhetoric about racial harassment, the real priorities of the police are still directed towards containing and criminalising the black community rather than serving it.

THE REAL POLICE RESPONSE

Whilst community campaigns in support of both the Altaf/Khan family and Mr Govindan succeeded in exposing the *real* police response to racial harassment, in the process vindicating these particular victims of racist violence from attempted police criminalisation, these cases were only the tip of the iceberg in a catalogue of cases NMP dealt with in 1990. Many other black people suffered the same kind of racist police response after being viciously attacked. Three such cases graphically illustrate the gulf between police anti-racist propaganda and police practice.

- In September, AB of Manor Park was on his way to visit his girlfriend and their two children. As he reached her flat, five men began to racially abuse him. One of the men, who AB recognised as being a tenant in the same block of flats, was carrying an air rifle. AB managed to retreat into the flat where his two children were playing, but the man began banging on the door shouting 'we'll get you nigger'. The man with the air rifle then proceeded to point it through the letter-box, firing a number of shots into the flat whilst shouting 'welcome to the Nazi squad'. All this time AB's girlfriend



shielded their children.

AB called the police, as did another black neighbour who had witnessed the cowardly attack. But by the time the police arrived, the attackers had fled. AB, however, was able to identify the gunman and he was soon apprehended and arrested.

To AB's total shock and dismay, he was later informed that his assailant had been released without charge and that no further action was to be taken. The following week, AB met the same attacker, who, again racially abused him, and a fight ensued. As in the case of Mr Altaf, the police responded by arresting and charging AB. In so doing, the police gave legitimacy to a callous and vicious attack with frightening fascist overtones, and then criminalised a black man for defending himself and his children from a self-proclaimed member of a 'nazi-squad'.

- Late one November evening, PK, HM and SD had gone to a kebab shop on Romford Road. As SD stepped out of the shop, he was threatened by four white men, one of whom was wielding a car 'crook-lock'. PK attempted to speak reasonably to the men, to try and calm the situation and prevent an intended racist attack, but they responded by calling him a 'Paki' and swinging at him with the crook-lock. When PK bravely stood his ground, the men ran off towards a pile of bricks, which they presumably intended to use as weapons. It was at this point that several police vehicles arrived at the scene.

PK immediately told the police what had happened only to find himself handcuffed. Despite protesting that he and his friends had been the victims of a racist incident, he was assaulted by the police and arrested alongside

HM. They were both charged with threatening behaviour. The four men who had initiated the attack, on the other hand, were permitted to walk free and were not even questioned as to why they were walking the streets with a crook-lock at that time of night.

- FM, a single black mother living in Silvertown, received a series of obscene racist phone-calls. Eventually, she realised that the callers were two teenage sisters living nearby, and she told them that if they had anything to say to her they should say it to her face. Within half an hour they came to FM's house, one holding a hammer and the other a high-heeled shoe. They forced their way into her living room and attacked her. As FM tried to defend herself, her neighbour, who had heard a disturbance, intervened, enabling FM to call the police. Her assailants ran off.

Officers from Plaistow police station arrived; they told FM that it was not worth taking any action.

FM then explained what had happened to the mother of the two young women, and she promised to confront her daughters. But the following day, FM found herself faced by both the mother and daughters and again attacked inside her own home. Despite the previous lack of sympathy she had received from the police, FM called the police again for assistance. This time they refused to specify whether they would take action. Soon afterwards, FM was called to Plaistow police station only to find that they had spoken to the attackers and decided to charge FM with actual bodily harm (ABH). And this despite the fact that they had already referred FM to Newham Victim Support as a victim of a crime.

In all three cases, NMP arranged legal representation and helped the individuals concerned take out formal complaints against police officers involved. In the case of FM, it was fortunate that NMP accompanied her to the police station since although she believed she had been summoned there to give a statement that would be used to prosecute her attackers, in fact her statement was intended to be used as evidence against her, in an attempt to support the unjust charge of ABH (later reduced to common assault). NMP ensured that FM consulted a solicitor who advised her not to make a statement as it would merely be used against her in court. We followed this up by arranging support visits for her and collecting witness statements in her defence.

At the time of writing, all these victims of racial violence are awaiting trial. And, as in the Altaf and Govindan cases, we are determined to fight these at-

tempts to criminalise black people, and once again expose the way in which the police collaborate with violent racists against innocent black people.

UPDATE FROM 1989

Below we focus on two cases that were documented in last year's Annual Report.

- PB and his brother, JB, were attacked by two white men who they had challenged after the men had stolen from their grocery shop in Ilford. After stabbing JB in the back with a knife and assaulting PB with a hammer, the men drove off. With the help of a few friends, two of whom had witnessed the attack, PB helped his brother back into the shop. Twice, PB phoned 999 giving the registration number of the attackers' car to them. Officers from Ilford police station showed up soon after with the attackers. An ambulance eventually arrived to take JB to hospital. At this point the police not only arrested the two attackers, but also PB, charging them all with violent disorder. When JB was released from hospital a few days later, he was also charged with violent disorder.

This case was a classic example of the police distorting the facts by representing a vicious attack on two black men as just another fight between two opposing parties. After a determined intervention by NMP, the charges against PB and JB were dropped. NMP sustained this pressure on both the police and the CPS to ensure the prosecution of the attackers was pursued. Eventually, one of the two was sentenced to two years imprisonment for his callous crime.

- From the moment MM and LM bought a house in 'respectable' Redbridge, they were harassed by their middle class neighbours. A petition was organised to get them out of the area and signed by all the white neighbours. MM and his family were also subjected to continual threats of violence by neighbours, who encouraged their three rottweiler dogs to roam in their back garden. Predictably, the police gave their full backing to the racists, who were encouraged to lodge continual complaints against MM, which resulted in him being harassed by the police and arrested on charges for which he was later acquitted on appeal.

Despite his acquittal, the charges remained on the police computer. So when he was the subject of typical stop and search in Hackney, simply for being a black man, he was questioned about the charges and his car was

searched. When the police found an ordinary fire-place poker in his car, they arrested him for possessing an offensive weapon and he was subsequently charged.

The case was tried at the Inner London Crown Court. After listening to the police evidence, the CPS asked the Judge to discharge the jury. She then proceeded to tell the Judge that, in her opinion, the police officers had perjured themselves in court, had lied to her, and she further requested that the case be thrown out. The Judge directed the jury to acquit MM.

MM had a similar victory when fighting allegations of noise nuisance levelled by Redbridge Environmental Health. When the neighbours, attempting to play on the racist stereotype of the 'noisy black family', contacted the Environmental Health Department, they blatantly colluded with the racists, effectively suggesting that MM and his family move out and let things return to 'normal'. MM successfully sued the department for taking action against him with no evidence and without even taking a decibel reading.

MM and LM came to NMP after they failed to receive any support from their local Community Relations Council.

Their case illustrates the all-pervasive nature of racism in British society, where racial harassment and police malpractice are not confined to deprived inner city areas, but can take place in areas of relative affluence. As we have previously stated, racism continues to fester away in suburban Redbridge, totally unchallenged by the local Council, the police and other relevant agencies. It is the outrageous response of the police that is the cause for most concern.

At the time of writing, MM has been arrested again and charged after an incident in which he was the victim of an unprovoked assault. However, with the support of NMP, MM is fighting back against this pattern of police criminalisation. He is currently pursuing a civil action against the police officers who were exposed as perjurers in the previous case against him. With repeated victories against the institutions that have chosen to support his neighbours' campaign of racial hatred, the resolve of MM and his family provides inspiration for all families who refuse to be intimidated by racism.



5 DEFEND THE ALTAF/KHAN FAMILY

On 5 October 1990, Mohammed Altaf was acquitted at Snaresbrook Crown Court of grievous bodily harm (GBH). Mr Altaf's crime had been to defend himself, and his sister's family, the Khans, from what can only be described as a barbaric and clan-like racist attack.

The acquittal of Mr Altaf came after over a year of campaign work by NMP and other community groups. The campaign fought to raise public support for the family, to ensure Mr Altaf's acquittal and to confront racial harassment and police criminalisation of black people under attack.

Below we report on the facts of the case and highlight some of the many issues the campaign threw up.

THE ATTACK ON THE ALTAF/KHAN FAMILY

As reported in the 1989 NMP Annual Report, the Khan family had been harassed for years by two sets of neighbours, one living opposite, the other next door but one. Then on Monday 7 August 1989, the children of these families began knocking on the Khan family's door, chanting 'Paki bastards, go back where you came from'. Mrs Khan's niece opened the door, and was struck with a bicycle chain. Whereupon Mrs Khan (who was nine-months pregnant at the time) came out of her house to remonstrate with the children only to be struck with a dustbin lid. The parents of the children who had by this time arrived on the scene, now joined in the attack. When Mrs Khan defended herself by hitting them with her handbag, the racist family began to punch and kick Mrs Khan repeatedly in the stomach. We do not need to emphasise the effect this could have had on a woman who was in the final stages of pregnancy.

Mrs Khan and her niece managed to scramble back into their home. But once inside, the attackers threw stones at their windows and threatened that, later, when their sons came home, 'you'll be dead'. At this point the Khans

rang the police. But this did not deter the racists. They spent the next hour gathering a clan together to lead an assault on the Khan's family home.

Coincidentally, Mrs Khan's brother, Mr Altaf, was set to pay a visit to the family. But on approaching the home, he was immediately attacked by six men wielding an iron pipe, lengths of wood and a knife. Mr Altaf was badly beaten but he managed to crawl into the house.

But the racists were by no means finished with their cowardly attack. The men proceeded to grab kerosene oil lamps from a nearby road works and throw them through the Khan's window. Mrs Khan's niece attempted to phone the police once again, but as she was doing so two of the men kicked in the front door, ripped out the telephone wire, and grabbed Mr. Altaf from behind, shouting 'kill the Paki, kill him'. Another attacker cut Mr Altaf and then attempted to stab him. Mr Altaf managed to avoid the knife. And in the ensuing melee, one of the racists accidentally stabbed one of his fellow attackers.

Many neighbours had gathered in the streets, yet they did nothing. Finally, the police arrived. Mr Altaf attempted to explain to them what had happened, but was told to 'shut your bloody mouth' and was then arrested. As a result of protests from Mrs Khan's niece, the police reluctantly arrested two of the attackers. They were released later without charge. Mr Altaf, on the other hand, was remanded in Wormwood Scrubs prison on a charge of grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent.

NMP INTERVENES

The following morning, Mr Malik of the Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association informed NMP of the harrowing details of this case. After visiting the Khan family, and witnessing the damage done to their house, it was clear that despite Mrs Khan's she could not be expected to stay in the house a

day longer as she was expecting a baby within a week. We immediately visited the local housing office, and at our instigation, priority transfer status was allocated to the Khans. In the meantime, however, they were forced to move into bed and breakfast accommodation - which meant, in effect, that the Khans were driven out of their home whilst their attackers were allowed to remain unhindered in their home. Thankfully the Khans were soon permanently rehoused elsewhere in the borough.

Our other immediate concern was Mr Altaf, who was being held on remand. We arranged legal representation, and, three weeks later, an appeal against bail conditions resulted in his release.

THE CAMPAIGN

Mr Altaf had now been released, but he still faced trial on the charge of GBH, whilst his attackers escaped with impunity. NMP soon began publicising the case in the local press, distributing leaflets, and circulating a petition in defence of the family. The central focus of the campaign to 'Defend the Altaf/Khan Family' was that in a rapidly deteriorating environment of increasing racist violence, both the police and the courts have a fundamental duty to ensure that racist attacks are challenged with the full sanction of the law. Mr Altaf was the victim of an attempted racist murder, yet he found himself criminalised and awaiting trial.

Over 5,000 people signed petitions demanding that the charges against Mr Altaf be dropped and over 100 letters of support were received from around the country. Keith Vaz MP and local councillors made representations to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on behalf of Mr Altaf. The work of Mr Malik and the Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association was instrumental to the campaign. All local mosques were regularly leafleted, as were tube stations and central shopping areas in Newham. Representatives of the campaign spoke at various local schools and community centres. The case received extensive press coverage in the *Observer*, *City Limits*, *Asian Times*, *Caribbean Times*, *NewLife*, *Asian Herald*, *Eastern Eye* and the local press.

On 20 September over seventy people, representing various groups, lobbied the Police and Community Consultative Group meeting, demanding that the PCCG respond to the local community's outrage at the actions of the police both in this case, and in similar cases, such as that of Mr Govindan (see next chapter). No answers were forthcoming regarding these cases and three black councillors chose to walk out of the meeting in a protest against NMP for having publicised the issues raised by the cases. It is ironic that, after the trial, when we returned to the PCCG in even greater numbers, and with a *Panorama* television crew, these same councillors now supported Mr Altaf, condemning the nature of the police response to racist attacks in no uncertain terms. When put on the spot, the police on the committee were totally embarrassed.

And the PCCG agreed to write to the CPS urging it to review its procedure on tackling racial harassment. They also undertook to write to the PCA, the Home Secretary, the Lord Chancellor and the Commissioner of Police.

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE

From the out-set, the one-sided police approach to this case exposed the hypocrisy of their claims to impartiality, the hollowness of their alleged determination to tackle racial harassment. At the time of the attack the police were conducting a glossy publicity campaign. Entitled 'Racial Attacks are Against the Law', it encouraged victims of attacks to come forward and to have confidence in the police. None of this had the slightest bearing on the experiences of the Khan family, for their previous complaints of racial harassment had fallen on deaf ears; in exactly the same way the vicious assault on Mrs Khan on the night of the attack was ignored. And when the police finally arrived, after the brutal attack on Mr Altaf, they immediately sided with his attackers.

This same bias was evident in the rest of the police 'investigation'. For instance:

- When the police arrived they found Mr Altaf covered in his own blood, with injuries from a knife cut. Mr Altaf suffered severe bruising to the head, chest and knees; abrasions and swellings on the face and lips; a bloody nose; and two 30 cm long bruises on the back; yet he was the first person arrested.

- Not only was Mr Altaf charged, but his attackers were used as the chief police witnesses against him.

- Despite Mr Altaf's explanation that all injuries had been caused by a knife held by an attacker, only the Khan's home was ever searched for a knife.

- The police admitted that the Khan's door had been smashed open. But they still accepted the attackers' claim that they had never entered the house.

- The police declined to carry out forensic tests on the blood in the Khan's home. This could have proved Mr Altaf's claim that the stabbing took place in the house.

- In a police photograph of the Khan's living room, there is a spanner lying next to one of the kerosene oil lamps thrown through the window. One attacker admitted using spanners outside the house yet the police never removed it as evidence or tested it for fingerprints.

- Following Mr Altaf's arrest the same attackers continued to racially harass Mrs Khan as she collected her children from school. The police were informed but expressed very little interest. They were far more concerned, however, with arranging a meeting with Mrs Khan (who does not speak English) regarding the charges pending against her brother.

THE TRIAL

The trial, which began at Snaresbrook Crown Court on 1 October, was full of controversy. The judge presiding in the case, Mr Finney, who had been drafted in from Wood Green where he normally sits, had previously been the subject of allegations of racism. During the trial of a number of African-Caribbean youths, he had described the Probation Service's equal opportunities policy, as 'sinister'. The youths' lawyer in this case protested over his comments and had their sentences reduced in the court of appeal as a result.

Judge Finney, who had been given a copy of NMP's campaign leaflet by the prosecution, banned the community from the public gallery before the trial had even started. He claimed that the leaflet was 'inflammatory' and further ruled that, over 20 supporters of Mr Altaf, including his close relatives, would be denied access to the court. The decision to conduct Mr Altaf's trial behind closed doors was a shock to all those present. It was only after the defence counsel objected, that Judge Finney allowed six supporters of Mr Altaf into the court.

In court Mr Altaf's attackers — the chief prosecution witnesses against him — blatantly contradicted each other. In addition, their evidence frequently contradicted their original statements to the police and their depositions taken during committal proceedings at Stratford Magistrates Court. For example:

- Two of the witnesses said the fight took place in the Khan's front garden whilst another said it took place in the road.

- One witness said the weapon was a regular kitchen knife whilst another said it was a 'heavy duty, Rambo knife'.

- One witness actually admitted hitting Mr Altaf with a stick and passing the stick on to another man who continued the beating. All the other witnesses had claimed this same witness was asleep during the fight.

- The main witness, who had been stabbed, was wearing only boxer shorts and a dressing gown when the fight began. He claimed he was in no rush, and was standing in the street outside his parents' home casually waiting for his brother to drop him home. His brother did not remember this at all; his father

said he had given him £3 to take a minicab home whilst another witness claimed that he was actually walking over to the neighbour's house.

- One witness said he had killed an old woman in a car accident just before the incident with Mr Altaf and had been advised by his doctor to forget the recent past. Yet in a statement to the police in February 1990, he said he could clearly remember all the details of the incident, although it had happened six months previously.

- The main witness claimed that he was standing over Mr Altaf when Mr Altaf, who was down on his knees, stabbed him. Another attacker, who claimed to have witnessed the stabbing, said that blood spurted out from the wound. Yet none of the 'victim's' blood was found in the Khan's front garden, where most of the police's prosecution witnesses situated the fight.

- During cross-examination, prosecution witnesses lost their temper when inconsistencies in their accounts were put to them. One of the youths admitted he had recent convictions for actual bodily harm, theft and assault on a police officer. Another admitted he had been convicted of causing actual bodily harm in a kebab take-away. Their father, who at one point claimed he was not a violent man, later shouted that he would kill his sons and that he would 'beat the shit out of them' if they ever used weapons in a fight.



- One witness claimed she had to leave her sick bed to attend court due to the stress of the trial. She even had to be helped to the witness box. Yet she happily sat in the public gallery for the remainder of the trial and seemed perfectly well.

- All of the witnesses tried to manipulate the Judge by claiming to be intimidated by Mr Altaf's supporters and even went so far as to allege that their cars had been tampered with outside the court and outside their homes.

Throughout the trial similar contradictory evidence exposed the prosecution witnesses as liars. The defence called no witnesses, relying on the ridiculous case brought by the police and the CPS to condemn itself. The jury often laughed at the contradictory nature of the evidence of prosecution witnesses, and some were even moved to tears by descriptions of what the Altaf/Khan family had been through. The jury, therefore, had no hesitation in acquitting Mr Altaf, reaching a 'Not Guilty' verdict in well under an hour.

SUCCESSSES OF THE CAMPAIGN

The most obvious successes of the campaign were the acquittal of Mohammed Altaf and the transfer of the Khan family to a more desirable neighbourhood shortly after Mrs Khan had recovered from the attack and given birth to a fine, healthy baby. However, as we stated earlier, the aim of the campaign was also to expose the way in which the police had collaborated with racist thugs and criminalised an innocent black man. The campaign demands for an inquiry into this case were so far reaching that they not only received the backing of Newham council but also the Police

Community Consultative Group. So as to ensure that the police were not let off the hook after the trial, the campaign continued under the banner of 'Police Harassment is a Crime', linking the Altaf/Khan case to an almost identical incident (see next chapter). We thereby sought to illustrate that what happened to Mr Altaf was no isolated incident but indicative of police racism as a whole and the criminalisation of black people under attack.

The victory of the Altaf/Khan family is a symbolic victory for black people fighting both against racist attacks and racist policing. We will not consider the campaign to be a complete success, however, until legal action is taken against both the attackers and the investigating officers. Mr Altaf has instructed his solicitors to take out a civil action against the police. And Newham council's legal department, present at the trial, have taken statements from the Khans and pledged to initiate eviction proceedings against the attackers. It is only through this type of grassroots, community campaigning, coupled with successful legal action, that a clear message will be sent throughout Newham that racist attacks and police criminalisation will not go unchallenged.

6 WHO IS GOING TO PROTECT US FROM THE POLICE?

"The police behaved worse than the original attackers. They should have defended me, but instead they abused me and my family."

Mr Govindan after being cleared of assault.

Once again, the police response to racist attacks was thrust firmly onto Newham's political agenda by the police's attempts to criminalise Mr Govindan whose only crime was to defend himself and his family from a vicious racist attack. Mr Govindan's case, like those of the Newham 8 and Newham 7 before, raises fundamental questions concerning black people's right to self-defence.

In fact, Mr Govindan's case, as we shall see, bears many similarities to that of the Altaf/Khan family. There is the same inability on the part of the police to deal with persistent racial harassment. Then, when racial harassment culminates in a vicious clan-like attack, there is the same tendency on the part of the police to sympathise with the racists and criminalise black people for fighting back. And even though the police case against Mr Govindan eventually collapsed this cannot be used to obscure the issue of black self-defence. We are forced to ask: 'who is going to protect us from the police?'

THE FACTS OF THE CASE

The attack on the Govindan family which led to Mr Govindan's arrest was no isolated incident. For well over a year, they had endured harassment ranging from abuse and threats to smashing his windows. Despite repeatedly informing the police, little had been done to help them.

The main instigator of the violence against Padmanabhan Govindan, a 59-

year-old grocer, was Paul Charalambous, a neighbouring shopkeeper. On 1 June 1990, this harassment culminated in an attack on Mr Govindan, when Mr. Charalambous accompanied by three other men called him a 'fucking Paki', assaulted him and proceeded to run into shop. When Mr Govindan warned his assailant that he would defend himself, Charalambous reacted by running out of the shop and sending in his heavily built assistant David Murcutt to 'sort him out'. Murcutt burst in shouting 'I'll kill you' and began hurling sweet trays and crates of drinks at Mr Govindan.

After telling his young daughter to call the police, Mr Govindan was forced to grab a shop-knife to keep his attacker at bay. Mrs Govindan bolted the shop door and bravely stood her ground in order to prevent Charalambous and the others from breaking in and carrying out their threats to kill the Govindan family. Mr Govindan repeatedly warned Murcutt to 'wait for the law'.

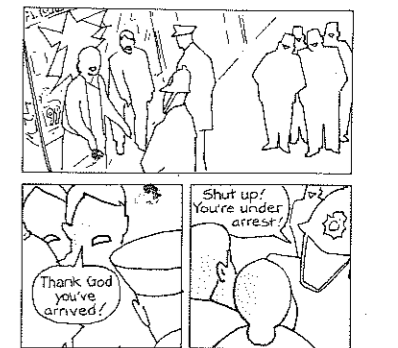
But Mr Govindan's faith in the police was in vain. For when officers from Plaistow police station arrived they were verbally abusive to Mr Govindan, sent him to the back of the shop and sided with the attackers - this despite the obvious damage to the Govindan's shop and the disparity between a group of well-built white men, whose ages range from early twenties to mid-thirties, and an elderly Asian man with a severe heart condition.

