

NMMP

Newham Monitoring Project

Annual Report

Communities of Resistance

1993/94



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Foreword

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Introduction

It is with great pleasure that the Management Committee of Newham Monitoring Project presents our fourteenth Annual Report entitled *Communities of Resistance*. Within, we document notable racial and police harassment cases and trends, the fightback of local community associations, the inadequate response of statutory agencies and the struggles, campaigns and victories of the past year.

However, 1993 was an ominous year for black and refugee communities across the country. Racist violence rose dramatically both in terms of incidence and intensity. It is now estimated that there are approximately 130,000 racist attacks a year in Britain. Additionally, the attacks are increasingly vicious, senseless and organised, the assaults on Quddus Ali and Mukhtar Ahmed being cases in point. The election of a BNP councillor on the Isle of Dogs further illustrates the importance of stopping fascism in its tracks before any further damage is done.

The role of the police, as in past years, has been beyond contempt. The murder of Joy Gardner who was suffocated whilst being arrested pending deportation, the arrest and criminalisation of the Tower Hamlets Nine and the deliberate confrontation engineered by the police with anti-fascists at the Unity demonstration in Welling are glaring examples of oppressive policing at its worst.

Although the contents of this report make grim reading, they also pay tribute to the resistance and determination of working-class people in Newham and elsewhere in East London. In 1993, the Gwendoline Avenue and Second Avenue community associations demonstrated how racial and police harassment can be effectively combatted. And the victorious Dray family campaign was a classic example of how to organise against the criminalisation of innocent people. All in all, we trust that this year's Annual Report bears testimony to the ongoing struggles of the local community against racist violence and police malpractice.

There are new battles already emerging which require urgent attention:

- The fascists are standing candidates in the May 1994 local elections - it is imperative that no fascist councillor is elected anywhere in Britain, particularly in East London.
- Refugees and asylum-seekers are on hunger strike in prisons and detention centres across the country - they must be supported by all those who oppose racist immigration laws which incarcerate and criminalise those whose only 'crime' is to want to live in Britain, free from attack.
- The Conservative government has proposed yet more draconian legislation that will revoke the right of silence and increase the number of miscarriages of justice - it is vital that the proposed laws are systematically opposed and defeated.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the workers of NMP who, as ever, have given time, energy and commitment beyond the call the duty. We also thank all our volunteers and supporters without whom we would have been unable to sustain the campaigns and initiatives in which we are involved. In doing so, we condemn the shameful sentences of community service passed against Lee and Nicholas Pulham who were convicted of affray in connection with the violent racist attack on Hossein Zahir, a NMP worker, and Michael Butler, a NMP volunteer (see last year's Annual Report).

In conclusion, NMP will continue to work with all those committed to fighting racism and injustice. But to those who violate our fundamental rights and liberties and seek to control us in the manner to which they have become accustomed, our message by word and by deed is clear - no justice, no peace!

Newham Monitoring Project
 Management Committee

Casework

The main tenet of NMP's work over the last 14 years has been to provide practical advice and support to those suffering racial harassment and police harassment in Newham. This approach means that casework takes a central role in the work of NMP. Our method of working has led us to reject the paternalistic approach of social advice and welfare agencies which is based on an advisor-client relationship. Instead, we adopt a community-based approach which means, for example, that our casework is determined by the needs and concerns of individuals and families themselves. We attempt to give those at the centre of a case real control over the direction that their case takes. This is achieved by providing structures whereby individuals suffering racial or police harassment are involved at every stage in the dialogue and feedback from statutory agencies such as the local authority and the police.

However, casework does not exist in isolation and is not carried out simply for the individual or family concerned. We are always asking what the wider ramifications are for the whole community. It is for this reason that NMP adopts a strategy of building on our casework to encourage community self-organisation and defence. The past year's sharp increase in cases again clearly shows the problem of initiatives set up by the police and the Council which do little to strengthen communities under attack. Often cases demand campaigning work, the object of which is not only to win this or that particular case, though this is important, but also to use the campaign to highlight issues thrown up by individual cases, and encourage local people to organise for themselves and take control of their lives.