Mr Govindan is clear that the reason for the police bias was unashamed and blatant racism. The WPC present went so far as to promise the attackers that Mr Govindan would be put behind bars. When Murcutt said he had no injuries that would warrant a serious change against Mr Govindan, she told him an old scar on his hand would suffice and that he should go to hospital because 'it's good for the case'. Despite the fact that the whole attack

EASTERN EYE
ROUGH JUSTICE!
 'I'LL TEACH THEM DISCIPLINE!
 VOWS BRAVE EX-ARMY OFFICER



Eastern Eye, 26/2/91



NEWS
 OBSERVER SUNDAY 7 OCTOBER 1990

'At the end of the day a black family was driven from home by violence but the police chose to blame the victim.'

Race attack victim vows to sue police over arrest

David Hase
 Home Affairs Correspondent

AN ASIAN man who was beaten with weapons and cut with a knife during an attack on his sister's home last week has vowed to sue the police over his arrest and charges by police officers.

As Mohammed Altaf, a 40-year-old father of three, was taken to court on charges of assault on a police officer, he vowed to sue the police, lawyers and community workers described the case as a landmark verdict, which had exposed grave deficiencies in the investigation of racial violence.

Last night the police defended their actions. Superintendent John Ball, the local commander, said the police had acted in a "reasonable" manner. He said the police had acted in a "reasonable" manner. He said the police had acted in a "reasonable" manner.

Mr Altaf became involved when he went to visit his sister Zahida Khan, who lived with her husband and her niece at 51 Carlisle Road, West Ham, a narrow street of Victorian council houses. According to a statement by the police, the family had been attacked by a group of men who had broken into the house and threatened the children of the house. Mr Altaf was arrested and charged with assault on a police officer.

Mr Altaf was arrested and charged with assault on a police officer. He was released on bail and is due to appear in court on October 10. He is being defended by solicitors from the Campaign Against Racist Attacks (CARA).

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had been captured on Mr Govindan's security camera, the police still chose to arrest Mr Govindan for actual bodily harm (ABH). They even went so far as sharing cherries from Charalambous's shop, sarcastically offering them to Mr Govindan. Once in custody, Mr Govindan was held for eight hours, refused permission to make a phone call and even refused a simple request for a glass of water, before finally being charged and released.

Having succeeded in attacking Mr Govindan with the full sanction of the police, Charalambous and Murcutt now felt confident they could attack the family again. Hence, the following month they began racially abusing and threatening Mr Govindan's nephew, Ajith. As soon as Ajith stepped into the street, Charalambous shouted 'there he is' and Murcutt proceeded to head-butt him. Again the Govindans called the police, but when the police arrived, Murcutt told them 'we've been having trouble with them' (ie the Govindans) and quoted the names of the officers who had dealt with the previous attack. On hearing this, the police decided to ignore the assault and actually directed a warning towards Ajith before leaving. This effectively meant that the outrageous charges against Mr Govindan constituted a free license for Murcutt and Charalambous to attack any members of the family at will. It, therefore, came as no surprise that after Charalambous instigated yet another attack on the shop (after which Mr Govindan yet again called the police), the police went and saw Charalambous and left without even speaking to Mr Govindan. It was left to volunteers on NMP's Emergency Service line to go down to the shop that night and record the incident.

DEFEND MR GOVINDAN

The campaign in defence of Mr Govindan was initiated in conjunction with the Defend the Altaf/Khan Family campaign under the banner of 'Police Harassment is a Crime'. The purpose behind adopting this approach was to highlight the fact that the police response to racist violence is often even more racist and more damaging than the original attack. Linking the two cases illustrated that there is nothing unique about this type of police racism that it is, in fact, a common experience for the black community. The similarities between the two cases are quite chilling:

In both cases

- The police ignored the families' previous complaints of racial harassment.
- The families were attacked by groups led by their racist neighbours.
- It was the black families who called the police.
- The police sided with the attackers and

used the attackers as the sole witnesses against them.

- The police ignored the continued racist attacks against the black families following the arrests.

The campaign was coordinated by NMP alongside the Malayalee Association of the UK and the Sree Narayana Mission of the UK both of which are black community groups in which Mr Govindan has been a longstanding and prominent member. The campaign received extensive local publicity in the press. It was also publicised through the leafleting of temples, community centres, colleges, polytechnic sites and housing estates, as well as through the placing of posters in central shopping areas and by the circulation of petitions in support of Mr Govindan.

On 20 September, a delegation of representatives from various community groups raised the issue of Mr Govindan's arrest at a Police Community Consultative Group (PCCG) meeting but as reported in the previous chapter, the delegation received a mixed reception. Subsequent campaign meetings with Newham council and a lobby of the full council meeting secured official council backing for the campaign. Thus at the PCCG AGM on 1 October, an even larger campaign delegation, accompanied by a *BBC Panorama* film crew, secured a commitment from the meeting to make representations to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Commissioner of Police regarding the charges against Mr Govindan.

On 22 November, over 100 local people attended a public meeting in support of the campaign. The meeting was addressed by Mr Govindan, Mr Pillai (Malayalee Association), Mr Murali (Sree Narayana Mission), Mr Malik (Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association), Barry Mussenden (Defend the Altaf/Khan Family) and Jasbir Singh (NMP). Many of those who attended had never been to such a meeting before but such was their anger at the police treatment of Mr Govindan that they were determined to make a stand. This was reflected in the contributions which included demands for action against the attackers and the police and calls for the resignation of Newham's principal Community Liaison Officer, Superintendent John Ball. Interestingly, Superintendent Ball did indeed resign a month later.

THE TRIAL

The trial which began on 11 December 1990 had to be adjourned almost immediately after David Murcutt - the chief police prosecution witness - failed to turn up sending a message to the court that he was in hospital. However, NMP took the *Panorama* crew which was filming the picket of the court, to Charalambous's shop and far from being on his death bed, Murcutt was there serving his customers. When questioned by

Panorama, he responded by attacking the cameraman as he was filming.

Now that the thuggery of Murcutt and Charalambous had been fully exposed, they clearly had no intention of being publicly questioned over their actions against Mr Govindan. And on the new trial date of 21 February 1991, Murcutt again sent a message to the court saying he was 'sick'. After the defence lawyers complained over Murcutt's lies to the court at the previous trial, the prosecution could hardly request another adjournment and they were forced to admit that without Murcutt they had no evidence to offer and the case could be dismissed. The magistrates were extremely reluctant to dismiss the case claiming that 'outside elements' may have intimidated Murcutt. But with no evidence against Mr Govindan, they had no choice but to acquit him.

Amidst the cheers of over 60 people picketing the court and packing the public gallery, Mr Govindan speaking to the *BBC Newsroom Southeast* film crew and journalists from the national and local press stated:

"This case is a victory not just for me but for the whole black community. I am an innocent man. The only reason I was arrested was because of the colour of my skin. After nearly eight months of worry I'm very relieved but I won't be satisfied until my attackers and the police are punished."

SUCCESSSES OF THE CAMPAIGN

Clearly, Mr Govindan's vindication on the trumped-up charges against him was the key issue for the defence campaign but there were many other campaign successes as well:

- Linking the Govindan case to the Altaf/Khan case illustrated that there is nothing unique about the police criminalisation of victims of racist attacks but that each case is indicative of the daily experience of the black community.
- The positive way in which the case was featured on *Panorama* and *BBC News* meant that the police had absolutely no defence against the hard issues of policing and racism that were raised in this case.
- The pressure brought to bear on the police by the campaign was such that they were forced to provide Mr Govindan with the support he was due in the first place. When his telephone wires were recently cut, senior police officers arrived immediately, called repair services and even stood guard until the lines were fixed.

● David Murcutt has finally been charged with assault resulting from the attack on Mr Govindan's nephew. Furthermore, since the campaign has been in full stride, there have been no more attacks, threats or acts of intimidation towards the Govindans.

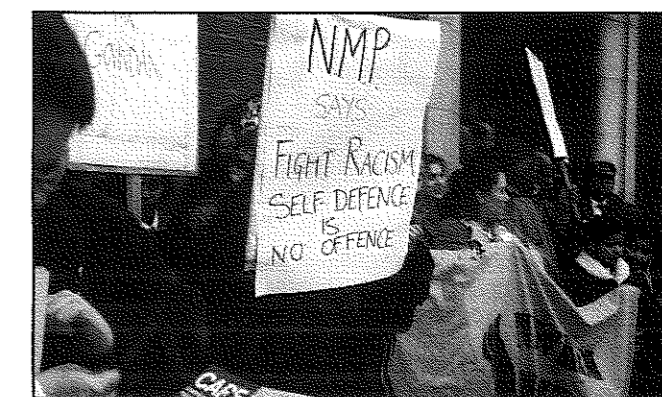
● Whilst unexpected, the campaign welcomed the full support of Newham council — placing the case and the issues involved at the forefront of the local political agenda — as acknowledged in our publicity. However, we note that the council made absolutely no mention of the campaign in their press release on Mr Govindan's victory.

● With the case won and the events of the attacks and the police response captured on video Mr Govindan is now in an excellent position to take out civil proceedings against both his attackers and the police.

This victory is an inspiration to others standing up against the racist oppression meted out to Britain's black community. The importance of community campaigning has again been demonstrated which is why Mr Govindan is not content to let matters end here. He is determined to sue the police and see justice prevail:

"I am still surprised at the prejudice that exists among the officers of the law who are supposed to protect us no matter what colour or creed. I have never had any trouble with the law. This incident has been deliberately thrust on me. I was just protecting my wife my daughter my property and myself. I think any human being would react in the same way under such circumstances. The police officers arrested the wrong man because of the colour I was born with. The officers responsible must be investigated and disciplined."

Mr Govindan



Picket in support of Mr Govindan

7 POLICE HARASSMENT IS A CRIME

"In this country, if the police say you're guilty, then you're guilty, especially if you are black or Irish."

Billy Power (one of the Birmingham 6 after being freed)

Events over the past year have highlighted the extent to which the police target, brutalise and criminalise minority sections of the community (see chapter 8). But whilst the Birmingham 6, Tottenham 3 and Guildford 4 cases have received widespread publicity, areas such as east London continue to be subjected to oppressive and racist policing which is almost routine in its nature. As we have consistently documented, black people in Newham are not free to walk the streets, drive their cars, frequent meeting places, or even sit in their homes without being under the constant threat of police harassment.

CASEWORK

During 1990, a total of 132 cases of police harassment were reported to NMP. A breakdown reveals the following:

● Breakdown in terms of manner of referral

Direct	86
Emergency Service (during non-office hours)	32
Via other agencies	14

● Breakdown in terms of gender and age⁽¹⁾

Male	82
Female	39
Children	11

● Breakdown in terms of nature of police harassment⁽²⁾

Assault/physical abuse	28
Verbal abuse	25
Stop and search/traffic	32

Home raids	11
Immigration	13
Other ⁽³⁾	23

● Breakdown in terms of police station

West Ham	43
Plaistow	31
Forest Gate	21
East Ham	7
Outside Newham ⁽⁴⁾	19
Unidentified police station ⁽⁵⁾	11

● Breakdown in terms of area

Forest Gate	38
Stratford	18
Manor Park	18
Canning Town/ Custom House	9
Beckton/North Woolwich	5
Plaistow	14
East Ham	12
Outside Newham ⁽⁶⁾	18

Below we report in more detail on specific cases of police harassment in which we were requested to intervene during the course of 1990.

RAIDS ON THE HOME

● One evening early last November, the police arrived at the home of the R family, East Ham. According to the police, they had received a call regarding a verbal argument between family members. When Mrs R opened her front door, she froze at the sight before her: police cars and vans were everywhere and there was even a police helicopter hovering above her home. Five officers then violently forced their way past Mrs R and immediately leapt on her son, DR. As a black-belt karate expert, DR sensibly refrained from any physical attempts to resist the police. Despite this, police proceeded to assault him, and during repeated attacks, ex-

Notes for statistics

(1)Our statistics in terms of gender and age represent the victim and/or person within a family with whom we have had the most frequent contact or who notified us of the incident.

(2)The majority of those who complained to us of police harassment experienced more than one kind of harassment. We have therefore classified incidents in terms of the major component of harassment.

(3)'Other' represents forms of harassment such as police indifference towards racial harassment and victims of racial harassment being arrested and charged by the police.

(4)'Outside Newham' represents the neighbouring boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, or police stations outside Newham where Newham residents were being held.

(5)'Unidentified police station' represents incidents of police harassment in Newham where we have been unable to identify police officers and their stations.

(6)'Outside Newham' represents the neighbouring boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, or areas outside Newham where Newham residents have faced police harassment.

tensive damage was done to the interior of the family home. As DR was taken away, the officers, blatantly indifferent to the havoc they had wreaked, abused other members of the family. DR was eventually charged with obstruction and is awaiting trial.



This case is a classic example of the excessive ways in which police respond to even the most minor of complaints regarding a black family. None of the R family had given any reason for the police to suspect they had broken the law. If just one officer had listened to Mrs R's explanation that there had been an argument that had been resolved, the matter could have ended there. But in the words of Mrs R, 'they didn't come to enquire, they came to fight'. The arrest of DR is completely unjustifiable, as he had committed no crime. And the charge of obstruction against DR relates solely to false allegations regarding his behaviour once the police entered the house. The officers should not have been there in the first place, let alone in such numbers.

After accompanying DR to court, NMP took photographic evidence of the damage done to the family home, issuing a formal complaint against the officers involved in the raid and a compensation claim to New Scotland Yard for damage to property. At the time of writing, we are still fighting this case. We are determined that the police should not be allowed to descend on a black family in this fashion, leaving them shocked, brutalised and humiliated.

● In March, during the early hours of the morning, five police officers burst into Ms I's home in East Ham. Ms I's two young daughters, aged eight and ten, were asleep at the time. The police claimed they had arrested Ms I's boyfriend (who does not live at the premises) for possession of drugs, using this as a pretext to ransack her home. When Ms I protested, she was physically assaulted in front of her children who began crying and screaming, appealing to the officers to 'leave mummy alone'. On failing to find any illegal substances in the house, the officers left. It later transpired that Ms I's boyfriend had never even been arrested in the first place. Ms I received no apology

from the police; nor did she receive compensation for the damage done to her home.

In November, when Ms I and her children were asleep, Ms I heard the sound of a forcible entry being made into her home. On running to the door, Ms I was confronted by officers brandishing a search warrant. They claimed to be looking for cocaine. The family were sent to the living room while the raid took place, and the children were even refused permission to visit the toilet. When Ms I's eldest daughter complained, she was told to be silent and that 'we can arrange for you to be put into care ... you won't see your mum very often'. As police searched the house, one officer stated 'your house is very clean, I've been to some black people's houses and they have been nasty, really nasty'. And this was said despite the fact that one of the officers involved in the raid was black.

On failing to find any cocaine, the officers left. For them, the incident was just another routine raid on a black household, but for Ms I and her children, the psychological torment and trauma cannot easily be forgotten. Ms I's daughters, although still young, recognised that the officers were 'prejudiced' and this exposure to the realities of racism has, not surprisingly, permanently tainted their views of the police.

Ms I approached NMP for support and we have since issued formal complaints over both raids, complimented by civil proceedings for damages against the Metropolitan Police. We hope that successful court action will make the police think twice before harassing and abusing vulnerable black families in this way.

● In August, IM was driving his car through Stratford in the early hours of the morning when he was stopped by police. They searched the vehicle, alleging that the engine was stolen. The officers then insisted that IM take them to his family home in Forest Gate, where they proceeded to search his room. On finding nothing suspicious, the police woke up IM's elder brother, YM, demanding to search the rest of the house. YM objected to this and was called a 'Paki'. When YM warned the police that he would make a complaint about their racism, one officer responded by punching him in the face, whilst another officer grabbed him by the throat and said 'you still going to complain, you black bastard'. They then dragged YM out into the street and began raining blows down on him.

By now, 12 officers from the Territorial Support Group (TSG) had arrived and IM was forced into the police van. YM's screams alerted his other brother, AM, who ran out into the front garden in his underpants. The officers,

who were all the time punching and kicking YM, now threatened AM with arrest. The brothers' father, who by now had become involved in the situation, told AM to call the police since these officers had 'gone mad'. The police threatened the father and chased AM into the house, only to drag him back into the street, saying he was under arrest for assaulting a police officer. They forced AM to walk bare-footed in the street through some broken glass and bundled him into a police van. One officer grabbed hold of his neck and banged his head on the van, saying 'this is what you deserve, you Paki'. As the door was closed, another officer told his colleagues to 'give the black bastard a good beating'. All three brothers were taken to West Ham police station. YM and AM were charged with threatening behaviour and assaulting a police officer. On release, they were told 'you're lucky to be in one piece' and that 'nobody say what happened, if you say anything to anyone, then we'll come down to your house again'.

The facts of this case speak for themselves. The whole episode reveals the chain of events that a police stop and search can all too easily lead to. A family peacefully asleep in their home find themselves dragged into the streets, seriously beaten, racially abused, and then charged with assault. Fortunately the brothers were not intimidated by the police 'warning' that they should keep quiet about the incident, and reported the matter to NMP. We recorded their injuries and arranged the best legal representation possible in order to fight the charges.

A great deal of work went into this defence case and, as this Annual Report was being prepared, we received the good news that our efforts have been rewarded by the case against the M family being dismissed. However, the brothers are determined not to let matters rest here, and we are now making arrangements for them to sue the police. The sheer racism of the arresting officers was bad enough, but, typically, the TSG acted in an even more brutal fashion, and on arrival went totally out of control. It is crucial that such police violence does not go unpunished and, for this reason, the civil action against the police will be vigorously pursued.

HARASSMENT ON THE STREETS

● One evening in August, AB, who had left his home in Plaistow to use a phone-box, was abused by the scruffily-dressed occupants of a parked car. One occupant said 'look at that big black bastard', whilst another shouted 'you nigger'. Having been provoked, AB simply replied 'you coots' - black slang for bigoted whites - and continued walking. The next thing AB knew, he was attacked by the three

men, one of whom had now armed himself with a scaffolding pole. AB ran away. When he saw a police car, he jogged towards it, expecting that the officers would arrest the three white men. But before he had a chance to say anything, the police officers grabbed him and began aiming punches at his head and body. A police van then arrived and AB, still unaware of the whereabouts of the three men who had attacked him, was thrown into it. As he was transported to Plaistow police station, the officers in the van continued their assault on him. On arrival at the police station, AB was strip-searched, eventually charged with assaulting two police officers. It was only then that he was told that the three racist thugs who had attacked him were actually undercover police men.

On release, AB immediately contacted NMP. Fortunately, we had just received a report from someone who had witnessed the incident. We arranged for AB's injuries to be photographed, and were able to build up a strong defence case. Consequently, when the case recently came to court, the predictable 'inconsistencies' in the police evidence were exposed. For example: -

- The police claimed the incident began with AB putting his head through the open car window, abusing them in their capacity as police officers, and then revealing his buttocks. But they also said that they were undercover police officers, failing to explain how AB could possibly have known them to be police.

- All three police officers agreed that AB assaulted two of the officers, but they had very different versions of how the alleged assault took place. The uniformed police officers, who later arrived on the scene, claimed they were told of the assault, by one of the officers who had allegedly been attacked, on the way to the police station. But the evidence of the officer - the supposed victim of the attack - contradicted this in that he said he did not accompany the uniformed officers back to the station.

- No mention of an assault was ever made on the custody record. Moreover, the custody officer was never told of this supposed assault.

Despite all these many discrepancies in the police evidence, the two magistrates - one of whom happened to be black - took well over an hour deliberating on the case and were still unable to agree on a verdict. This whole scenario is highly unusual, but since there were only two magistrates - with one accepting the police evidence and one disputing it - a retrial was ordered.

In the opinion of NMP observers at the trial, the police had been exposed as complete liars who presumably out of boredom, and because a black man walking down the street on his own is seen as 'fair game', had set about racially attacking an innocent

passer-by. We are now concerned that before the retrial, police witnesses may 'refine' their story to avoid such inconsistencies and ensure a conviction. It is a case we continue to monitor with the utmost scrutiny.

● One April evening, LL, who is employed by Newham council as a mobile security guard, was on duty. During a patrol in Forest Gate, he pulled his car over behind a row of parked cars, in order to inspect council property and then proceeded to use his cash-card in the bank-till opposite. He then got back into the car. Although he was in full uniform, with a guard dog in the rear of his car, police officers driving past beckoned him to move on. LL, who was radioing to base at the time, held up an explanatory sign stating 'London Borough of Newham Emergency Services on duty' and the officers moved off. They then returned on foot, accused him of abusing them, and dragged LL out of his car. When LL attempted to tell the officers there was no need for this, and that part of his job involved working and maintaining a good relationship with the police, the officers responded by saying he was under arrest for disturbing the peace.

During the trial, it was revealed that LL, who had no previous convictions, had had an exemplary record whilst serving in the British Army. But despite this, and despite the lack of evidence against him, LL was still convicted and fined. Although a minor offence, it is the principle of the issue that is so unacceptable. In this instance, a black man was diligently going about duties aimed at preventing crime, only to find that officers who are paid to enforce the law had nothing better to do than harass him. The police seem determined to criminalise all black people, even if only with the most minor offences, and LL is now left to reflect bitterly on the state of the British criminal justice system.

● PT, who has previous convictions, has been harassed by the police for many years. As PT is familiar to the police, who see him as an easy target for constant 'nickings', they take pleasure in taunting him in order to provoke an arrestable offence. One example of this occurred when PT was walking down High Street, East Ham. An officer took great amusement from following right behind him. Eventually PT got fed up and turned around, telling the officer to 'f.... off and leave me alone'. He was immediately arrested. The officer, who knew of PT's previous convictions, was confident of a successful prosecution.

In another incident, PT was stabbed in his own home by two men during a horrific attack in which his arm was almost severed. His assailants were also black. The police response

was to place PT under arrest. The subsequent investigation resulted in a forced entry into PT's home. Following this, PT was remanded to Brixton prison for six months before a trial in which the judge threw out the case after just



Result of the police 'search'

one hour. On returning home, PT found that the police search of his flat had resulted in it being totally ransacked and left uninhabitable. Soon after release, PT was attacked on the streets by the same men. He reported the incident to NMP. We accompanied him to the police station to ensure that this time the police action would be against the attackers and not against PT. However, the police still refused to act; it seemed that they held a grudge owing to the fact the previous charges against PT had been thrown out. The police stated openly that they wanted to see PT behind bars.

The hostility of the police towards PT came to a climax in May. It was then that the two men who were after PT, attacked him for a third time, this time in an alley-way. Whilst PT was in a near-by phone-box attempting to report the attack to NMP, the police arrived. PT assumed the police were there as a result of the attack on him but, in fact, they were responding to an allegation that PT had caused criminal damage during the struggle. Without questioning PT as to the course of events, the officers immediately handcuffed him. When he attempted to explain his side of the story, a struggle ensued during which four officers set upon him and repeatedly punched him. It was a busy market day and many by-standers implored the police to leave PT alone, but he was arrested and charged with seriously assaulting the officers whom he was struggling with. Despite the fact that witnesses came to court and testified on PT's behalf, he could not and did not want to deny that he had tried to fight back during the police assault, and, as a result he was convicted of actual bodily harm (ABH) against the arresting officers. PT is now serving 12 months in prison.

This whole saga reveals the vindictive attitude of many of Newham's police officers. Any black person with previous convictions is seen as an 'easy nick', and the police will go out of their way to provoke such an individual into committing an arrestable offence, not content until they can ensure that s/he is finally put behind bars. This form of petty tyranny on the part of the police is further complimented by their attitude of total indifference towards any problem that the victimised individual experiences, even when it includes being repeatedly attacked and almost killed in one's own home - in PT's case, there is also the question of the police's nonchalant attitude towards black on black violence.

The whole approach of the police serves as another strategy in the overall criminalisation of the black community. Simply put, the strategy is one of ensuring that as many black people as possible receive criminal records, and then use their 'previous' as justifications for continual harassment.

HARASSMENT AT WORK

As NMP has repeatedly stated, all sections of the black community are vulnerable to police harassment. In terms of harassment at work, this has been particularly true of the Chinese community in east London and the City who have had to tolerate constant racist policing whilst going about their daily lives. The issue has recently been brought to a head by the persistent police harassment of the 50 or 60 Chinese traders working in Smithfields meat market, Barbican.

In October, a police officer, who has been responsible for at least ten separate incidents of racial harassment in the market, ordered Ms Mau, a Chinese trader, to move her vehicle from a legitimate parking spot. The deliberately aggressive and threatening manner of the officer intimidated her, and she agreed to move.

Immediately as the space became vacant, a white driver occupied it with no objection whatsoever from the officer. When Ms Mau demanded an explanation, none was forthcoming. The whole incident was witnessed by over 30 Chinese and English traders who are adamant that it was a case of blatant racial discrimination.

All the witnesses and other Chinese traders, many of whom have also been harassed, signed a petition complaining to the police over this harassment but they have yet to receive a satisfactory response.

The Chinese Information Advice Centre in conjunction with Newham Chinese Association approached NMP in order to initiate a joint campaign to highlight the way in which African-Caribbean, South Asian and Far-East Asian people are all subjected to the same racist policing. The case was raised amongst the media, particularly in the Chinese press and the general black press, and the initiative is now working towards building greater unity amongst all minority groups fighting back against police racism.

POLICE HARASSMENT OF BLACK WOMEN

The Metropolitan police 'Racial Harassment is a Crime' campaign has been well-documented in this report, but running concurrently with it has been a police campaign around 'Sexual Harassment is a Crime'. In the same way as the police have an atrocious record in responding to victims of racist violence, their reputation for dealing with the victims of sexual violence is equally bad, whether it be crimes ranging from sexual harassment at work, domestic violence in the home or vicious rape. It must also be stated that the improvement in the standard of policing as a result of the campaign has been negligible. For this reason, black women remain particularly vulnerable to the negative response of the police who are notorious for being as sexist as they are racist.

This is borne out in the case of SF who, in October, was raped by a man who she was able to identify both by name and address. SF immediately reported the crime to Forest Gate CID. As she was still suffering from the physical, emotional and psychological effects of the attack, she relied on friends to contact the police and to enquire as to the progress of the investigation and whether the rapist had been apprehended. Unbelievably, these friends found themselves being spoken to in a 'Jim Davidson' mock Caribbean accent and told 'we've got more important things to do'. When SF's sister complained she was told 'we don't like your attitude ... so now you'll say we're racist'. The police's offensive behaviour in this case is beyond belief. We expect the strongly worded NMP official complaint against the officers dealing with this episode to ensure that SF is treated with more sensitivity and the case against her attacker pursued more seriously.

POLICE HARASSMENT OF THE BLACK DISABLED

JO is a black community worker in the Upton Park area who is disabled through polio. On finishing work one December evening, he phoned for a taxi due to his mobility problems. The taxi took an excessively long period to arrive. When the car finally arrived, JO complained to the driver, only to be racially abused and assaulted.

JO locked himself inside the black community centre where he had been working and called the police. When the police arrived, JO, who was quite naturally distraught, could not tell if they were police, as they were not uniformed officers, so he requested to see their identification before allowing them in. This simple request infuriated the police who proceeded to kick down the centre door and burst into the premises. JO was assaulted, and then four officers began violently arresting him. To add to his humiliation, JO was told he was being detained under the Mental Health Act.

JO was taken to West Ham police station and later

released without charge. He informed his colleagues who contacted NMP. We complained to the police about the way JO was treated and the injuries he had sustained at the hands of the police. As a result, the police attempted to identify the taxi driver who initially assaulted JO, but were unable to do so. In the presence of an NMP worker, a senior officer justified the 'mistake' by claiming that the police officers believed JO was attempting to strangle himself.

There is nothing unique about this type of treatment of victims of racist violence (see chapter on police response to racist attacks) but it is all the more inexcusable in that a disabled black person was treated in this way after being attacked. It must take a particularly heartless brand of racism for the police to take advantage of JO and treat him in the aggressive and humiliating way they did. Despite JO being a highly qualified educational trainer, the police arrested him under the Mental Health Act, something that is happening increasingly to black people (see chapter 12). Furthermore, by kicking down the door of the black community centre, the police demonstrated their lack of respect for black community centres. NMP categorically condemns the actions of the police in this case and we are advising the black community centre concerned on how to take out a legal action against the police. The crux of our advice is 'don't let them get away with it!'

POLICE RACISM

Below we document two cases which constitute indirect police harassment and illustrate the way in which racism characterises police dealings with black people.

● In October, WPC Lindley, from Plaistow police station, was involved in a meeting with Social Services who were dealing with a case involving a black mother and her children. In a totally unprovoked outburst, WPC Lindley began accusing black people of continually 'breeding' and complained about 'niggers' beating their children. The matter was reported to NMP and we contacted the Director of Social Services to ensure that the council officially complained about WPC Lindley's racist remarks. This officer was subsequently removed from the police's child protection team, but, as far as we are aware, she was never disciplined and is therefore free to act out her prejudices in other areas of policing.

● The J family from Forest Gate had experienced five years of harassment from their neighbours including an assault on Mrs J, an attack on Mr J in which he was beaten unconscious and hospitalised, and even an assault on their baby grandchild.

In September, Mr J was again attacked outside his home by the neighbours and had his head split open with an iron bar. Mr J's son attempted to save his father, but he was also

attacked. When the police arrived, they refused to make any arrests, instead advising Mr J to 'take your own action, we're not doing anything'. Furthermore, the officers would not even call an ambulance, telling Mr J, 'there's nothing wrong with you'. In fact, Mr J had to be hospitalised for over a week; he was bed-ridden for over a month and in need of regular home visits from his GP. Even whilst Mr J was in hospital, Mrs J was warned by the neighbours that 'you and the kids are next'.

Despite these shocking attacks on the J family, the police have remained ambivalent to their plight. It took a complaint from NMP before the case was investigated. Even now, there is no guarantee that action will be taken.

Leaving a black family in this predicament to effectively fend for themselves is simply another form of police harassment. Cases such as this serve to reiterate the fact that the police have no interest in serving the black community. The ineffective response of the police to crimes against black people is as much a problem as the continued criminalisation of the black community.

All the cases discussed in this chapter reveal the extent to which racism is prevalent in the police force and the varying ways racism manifests itself. As we approach the 10th anniversary of the 1981 uprisings, it is clear that no significant advances have been made in tackling racism within the police force. Instead, all we can see is increased police powers and an improvement in police public relations. This is why the black community has no faith in the police, and why groups like NMP remain a vital resource for all those who continue to suffer police harassment.

8 POLICING UNDER SCRUTINY

Last year we documented the crisis of public confidence in the British police. Recent events (most notably the acquittal of the Birmingham 6) have confirmed how rotten the state of policing in Britain actually is. Controversies of some sort involving the police are still regularly being brought to the public's attention - be it another miscarriage of justice or example of police corruption; be it another death in custody or case of police malpractice, where the police have had to pay vast sums in compensation as a result of a civil action or an out-of-court settlement.

Below we examine some of the key policing issues, both local and national, that arose during 1990, issues that are of special interest to NMP's work in challenging racist policing.

BIRMINGHAM 6: FREE AT LAST

On 14 March 1991 the Birmingham 6 were freed by the Court of Appeal after nearly 17 years in prison. Framed by the West Midlands police and the British judiciary for the IRA pub bombings in Birmingham in 1974, their case demonstrates, like the Guildford 4 case, the extent of police corruption and the lengths to which those at the very highest of levels will go to cover it up.

The Birmingham 6 were convicted purely on the basis of fabricated confessions, beaten out of them, and forensic evidence now thoroughly discredited. The British establishment wanted to scapegoat any group of Irish men they could lay their hands on and the West Midlands police duly delivered. Although the government has now announced a Royal Commission to assess the flawed judicial system as a whole, we have no illusions that those guilty at the highest levels will ever be brought to justice, or that any substantial legal reform will be forthcoming. A few officers on the ground will probably be sacrificed but the larger conspiracy will be hidden from the public.

Paddy Hill, one of the Birmingham

6, summed up after walking out of the Old Bailey to a rapturous reunion with family, friends and supporters:

"For sixteen-and-a-half years we have been used as political scapegoats. The police told us from the start we did not do it. They told us they didn't care who had done it. They told us we were selected and they were going to frame us for it and just to keep the people in there happy. I don't think them people in there have got the intelligence or the honesty to spell the word justice, never mind dispense it. They're rotten." (pointing at the court behind him)

We salute the Birmingham 6 - Hugh Callaghan, Paddy Hill, Gerry Hunter, Richard McKenny, Billy Power and Johnny Walker - and their families who never stopped fighting for the release of the Six and led the campaign from start to finish at tremendous personal cost. We salute the 'Free the Birmingham 6 Campaign', the defence lawyers, Granada's *World in Action* programme and public figures like Chris Mullin who consistently campaigned on behalf of the Six. We note how cynical politicians who never supported the Six until it was opportune to do so, recently jumped onto the bandwagon to gain as much political capital out of the case as they could. We condemn those police officers of the now-disbanded West Midlands Serious Crime Squad who were named in court for being involved in the framing of the Six, particularly former Detective Superintendent George Reade who headed the team. We condemn those judges who never questioned the police version of events in spite of all evidence to the contrary and denied the Six their freedom, particularly Lord Bridge, the late Lord

Chief Justice Widgery, Lord Denning and Lord Chief Justice Lane. The fact that over 100 MPs of all political parties have now called for the resignation of Lord Lane (who arrogantly dismissed the Six's last appeal in January 1988) is testimony to his complicity with the injustice perpetrated against the Six.

FREE THE TOTTENHAM 3

In the aftermath of the acquittal of the Birmingham 6 (and the release of the Winchester 3 and the exoneration of the Maguire 7), we must press on to release all those convicted on no evidence other than their so-called 'confessions' - and none more so than the Tottenham 3. Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghupathi have been in prison for more than five years, serving life sentences for a crime they did not commit. Engin's case has already been referred back to the Court of Appeal and the Home Secretary is currently considering new evidence in Winston's and Mark's cases. Now that British justice lies in tatters and the media and public are more willing to question the police and judiciary than ever before, we must raise the profile of cases like the Tottenham 3 and countless others so that their release can be expedited. We must demand the end of convictions based purely on uncorroborated confessions made in police custody and see that the current appeal process is replaced with an independent review panel of lawyers and lay people to investigate possible miscarriages of justice - a demand already backed by leading lawyers including Lord Scarman. Only then will police and judicial corruption stand the chance of being fully exposed.

WYN JONES AND POLLY PECK

Wyn Jones is one of those senior police officers frequently embroiled in controversy. In 1987, while Deputy Assistant Commissioner in charge of Area 2 East London, he denounced NMP as 'the most sinister, damaging and divisive group operating in the borough today'. The same year he was in charge of the policing of the Wapping strike, for which he came under heavy public criticism; even the usually-reticent Police Complaints Authority (PCA) criticised the breakdown of the police command structure at Wapping and the indiscriminate use of violence by officers. Wyn Jones was furious and retaliated by calling for the abolition of the PCA.

Now Assistant Commissioner, Jones has been implicated in what is considered one of the most serious internal investigations in the history of Scotland Yard. Allegations over alleged 'favours' received from the crashed Polly Peck company are currently being investigated by the fraud squad.

Whether or not such allegations of corruption have any substance to them, it can hardly inspire public confidence in the police to have the third highest

ranking Metropolitan police officer suspected of serious impropriety. Not that Jones seemed too interested in public opinion when he was in East London - years ago NMP tried to draw attention to his implacable opposition to calls for police accountability to the public. Even so, he managed to move up the ranks swiftly and was even tipped as a future Commissioner. Now he faces the humiliation of being the highest ranking police officer ever to be investigated by Scotland Yard.

JOHN BALL: THE SAGA CONTINUES

In our last Annual Report, we detailed how Superintendent John Ball, Newham's principal Community Liaison Officer, had waged both a public and a not so public campaign against NMP. In response, in April 1990, NMP wrote to Sir Peter Imbert, the Metropolitan police Commissioner, expressing deep concern at John Ball's attempts to discredit the work of NMP and interfere in the running of local democracy. We went on to demand a thorough investigation into his conduct. We received a reply from Deputy Assistant Commissioner Taylor, who is in charge of Area 2 East London, regretting NMP's complaint, reminding us of the virtues of multi-agency policing and ignoring any mention of the substantial issues raised in our letter.

In January 1991, John Ball resigned from the police force to pursue a career as head of security at West Ham United Football Club. In March 1991, the National Front were spotted selling NF News outside the ground - something they have not done in years.

We trust that John Ball will spend as much time ensuring that the National Front do not peddle their filth at West Ham United as he did in defending the indefensible conduct of police officers in criminalising innocent black people like Mr Altaf and Mr Govindan.

THE BEATING OF GARY STRETCH

On 7 December 1990, seven police officers who beat Gary Stretch unconscious outside a pub in Hackney were sacked from the Metropolitan police for discreditable conduct. Sir John Dellow, Acting Commissioner of the Metropolitan police, handed down his decision a month after a PCA tribunal recommended the firings.

While the police are already arguing that the dismissals demonstrate the efficacy of their disciplinary procedures, closer examination of the case reveals a very different picture. The savagery of the beating Gary was given and the corroboration of independent witnesses forced the police to act. But what lies behind the dismissals? Below we look at Gary's ordeal and the larger questions raised by the case.

One evening in November 1987 Gary Stretch was having a quiet drink with a friend in the Limes pub in Hackney. He was known to the local police but had not been in trouble for three years. Also in the pub were

JANUARY

- 3 Full text of Burnage Report published, criticising Manchester education authority's anti-racist policies and press coverage of inquiry's findings.
- 8 Third annual 'We Remember' march in commemoration of those killed or brutalised by Hackney police.
- 12 Home Office agrees to pay compensation to 4 Kurdish refugees unlawfully deported to Turkey in 1989.
- 21 Relatives of murdered black taxi driver, Kuldip Singh Sekhon, refused entry to Britain for his funeral.
- 23 Governors at Altrincham grammar school, Manchester, decide to allow 2 Muslim sisters to wear headscarves to school, having turned them away for doing so for past month.
- 25 CRE report shows black graduates more likely to be unemployed, to spend longer finding work and to be employed below their skill levels.
- 31 Over 2,000 people attend Kuldip Singh Sekhon's funeral procession through Southall. Almost every shop shuts down as mark of respect.

FEBRUARY

- 6 Family of Winston Rose who died in police custody in 1981 awarded £130,000 damages.
- 6 Police clash with 200 strong crowd in Toxteth, Liverpool.
- 8 Rastafarian Glendon Spencer, beaten by police in 1985, awarded nearly £6000 damages by Leeds High Court.
- 8 Metropolitan police admit paying out more than £500,000 last year in civil actions against the police or in out of court settlements.
- 11 Nelson Mandela is released after being imprisoned for 26 years in South Africa.
- 14 Bangladeshi parents in Tower Hamlets lose their legal attempt to force the Inner London Education Authority to provide schooling for their children.
- 15 PCA concludes that officers involved in policing the Wapping strike in 1987 were 'out of control' and used their truncheons indiscriminately.
- 21 High Court rules deportation orders made by immigration officials against Julius Alexander and Shamusideen Oladehinde illegal.
- 23 Hassan Khan, jailed in 1987 for 15 years, freed by Court of Appeal after it is proven that his confession to robbery was fabricated by West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad.
- 27 New Press Council code of practice says newspapers should not publish material likely to encourage discrimination.

MARCH

- 8 Anti-poll tax demonstration outside Hackney town hall ends in running battles between protestors and police in riot gear.
- 9 NMP launches its education document on racism and racist violence in schools.
- 11 Anti-fascists demonstrate against BNP 'Rights for Whites' march in Bethnal Green.
- 13 Olympicsprinter Linford Christie wins 'five-figure sum' in damages against Metropolitan police for wrongful arrest and libel.
- 16 Metropolitan police pays £20,000 damages to trainee accountant Hughine Wilson who was assaulted by Notting Hill police and had drugs planted on him.
- 18 Over 200 people attend NMP's 10th anniversary Annual General Meeting.
- 26 Bow Street magistrate rules that charges of perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice should be pursued against 3 officers involved

in policing the Wapping strike in 1987. Charges against 23 other officers already dismissed. Granada special 'Who Bombed Birmingham?' names those allegedly responsible for Birmingham pub bombings in 1974.

- 28 Investigation into West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad hampered by disappearance of key files and documents.
- 30 Alban Turner, jailed for a murder at 1987 Notting Hill Carnival, is acquitted in Court of Appeal after key prosecution witness admits he testified only after police threats.
- 31 Anti-poll tax march of over 250,000 people from Kennington Park to Trafalgar Square charged by riot police. Over 300 people arrested.

APRIL

- 1 Strangeways Prison taken over by hundreds of inmates demanding radical reform of penal system.
- 9 High Court rules that Salman Rushdie and his publishers cannot be charged with blasphemous libel for 'The Satanic Verses'.
- 17 Black US politician Jesse Jackson questions convictions of Tottenham 3.
- 19 Collapse of Tory back-bench revolt against government plans to grant citizenship to 'key people' in Hong Kong.
- 19 Tory MP Norman Tebbit proposes loyalty 'cricket test' for blacks in Britain, asking 'which side do they cheer for?'
- 22 Education Secretary John MacGregor rules that parents' right to choose their children's schools in Cleveland overrides race relations legislation.
- 22 Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd bans the families of 3 IRA members killed by SAS in Gibraltar in 1988 from suing Ministry of Defence.
- 25 Strangeways prison is recaptured as 5 remaining inmates surrender, 9 hours after prison officers stormed the jail.
- 25 Council of Europe finds MI5 in breach of European Convention of Human Rights for describing National Council for Civil Liberties as subversive.

MAY

- 2 PCA announces 14% increase in serious complaints against police in past year.
- 2 BBC 'Inside Story' argues that sport in Britain is as disfigured by racism as the rest of society.
- 3 Law Society report describes entrenched racial discrimination in legal profession.
- 5 North London Jewish cemetery is desecrated, tombstones smashed and daubed with swastikas.
- 10 West Midlands police to investigate an assault by off-duty officers in Birmingham that resulted in Tony Tuite receiving 20 stitches to face wounds.
- 13 Immigration officials to hunt down 33 Chinese refugees, who denied political asylum, have gone into hiding.
- 17 Lord Scarman says convictions of Tottenham 3 are unsafe and should be reviewed.
- 20 Parents in Wakefield who refused to send their child to a school where 1 in 3 pupils is Asian are told they can send their child to school of their choice.
- 23 Metropolitan police figures show 22% rise in recorded racial incidents and 25% rise in recorded racial assaults.

JUNE

- 1 Padmanabhan Govindan, a 59-year-old shopkeeper, is arrested and charged with assault for trying to defend himself and his family from racist attackers in Plaistow, Newham.
- 4 Detective Chief Superintendent Melvin, who led investigation into 1985 Broadwater Farm uprising,

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1990

- 19 Stephen Lamb sentenced to life imprisonment for murder of 14-year-old Tahir Akram in Oldham in July 1989. Lamb and his friends had driven around town shooting randomly at black people.
- 26 Steven Coker sentenced to life imprisonment for murder of Kuldip Singh Sekhon in Southall in November 1989, but judge denies racial motive.
- 29 High Court refuses to order new inquest into the death of Clinton McCurbin who died after being

JULY

- 1 Black and 'Third World' people mourn as Cameroon loses to England in World Cup!
- 3 NMP invited by ANC to meet Nelson and Winnie Mandela at special briefing.
- 7 Jewish cemeteries in Leeds and Manchester desecrated.
- 17 Report shows refusal rates for visitors to Britain from Caribbean have risen 18-fold in 5 years.
- 20 Immigration department of Home Office accused of 'incompetence' and 'inexcusable inefficiency' by Home Affairs Committee over its handling of citizenship applications.
- 26 Teenager Lee Costello convicted of murdering 11-year-old Tasleem Akhtar in Birmingham in December 1989, but judge says case has 'no racial associations'.
- 26 Sheffield steel-worker Mohammed Siddique awarded 'substantial' compensation against British Steel after suffering 2 years of racial harassment at work.
- 29 Over 15,000 people attend NMP's anti-racist festival in Plashet Park, East Ham, around theme of 'Keeping the Fight Alive'.

AUGUST

- 2 Gulf conflict intensifies as Iraq occupies Kuwait.
- 6 Britain found guilty of violating European Convention of Human Rights for deporting 5 Tamil asylum-seekers who had no effective remedy against Home Secretary's decision.
- 15 HM Chief Inspector of Prisons criticises use of prisons to hold immigrants and refugees.
- 16 Runnymede Trust study says that black people receive unequal and unfair treatment in magistrates courts.
- 16 Brent council decides to end its race equality programme in education, the subject of considerable press and political hostility.
- 17 Five Kurdish refugees begin hunger strike outside Home Office in protest at refusal of immigration authorities to admit their wives and children.
- 18 Anti-fascists demonstrate against National Front march in Enfield.

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Anti-racist march in Leeds in support of Dewsbury 82, arrested in June 1989 following demonstration against BNP.
- 6 BNP wins 12% of the vote (over 25% of the white vote) in council by-election in Tower Hamlets.
- 12 Legal Action Group report finds that local authorities are failing to use law to protect black tenants from racial harassment.
- 14 CRE report finds that 1 in 5 property letting agencies discriminate against black people, in some areas the figure is almost 1 in 2.
- 18 Home Office report finds that black people are dissatisfied with the way their cases are handled by police.