Emergency Service

In 1993, 114 or 24% of cases came to the project via the 24-hour emergency service line. This service remains unique in the borough. It is a vital component of NMP's casework and an essential tool in the provision of on-going practical support to victims of racial harassment. In our experience the mere knowledge that support is available from NMP volunteer on a 24 basis with just a phone call has proven itself as a reassurance to those experiencing violent and often persistent harassment.

The emergency service volunteers represent one of the pillars of the project. Without their continuing and unfailing support much of our work would remain undone. NMP gratefully acknowledges their help and support throughout 1993.

In 1993 NMP saw an increase of 35 cases of racial harassment. The reasons for this increase are diverse, rooted both in the national and local, economic and political conditions. On a more concrete level though there are a number of factors we have identified which

Racial Harassment

The statistics below illustrate the patterns of racist violence across the borough. The statistics cannot, however, show the real impact of racist violence on real people. They do not show the systematic torment to which some families have been subjected. They do not reveal how this harassment can gradually destroy people's lives. The constant abuse, threats and criminal damage to property can be just as debilitating as the assaults, stabbings and beatings.

These figures also fail to reveal the strength, courage and on-going tradition of resistance within the black community of Newham. This resistance takes many forms, whether it be an individual family refusing to be intimidated out of an area or families and individuals organising community associations to resist the harassment collectively.

Below we document, area by area, the more alarming cases of racial harassment as well as cases which raise questions about the response of statutory agencies, chiefly the police and the council. The areas included are those which are of particular note.

East Ham

In the past, we have repeatedly warned about harassment taking place in the Vicarage Lane area of East Ham around Folkestone Road and Goosely Lane, E6. We reported in the 1991/1992 Annual Report on racial harassment in this area, and, indeed, warned that 'East Ham South is fast developing into a no-go area'. Unfortunately, these warnings have proven justified. Throughout 1993, we received numerous reports of harassment in the Folkestone Road and Goosely Lane area. It appears that much of the harassment has been supported by or has involved fascists. The fact that Steven O'Shea, a well-known BNP member, lives in Folkestone Road is undoubtedly related to the rise in racist attacks in the area.

■ The Z family has lived in Gooseley Lane for many years, suffering from sporadic incidents of verbal abuse and threats. They had not, however, experienced any physical attacks on their home. In 1993, the harassment intensified with the family car being damaged, death threats and petrol being poured through the letter box and set alight. The ensuing fire caused severe smoke damage to the porch, but fortunately a fire proof rug failed to catch light and so the fire

Breakdown of cases

Cases reported to NMP

Racial Harassment	232	(48%)
Police Harassment	175	(36%)
Other (see note 1)	73	(16%)

Referrals

Direct	244	(51%)
Emergency Service (see note 2)	114	(24%)
Other (see note 3)	122	(25%)

Notes on statistics

(1) These cases do not fit neatly into the categories of either racial or police harassment, but are linked to questions of institutionalised racism (2) This only refers to calls during non-office hours (3) This refers to cases referred to us by voluntary and statutory agencies.

Racial Harassment Statistics

Breakdown in terms of manner of referral

Direct	103
Emergency service	46
Via other agencies	83

Breakdown in terms of gender and age

Female	109
Male	86
Children/Adolescents	37

Breakdown in terms of nature of racial harassment

Murders	1
Physical Assault/Abuse	65
Verbal Abuse/Threats	79
Arson/Damage to Property	66
Other	21

Breakdown in terms of location of attack

Home	119
School	16
Work	10
Street	87

Breakdown in terms of area

E6	30
E7	14
E12	23
E13	37
E15	44
E16	59
Outside Newham	25

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did not spread. In subsequent months, the harassment continued unabated.

At present, we are monitoring the situation with the Z family. We have successfully demanded the installation of security measures including a fire-proof letter box, protective film on the windows and a video camera. None of the perpetrators in this case have yet been caught.

It should be noted that the Z family own their home. This means that although they are technically entitled to the limited support the council offers its tenants, in practice as we pointed out in the 1992/1993 Annual Report, owner occupiers are in practice denied this service. In the case of this family, they are not, despite the arson attack, eligible to be re-housed by the council.