OCTOBER

- 5 Mohammed Altaf, who defended himself against racist attack in Manor Park, Newham, is acquitted of malicious wounding at Snagsbrook Crown Court.
- 8 Israeli soldiers murder 21 unarmed Palestinians and wound hundreds more at Al-Aqsa mosque in Occupied Jerusalem.
- 9 European Parliament narrowly passes report expressing concern at increase of racism and xenophobia in Europe.
- 18 Government announces new restrictions on Section 11 funding. CRE warns this may lead to scrapping of local authority race initiatives.
- 20 Anti-poll tax march to Brixton prison organised by Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign is broken up by police.
- 25 Study shows that black graduates from medical schools face much greater difficulties in finding jobs than their white counterparts.
- 29 Nottinghamshire PC Surinder Singh becomes first serving police officer to win racial discrimination case after industrial tribunal hears of racist abuse and refusal to promote him.

NOVEMBER

- 1 Amnesty International accuses British government of failing to uphold international obligations towards refugees and asylum-seekers.
- 11 AFA and NUS London demonstrate in Parliament Square against NF marching on Remembrance Sunday.
- 22 Margaret Thatcher resigns after more than 11 years as British Prime Minister.
- 22 NMP public meeting on police harassment and Defend Mr Govindan Campaign.
- 23 Armed forces ordered by High Court to provide black soldiers with means of redress for racial discrimination and abuse.
- 23 Boxer Maurice Hope awarded 50,000 damages against Metropolitan police for false imprisonment and malicious prosecution.
- 24 Anti-fascists demonstrate against BNP 'Rights for Whites' march in Bethnal Green.
- 28 PC William Halliday wins claim of racial discrimination against Orpington police.

DECEMBER

- 3 Row erupts in Cheltenham Conservative Party after black candidate John Taylor is called a 'bloody nigger' by local Tory, who is later expelled from the Party.
- 4 Home Secretary refers case of Engin Raghup, 1 of Tottenham 3, back to the Court of Appeal.
- 6 Government rules out legislation on ethnic monitoring of decisions taken by police, courts and probation service.
- 10 Study shows that black defendants remanded by courts for psychiatric evaluation are less likely to be bailed and more likely to be given court orders requiring compulsory psychiatric treatment than white defendants.
- 11 Metropolitan police Assistant Commissioner Wyn Jones is investigated by Scotland Yard's Complaints Investigations Branch over alleged 'favours' from Polly Peck.

continued from page 33

seven off-duty police officers from nearby City Road police station. One of them recognised Gary, came up to him and told him to get out of the pub or else 'get a booting'. All of a sudden, Gary was hit from behind with a pint glass and punched to the floor. He was dragged out into the street where he was viciously assaulted by the officers. His shirt and trousers were ripped off and he was bleeding profusely. The attack was witnessed by a crowd of people. When the officers finally stopped, some of the witnesses carried Gary back into the pub. Uniformed officers from Bethnal Green arrived soon after and took Gary in a police van to the London hospital. By this time, he was unconscious.

Gary spent five days in hospital. As a result of the beating, he was temporarily blinded, left with a partially severed ear, and had his neck put in a brace. Gary's father and Joanne Legg, a barmaid at the Limes pub whose father was a policeman, immediately made a complaint to Scotland Yard. But when the investigating officers came round to question Gary, they showed him a small knife and suggested that Gary had tried to stab the officers in the pub and that the officers had been forced to take it off him. Gary was understandably shocked and afraid. The matter was eventually referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for further consideration.

In January 1989 the Director of Public Prosecutions announced that there would be no criminal charges due to insufficient evidence. The matter was referred back to the PCA.

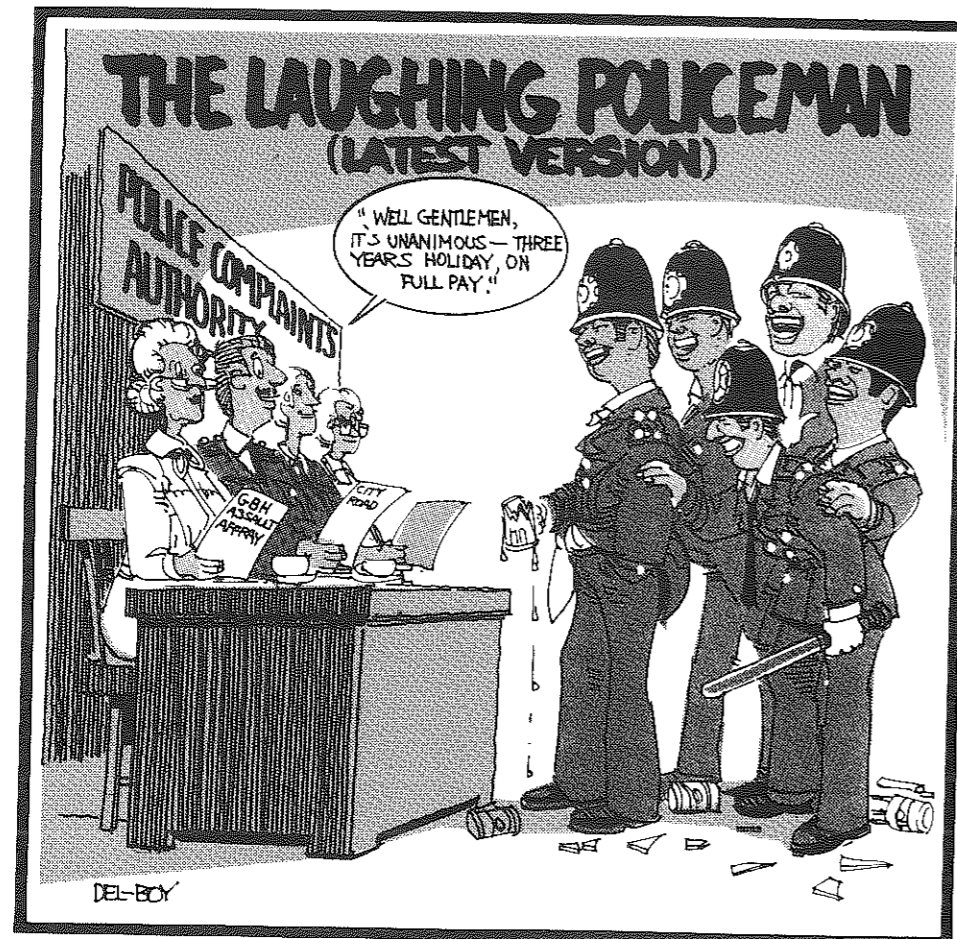
By May 1990 nothing had happened. The officers, who were all still suspended on full pay, asked the

High Court to throw out the case on the grounds that too much time had elapsed since the incident. Their plea, backed by the Police Federation, was turned down. A subsequent attempt to obtain an ex parte injunction to halt proceedings pending a judicial review was also rejected as there were 'no exceptional circumstances'.

Finally, the hearings went ahead. But Gary was denied the right to have a lawyer present and the press were not allowed to report the proceedings. It took four weeks just to hear the evidence. And in spite of the verdicts in their favour, Gary, his father and Joanne Legg all agreed that there was nothing to celebrate, that the pressure they had been placed under was dreadful, and that they would not advise anybody else to go through the Police Complaints Authority. Gary wishes he had taken out a private prosecution instead.

Some people might argue that at least seven officers have been sacked from the police force. But if these thugs had not been police officers, they would have probably been charged with violent disorder and grievous bodily harm with intent and, considering the severity of Gary's injuries and the number of independent witnesses, convicted and given lengthy custodial sentences.

Contrast this with Gary's ordeal. For three years a cloud hung over his head. For him and his family it was pure hell. Their courage and resilience under tremendous strain was remarkable. Hopefully, the civil action that Gary is currently bringing against the police for assault, wrongful arrest and false imprisonment will in some way compensate for the brutal beating that he was subjected to.



9 EURO-RACISM, POLICING AND 1992

Below we reprint an article by Tony Bunyan that is of special interest to NMP's work.* By reproducing it, we hope to alert the local community to the sinister implications of 1992 and 'Fortress Europe':

In 1992 the internal borders of the 12 countries of the European Community (EC) are due to come down, marking another step in fulfilling the economic union set out in the 1957 Treaty of Rome and the 1987 Single European Act. However, outside the formal structures of the EC, the Commission and the European Parliament, another European state is being created, in secret and with little democratic debate.

As a result, 'Third World' immigrants and refugees face a new form of racism, Euro-racism, which is underpinning the construction of an EC-wide (even Europe-wide) authoritarian state. Not for the first time, the experience of the black community is the precursor for the whole community.

Already, under the aegis of the 12 EC interior and justice ministers, various ad-hoc organisations have been set up including the Trevi Group, the Working Group on Immigration, and the Group of National Coordinators on the Free Movement of People. Through these organisations, policies are developed by civil servants, police officers, customs officers, immigration officials, security and intelligence agencies, and military chiefs. The main contributing bodies from the UK are the Home Office, MI5, the Association of Chief Police Officers, and the European Liaison Section of the Metropolitan Police Special Branch.

Interpol, the longstanding body for handling legal and policing matters, is being by-passed. The previous Home Secretary, David Waddington, said it 'can be no more than a channel of communication'.

These bodies and agencies are taking the main political decisions on polic-

ing crime, techniques to enforce public order, security service co-operation, creation of a police information and intelligence database, and on immigration, refugees and asylum-seekers. But the exchange of information on political activity ('subversion') presents a problem. As a chief constable told a House of Lords committee, it would be extremely difficult to explain 'to a European mind our thinking at this end of what we regard as a threat'.

The introduction of identity cards was recommended last year by the Home Affairs Select Committee in its report on Practical Police Co-operation in the EC. Discussions on the 'harmonising' of EC policing and security policies for combating terrorism and drugs, enforcing immigration policies and controlling crime and public disorder, all rest on the need to establish an accurate database on legitimate EC citizens and the threat they pose to internal security.

The Home Office opposes compulsory ID cards (at present) but is still considering voluntary ones, a false distinction if their production was required to obtain essential services, like social security or medical registration. Its main objection is not one of principle but to the cost of introducing them: they are likely to be machine-readable with unique personal identification characters, such as a DNA print or a fingerprint.

More recently, discussions have taken place, through the Council of Foreign Ministers and the Western European Union, about the creation of a European 'pillar' of Nato and a rapid deployment force to act outside the EC.

The deliberations of these ad-hoc organisations are secret because they are said to be 'operational'. In the UK the Home Secretary periodically makes a short statement either about them or some aspect of their activities in reply

to a planned written question, a procedure which allows for no debate. The Home Office view is that policing matters lie outside the EC's competence and that 'the Trevi Group is independent of the EC's institutional structures'.

The Trevi Group was set up in 1976 to combat terrorism, but in the past five years its remit has been extended to immigration, police and security co-operation, the exchange of information, and crime. Trevi meetings are also attended by 'Friends of Trevi', including Sweden, Austria, Norway, Switzerland, Canada and the US.

The British government sees Trevi's 'distinctive strength' as lying in 'the informal, spontaneous, and practical character of its discussions'. The ease with which formal structures can be slipped in and out of has been described by one Home Office official as 'the shuffling of chairs'. At ministerial meetings, interior and justice ministers gather in the morning with the commission present; then 'during the coffee break the chairs are shuffled ... and when they meet in their Trevi mode after coffee, the commission has gone'.

The rationale behind these developments had centred on the need to enforce border controls in 1992: how to ensure the free movement of goods, services and (some) people within the EC while enforcing a 'hard outer shell' against immigrants and 'Third World' refugees.

Trevi has been the vehicle by which EC countries agreed on 55 countries whose nationals require visas to enter the EC, and on a common list of 'undesirables'. Grounds for exclusion include national security and 'aliens considered likely to compromise public order' (para 5.1, Trevi, June 1990).

Similarly, the signatories to the Schengen Agreement - Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and Italy - have a list of 115 countries, and its own lists of 'undesirables'. The agreement, signed in June 1990, also covers crime operations, hot pursuit, drugs, arms, and the registration of hotel guests. It is to be backed by an intelligence and information computer system - the Schengen Information System (SIS) - based in Strasbourg, France, which will include information on aliens, asylum seekers, crime (people wanted for prosecution), firearms, vehicles and persons under surveillance. Although the UK police's new computer system (PCN2) has not yet been directly linked to SIS, it will be compatible with the German Bundeskriminalamt computer at Wiesbaden, which is expected to form the basis of the SIS system.

The one difference between the Trevi Group (all 12 EC countries) and the Schengen group is over the need for internal border controls. The UK will continue to maintain border checks for EC citizens, in order to combat terrorism, drugs, and illegal immigration. Ireland, Denmark and Greece may follow suit. But on most other issues, views converge between the two groups.

At the Dublin summit last year the EC countries agreed to a Convention on Applications for Asylum. This introduced the 'one-stop' rule whereby the first

country which admits an asylum-seeker becomes responsible for dealing with the application, and precludes entry to another EC country if this is rejected. Like other agreements, the Convention does not fall within the jurisdiction of EC institutions.

Measures to exclude 'Third World' peoples - while welcoming skilled, educated and white migrants from Eastern Europe - are leading to the introduction of a system of internal controls which will criminalise black settlers and illegal immigrants alike. Within a common culture of European racism, all 'Third World' people are defined as immigrants and refugees, and all immigrants and refugees as terrorists and drug-runners.

How is the citizen to be distinguished from an immigrant or an immigrant from a refugee, let alone one black from another? As A Sivanandan wrote: 'We all carry our passports on our faces'.

* An unabridged version of this article appears in a special issue of *Race & Class*, 'Europe: Variations on a Theme of Racism', available from the Institute of Race Relations, 2-6 Leeke Street, London WC1.

TO THE RESURGENCE OF FASCISM IN EAST LONDON

"It may have appeared to members living in the provinces that over the past year the party has allocated a disproportionate amount of effort to staging major events in London (especially the East End of London) by comparison with other parts of the country.

This has happened, not because the rest of Britain is regarded as being of lesser importance, but only because the contemporary political situation is one that has offered us special and unique opportunities for development in London's East End. As long as that situation prevails and those opportunities continue, it would be wrong not to take advantage of them..."

(BNP - organisers and activists bulletin)

These seemingly innocuous few sentences summarise the current strategy of the most rabid group operating on the far right today, the British National Party (BNP). Last year's Annual Report detailed the BNP's activities across London and the highly effective counter-mobilisations of NMP, Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) and other anti-fascist allies. Yet, the BNP remains the most dangerous fascist force active on the streets, requiring, like the cancerous disease it resembles, 'radical surgery' to check its growth.

It has been said that the fascists 'swim in a racist sea', and none is more polluted than Tower Hamlets, where the BNP has been extremely active throughout 1990-91, standing several candidates in local by-elections and generally stepping up its activities. In Redbridge, the BNP has established something of a base for itself as well. As

yet, Newham has not experienced fascist organisation on anything of the scale of Tower Hamlets or Redbridge - but the danger signals are there. The resurgence of the far right in neighbouring boroughs - between which Newham is wedged - is clearly something that concerns NMP, as fascist activity could all too easily spread into Newham (particularly the south of the borough). For these reasons, we examine some recent trends in Tower Hamlets, Redbridge and Newham.

TOWER HAMLETS

Tower Hamlets council, which is controlled by the Liberal Democrats, has played no small part in encouraging the growth of racism in the borough. They put into practice their electoral anti-immigration rhetoric by evicting, in 1987, 90 Bangladeshi families on the grounds that they had made themselves 'intentionally homeless' by coming to Britain. In addition, they have crowded homeless black (mostly Bengali) families into bed and breakfast accommodation, and housed other black families on the worst estates in the borough.

The council has fuelled a growth in popular racism that is not in its perceived self-interest to quell. The basis of this popular racism is the ludicrous claim the Bangladeshis get special privileges and that whites are the victims of 'reverse' racism. Racist violence in Tower Hamlets is now rife and manifests itself on housing estates and in and around schools. This attracts BNP activists who argue for 'Rights for Whites'. Indeed, Tower Hamlets provides the BNP with a testing-ground for a new strategy that it hopes to adopt in other parts of the country.

In the face of police hostility and complacency over racist violence, local black people have had little choice



but to defend themselves and fight back. It is in this overall context that the stabbing of a white youth, John Stoner, must be viewed.



The John Stoner affair

John Stoner was stabbed at Morpeth school, Globe Town in February 1990. This was then taken up by the BNP and turned into a cause celebre, an opportunity to mobilise amongst disgruntled and dispossessed whites.

The day before the attack on John Stoner, there had been an incident involving Stoner's foster-father at Morpeth school, during which a teacher called him a racist and asked him to leave the premises. That day, too, a 15-year-old Bengali boy had been waylaid outside another school in Tower Hamlets by a group of white youths wielding a four-foot metal spike. Amongst Bengali youth, who formed the East End Youth Organisation to fight racism and defend the Bengali community, the Bengali boys (arrested for stabbing Stoner and subsequently found not guilty at court) are considered to have restored some dignity to the community.

Yet the press were not interested in these facts. Instead, by ignoring the local history of racist violence against black people, they lent legitimacy to the BNP. They arrived in droves, sniffing frantically for a sensational 'race story', and even adopted the BNP's strategy of arguing that it is whites, not blacks, who are the true victims of racist violence:

"There is a new generation of East Enders, angry and often lawless, who are now claiming the streets for themselves. And it is the turn of the white community to feel threatened". (The Independent, 3 August 1990)

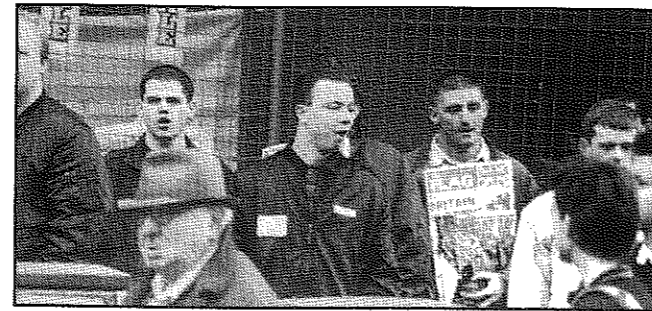
Overnight, George Happe, the foster-grandfather of John Stoner, was put forward as a spokesperson for the 'threatened' white community and an expert on 'race relations':

"...they take our businesses. They take the heart out of the place". (The Guardian, 23 February 1990)

BBC2's multicultural slot Ain't No Black in the Union

Jack was similarly uncritical when Happe spewed forth:

"They don't do the runaway ginger-bread man, they do the runaway chappati".



The demonstration George Happe organised through Globe Town was backed by the hopelessly naive Bishop of Stepney who accepted at face value Happe's claims that 'we're not racist'. The East London Advertiser, who in 1984 supported the bogus 'Fair Play for Whites' organisation, also supported the initiative, describing the demonstration as a 'racial harmony march' and the stabbing of John Stoner as 'racially motivated'.

George Happe's so-called 'racial harmony' march provided the BNP with a unique opportunity and they used it to peddle their garbage, arguing that only the BNP could recapture the East End for the 'real' East Enders. They leafleted the area in support of the Happe/Stoner family, and were prominent amongst the hundred or so marchers chanting:

"I'm gonna jump down, turn around, kick a Pakistani, jump down, turn around, kick him in the head".

"We hate the Pakis, we hate the Pakis, we are the Paki-haters".

The BNP was encouraged by the response of flag-waving white residents who created a carnival-style atmosphere and occasionally burst into renditions of 'Rule Britannia' and 'May be it's because I'm a Londoner'.

Two weeks later the BNP organised its own 'Rights for Whites' march and subsequently announced its intention to put up four candidates in the May local elections - one in Spitalfields, the heart of the Bengali community, and two in Globe Town, where it was most successful. In total, the BNP received 12% of the vote, which in the racially-divided wards of Tower Hamlets, meant that, in reality, it received 25% of the white vote.

The BNP owed much of its success to George Happe, who at another BNP 'Rights for Whites' march in November, thanked the BNP for all the support it had given his campaign.

REDBRIDGE

In neighbouring Redbridge, as in Tower Hamlets, the BNP has sought to raise its public profile. This endeavour took the form of a sticker-campaign on local underground stations and a short-lived 'crime-prevention' patrol that failed to convince the vast majority of Redbridge locals, the council or even the press, of the need to mobilise against the BNP's imaginary wave of black 'lawlessness'.



Redbridge Guardian, 16/11/90

BNP crime, on the other hand, was increasing. A group of fascists viciously attacked a young Jewish teacher, Arthur Neslen, who had been removing a BNP sticker from Gants Hill tube station. He was left hospitalised requiring five stitches to his face. Tony 'mad bomber' Lecomber, long-time activist of the BNP, has been arrested in connection with the assault and charged with grievous bodily harm. Lecomber is expected to be jailed and NMP, among others in the anti-fascist movement, will shed no tears over this. Our immediate response to this incident was to demand of the manager responsible for Gants Hill tube station, as an urgent priority, the removal of racist stickers and graffiti from all stations, especially in view of the fact that in the same area in 1984, Peter Burns, a black ticket collector, was murdered when racists stabbed him in the eye. The manager's response left us unconvinced that a future campaign to highlight the problem would not be necessary. Meanwhile, we commend Arthur, a long-time supporter of NMP, for having the determination to see the prosecution of Lecomber through.

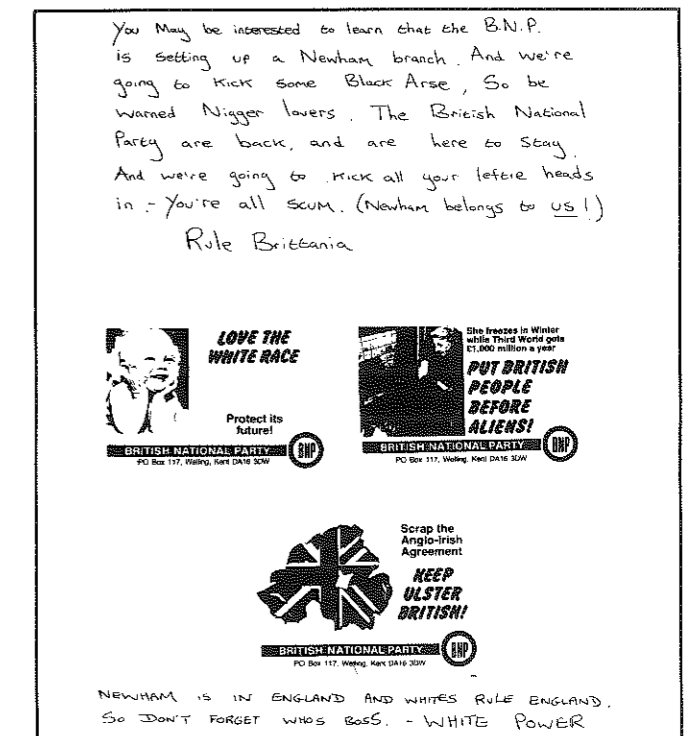
NEWHAM

For Newham's black community, the implications of the BNP's racist campaign is clear - the BNP is attempting to develop a climate whereby violence against black people becomes respectable and a patriotic crusade for sections of white society, looking for scape-

goats for the current economic crisis.

Consequently, the BNP has drawn inspiration from the resurgence of fascism and nationalism across Europe, which offers, on a pan-European level, the same 'Foreigners Out' message of the BNP. The aftermath of the Gulf War and the anti-Arab racism sweeping across western Europe is also aiding the growth of European fascism.

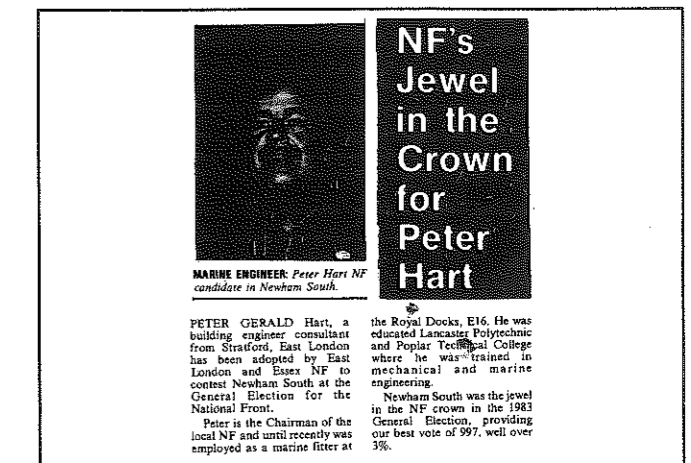
The BNP's strategy of fermenting racist violence has led, in Newham, to mosques receiving hate-mail. Jewish synagogues and cemeteries were also desecrated across London as anti-semitic attacks rose sharply. Eventually NMP received an abusive note from the BNP informing us of their intention to set up a Newham branch to 'kick some black arse and all your leftie heads in'. Their announcement was a welcome re-



BNP hate letter

minder that 'forewarned is forearmed!'

Elsewhere in Newham, NF leader Ian Anderson still occasionally slithers from under his stone in Monmouth Road, East Ham, to remind anyone who



The Flag, July 1990

WATCHDOG GROUP AND COUNCILLORS ISSUE WARNING OF A GROWING RACIST CAMPAIGN

'Help us defeat the return of fascism'

WORRIED Newham councillors have joined race watchdogs in condemning the "rise of fascism" within East London.

The move follows an announcement by the National Front that they will contest Newham South in the next General Election.

Their candidate is 49-year-old Peter Hart from Stratford, a self-employed building services engineer.

In a letter to the Recorder this week, Newham Monitoring Project say they are very concerned.

The letter is signed by one Conservative and 20 Labour councillors, and warns of a resurgence of fascism.

NMP say there has been an increase in racist and anti-Semitic attacks across London.

The group claim a number of Jewish graves have been vandalised in Newham.

And the Project refer to neighbouring Tower Hamlets, where the British National Party fielded candidates in last May's council elections.

Fascist rallies and public meetings have been held there. Another gathering was due to be held in Bethnal Green this week.

In their letter NMP slam the meeting as an attempt to incite racial hatred.

They say they fear the community is close to being torn apart.

The Project add: "We urge the people of Newham and the rest of East London to once again protest at this clear attempt to drive a wedge into the heart of our community."

Newham Recorder, 15/11/90



Fascist Graffiti in Newham

will listen that crime and unemployment in Britain was non-existent before the blacks came and spoil it all. Electorally, the vehicle for the NF in Newham will be 49-year-old Peter Hart, a self-employed builder from Albert Square, Stratford, who, it was recently announced, will stand as the NF's parliamentary candidate for Newham South in the forthcoming General Election.

Some of Newham's councillors, in a refreshing gesture, joined with us in publicly condemning this development. Similarly, as Hart discovered, Stratford's housing officers are flatly refusing to process any applications or forms that express racist or fascist sentiments. A growing number of Newham's officials at last appear to recognise, as we in the black community have always done, the dangers of giving any ground whatsoever to what is clearly the beginning of a new NF campaign to polarize Newham's communities.

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

NMP has continued to work closely with Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) and other anti-racist groups and individuals who recognise the anti-black and terrorist nature of contemporary fascism.

AFA has prioritised the East End, where the fascists (particularly the BNP) hope to tap into an indigenous fascist tradition. In April, Tower Hamlets council allowed the BNP to hold a provocative pre-election

meeting in Weavers Field school in the heart of the Bengali community. AFA mobilised, but in the event, as was to be expected, the fascists received heavy police protection. Again, in November, AFA mobilised against the BNP's second 'Rights for Whites' march. This was followed by successful mobilisations by AFA against the regular fascist paper-sales at the top of Brick Lane - this was part of an on-going strategy to show that anti-fascism and anti-racism should be infinitely more than empty expressions of sympathy for the victims. AFA is guided by advice that the fascists themselves have given on how to defeat fascism:

'Only one thing could have stopped our movement - if our adversaries had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed, with the utmost brutality, the nucleus of our new movement'.

(Adolf Hitler, 1933)

As part of NMP's research for its book on the post-war history of Newham's black community (see chapter 15), we have been forced to examine some of the conditions that gave rise to the rapid growth of the National Front in the south of the borough in the mid-1970s. Many of the factors that gave rise to their success then, exist today. In 1991, we will redouble our efforts not only to counter fascist activity but to challenge the racist ideology upon which fascism thrives.

11 NMP FESTIVAL: KEEPING THE FIGHT ALIVE

As part of its 10th anniversary activities, on Sunday 29 July 1990, NMP staged an anti-racist festival in Plashet Park, East Ham. The festival not only celebrated 10 years of anti-racist work in the borough by NMP but also commemorated the murder, on 17 July 1980, of Akhtar Ali Baig by skinheads in East Ham. It was Akhtar Ali Baig's murder that led to the formation of NMP.

The festival's objective was to bring together the people of Newham's various communities and build on the gains the people of Newham have fought for over the last 10 years. Seen in this context, the festival was an attempt to rally people around a popular anti-racist culture - a culture that brought together Newham's youth, both black and white, in a celebration of the rich and diverse music and culture that the black community has to offer.

The festival, which was facilitated by a committee consisting of individuals from NMP as well as local friends and supporters, was organised principally by the Project. The committee's aim was to ensure that the event was not merely multicultural, but that in line with NMP's overall work, it reflected NMP's long-term strategy of reinforcing anti-racism within Newham, and in the process, strengthening the black community around our common struggle against racism.

It was for this reason that the venue chosen for the festival was Plashet Park, which apart from being at the heart of Newham's black community, was also the scene of police attacks on the Newham 7/ Justice for the Pryce Family demonstration in 1985. On the occasion of the festival, however, NMP insisted that there be no police presence either in the park or in the immediate vicinity so as to avoid any repetition of the events of 1985. The police took our advice on this matter.

Over 15,000 people attended the festival over the course of the day, making it one of the biggest outdoor events ever staged in Newham and certainly the largest gathering of black people in Newham for a number of years. In fact, its size led London Transport to increase the local bus service as well as the tube service on the District Line.

The festival comprised 2 stages, one with



live acts and poets and the other with sound systems. Artists who performed included Chumbawumba, Black Survivors, Howlin Wilf, Awaara, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Ahmed Sheikh, Patience Agbabi, Saqib Deshmukh, MC Wildski, Q Tee, FBI, Mary Rose, MC Duke, Raucus, Soul II Soul DJ Craze, Tim Westwood and Ronin Inc. Sound systems were provided by Dance FM and Love FM.

In addition to the live entertainment, there were over 80 food, book, handicrafts, cultural, political and community stalls catering for every taste. For the young children, free merry-go-rounds, inflatables, face-painting and crazy bikes were laid on so they did not miss out on any of the fun.

Four marquees were also erected, displaying various exhibitions, including one by NMP on the history of racism in the East End and one by the Institute of Race Relations on African-Caribbean and Asian struggles in Britain. A further 20,000 NMP information leaflets were distributed, together with thousands of rights cards, informing local people not only of the services that NMP provides but also of the anti-racist struggle in Newham.

NMP would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers who helped to make the festival such a success, as well as the thousands of people who attended.



1980 • NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT • 1990

KEEPING THE FIGHT ALIVE

ANTI-RACIST FESTIVAL

MC WILDSKI • Q TEE
SOUL II SOUL DJS
SHE ROCKERS
MC DUKE • STEVIE V
FBI • BLACK SURVIVORS • CHALLA
HOWLIN WILF • LIONESS CHANT • FELIX
CHUMBAWUMBA • MARY ROSE
AHMED SHEIKH • PATIENCE AGBABI
RONIN INC.
SPECIAL SURPRISE GUESTS

PLASHET PARK
Plashet Grove, London, E6
East Ham

SUNDAY
JULY 29th 1990
FREE
12pm - 8pm

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT
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HOUSING, LETTING AND SOCIAL REPAIRS

12 ISSUES OF CONCERN

RACISM, PROBATION AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Historically, the full weight of the criminal justice system has been brought to bear on the black community. Even today, black people constitute 14% of the prison population, with African-Caribbeans representing more than 9%. This is despite the fact that they comprise only 5% and 1% respectively of the general population of Britain. The situation is even worse for black women who now represent 21% of the female prison population.

Apart from revealing the gross over-representation of black people in prison, these figures hint at the daily misery of many people forced to run the gauntlet of attempts to criminalise the black community.

This policy of criminalisation feeds and emphasises the popular racism on the streets that routinely associates 'black' with drugs, deviance, crime and general illegality. It provides justification for the 'special measures' the police, courts and prisons argue are necessary to deal with such an 'exceptional' and 'unruly' problem. Black people are 'constitutionally disorderly', said former Metropolitan police commissioner, Sir Kenneth Newman, 'are likely not have a sufficient understanding of the English way of life' concluded a member of the judiciary, and 'can pose a threat just by moving slowly' according to one prison governor.

Therefore, the racism entrenched within the criminal justice system as a whole is reflected in the day-to-day experiences of those who come to NMP for advice and support.

PROBATION

One agency within the criminal justice system which feels it has seriously attempted to challenge at least some of the cruder manifestations of racism in the courts, is the Probation Service. Probation officers are both 'officers of the court' and social workers, and as

such are in the unique position of being able to offer sentence recommendations to the court. Presented in the form of a report, these recommendations are supposed to take a balanced and unbiased view of the offence and the offender. They aim to present to the court the client's reason for and attitude towards the offence, together with other background information.

Considered to be powerful documents, recognition has only recently been given to the way these reports can be racist. In an attempt to prevent overtly racist reports being submitted to the courts, many probation offices have started to develop procedures whereby reports written by individual probation officers are checked by their colleagues for discriminatory statements or inappropriate recommendations.

Nevertheless, the reality of this initiative falls far short of its stated aims. With no national, regional or even borough-wide agreements on standards by which this 'gate-keeping' process should be undertaken, practice varies widely from office to office, whilst in many areas the project has not even got underway. In addition, individual officers still retain the right to disregard their colleagues' observations. Thus the whole exercise is fundamentally flawed and like much official anti-racist policy has no teeth where needed most.

Even though probation officers are legitimately entitled to address the judiciary through verbal testimony and written recommendation, the vast majority simply refuse to stand up and be counted in court in the face of even the most blatant racism. The few that do challenge racist remarks, sentiments and behaviour either in or out of court, are usually isolated and scapegoated as troublemakers.

Some probation officers completely abdicate their responsibilities towards their clients once they appear in court.

At West Ham Magistrates Court, NMP workers witnessed the imprisonment of a black defendant simply because two probation officers failed, when asked, to offer the court an alternative to custody when that was clearly what was required of them at the time. Other probation officers fail to challenge or even recognise the racism of some of their white clients. When NMP, on one occasion, informed a probation office that one of its clients was continuing to racially harass a family who NMP was supporting, it was never taken on board or investigated; when the client in question was later in court, the probation officer present made no mention of NMP's complaint and the client was thus let off the hook.

The fact is that probation officers do have a choice, yet many choose to adopt a subservient demeanour in court in the hope that this will benefit their clients and

further their working relationships with magistrates and judges. This approach in fact strips the probation officer of his or her dignity and leaves the client vulnerable to the racism and political bias that pervades the criminal justice system.

In summation, however well-intentioned individual probation officers might be, the Probation Service as an institution is largely out of touch with the reality of racism and how it affects the way the criminal justice system dispenses with black people. As the black prison population steadily increases, there is a desperate need for all those involved in probation and the criminal justice system as a whole to recognise the roles that many of them play in perpetuating racism. What is urgently needed is a unified response that strengthens and broadens the base for committed proactive work, reflecting the seriousness of the issue.

THE BLACK COMMUNITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Many questions need to be addressed as to the situation of black people suffering from mental illnesses. What treatment, support, therapy do they receive? Why is it that 60% of black admissions to mental health institutions are made under the provisions of the Mental Health Act? Why are black patients kept in mental institutions often locked up for 24 hours a day without adequate care?

Why? Racism.

These are disturbing facts. Where can a black person suffering from any kind of mental disturbance go, and be listened to, helped and treated fairly? Can they trust in the system when once hospitalised, the possibility of being rehabilitated back into the community is virtually unheard of for a black patient?

Racism is the answer to these questions because racism is the primary cause of many of the problems black people face in Britain. While black people make up only 5% of the British population, 12% of patients in Broadmoor (a mental institution) are black. And the system is built and upheld in a way which does not concern itself with black issues.

RACIST DIAGNOSIS AND THE USE OF DRUGS

Old racial stereotypes are still very much used against black people when they are assessed by psychiatrists. We are seen as 'aggressive', 'violent' and 'dangerous', and our behaviour is interpreted by psychiatrists as such due to their ignorance - a racism and prejudice that permeates the mental health system and is repeated throughout other institutions.

For instance, cultural differences should not be the basis for a diagnosis of schizophrenia, but often they

are. Psychiatrists actually believe that these cultural differences stem from a backward culture and inferior family set-ups. In addition, other white-dominated institutions such as the police, the courts, the medical profession and Social Services use their powers to refer black people to mental institutions, making assumptions about the patient's character on the basis of their own racial stereotypes and views of cultural differences. And in other cases, they automatically presume a black person is mentally disturbed when s/he is not. Furthermore, psychiatrists, very often do not know how to treat a black patient, and will subsequently diagnose drugs, usually at a very high dosage. Owing to this, a disproportionate number of black people have actually died inside mental institutions; many others now live as vegetables due to the course of drugs they have been given. Many white psychiatrists do not understand black people. They are completely unaware of the problems many young black males face, the poverty and racism black people as a whole suffer from in society, and the frustrations and stresses caused by racism.

Overdosing black patients with drugs and locking them away in high security wings seems to be the only way the system knows how to treat black people. Professionals do not seem to want to spend time finding a more positive and effective policy of dealing with black patients. It would seem obvious that the human body can only take drugs to a certain degree and that high dosages of certain drugs, which lead to emotional and physical abnormalities, can kill or leave the patient even more disturbed mentally (if, that is, the person was mentally ill in the first place) than before. This was seen in the case of Randolph Ince who began to grow breasts and whose weight drastically ballooned when he was prescribed drugs at three times the recommended dosage.

DEATHS IN MENTAL INSTITUTIONS

Between January 1989 and March 1990, 14 black people have died in mental institutions. Who is to blame for the deaths of black people in prisons, police stations or mental institutions? The usual verdict is 'death by misadventure', or 'accidental death'. But surely staff, and psychiatrists, who too often neglect black patients, leave them drugged and unconscious, or interpret their actions as violent and use undue force against them, leading, perhaps to fatal injuries, must shoulder some of the blame. And in turn, these actions are indicative of the institutionalised racism that permeates the mental health system as a whole. Also black patients are kept in high security wings often locked up for 24 hours a day.

TWO NEWHAM CASES

NMP can report on two mental health cases that we dealt during the course of this year, reflecting the lack of facilities and the kind of treatment being dished out to black people.

Case 1

WB is mentally disturbed. He had been living on his own. But his mother, concerned about his condition, persuaded him to move back in with her as she felt she could help him more if he was at home.

On various occasions WB's mother made appointments with her doctor for her son but he refused to go.

His mother recognised that he would be fine if he took the medication prescribed to him, but if at any time he did not take it, he would behave unusually. And at these times she would ask for help from Social Services.

One day in November, WB began to behave strangely. His mother sensed something was wrong and went immediately to a phone-box to call for help from Social Services. Meanwhile, a police officer, who was just passing by, came to question him. WB responded by assaulting the officer whereupon he was arrested and taken to Forest Gate police station.

At the police station, a doctor was called in. His mother had by now informed the police that her son was unwell and could not be held responsible for his actions in his present state of mind. The doctor confirmed that WB was indeed mentally disturbed and instructed that he should be taken to hospital promptly. The police agreed and assured the doctor that WB would be taken to East Ham Memorial hospital.

Although the police did, in fact, take WB to the hospital, the hospital could not find a place for him. Subsequently, WB was taken to West Ham police station and brought to Newham West Magistrates Court the following day. The duty solicitor present that day was unsympathetic to WB's plight and though NMP requested that WB's probation officer, more familiar with WB's case, be brought to court to provide an appropriate assessment of WB, he failed to arrive. Luckily, a solicitor, who was known to NMP, happened to be present at the court and she helped. Despite this, WB was still held in remand in the psychiatric ward of Brixton prison and in fact stayed in Brixton prison until a suitable place in a hospital could be found.

Case 2

CS suffers from 'paranoid schizophrenia', and is further hampered by physical disabilities - the loss of a hand and a damaged hip - which limit his mobility.

CS was initially referred to NMP in September 1990 because of problems with housing. From December 1989, CS had been left languishing in a flat which was not only insect-infested, but

which had been burgled several times, leaving the property in a totally insecure state. The Housing Department had plans to rehouse him, and other tenants, and this was to be completed by August 1990. This disturbing, unhealthy and unsafe situation only served to heighten the vulnerability of CS, and understandably, when combined with his physical and mental condition, it all proved too much for him.

Subsequently, in October 1990, CS was arrested by West Ham police after behaving 'unusually'. Once informed of the mental condition of CS, the police took him to East Ham Memorial hospital where he had a seizure. While being administered with drugs, CS lashed out at doctors. Although CS was, owing to his mental state, not responsible for his actions, he was charged with assault and placed on remand in Brixton prison.

CS pleaded guilty to the charge and was given bail while awaiting sentencing. His case was constantly adjourned, due to the failure of both mental health workers and probation officers to provide the necessary psychiatric assessments of CS required by the court. Eventually, CS's mental health worker, who had an understanding of CS's history and circumstances, stated that CS was not considered to be dangerous. Outside psychiatrists, however, disagreed - when faced with a black man who aided his communication by gesticulating with

his arms, one of which was attached to a metal hook, these psychiatrists portrayed CS as a highly dangerous madman. Furthermore, the probation officer failed to provide the court with a social enquiry report necessary to allow CS to get probation. She described this as due to the 'the safety factor'. By this it was meant that CS had been labelled too dangerous to be interviewed 'in absentia'.

The magistrates then revoked CS's bail, placing him on remand in the psychiatric wing of Brixton prison. CS was left there for over a month during the Christmas and New Year period. Eventually, CS was sentenced and placed in a mental hospital which properly addressed his needs.

The case of CS is indicative of both the vulnerable position of black people with mental health problems who find themselves in conflict with the police and other statutory agencies, and the subconscious racist stereotyping that underlines their treatment.

CS should not have been charged and convicted of an assault for which he could not be held responsible. Moreover, his bail should never have been revoked when there had been no change in his circumstances. CS had not broken any of his bail conditions, or failed to attend any of the magistrates court hearings.

The Probation Service, Social Services, and the mental hospital failed CS and caused him to spend time in prison unnecessarily. With the right support CS could have stayed in the community. Instead he is still being held in a mental hospital.

A CHANGE IN THE SYSTEM

In both the above cases, it must be stressed, the various institutions concerned did not recognise their failure to ensure the appropriate treatment. This is symptomatic of what happens on a wider level. The real needs of black people suffering from any kind of mental disorder are continually disregarded; they are treated in an inhumane and degrading fashion and provided with little or no help. Black people with mental health problems face all the usual burdens of racism and are in addition further criminalised by a system that already disproportionately criminalises black people. A black person suffering mental illness often feels trapped and in constant conflict with the system: arrested while suffering a breakdown or behaving abnormally in the streets; taken to prison/hospital; may be given medication; and then put back into the community with no support or aftercare, leaving the patient isolated, unprepared to cope alone and prone therefore to further mental disorder. The system is failing to serve the black community in many ways. There is an urgent need for those involved in mental health care both in Newham and nationally to come together and seek change.

There are a whole range of services and information that should be made readily available to the whole black community, especially as black people with mental health problems are far too often left out in the cold and in many cases are isolated from their family and community.

Mental health professionals too often reach for drugs as a cure. Instead, they should use counselling and psycho-therapy more often, both as a cure and as a prevention to severe mental disturbances, thereby allowing the person to remain in his/her own community which would allow for positive rehabilitation.

Racism is inbuilt in society. It is vital that black mental health patients are not left to wander the streets, only to be pulled back into the same trap. This vicious circle can only be broken with effective community care and facilities based in the community.

13 RACISM AND THE MEDIA

To argue that in the reporting of race, the British media are more in the business of making opinion than of presenting news is nothing new. Most reporting of race is characterised by sensationalism and the stereotyping and scapegoating of black people. But during the last few years, the situation has deteriorated further: large sections of the press are now aggressively engaged in generating racial hysteria and giving respectability to popular racist ideas and actions.

Below we examine recent trends and events in the coverage of race issues in the media and what the implications have been on the lives of black people and race relations in general.

FROM SALMAN TO SADDAM

The 'Salman Rushdie affair' took Britain by storm in 1989. The Muslim community, incensed at what they felt was an attack not only on their religion but on their very existence in this country, organised a campaign to extend the blasphemy laws, that protect Christianity, to cover Islam. The media, however, crudely reduced the conflict to one between 'freedom of speech' and Islamic fundamentalism. Muslims were portrayed as 'anti-British' and a threat to 'British democracy' - in all sections of the media from the tabloids to the BBC. Tory MPs called for the deportation of Muslims unwilling to accept British laws. Mosques were vandalised by fascists and defaced with graffiti like 'NF rules' and 'Long live Rushdie'. In racist attacks up and down the country, the Rushdie affair was used to justify violence and criminal damage. Even the word 'Muslim' became a term of abuse, synonymous with 'Paki'.