■ Mrs S lived with her two children in Folkestone Road. They had been suffering harassment for some time when in early August 1993, the attacks intensified in both frequency and severity. On 7 August, Mrs S's 12-year-old son Z was assaulted by a group of boys who would gather beside Blaney Crescent (off Folkestone Road). On 15 August, Mrs S was verbally abused and despite being five months pregnant, was jostled and kicked. On 16 August, she was assaulted on her way to a public phone box, as she tried to get away from a gang of local youths who threw stones at her and shouted racial abuse. On 17 August six youths would not let her out of a public phone box - they continued to abuse and threaten her until she managed to escape.

On 18 August, following another emergency service call from Mrs S, a NMP volunteer attended her home. Mrs S complained that the same group of youths were throwing stones at Z and were threatening and abusing her. She was in an extremely distressed state and had already called the police. When the police arrived, Z pointed out the youths. The NMP volunteer naturally demanded that the police take action against the youths. Typically, the police not only failed to take any action because they 'didn't want to chase kids across a park', but they went so far as to imply that Mrs S was only alleging the harassment was racial because a NMP volunteer was present. When Mrs S confirmed that she had been abused, the officer insisted he would take no further action and left.

The NMP volunteer remained with the family until dawn.

On 23 August at 6.30 pm, Z was playing outside his home when a group of ten white boys, aged between 14 and 16, verbally abused him. Z began to back away when one of the group known to Z as 'John' attacked him. Z was punched to head and knocked to the ground and kicked repeatedly in the face. As Z staggered to his feet, he noticed one of the youths approaching with a plank of wood - he ran home with the gang pursuing him. Mrs S again called the police and the NMP emergency service line. Whereas NMP volunteers got there within ten minutes, the police took over an hour. On this occasion, the officers took action and arrested the youth 'John', who was so confident that he had not even run away. Incredibly, despite the serious nature of the assault and the fact that Z suffered a broken nose, the police simply cautioned the youth and released him.

It is important to understand the impact that racial harassment can have on a child as young as Z. He had begun, out of fear for his own safety, to carry a baseball bat with him when he went outside. Moreover, he possessed a veritable armoury of weapons in his bedroom.

In September 1993, the S family were moved from Folkestone Road.

■ Mrs B and her children moved to Eastbourne Road off Folkestone Road in September 1990, after having been told by the council's Homeless Persons Unit that if they didn't move they would end up 'on the streets'. By January 1993, Mrs B was pleading with the council to be transferred. Sticks and stones were regularly thrown against the kitchen window, often causing damage - this only stopped when NMP demanded security measures be installed. The harassment escalated to the point where Mrs B's son was being repeatedly mugged on the way to the shops and racially abused. Stickers from far right groups were stuck on their door and soiled nappies and excrement were shoved through the letter box and smeared on the windows. On one occasion, Mrs B was returning with her children from school when she was confronted by a number of youths. She was threatened with a knife and her son was assaulted.

On 3 September 1993, Mrs B was on her way home when she was approached by a group of white youths. The youths screamed 'Pakis go

home', blocked her path and savagely beat her. Mrs B sustained injuries to her head and face as well as bruising on her body. It appears the youths went so far as to use a metal weapon to beat her across her arms.

Mrs B's doctor became fearful for her health and wrote independently to the council that he would be 'grateful if it would be at all possible for her to be offered alternative accommodation in view of the exacerbation of her medical condition due to these developments'.

The response of the council was to hold an emergency meeting at which it was confirmed that Mrs B was on the priority transfer list. The best that the police could do was to suggest a 'joint visit' with a police officer around the area so that the perpetrators could be identified. Given the lack of practical support that the police provided the B family, this offer was not taken up.

■ The S family moved into Folkestone Road in December 1992. As in the case of Mrs B, they were told by the Homeless Persons Unit that they had to accept the property and any refusal would be deemed 'unreasonable'. The S family were never informed about the severity of racial harassment in the area nor were they advised that it is council policy that in such areas, refusing an offer is not in fact, unreasonable.