Throughout the conflict, the media exacerbated racial tensions by promoting extreme voices in the Tory party, the mosques and the pro-Rushdie lobby at the expense of those who provided alternative and progressive perspectives. At no point was any effort made to go beyond scaremongering images

of book-burning and death-threats. What followed was false debate after false debate about the Rushdie affair, with society suffering the consequences of increased racial polarisation.

We failed Norman Tebbit's cricket test and are proud of it

In April 1990, Norman Tebbit, one of the most right-wing Tory MPs, questioned the loyalty of Britain's black people by proposing the 'cricket test': 'which side do they cheer for?' asked Tebbit, implying that because most black people in Britain do not support England in cricket, they are 'anti-British' and do not deserve to live here.

While Tebbit was derided by many in the media, journalists picked up on his 'cricket test' and used it as a vehicle to reflect on the nature of the 'race problem' in this country. It proved an ideal opportunity to channel their preoccupation with immigration and ask whether or not black people with their different cultures, customs and values 'fit in'.

Asian youth provided a timely response to Tebbit when they hoisted a banner reading 'We failed Norman Tebbit's cricket test and are proud of it' at a cricket match between England and India - photos of the occasion appeared in several daily papers the next morning.

The Gulf War

It was the Gulf War that saw the British media stoop to new depths in its uncritical support of Western military action against Iraq and its deafening silence to human rights abuses against black people at home. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the US and Britain subsequently sent troops to Saudi Arabia, the media were able to draw upon the popular racism that they had been propagating for years. Saddam Hussein, for years a close ally of the West, was now denounced as a Muslim tyrant. Rampant anti-Arab racism, in the name of 'supporting our boys',

followed. As the West 'carpet-bombed' Iraq and killed thousands, it became necessary to legitimise the war by dehumanising the Iraqi people and referring to them as 'collateral damage'. This was achieved by using anti-Arab/anti-Muslim racism to fuel nationalist and jingoistic fervour and glorify the destruction of Iraq and its people. *The Sun* ran stories about 'hundreds of Iraqis fried in their tanks' and 'the day it rained bombs', whilst even the 'liberal' media remained reticent, in fear of being viewed as unpatriotic.

Britain's black community was increasingly seen as the 'enemy within'. The media launched a sustained campaign against black people for being 'traitors'. The tabloid press ran stories about how Muslims had prevented 'patriotic' Britons from flying the Union Jack. Its answer was a huge campaign of stickers and posters of Union Jacks, accompanied by outbursts of 'if they don't like it here, they should leave'. The so-called quality press, however, played the racist game in a more intelligent and sophisticated manner, becoming obsessed with the 'divided loyalties' of Britain's black people. When black clerics spoke out against the war, it was because they secretly supported Saddam Hussein, not for humanitarian or religious reasons. Yet the Pope and Britain's Catholic community were never accused of being a 'fifth column' when the Pope opposed the war. Attacks on the black community that occurred as a result of the war remained marginal issues to the mainstream media. Indeed, the attacks on the mosques during the war hardly rated a mention - we can only compare this with the probable reaction if even one Christian church had been fire-bombed.

The media's racist coverage of the Gulf War will continue to affect the lives of black people in Britain for years to come. It will be some time before 'race relations' will recover from the battering received by the war.

NMP AND THE MEDIA

NMP remains a first point of reference nationally for journalists interested in publicising the fight-back against racism and speaking to those people at the cutting edge of racist attacks. It should be noted that the press comes to small black groups like Newham Monitoring Project and Southall Monitoring Group - not to community relations councils, race equality units and other 'race experts' - when it wants to speak to the black community, because we work at the grassroots with people under attack and they largely do not.

During 1990-91, NMP reached new audiences in working on a variety of television and radio programmes and featuring in numerous newspaper and magazine articles. Most notably, we appeared on a BBC *Panorama* documentary on racist violence, challenging the professed commitment of the police to combat racial harassment. The video of Mr and Mrs

Govindan being attacked in their shop was shown. The Govindan case was also featured on BBC *Newsroom Southeast*.

During the Gulf War, NMP appeared on various programmes looking at the racist backlash against the black community including Channel 4's *Free for All*, *Right to Reply* and *Midnight Special* and BBC's *Heart of the Matter*. NMP also contributed to a *Thames News* item on racial harassment in Canning Town, a BBC *Reportage* piece on the far right, Channel 4's *Verdict* on inter-racial adoption and a Barcelona TV special on racist violence in Britain.

We have done extensive work on radio as well. In Britain, we have commented on issues of racism and policing on Radio 1, Radio 4, Radio 5, BBC World Service, GLR, Capital Radio, Sunrise Radio, and WNK Radio. Internationally, we have been interviewed by radio stations from New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Australia, Cuba and Sweden.

NMP arranged stories for two national papers: the *Observer* did a major piece on the Altaf case while the *Daily Mirror* did a full page spread on racial harassment in Beckton. The black press was, predictably, most supportive of NMP's work. *Eastern Eye*, in particular, deserves mention for carrying two superb articles on the Altaf and Govindan victories. *Asian Times*, *Caribbean Times*, *The Voice*, *New Life*, *Asian Herald*, *Profile* and *Newsasia* also published stories on the Project's work. Others who carried articles on NMP include *City Limits*, *Time Out*, *Spare Rib* and various left newspapers. Even *Police Review* quoted NMP in a cover story on racism in the East End. Locally, the *Stratford and Newham Express* and the *Stratford and Newham Yellow Advertiser* regularly mentioned NMP in reference to race issues. Internationally, NMP received coverage in daily papers in Greece, India and Italy.

The *Newham Recorder*, which in previous years specialised in distorting the work of NMP, chose to largely ignore us during 1990. Even when it covered the Altaf and Govindan cases, it 'forgot' to mention that NMP had organised the defence campaigns. This strategy of denying the Project the oxygen of publicity was, however, abandoned in one notable editorial in March 1990: we reprint Tom Duncan's diatribe against NMP and ask you, the readers, to contrast it with another commentary (also reprinted) which appeared in *Eastern Eye* in February 1991.

EDITOR'S VIEW
BY TOM DUNCAN

Short on a few of the basic facts of life...

NEWHAM Monitoring Project are, if nothing else, consistent. Their tenth annual report is just like their ninth, and their eighth, and their seventh, and so on.

They are never short of praise...for themselves.

They are never short of belief...in their own infallibility.

And they are never short of insults...for those who oppose their methods.

One thing they are consistently short of, however, is logic and attention to the truth.

I share with Police Superintendent John Ball the honour of being their most consistent target for abuse.

What I didn't realise until I read their report was that Mr Ball had such authority over me that he actually ordered me to change an article published in this paper.

Old age can do funny things to people and I had to look back at the article. It was no wonder I couldn't remember it.

I WAS ON HOLIDAY AT THE TIME.

Ah well, Newham Monitoring Project. Another own goal.

If I felt in need of another holiday, I could start planning it now on the money I would receive by suing them for defamation.

Mr Ball, too, could look forward to at least a weekend in Southend, but I doubt if either of us would enjoy the experience more than knowing that Newham Monitoring Project have again revealed just how seriously they can be taken.

Their tirade of nonsense and their unceasing support of lost causes would be more at home in Disneyland than a sensitive area like East London.

The movement was born out of a bunch of hotheads and no attempt since then to add a veneer of responsibility has managed to hide the fact that they are still a group who fail palpably to gain credibility.

They resolutely refuse to support a group set up for the very reasons they say is their main concern.

Their blatant distrust and scandalous condemnation of the police would be laughable if it were not so serious.

The world needs its pressure groups, but not those that act against the very things they claim to support.

East London must hope there will not be an eleventh annual report of Newham Monitoring Project. Regrettably, I fear there will be.

Standing firm for justice

THE COURAGE and determination of Mr Padmanabhan Govindan must be applauded. In the face of racism from both mindless thugs and the police who were supposed to protect him, he has stood firm in his battle for justice.

However, it should not be forgotten that without the support of his local community and, in particular, the oft-maligned Newham Monitoring Project, it is unlikely that he and his family could have survived this terrible ordeal.

For years the NMP and similar anti-racist organisations have been portrayed as thorns in the flesh of the forces of 'law and order'. The press routinely dismiss and vilify them as mindless radicals (yet never fail to queue up at their doors for juicy titbits). Politicians abuse them at will whilst jumping on the bandwagon of their successes.

Sadly too many Asians are taken in by the right-wing hysteria directed against such organisations, failing to recognise the selfless determination with which they go about the task of exposing racial injustices.

NMP and other such groups are facing a crisis of funding as a result of radical Government cutbacks in social spending. Yet it is in these difficult times that the support of such committed organisations is needed more than ever.

In order to combat racial injustice we need not only the personal courage of such individuals as Mr Govindan, but the backing of WELL-FUNDED AND SUPPORTED organisations such as the Newham Monitoring Project.

14 THE GULF CRISIS: THE HIDDEN WAR

The war in the Gulf had serious implications for Britain's black communities. As Arabs living in Britain were detained by the government on grounds of 'national security', as racist violence against black people in the UK grew, NMP increasingly found itself drawn into campaigns to safeguard the civil liberties of black and 'Third World' peoples in Britain. For these reasons, we have extended the remit of our annual report to include this survey of the Gulf War's racist backlash.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

As the Gulf crisis intensified, a hidden war was unleashed against black and 'Third World' communities across Europe. The roots of this 'war' lay deep within racism, particularly anti-Arab/anti-Muslim racism. On the continent, it was the Turkish, Arab and North African communities, having been 'imported' as a new 'underclass' of poorly paid workers with little or no political rights, who were the targets of this racism. They were portrayed as 'terrorists' and 'drug smugglers', indeed as a threat to the very foundations of Western, Christian civilisation.

This view - which gained credence in the popular consciousness with the support of the new right (the Belgian Interior Minister called Arabs 'barbarians') and fascist parties like the French Front Nationale (their electoral success was largely due to anti-immigrant platforms) - inevitably led to a horrific rise in racist violence. In France, for example, 19 North Africans have been murdered in racist attacks since 1986. These attacks, together with the strengthening of state controls in terms of policing and immigration, heralded a new Europe for black people.

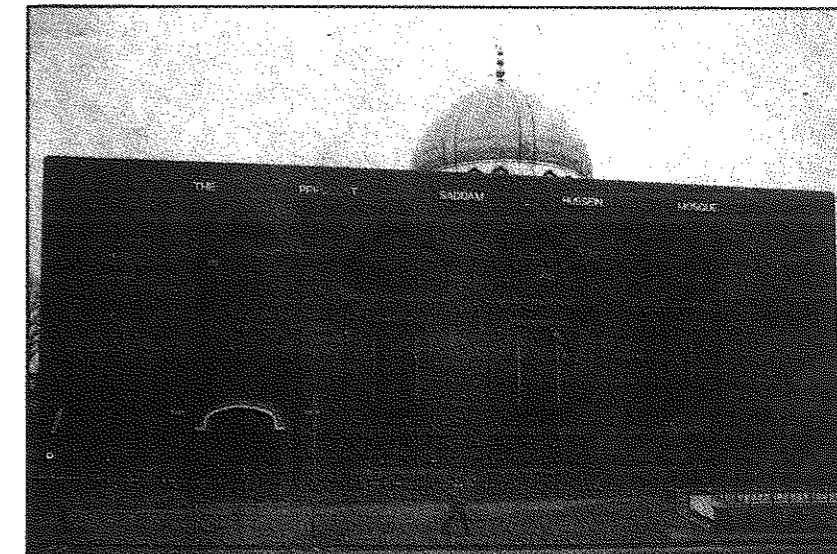
In Britain, anti-Arab/anti-Muslim racism has become particularly virulent since the 'Rushdie affair' in 1989. But it came to the fore during the oil

crisis in 1973, when the West lost its direct control over Arab oil. Since then, the Arab people have been portrayed as 'Muslim fanatics', 'terrorists' and 'despotic, rich oil sheikhs'. These stereotypes were, subsequently, used effectively against the late Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, and the Libyan leader, Colonel Gadhafi.

Only by recognising the centrality of anti-Arab racism will we, as anti-racists, be able to challenge the new Europe being built around us, a Europe which views all black people as the 'enemy within'. We have already witnessed the deployment of thousands of armed troops against the black community in Italy and France. Indeed, the experience of France - where over

The Gulf War THE MOSLEM THREAT

The picture above shows the 'President Saddam Hussein Mosque' in Birmingham. It tells an alarming story. The war in the Gulf has exposed just how vulnerable Britain is to the threat within. Just a year ago no-one could have predicted a war in the Middle East involving British forces. But the war we didn't want has come and, for better or worse, our forces are fighting in it.



In this situation the multi-racial experiment in Britain has become a nightmare. The British National Party has always opposed immigration, and now the awful consequences of immigration are with us. We are at war with a Moslem nation whose leader has declared a *Jihad* - a 'holy war' on behalf of Islam. Meanwhile, here at home there are 2 million Moslems amongst us.

The most fanatical of the Moslem leaders in this country, Kalim Siddiqui, has declared that if the war goes badly for Iraq there will be blood on the streets in Britain - a civil war on our own country!

This could mean that a large part of the 2 million Moslems amongst us are waiting for a 'holy war' - a war in which Britain could be torn apart in the name of Islam.

We say that this cannot be allowed. At the very least, Siddiqui and others like him should be interned as enemy aliens. Furthermore, we say that Britain's 2 million Moslems, as well as other non-European immigrants, should be resettled in their ethnic homelands.

Repatriate NOW to make Britain safe!

Send 32p in stamps for further details to:

BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY



Printed & published by BNP, PO Box 117, Welling, Kent DA16 3DW

2,000 Tunisians returned to Tunisia in less than 14 days because of fear of racist violence - may soon become a familiar spectacle in Britain. The new Europe has no need for black people; the newly 'liberated' Eastern European countries will provide it with all the cheap labour it requires.

The resurgence of popular racism has also enabled fascist organisations such as the BNP to re-enter the political debate on immigration, policing and multiculturalism. Their leaflets about the 'Muslim Threat' echo the voices of the popular media; in fact, in some instances, their analysis is more restrained than that of the mainstream establishment. The BNP obviously hopes to reap similar electoral benefits as

the French Front Nationale. Anti-racists should remember that the Gulf War may have ended but the war against black people is only just beginning.

RACIST ATTACKS

A number of racial incidents were reported to NMP and other anti-racist organisations, such as CARF, during the war. Below we print a selection of the incidents to give some idea of the extent to which a war was being launched against the black community throughout the UK.

■ Burning rag thrown through the window of a mosque in Chorley, Lancs (Sun 15.1.91) ■ Petrol poured through the roof vent of Medina Majid mosque, Batley, causing £4000 damage (Times 17.1.91) ■ Iraqi Community Association in Hackney, east London, bombarded with abusive letters and phone calls since the war began, threatening retaliation if any British soldiers get killed (Hackney Gazette 18.1.91) ■ White youths attack Somali women in head-scarves in the centre of Sheffield. Other women in different parts of the country also approached in the street and told not to wear the hijab. (report to CARF 19.1.91) ■ Two 17-year-old Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets shot at by a white man with an air rifle (report to NMP 22.1.91) ■ Petrol poured over the door of a Woking mosque and set alight. Several cars in the area daubed with anti-Iraqi graffiti (Guardian 23.1.91) ■ Attempted fire attack on mosque in Norwich (report to CARF 23.1.91) ■ Birmingham city central synagogue attacked and a car set on fire; Jewish cemetery in Portsmouth broken into and gravestones daubed with SS insignia (Jewish Chronicle 23.1.91) ■ Arson attack on Hasmorean boys school, Hendon. (Evening Standard 24.1.91) ■ Muslim parents in East Ham complain after school teacher asks Muslim children whether they support Saddam Hussein and then tells them 'you should all be shot' (report to NMP 24.1.91) ■ Yemeni community bus, carrying school-children, stoned in Sheffield. The Yemeni community reports many violent attacks (report to NMP 26.1.91) ■ Asian family's home petrol-bombed in Shipley, Bradford (Observer 26.1.91) ■ Slogans such as 'Death to Niggers' and 'Kill Iraqis' left scattered in the room of Bernie Grant MP after his office in Tottenham, is ransacked (Caribbean Times 29.1.91) ■ The Saddam Hussein mosque, Birmingham, given extra police protection after repeated threats since last August (Eastern Eye 29.1.91) ■ Arson attacks on cars in Asian area of Heckmondwike, Yorks. A Batley schoolboy has his nose broken after an attack by four white youths (Asian Times 29.1.91) ■ 276 racial incidents reported in the schools of Strathclyde; Police visit Waltham Forest mosques looking for Iraqi 'terrorists'; Kirklees mosque attacked; Glasgow central mosque threatened (CRE report 30.1.91) ■ Attacks on mosque and local taxi-drivers in Burnley (report to NMP 30.1.91) ■ Asian shops in Fyfe, Scotland, attacked. In Edinbrugh six white youths attack an Indian restaurant (report to CARF 30.1.91) ■ The Thief of Baghdad restaurant, Bolton, repeatedly threatened; Mosques in Nottingham and Brixton attacked (GLARE report Feb '91) ■ Arab students at Nottingham University report increase in racist attacks (report to NMP 3.2.91) ■ NF literature threatening to burn down mosques unless Muslims publicly condemn Saddam Hussein sent to Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association, the Sunni Razvi Jamia mosque and the Islamic centre, all in Newham (report to NMP 4.2.91) ■ BNP literature sent to mosque and synagogue in Ilford (report to NMP 9.2.91) ■ A letter bomb sent to 'Jewish Care', a welfare organisation in north-west London (Jewish Chronicle 15.2.91) ■ All the windows of a Sikh temple in Gravesend smashed and threatening letters sent to local Asians (report to CARF 15.2.91) ■ Windows smashed at the Ram Garhia Gurdwara, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent. Missile, wrapped in paper which contained the message 'For the lads in the Gulf', thrown through the window (Eastern Eye 19.2.91) ■ Windows broken during an attack on the east London mosque, Whitechapel (Asian Times 19.2.91) ■ Attack on a mosque in Charlton, south-east London causes £5000 damage (report to NMP 21.1.91) ■ In addition, there has been hundreds of incidents reported to anti-racist organisations across Britain of Asian cab drivers being attacked.

NEWHAM AND THE WAR

The fact that Newham remained relatively free from the serious attacks that took place in other areas of the country, was, we feel, largely due to the history of organisation within Newham's black community which enabled it immediately to take steps to protect itself from attacks. NMP played a central role in co-ordinating this response, using its experience of community organisation to publicise its 24-hour-service, as well as calling for practical measures, such as direct lines from the mosques to the fire service, in case of arson attack. In addition, NMP took part in the Peace in the Gulf committee, which brought together the majority of Newham's mosques and community centres to help co-ordinate responses to the war and counter the criminalisation of Newham's Muslim community. Fortunately, there were no arson attacks on any of Newham's mosques, although three mosques, the Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association, the Sunni Razvi Jamia mosque and the Islamic centre, did receive threats from the National Front, telling them that they had to make public statements against Saddam Hussein, otherwise they would be targets for arson attacks. Perhaps, Newham's leading National Front member, Ian Anderson, figured that this would raise the profile of the National Front locally, in the run up to the forthcoming General Election, when they will be standing a candidate in Newham South.

Although there were not the firebombings and other serious incidents that occurred elsewhere, the racist backlash as a result of the Gulf war did effect our casework.

● In February 1991, the N family, who are Nigerian, were attacked in Memorial park, West Ham, by a eight-strong gang of white youths. The family were racially abused and physically attacked, with CN receiving injuries to the face, including bruising and a black eye. The same gang then attacked DO, CN's uncle.

Although the N family are Nigerian, the racist abuse they suffered included references to the Gulf war, including remarks such as 'go back to your own country, you Iraqi'.

This case demonstrates the extent to which anti-Arab racism has become part and parcel of the racist vocabulary, affecting all black people, be they Arab or not. This experience is very similar to the effect of the anti-Muslim hysteria generated by the 'Rushdie affair', when Muslim became a term of racist abuse for all black people.

● The H family, who are Iranian, had suffered long-term racial harassment from their neighbours, including damage to the car, racist abuse and attacks on the children. When the Gulf War began, anti-Iraqi abuse became a

daily occurrence, including remarks such as 'Iraqi traitor' and 'surrender to the UN'. One morning, Mr H found Union Jack cut-outs from the Sun stuck on a snow-man he had built for his children in the front garden. When he phoned the police about the anti-Iraqi racial harassment his family was suffering, the first thing police asked Mr H was whether he was Iraqi. Rather than denying he was Iraqi, he bravely asked what his nationality had to do with his complaint of racial harassment.

The police's failure to take any action against the perpetrators demonstrates their unwillingness to challenge the increasing racism due to anti-Arab hysteria.

● Not only did the Canning Town Muslim Welfare Association receive threatening letters, in addition, local people using the mosque were targeted for attack. Mr M, for example, was on his way to the mosque, when he was attacked by a gang of white youths. Although Mr M managed to fight off his attackers, he was subsequently attacked by another gang of local racists, armed with metal pipes. Mr M managed to defend himself, although he suffered injuries in doing so. Despite being able to identify the attackers, as well-known local racists, the police have failed to arrest and charge them.

As a result of the harassment that the mosque and its members have suffered, compounded by the failure of the police to respond adequately, the Association is considering moving to new premises in a 'safer' black area.

This case demonstrates how, as a result of the war, symbols of Muslim faith, such as mosques, became a target for racist attack. Moreover, the failure of the police to tackle racist violence is once again raising the spectre of no-go areas for black people. This must not be allowed to happen.

CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION LAW

The government, ably abetted by the popular media, have generated an atmosphere whereby the criminalisation of Arab and Muslim people, and their portrayal as terrorists, has gone unchallenged within society. Under the guise of 'protecting the British people from this terrorist threat', the government launched a wave of deportations and detentions aimed at the Arab community, in particular the Iraqi and Palestinian communities.

The detentions and deportations that arose from the Gulf War effected all aspects of life for Arab people in Britain. In September 1990, the immigration rules were changed so as to prohibit the entry (and re-entry) of Iraqi students. 23 Iraqis were expelled on 'national security' grounds. This was accompanied by a deci-

sion to delay re-entry visas for other Iraqi nationals, many of them political refugees fleeing from Saddam Hussein. In addition, from September onwards, Iraqis entering Britain were subjected to thorough personal and baggage checks and were questioned about their attitude to Saddam Hussein. Some airlines, such as Pan Am, continued this criminalisation to its logical end by banning all 'Arabs' from their flights, both domestic and international, in the name of security. Employers also screened Middle East employees for 'potential terrorists'. Engineering firms actually laid off black workers (some with 15 years service), deeming them potential security risks.