In January 1993, the S family notified the council that they were suffering racial harassment. On an almost daily basis, the family were being spat at, racially abused and threatened. They had to endure the indignity of wiping excrement off their windows and clearing it from their path. The S children had to run a regular gauntlet of abuse and assaults even on the most mundane outing. The family car had paint and excrement thrown over it and was eventually stolen. Stickers from far right groups were stuck on their front door.

On 18 September 1993 at around 10 pm, Mr S heard a loud banging on the front door. When he looked out of the window, he saw three youths taunting him, one armed with a baseball bat. The three youths then walked off and joined a group of fifteen or so up the road. Fearing for their safety, the family took the remarkably brave step of venturing out to a public phone box, in view of the youths, in order to call the NMP emergency service line and the

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police. On arrival, the police searched the youths and sent them away. On 4 November 1993, a window was broken. The next day, another window was broken, and a number of youths congregated outside their home singing 'Rule Britannia'. Finally, on the 11 December 1993, the S children, aged 8 and 10, were set upon and beaten by a group of youths, the oldest being about 15-years-old. The children were bruised and shaken. The next morning, dog excrement was smeared on the doors. The S family could simply take no more.

Through the intervention of NMP's emergency service volunteer, the family were moved to a bed and breakfast that night. At present, the family still visit Folkestone Road during the days, and NMP continues to provide support.

Inadequate statutory response

In the case of the S family, in particular, the response of the council's housing department has been blatantly irresponsible. On the 17 August 1993, eight months after the S family moved in, they were informed by the District Housing Manager that they were not 'adequately advised at the time the property was offered'. In a letter addressed to NMP dated the 27 August 1993, the same manager stated that it was 'unfortunate' this property was allocated to the S family and it was done so by an officer 'unfamiliar with the property'. Neither of these admissions is apparently of any use to the S family as it has no bearing on their attempts to escape the harassment. The question which is so often left unanswered in cases such as this is how can the Homeless Persons Unit be allowed to badger and scare people into accepting properties in areas which put their lives at risk, when its own officers do not know which areas have a high incidence of racial harassment and the housing department refuses to rectify such incompetence.

It was clear from the beginning that the harassment in the Folkestone Road area was serious and probably involved the same group of individuals. It was only in July and August 1993 that it gradually became apparent that the harassment was co-ordinated and that the far-right appeared to be behind it. We discovered that Steven O'Shea, an activist in the fascist British National Party, actually lived in Folke-

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stone Road.

In August 1993, we warned in a letter, concerning Mrs B's case, that the harassment appeared organised. In September 1993, we were forced to step up regular nightly visits to all the families in the area which we sustained from mid-September to mid-October in an attempt to provide some practical support. Many of the families did not, however, feel confident enough to give evidence against the perpetrators. Given the stark choices facing the families such hesitation is understandable. On the one hand, they were faced with the prospect of the police, in the event they believed the families under siege, doing little more than 'cautioning' those perpetrators they caught. On the other hand, there was the housing department's lengthy eviction process which could be utilised in cases where sufficient evidence was amassed against specific perpetrators. In either event, the perpetrators are not obviously dissuaded and the families are once again left with no or little support.

Due to the proximity of these families to one another, the option of launching a 'community association' was considered and, in fact, two meetings were held. However, the families did not feel sufficiently confident to organise and sustain a fightback and simply wanted to escape the violence.

Racial harassment in East Ham was not confined to the Folkestone Road area - in 1993 we dealt with 30 cases in the E6 area.

■ Mr I lived in Market Street, E6 for some time. He was the victim of harassment on a regular basis in the first few months of 1993. This harassment was linked to the 'Flanders community club' in Napier Road, E6 - around the corner from the Mr I's home. The increase in Mr I's problems coincided with the increasing popularity of the club, especially late on Saturday nights. In February 1993, Mr I notified the council that he was being verbally abused by youths from the club. In fact, Mr I repeatedly complained of harassment, which included rubbish being pushed through his letter box, paint being daubed on his front door, racist graffiti being painted on the wall and constant banging on his front door. On one occasion, in fact, his front door was smashed open. When police were