On 3 January 1991, a further 67 Iraqis were served with notices of intention to deport them, again on national security grounds. Two days before the outbreak of war, reports indicated that there had been an increase in liaison between police, intelligence services and government departments as senior officers began to warn of the risk that:

'Palestinian fanatics or maverick Arab groups sponsored by Baghdad may launch a bombing campaign'
(Daily Telegraph, 15.1.91)

By 18 January (a few days after the outbreak of the war in the Gulf), 63 more Iraqis and seven Palestinians had been served with notices of intention to deport them. The media justified these detentions by claiming that 'European police had smashed a Palestinian terrorist network' (Independent, 20.1.91). The detainees included Palestinian, Abbas Shiblak, who had lived in Britain for 17 years, was well-known as a proponent of peaceful Arab-Israeli dialogue, and was a consistent campaigner against Iraqi human rights abuses.

Criminalisation of Arab community

On 18 January, the Home Office, using the Immigration Act 1971, issued new rules prohibiting the granting of visas to Iraqis. The rules also effected leave to enter or extensions of stay to Iraqis, and required all those with limited leave to stay (ie visitors, students and short-stay businessmen) to register immediately with the police. Although the penalty for failing to register is a fine of up to £1000 and a possible recommendation for deportation, notices were not sent to individuals affected by the new requirement. Instead, advertisements were placed in the Arab press.

This new ruling created a situation whereby the government was able to deport Arab people not only for being 'suspect Arabs' but also for having broken existing immigration legislation that made 'overstaying' a criminal offence. In effect, the new rules served to criminalise the black community and led to a situation whereby black people became wary of political involvement or challenging government policy especially in the context of the war. *The Times* (24.1.91) reported that armed police had been used to expel 14

Iraqi students to Amman, Jordan, and arrest and detain a further 31 Iraqis in a joint police and immigration operation.

With police raids on colleges and universities throughout the country, thousands of Arab students went into hiding. The message was quite clearly 'if you're Arab, you are open to arrest'. Many organisations and individual students turned to NMP for help. After two 18-year-old students at Westminster College were arrested and deported to Jordan, calls began to be received by NMP from Arab students desperately seeking advice as to their legal position.

By the end of January 1991, at least 182 Arabs had been detained - mostly Iraqis and Palestinians, but also Yemenis, Jordanians, Lebanese and, even, a naturalised US citizen. According to government figures, 84 Arabs had been deported to Jordan.

Organisations of migrants and refugees, however, dispute these official figures. The Immigration Prisoners Support Group, Refugee Forum, Migrants Rights Action Network and Rights and Justice have all said that the numbers of people detained and deported, or awaiting deportation, as a result of the Gulf War, were at least twice the figure claimed by the Home Office - a more realistic figure would be approaching 400. Included in this are the many domestic workers, employed by the Kuwaitis, who were abandoned in this country. These deportations not only contravened international law - and, as such, were condemned by Amnesty International - but, in some cases, constituted a possible death sentence for the deportees, since they were opponents of the Iraqi Ba'athist regime. Deporting them to Jordan was tantamount to handing them back to Iraq. Despite this, many 'liberal' organisations, fearing being labelled 'unpatriotic' or 'disloyal to our boys', fell silent on the issue. This led black, anti-racist, migrant and refugee organisations, such as the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and Black People Against War in the Gulf, to launch their own initiatives, including help-lines to co-ordinate legal advice. The scale and urgency of the problem led NMP to extend its emergency help-line. NMP also worked with the Law Centres Federation to produce a list of emergency immigration solicitors that would be available 24 hours a day to respond to emergency detentions.

DETENTIONS

The majority of detainees were served with notice of intention to deport under Section 3(5)(b) of the Immigration Act 1971. They were held in Pentonville and Holloway prison; those claiming asylum were held at Wormwood Scrubs. The decision to hold the detainees in prison reinforced the perception of them as people who had committed a criminal offence; rather they were people against whom no case had been proved. In addition, detainees were also held in Sheffield, Bradford and Leeds, although the majority

were moved south.

Detainees received, by way of particulars of their offence to Britain's security, a standard letter saying:

'The Iraqi government has openly threatened to take terrorist action against unspecified Western targets if hostilities break out in the Gulf. In the light of this, your known links and activities in connection with the Iraqi regime make your presence in the United Kingdom an unacceptable security risk'.

The hidden agenda here was to force people to leave the country voluntarily, through fear of imprisonment, rather than challenge the detentions. However, people who left the country later found out that they would be refused leave to re-enter Britain, and Europe, at a future date. Unaware of their rights (eg their right to appeal against deportation and their eligibility for legal aid), many left Britain, intending to return after the war.

Those who decided to challenge their detention and proposed deportation received first encouragement, then a slap in the face from the courts. On 22 January, High Court Judge Simon Brown gave a stateless couple leave to challenge the Home Office decision, saying 'there is an urgent need to decide whether this is ... internment by the back-door'. But the next day the same judge decided that the 'urgent need' no longer existed. 'The court cannot interfere in matters of national security', he said. Besides, he reminded detainees, they had the right to make representations to the 'Three Wise Men' - the panel whose advice the Home Office would consider before deporting.

The government, therefore, was in the position of legitimising the deployment of thousands of troops in the Gulf on the pretext of the Iraqi violation of international law whilst, simultaneously, disregarding various international laws in the treatment, detention and deportation of Arab people in Britain. The Immigration Act 1971, for example, contradicts the European Convention of Human Rights, in particular Article 5 which protects the right to liberty and security of the person and Article 5(1)(f) which covers detention and deportation. It is quite clear that the British government has also disregarded Article 5(4) of the European Convention which states that 'everyone who is deprived of his/her liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings by which the lawfulness of his detention shall be decided speedily by a court and his/her release ordered if the detention is not lawful'.

The 'Three Wise Men'

The system whereby a panel of advisers review national security deportations was set up in 1971, after the Labour government rejected recommendations in the 1968 Wilson Committee report. The report stated that deportations should 'not be exempt from the

fundamental principle that any administrative decision should be subject to scrutiny and appeal before execution'. When, in 1976, the American journalist Mark Hosenball challenged the procedure as unfair, Lord Denning, in the Court of Appeal, agreed, but said that: 'the rules of natural justice have to be modified in regard to foreigners who prove themselves unwelcome and ought to be deported'. The basis of his decision was Section 15(3) of the Immigration Act 1971 which states that:

'A person shall not be entitled to appeal against a decision to make a deportation order against him if the ground of the decision was that his deportation is conducive to the public good as being in the interests of national security or of the relations between the United Kingdom and any other country or for other reasons of a political nature'. (emphasis added)

The above clearly demonstrates that the government was sanctioning deportations for 'reasons of a political nature', using its power of criminalisation against any section of the community it deems a political threat.

The 'Three Wise Men', as the panel came to be known, were chosen by the Home Office. It consisted of Lord Justice Lloyd, Mr David Neve (the President of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal) and Sir Robert Andrew, a retired senior civil servant. This panel was to make a secret recommendation to the Home Secretary, after convening a hearing with the detainees. The Home Secretary, however, was not legally bound by any of the panel's recommendations.

The hearings themselves, held in secret, lasted an average of 40 minutes, and lawyers were not allowed to represent their clients at them. After pressure from various civil liberties groups, detainees were granted the right to have a 'non-legal' friend accompany them, although even this concession limited, as the government ruled: 'the detainee may be assisted by a friend to such an extent as the advisors sanction'. Not only was no evidence called by the Home Office, but detainees were not allowed to cross-examine government departments or officials involved. Thus, detainees left hearings as ignorant as before as to the allegations against them.

It was the Home Office's intention to rush the hearings through in three days, listing them at a rate of eight a day. Only after lawyers acting for the detainees threatened High Court proceedings did the panel agree to adjourn cases to allow detainees more time to fight the (unknown) charges against them. Furthermore, the conditions in Pentonville, where those who applied for a panel review were detained, militated strongly against proper preparation of cases. Lawyers were having to confer with detainees in corridors and in dilapidated rooms in a disused wing brought back into service for the 'war deportees'. Conditions were such that even the International Red Cross made representations to the Home Secretary. In February, 30 detainees went on hunger strike to protest at the failure of the heating system; they were sleeping in cells well below

freezing-point.

The Hearing

The detainee would enter a room where he would sit facing the 'Three Wise Men'. Despite having no information as to the precise nature of the allegations against him, the detainee would have 40 minutes to convince the panel that these allegations were false. It has now come to light that the basis for many of the detentions was incorrect and that out-dated information from the intelligence services was used. The detainee was not allowed to have any legal representation at the interrogation, a denial of basic civil rights. The panel also asked a number of questions which were to assist in determining whether the detainee was actually a threat. These included such incisive questions as:

- What is your political involvement in this country with Palestine?
- What is your position on the Palestinian question?
- Have you played any part in trying to promote anti-Syrian propaganda? (interesting question since Syria was deemed country non-gratia until its support for Western troops in the Gulf)
- Have you expressed views on the Gulf crisis?
- Over the last few weeks, have you been expressing views about the situation in Kuwait with anyone?
- What have you talked about with your wife?

The panel would not give any indication as to what their reaction was to any of the answers, except to continuously pressurise the detainee to 'answer again' or 'think hard, think hard'.

Further implications

The experience of criminalisation that the black community has faced at the hands of the immigration authorities has taught it valuable lessons about the necessity of an organised response. A wide spectrum of organisations came together to launch anti-deportation campaigns, specifically around two Palestinians, Abbas Shiblak and Ali Saleh, who were well-known in academic and journalist circles and, as such, were able to generate widespread support which enabled them to win their appeal against deportation. Unfortunately, sections of the liberal media who questioned their detentions failed to consider other less-known detainees, particularly the Iraqi detainees, many of whom had been opponents of the Iraqi regime long before the West concerned itself about Iraqi human rights abuses. The fear that because they were Iraqis they would automatically be deemed guilty had an effect on the decision of many detainees not to mount high-profile campaigns, not to mention fear of reprisal against their families in Iraq and fear that such campaigns would also have an effect on family members resident in Britain. Since the government had made it

clear it was also willing to use Section 3(5)(c) of the Immigration Act 1971 - which states that 'a person shall be liable to deportation from the United Kingdom, if another person to whose family he belongs is or has been ordered to be deported' - many detainees had little option but to remain quiet.

In addition to the civilian prisoners, 35 students were detained in January as 'prisoners of war', making Britain the the only country outside the Middle East to have POWs. These POWs were held in an army camp in Rollestone, Wiltshire. Their detentions appear to have been authorised under the Royal Prerogative, but they remain something of a mystery. Not only had there has been no formal declaration of war (indeed the Lord Chancellor's Department issued a statement that Britain was not at war with Iraq but was 'participating in an enforcement action on behalf of the UN, pursuant to a Security Council resolution'), but many of the students classified as POWs were detained because they were registered with the Iraqi Embassy, so as to be applicable for government sponsorship. Arab students remain at risk of deportation because the war disrupted the flow of their funds. Failure to pay their tuition fees means that they are unable to continue to register as students, making them liable for deportation because their immigration visas only permit residence for study purposes. Some of those POWs released are currently investigating the possibility of civil action against the government for their detentions.

For many Arabs resident in Britain, the threat of deportation still hangs over them. Although they do not face the immediate prospect of deportation, they have found themselves without income and without access to financial resources held in Britain because their accounts have been frozen. They remain without an effective right of appeal against the refusal of the Home Office to allow them to stay in Britain and aware that, at any moment, they could be deported to a country in the midst of a civil war, where their lives would most certainly be at risk.

Various black and anti-racist organisations initiated a campaign around this issue. For the treatment of Iraqi people in the UK can no longer be deemed a question of 'national security'. What is at stake is the power of the Home Office to target a specific nationality or group of people and abuse their civil liberties. Today it is the Iraqi people who are at the forefront of the threat of deportation. But, as the black community are all too well aware, special powers used against the Iraqis today, could all too easily be used against others within the black community whenever the government so wishes.

BLACK PEOPLE AGAINST WAR IN THE GULF (BPAWG)

When the Gulf War began, NMP realised that the anti-Arab/anti-Muslim hysteria, generated by the govern-

ment and the media, would intensify further into a direct attack on the black community. Due to the lack of a national anti-racist organisation, NMP took the lead in co-ordinating a network of black community and anti-racist organisations to ensure that practical work was done around both the new wave of racist violence and the internment and deportation of Arab people.

This network of organisations came together under the title of 'Black People Against War In The Gulf', and was officially launched at a public meeting, on 5 February, of over 400 people at Camden town hall. A number of speakers addressed the meeting including Sabah Jawad, from the Iraqi Democrats; Bernie Grant MP; A Sivanandan, editor of Race & Class; Ali Jeddah, a former Palestinian political prisoner; and Reem Abdelhadi, a leading Palestinian student activist.



BPAWG public meeting

A wide ranging discussion took place around the centrality of anti-Arab/anti-Muslim racism in the construction of a new popular anti-black racism, linked to a resurgence of Euro-fascism as well as European legislation on policing and immigration. It was agreed that there was an urgent need for black organisations to take the lead in initiating practical campaigns around the attacks and detentions. For instance, a campaign was launched to support the detainees which culminated in a picket of the Home Office to protest at the attacks and detentions on 20 February.

Police smash BPAWG picket

The police were hostile to the picket from the start. They refused to allow the picket to stand in front of the Home Office - the traditional spot for pickets - instead they crammed it onto the narrow pavement opposite.

Twenty minutes after the picket began, the police called in re-inforcements from the Territorial Support Group. Using the pretext that slogans critical of the United States were an offence under the Public Order Act, the police proceeded to ban the picket and made indiscriminate arrests. A total of eleven people were arrested and held at Rochester Row police station for five hours. The police charged some of the eleven protestors with Public Order offences; others were charged under Section 59(2) of the Metropolitan Police Act 1839, an obscure piece of legislation. The arrests were witnessed by Jeremy Corbyn MP, who is due to appear as a witness in the forthcoming trials.

It is quite clear that the disruption of the picket is yet another example of the British state's denial of black



Arrest outside Home Office - Asian Times, 26/2/91

people's rights - including the right to dissent - in the context of the war. Interestingly enough, when Jeremy Corbyn raised the issue of the arrests in the House of Commons, on 26 February, the following was reported in the official Hansard:

Mr Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis indicating under what powers the picket of his Department called by 'Black People Against War in the Gulf' on 20 February was cleared away by the Metropolitan police. **Mr Peter Lloyd:** I understand from the Commissioner that, on 20 February, a demonstration organised by the **Newham Monitoring Project** took place between 4 and 6 pm outside the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate. During the demonstration, a male leading the chanting started using a megaphone and, after a warning to desist, was arrested. A group of other demonstrators attempted to prevent the arrest and a scuffle broke out. To prevent further disorder, the sessional order under section 59(2) of the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 was invoked and the crowd dispersed. A total of 11 persons were arrested.

It was interesting that the Minister, in his reply, chose to focus not on the indiscriminate attack on the picket, but on the role of NMP in organising the picket. Obviously, the Home Office takes more interest in NMP and its work, than it likes to admit, immediately linking it with any progressive black struggle in London.

Other initiatives

On a practical level, people from all across London phoned NMP for advice on tackling racist violence as well as legal advice on the deportations. It was on this basis that NMP took the decision to extend its Emergency Service during the course of the war, to provide legal assistance around the deportations and to collate a list of racial incidents to give a clearer picture of the situation around the country.

It also became clear that there was a need for a black perspective around issues of the war and its implications on the 'Third World'. NMP played a central role in raising these issues in various forums including student teach-ins and public meetings. We also contributed to various television programmes, including BBC's *Heart of the Matter* and Channel 4's *Free for All*, *Midnight Special* and *Right to Reply*.

Photo: Tim Nolan

15 OUTREACH WORK: A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

NMP understands the importance of ensuring that the experiences of the black community play a central role in the development of strategies to counter new dimensions of popular racism and police malpractice. Our fundamental belief that the fight against racism can only be fought by the community and never on its behalf, has emerged from ten years of grassroots anti-racist work, including involvement in numerous self-defence campaigns. Through these campaigns, we have sought to increase the involvement of local people in the diversity of the Project's work, and through regular talks and debates, we are able to draw upon the experiences of local black people, identifying the new demands and needs of the community.

The 'Newham experience' has a relevance far beyond the boundaries of this borough. And for this reason, NMP has sought to take the lessons of this experience out to as wide an audience as possible from the voluntary and statutory sectors to the mainstream political system, as well as within the anti-racist movement itself. By so doing, we have shown that the 'Newham experience' can provide a blueprint for community struggles across the country.

WORK WITH STUDENTS

Some observations on 'student anti-racism'

The student movement, whilst potentially being one of the most progressive sections of society, has remained largely absent from the anti-racist movement.

The main factor constraining existing 'student anti-racism' is the failure of the student movement as a whole to analyse the changing nature of institutional and popular racism, as well as contemporary fascism. Fascism, for example, continues, for the most part, to be analysed in terms of the past,

either solely in terms of anti-semitism and the Holocaust, or as the fascism of the seventies with its electoral successes. Student anti-fascism, furthermore, needs to extend beyond the confines of the colleges and into the community. An example of this has been the 'No Platform for Fascists' campaign which was formulated at a time when the fascists were organising openly on college campuses. The creation of fascist-free campuses was paramount. Today, however, the reality is that the fascist threat is largely within inner-city communities, where groups like the BNP are involved in sustained campaigns of racist violence. Students, therefore, have to create an anti-fascist environment within their colleges whilst ensuring that their 'No Platform' policies extend to the community where they need to relate to campaigns and other efforts against racist violence.

The struggle against racism remains largely peripheral within 'student anti-racism' and there is little assessment of the development of racism in the eighties and scant regard for the struggles that black people have waged against racism. The rise of self-defence campaigns and black self-organisation has past much of the student movement unnoticed. Furthermore, many students fail to recognise that the recent resurgence of the far right across Europe stems from contemporary popular anti-black (and anti-Arab) racism.



These central omissions can best be characterised as stemming from the tendency to subsume the struggle against racism to the struggle against fascism, resulting in a failure to understand the organic link between racism and fascism.

As a consequence of this fundamentally flawed analysis, student initiatives, throughout the eighties, largely failed to relate to the black and anti-racist movement. Rather than relating to the real issues facing oppressed communities, student debate became internalised and obsessed with questions of individual prejudice.

Despite this, NMP recognised throughout 1990 that the opportunity was there to initiate anti-racist strategies within the student movement - not least because of the increasing confidence of black students. And by encouraging students to relate to on-going community campaigns against racism, we aimed to overcome some of the limitations described above, thereby ensuring that subsequent activity became pro-active and out-going.

NMP/student initiatives

A number of initiatives were undertaken, primarily in conjunction with the National Union of Students (NUS) London Area, which has 250,000 members. The idea was to turn the resources of the student movement to the benefit of local anti-racist initiatives.

A London student anti-racism conference was organised jointly with NMP to map out a framework for future student/community work. One by-product of the conference was the creation of an anti-racist students network in Tower Hamlets which linked the local higher education institutions with further education colleges (which are predominantly black and have a history of underfunding and marginalisation), and provided thereby a forum for the practical exchange of resources and ideas. This initiative served to mobilise the wider student movement around an agenda determined by the local black student population, including opposition to the petrol bombing of local homes, the shooting of local black students and the increased activity of the BNP.

Practical long term initiatives were also launched around issues of racism and policing. For instance, 10,000 rights cards (using NMP's rights card as a model) are going to be distributed to inform the young people of Tower Hamlets of their legal rights in the face of police racism. This has been backed up by the formation of a paralegal network incorporating the local student population, community organisations and solicitors to provide long-term support to 'victims' of racist and police violence. It is envisaged that this forum will set the campaigning agenda for future work.

Following various other successful initiatives, including a massive student mobilisation against the annual NF march on Remembrance Sunday, NMP were invited to give a keynote speech on 'How to Fight Racism: A Grassroots Perspective' at the NUS anti-

racist conference in Newcastle; we were also asked to lead practical workshops on contemporary fascism. The conference brought together delegates from colleges all over the country.

In recognition of the work of NMP, a number of colleges submitted motions to the annual NUS conference, where a motion was unanimously approved urging the NUS with its 1.8 million members to affiliate to NMP and support all aspects of our work.

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-RACISM: A COMMON AGENDA

Networking In Europe

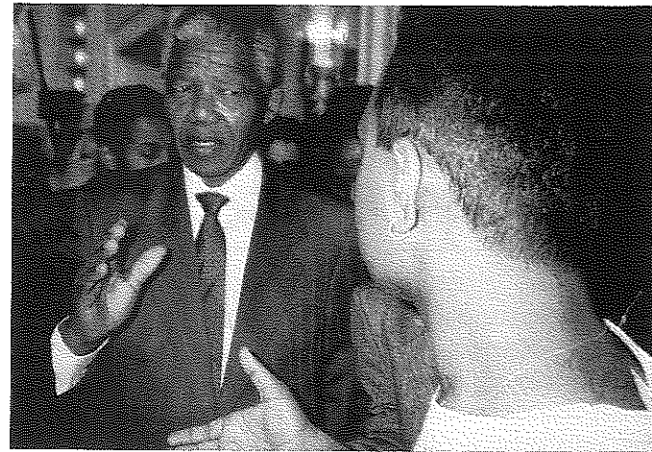
With the growth of European racism and fascism, particularly in relation to the creation of the Single European Market in 1992, NMP has continued to stress the importance of incorporating international perspectives into the domestic agenda and creating a European network of organisations to coordinate anti-racist initiatives. Throughout 1990 we have continued to work closely with the Refugee Forum that has links with similar grassroots refugee organisations across Europe.

1990 also saw an increase in the number of European organisations visiting NMP, eager to learn from the experiences of Newham's black community, its mode of organisation, and its fight-back. These included FASTI and SCALP from France, as well as anti-racist and refugee activists from Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Norway and both 'West' and 'East' Germany. We also talked about the work of NMP to individuals from the Soviet Union, Turkey, Italy, Spain and Poland. Furthermore, NMP addressed various forums on European racism including conferences organised by Birmingham University on '1992 and the Business Community' and the Scottish 'Communities of Resistance' campaign in Edinburgh.

NMP meets Nelson Mandela

The release of the jailed ANC activist Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990 was jubilantly heralded throughout the world, particularly within the black communities, who see in Mandela the personification of the international struggle against racism and oppression. Within Britain, black people have consistently drawn parallels between our own struggles against racism, both in this country and in our countries of origin, and the struggle of the Azanian people against the racist apartheid system. NMP has consistently had a strong and supportive relationship with the British section of the ANC, not only because of our common agenda against racism but also because of our common belief that black people should take the lead in their own struggles. In recognition of our work, NMP was invited to meet Nelson and Winnie Mandela during their trip to Britain in July 1990. Nelson Mandela was emphatic that 'racism has no place in the last decade of this

century' and called on anti-racists to 'double and re-double their efforts to defeat the forces of racism and apartheid, wherever they may be'. NMP presented him with copies of our Annual Reports, which were gladly accepted.



NMP visits Palestine

During 1990, members of NMP were invited, as part of a black delegation comprising lawyers, trade-unionists and individual activists, to visit 'Occupied Palestine' as guests of the Palestinian community and human rights organisations. The trip was intended to facilitate practical cooperation around common issues of racism and violations of human rights. This was of particular importance due to the increase of anti-Arab racism internationally, especially with regards to the Gulf crisis (see chapter on Gulf War).

Important lessons were learnt on how the Palestinian people, despite the massive oppression they are facing, were engaged in evolving new forms of democratic expression, through the formation of 'Popular Committees' covering all aspects of social, economic, legal and political life. The delegation were also able to visit the large African Palestinian community in Jericho and Occupied Jerusalem. Here, we not only learnt of how this community were responding to anti-black racism within Israeli society, but were also able to exchange experiences of racism and resistance. The trip will remain deeply etched in our memories not only because of the everyday acts of brutality we witnessed but also because members of NMP were among the few Western people who witnessed the Al-Aqsa massacre. On 8 October 1990, 21 Palestinians were shot and killed by Israeli troops and hundreds more wounded, as Israeli religious fundamentalists attempted to storm the Dome of the Rock. Reports are being compiled on the visit at the moment to be sent to the United Nations.

ANTI-RACIST CAMPAIGNS IN BRITAIN

The murder Of Kuldip Singh Sekhon

In the early hours of 11 November 1989, Kuldip Singh Sekhon, a manual worker at SAS Caterers, Heathrow

airport and part-time taxi driver, was murdered in a vicious racist attack - he had been brutally stabbed 54 times. Despite the fact that his murderer, Stephen Coker, was a notorious local racist, and the fact that no money was taken from the body, Hounslow police refused to recognise the racist motive behind the murder.

The Sekhon Family Support Group, organised by Southall Monitoring Group, called for a National Day of Remembrance for all victims of racist violence on 31 January 1990, the day of Kuldip Singh Sekhon's funeral. NMP mobilised local people to attend the funeral as a mark of respect for the Sekhon family. NMP joined various community campaigns in providing a speaker for the rally. Thousands of local black people turned out to join the funeral march. They were joined by striking taxi-drivers, teachers and local school students who were protesting at the horrific level of racist violence the black community was facing. Commercial life came to a halt as shops, banks and offices all closed for the day in an impressive show of community solidarity and organisation.



NMP marches in memory of Kuldip

During the trial of Stephen Coker at the Old Bailey, a London-wide picket, supported by NMP, was called in protest at the failure of the police and judiciary to recognise the murder as racist. On the first day of the trial, the judge said there were too many Asians in the public gallery and that no more would be allowed in. Subsequently, he made a point of rejecting any racial motive on the part of Coker, whilst sentencing him to life imprisonment, after the jury had found him guilty of murder. This case demonstrates that despite attempts by the police to convince the black community that they are willing to recognise that a racial attack is a crime, the reality remains that they, along with the CPS and the judiciary, continually conspire to deny any racial motive to the thousands of attacks that take place on the black community every year.

Dewsbury 82: self-defence is no offence

On 24 June 1989, the BNP marched through Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, in an attempt to capitalise on the racist backlash that the Rushdie affair had brought about. The black community immediately mobilised to protect themselves from attack. The police, rather than protect the community from roaming packs of racists and fascists, charged the peaceful counter-demonstration.

Over 750 police, some in riot gear, began making mass arrests. 59 youths, predominantly Asian, were arrested. A further 23 were arrested in fishing raids in Leeds, Batley, Dewsbury and Sheffield. This process of criminalisation of black people, for attempting to protect their community from racist attack, initiated by the police, was continued by the courts. Bail conditions imposed for some of the arrested resembled draconian South African 'banning orders'. These included passports being seized, severe curfews (from 8pm to 8am) as well as bans from any political activity, including meetings of their own defence campaign.

The local community immediately organised a defence campaign for the arrested around the slogan of 'Self-Defence is no Offence'. Black people throughout the country drew parallels between this campaign and previous self-defence campaigns such as the Bradford 12, the Newham 8 and the Newham 7. Once again it was clear that only through mass community mobilisation would these 'political charges' be defeated. NMP helped to organise a London-wide support group to mobilise people for a demonstration in Leeds on 1 September 1990, to coincide with the crown court trials. NMP not only helped fill two coaches for the demonstration of over 1,000 people but also spoke at the Rally.

Of the 82 people arrested, 55 were rail-roped through the magistrates courts, with three-quarters of them receiving fines ranging from 100 to 250. A further 25 were charged with offences, including violent disorder and affray, and elected to be tried before a jury. Two were dealt with prior to the main trial at Leeds Crown Court on 3 September 1990. Of the remaining defendants, five were acquitted and the rest were sentenced on 3 January 1991. Four received non-custodial sentences and 18 were jailed for sentences ranging from three months, nine months, 12 months, 18 months and 21 months, with one receiving a three-year sentence.

In a year that exposed the extent of police criminalisation of the Irish community (most notable, the cases of the Guildford 4 and Birmingham 6), this trial demonstrated the extent to which the police and



NMP speaks at Dewsbury 82 rally

the judicial system were willing to conspire to ensure the continuing criminalisation of the black community and their right to self-defence.

LOCAL AND NATIONAL LINKS

On a local level, NMP has always stressed the importance of developing new links whilst strengthening existing ones. During 1990, NMP has continued to be involved in the Black Tenants and Resident Groups (which NMP helped to set up), primarily in South Newham.

Following the launch of our document, 'Racism and Racist Violence In Schools', NMP has also placed great emphasis on our work in local schools. We have spoken on issues of racism and policing at a majority of the secondary schools in the borough, and will continue to give such educational activity the priority it deserves.

Following on from last year's Annual Report, in which we highlighted a number of initiatives in coordinating work between NMP and the Polytechnic Of East London (PEL), we are happy to report the success of some of these initiatives. NMP visited the various sites that make up PEL, holding stalls and leafleting about local as well as national anti-racist campaigns. A number of PEL students subsequently joined NMP in various anti-fascist mobilisations, including on Remembrance Sunday and in Tower Hamlets. We not only intend to solidify this relationship further in the coming year but also extend our activities within Newham Community College.

NMP, in holding up our experience as a blueprint for other community initiatives, has played a key role in helping give workers from a number of voluntary and statutory agencies a different vantage-point and perspective on their work. Locally, this has included the Homeless Young Persons Project, East London Housing Association, Newham Consortium for Youth and Walthamstow YMCA, as well as numerous local authority workers including District Race Equality Officers, Local Housing Officers, social workers and black technical officers, to name a few. Nationally, race workers from all across the country have visited NMP to study our approach, including workers from Manchester, Rochdale, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Bristol and colleagues from Leicester Racial Attacks Monitoring Project and Birmingham Racial Attacks Monitoring Unit.

NMP has also played a key role in both formulating and advocating new strategies to deal with legal remedies to racial and police harassment. These have included keynote speeches and workshops at the Legal Action Group conference on 'Legal Remedies to Racial Harassment', the Sheffield City Council conference on 'Local Authorities and Racial Harassment', the Rochdale Borough Council conference, 'Beyond the Ghetto', which dealt with racial harassment on council estates, and the Hackney CRE conference on 'Racism and the Education System'.

NMP also contributed to the on-going debate around policing and the denial of civil liberties, through our involvement in the Legal Observers Group and by speaking at various conferences, including ones organised by the Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign on policing and the Labour Party on racism and the criminal justice system.

NMP, in recognising the importance of presenting our views on racism and policing to the widest possible cross-section of people, has over the last year addressed a variety of meetings, too numerous to mention. Suffice to say that they have included Labour Party ward meetings, anti-apartheid meetings, student meetings and trade-union meetings and conferences organised by NALGO and the National Union of Railwayworkers.

NMP has consistently attempted to provide support to a wide range of community initiatives. In 1990 we helped organise the Newham Asian Mela and the Newham Festival for Youth, injecting our vision of positive cultural anti-racism.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Over 200 people attended NMP's 10th Anniversary Annual General Meeting on 18 March 1990 at the Newham African Caribbean Association Centre in Upton Park. The AGM was addressed by Gulshun

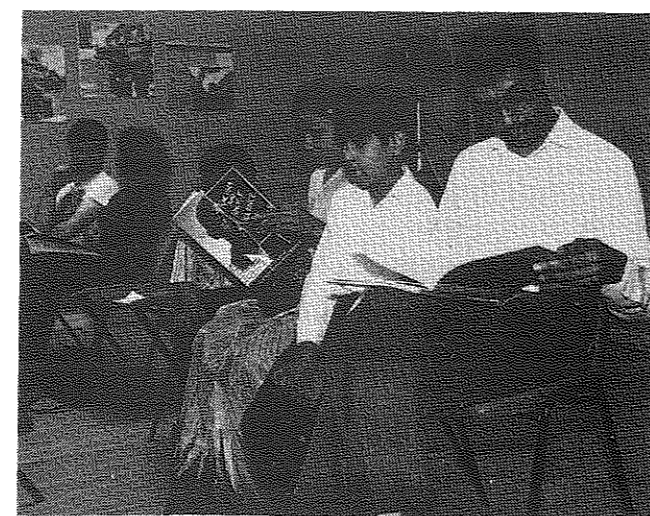


NMP AGM 1990

Rehman, a founding member of NMP, who spoke on the murder of Akhtar Ali Baig in 1980, the formation of the Project and its work over the last ten years. She also gave an overview of developments within Newham in that period and the continuing need for NMP. The AGM was also addressed by Gus John, Director of Education, London Borough of Hackney, and member of the Macdonald Inquiry into racism in Manchester schools. He reflected on the wider struggles that have taken place against racism in this country and the necessity of ensuring that the process of continually re-assessing existing anti-racist strategies is determined by black people and not by other interests on our behalf.

NEWHAM: THE FORGING OF A BLACK COMMUNITY

Just over a year ago, NMP began work on a book on the history of Newham's black communities. The idea was to commemorate the 10th anniversary of NMP by producing a major study into black political struggles and black political organisations in Newham in the post-war period. A book, it was felt, would not only be a celebration of the rich political struggle of black people in Newham, but, hopefully, a guide for action for generations to come. Black people's struggles against racism are seldom written up in official history text-



books, and young black people are effectively denied the knowledge of the struggles of the generations that came before them.

We started our research by going through back copies of old magazines and newspapers, using the local studies library at Stratford on a regular basis, as well as the archives of the Institute of Race Relations. We also contacted the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (CARF) whose research and editorial skills proved vital to the book's compilation.

From this initial research, we proceeded to build up a picture of the early struggles of African-Caribbean and Asian people in Newham by interviewing over 30 local people, mostly local black people who had played an important role in challenging racism and forging a black community in Newham. In addition, we interviewed local councillors and council officers whose perspectives we felt would enrich the book, as well as white trade-unionists who had opposed fascism in the docks and in the wider community. Tape-recordings and transcripts were made of all those interviewed.

Slowly, a picture of racism and resistance in Newham began to emerge.

Researching the book was rather like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle. And, although at times we felt lost beneath a pile of newspaper cuttings and a stack of reading materials, certain themes began to emerge. We realised that there were really two main strands to the story we were attempting to tell. The first tells of how black people in Newham have fought racial discrimination - in housing, social life, employment, education, on the streets - and created a community in the process. The second, with which the first is closely interwoven, is the history of Newham's economic (and hence social) development itself.

In fact, the early period of black settlement in the borough was hardest to trace. For, although the work of Newham Monitoring Project is now well-known, not just in Newham but throughout the country, less is known of the equally important work of NMP's forebears such as East London Black Unity and Freedom Party, East London West Indian Association, East London Indian Workers Association, Standing Conference of Asian Organisations, Newham Defence Committee and Newham Youth Movement.

The book also provided us with an opportunity to examine certain factors that lead to the growth of racism and fascism. Throughout, we relate the particularly violent form racism has taken in Newham, to the industrial decline and material deprivation of the borough as a whole. We have also related the growth of racism and fascist activity to questions of local democracy and community participation in local government.

We have not attempted to bring the history of the borough totally up to date. Having said that, what does concern us is the way in which certain trends are re-emerging. The first African-Caribbean and Asian immigrants in the borough suffered enormous exploitation which often led to injury and ill-health. We are concerned that today the same conditions are re-emerging in employment and that black people are

experiencing increasing racism and exploitation at work. Clearly, this is something for future research. We are also concerned that a period of far right activity and extreme racist violence that characterised the 1970s show signs of re-emerging in Newham in the 1990s.

We are confident that *Newham: The Forging of a Black Community* will be a contribution not only to black history but to local studies as a whole. For, as we say in the publicity for our book:

"Newham: The Forging of a Black Community is a first in the writing of black British local history. For here the growth of Newham's working class black community is situated in the context of industrial development and decline around London's docks. As the white labour movement lost its strength and political focus, Newham developed into a hot-bed of racism and organised fascism. Black people - Asian and Afro-Caribbean - tell of the struggles they forged over discrimination in housing, at work, in education; tell how fighting crude racial violence brought them together in a community of resistance. It is in this recent black working class history that we find the echo of the socialist traditions for which the East End was once renowned."

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM (CARF)

NMP are pleased to welcome the publication of the new anti-racist, anti-fascist magazine CARF. In fact, the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism has been in existence for 13 years, originally growing out of the All-London Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Coordinating Committee which it serviced with the newspaper CARF from 1977-1979. From 1979-1990, CARF wrote a 4-page supplement for the magazine *Searchlight*. But in 1990, they decided to return to their own bi-monthly 16-page magazine. CARF attempts to provide analysis on a range of subjects: racial violence, organised fascism, police malpractice, anti-semitism, anti-Arab racism, racist laws and popular racism, to name but a few.

NMP have always worked closely with CARF who are our first port of call for information and research, a vital back-up for any grassroots group working against racism. So far two excellent issues of CARF have been produced and we eagerly await future editions. CARF is available from CARF, BM Box 8784, London WC1N 3XX.

16 RESOURCES

NMP has a number of resources which are available to local community groups and affiliated members. A deposit may be required on some items, with prices being negotiable according to the user's financial position.

● **Newham Monitoring Project exhibitions**

The History of Racism in the East End (23 panels which illustrate the history of racism in London's East End)

Conspiracy (12 panels which document different campaigns and struggles of black people in Britain)

● **Video/Reading Library**

A selection of videos, books, journals and reports on issues related to racism, fascism, policing and civil liberties. Telephone for details

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Below we list some suggestions for further reading

● **Publications available from Newham Monitoring Project**

Annual Reports (1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989)

Accounts of the struggle against racist violence, fascism and police harassment in Newham in the context of trends and events nationally

Newham: The Forging of a Black Community (1991)

History of the struggles of the post-war black community in Newham based on interviews and original research (published jointly with the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism)

The Dividing Line (1986)

Brief historical booklet on racism in East London and NMP's work to accompany a film that NMP made with BBC Open Space

Newham Communities of Resistance 1992

Information Pack (1990)

Series of papers on the implications of 1992 on black and refugee communities in Newham and elsewhere in Europe

● **Publications available from the Institute of Race Relations**

Race & Class

Quarterly journal of black and Third World liberation. Subscription is £10 (individuals) and £14 (organisations) per year

Policing Against Black People (1987)

● **Other publications**

Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (CARF)

Bi-monthly magazine produced by the CARF collective covering key issues in the anti-racist struggle. Subscription is £5 (individuals) and £10 (organisations) per year

Duncan Forbes, *Action on Racial Harassment: Legal Remedies and Local Authorities* (Legal Action Group and London Housing Unit, 1988)

Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (Pluto Press, 1984)

Paul Gordon and Francesca Klug, *New Right, New Racism* (Searchlight, 1986)

Paul Gordon, *White Law: Racism in the Police, Courts and Prisons* (Pluto Press, 1983)

Chris Mullin, *Error of Judgement: The Truth about the Birmingham Bombings* (Poolbeg Press, 1990)

A Sivanandan, *A Different Hunger: Writings on Black Resistance* (Pluto Press, 1982)

A Sivanandan, *Communities of Resistance: Writings on Black Struggles for Socialism* (Verso, 1990)

Gunter Wallraff, *Lowest of the Low* (Methuen, 1988)

The Arrivants: *A Pictorial Essay on Blacks in Britain* (Race Today Collective, 1987)

The Broadwater Farm Inquiry: Report of the Independent Inquiry into Disturbances of October 1985 at the Broadwater Farm Estate, Tottenham (Karia Press, 1986)

Challenging Racism (All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism, 1984)

Loosen the Shackles: First Report of the Liverpool 8 Inquiry into Race Relations in Liverpool (Karia Press, 1989)

The Migrant and Refugee Manifesto (Refugee Forum and Migrant Rights Action Network, 1989)

Murder in the Playground: The Report of the MacDonald Inquiry into Racism and Racial Violence in Manchester Schools (Longsight Press, 1989)

Policing in Hackney 1945-84: Report Commissioned by the Roach Family Support Committee (Karia Press, 1987)

17 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 1990

	1990	1989
	£	£
INCOME		
Grant Funding	96,682	96,774
Other Income	3,474	65
	<u>100,156</u>	<u>96,939</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries & National Insurance	54,993	50,073
Rent, Rates, Light and Heat	1,044	1,128
Repairs and Maintenance	4,259	3,760
Insurance	1,464	1,373
Telephone	4,354	2,506
Stationery, Postage & Office Materials	5,258	8,679
Printing, Publicity and Reports	8,941	10,262
Literature and Subscriptions	333	1,139
Audit and Accountancy	1,843	1,128
Legal Fees	573	52
Courses and Conference	1,615	3,003
Motor, Travel and Subsistence Expenses	4,474	6,154
Volunteers' Expenses	3,352	2,114
Bank Charges and Other Expenses	696	424
Equipment Purchased	2,354	295
Recruitment Advertising	2,735	433
Book Expenses	2,448	3,958
	<u>100,736</u>	<u>96,481</u>
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE PERIOD	(580)	458

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 1990

	1990	1989
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors and Prepayments	4,171	1,568
Cash at Bank and in Hand	15,331	18,705
	<u>19,502</u>	<u>20,273</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and Accrued Expenses	(14,349)	(14,991)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>5,153</u>	<u>5,282</u>
REPRESENTED BY		
Accumulated Surplus	3,526	4,106
Defence Fund	1,627	1,176
	<u>5,153</u>	<u>5,282</u>

18 AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS

Affiliation to NMP is open to anyone who lives or works in Newham and agrees with the constitutional aims and objectives of the Project.

*AFRICAN REFUGEE HOUSING ACTION GROUP (ARHAG)
ASIAN ARTS GROUP
*ASIAN WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE
BEHNO-KI-MILAN
*BIRNBERG & COMPANY SOLICITORS
*BIRMINGHAM RACIAL ATTACKS MONITORING UNIT (BRAMU)
*BRIGHTON POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS UNION
*BRIGHTON ANTI-FASCIST ACTION
*BRIGHTON LAW CENTRE
*CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM
CANNING TOWN & GRANGE WARD LABOUR PARTY
CANNING TOWN MUSLIM WELFARE ASSOCIATION
CASTLE WARD LABOUR PARTY
*CITY OF LONDON ANTI-APARTHEID GROUP
COMMUNITY LINKS
CUMBERLAND SCHOOL NUT GROUP
DEAN & COMPANY SOLICITORS
EAST LONDON ACTTS (NEWHAM BRANCH)
EAST LONDON BLACK WOMENS ORGANISATION (ELBWO)
EAST LONDON IRISH YEAR OF ACTION
EASTWARDS TRUST (HOSTELS) LTD
*ESSEX UNIVERSITY STUDENTS UNION
FOREST GATE WARD LABOUR PARTY
FOREST GATE YOUTH CENTRE
*GENERAL UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN
GREATFIELD WARD LABOUR PARTY
*GREENWICH GUJARATI SAMAJ
*GREENWICH ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST RACIST ATTACKS (GACARA)
GUJARAT WELFARE ASSOCIATION
INDIAN WORKERS ASSOCIATION (GB) EAST LONDON
INTERNATIONAL ASIAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION
ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION
*LEICESTER RACIAL ATTACKS MONITORING PROJECT (RAMP)
LITTLE ILFORD YOUTH CENTRE
*LONDON ALLIANCE AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM (LAARF)
*LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS STUDENTS UNION
MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION OF THE UK
MANOR PARK WARD LABOUR PARTY
MAYFLOWER FAMILY CENTRE

*MIGRANT RIGHTS ACTION NETWORK
MUSLIM WELFARE ASSOCIATION
*NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS
*NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS LONDON AREA
NEIGHBOURHOOD CARE PROJECT
NEWHAM ALCOHOL ADVISORY SERVICE
NEWHAM ANTI-FASCIST ACTION
NEWHAM ASIAN WOMEN'S PROJECT
NEWHAM CHINESE ASSOCIATION
NEWHAM CITIZEN ADVICE BUREAU
NEWHAM INDEPENDENT LABOUR PUBLICATIONS
NEWHAM CND
NEWHAM COMMUNITY ADVICE UNIT
NEWHAM CONSORTIUM FOR YOUTH
NEWHAM DRUGS PROJECT
NEWHAM NALGO BLACK WORKERS GROUP
NEWHAM NALGO
NEWHAM LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS
NEWHAM NORTH EAST LABOUR PARTY
NEWHAM NORTH WEST LABOUR PARTY
NEWHAM REFUGEE FORUM
NEWHAM RENEWAL PROGRAMME
NEWHAM RIGHTS CENTRE
NEWHAM TAMIL COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION
NEWHAM TENANTS AND RESIDENTS FEDERATION
NEWHAM WOMENS GROUP
ONE LOVE (BEDS)
PLASHET WARD LABOUR PARTY
PLASHET SCHOOL NUT GROUP
POLYTECHNIC OF EAST LONDON STUDENTS UNION
ROKEBY SCHOOL NUT GROUP
SHALOM CENTRE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE
ST STEPHENS WARD LABOUR PARTY
STRATFORD SCHOOL NUT GROUP
*SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
TAMIL WELFARE ASSOCIATION OF NEWHAM
THEATRE ROYAL STRATFORD
TOM ALLEN COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE
*TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT
*THIRD WORLD FIRST
UPTON WARD LABOUR PARTY

* Other organisations which support and agree with the constitutional aims and objectives of NMP although not based in Newham.