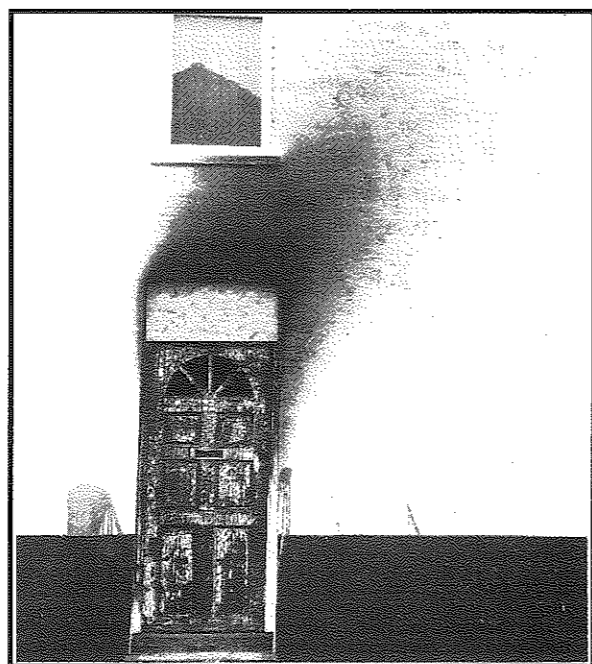


Photo: NMP

Mr I's house after the arson attack

called, an individual from the club was identified as the perpetrator, but to avoid further exacerbating the situation Mr I decided not to press charges.

On 11 April 1993, Mr I returned home at 8.30 pm and went straight upstairs. Within minutes, he heard a loud noise from downstairs. Despite the fact that such noise was a regular occurrence, Mr I decided to investigate. He went downstairs and opened the living room door only to be confronted by a wall of flames. As he turned away, he saw a young white man run out of his house. Mr I required emergency treatment for burns to his face and hands. His house was totally gutted. All his possessions were burnt and the house charred. Mr I was lucky to escape with his life.

NMP immediately provided Mr I with practical support. We helped him seek temporary accommodation and sort out various insurance matters.

Not surprisingly, Mr I was extremely frightened and traumatised by the arson attack. In a letter to NMP dated 30 April 1993, a senior housing officer stated that 'it is quite clear that the racial incidents are linked with the Flanders Community Centre with disturbances caused by the Youth Club and more serious disturbances caused by late night weekend drinking at the club bar.' He also went on to say that 'prior to the fire, Leisure Services had

been contacted to commence an investigation into the community centre'. We immediately demanded that the club be shut down and the perpetrators be arrested. Newham Council, however, closed ranks on the matter. Rather than take action against the perpetrators, they back-tracked and in a letter dated 24 May 1993, the same officer quoted above stated that 'The statement was not intended to implicate members of the community centre or the management committee.' Leisure Services went so far as to say that 'no evidence has been found to link the Flanders Club with the incidents'. Mr I, however, remains adamant that his attackers were from the club and has reiterated that the trouble only took place when the club was open late at night. His home is directly in the path of the club users.

Mr I was provided with minimal support by the council and the police in the course of his ordeal. Nevertheless, he has bravely returned to his home, even though the housing department is reluctant to provide him with the necessary security arrangements on the grounds of cost.

Manor Park

In 1993 we dealt with 23 incidents of racial harassment in the Manor Park area. Although this is substantially less than that recorded in the south of the borough, Manor Park and the North East of Newham continue to cause concern. In December 1991, Panchadcharam Sahitharan, a Tamil refugee, was murdered in

YOUTH IN RACE-HATE ATTACK

A THUG has been detained for three years for his part in a racially-motivated "revenge" axe attack on a Bengali boy.

Mark Smith, 18, was "tooled up" with at least three other white youths who went in search of a "gratuitous bit of violence" in Manor Park.

Snaresbrook Crown Court heard that earlier on June 19 last year, one of Smith's friends, named as Eddie Jamieson, had been stabbed in the back by a gang of Asians.

Prosecutor Mr Charles Byers said that a cut-throat of five young men, including Smith, drove to Romford Road.

There they cornered Mohammed Meen, 14, a pupil at Little Ilford Secondary School, who had nothing to do with the alleged stabbing.

The helpless teenager was brutally beaten, kicked and then bludgeoned with the axe. He suffered a gaping head wound, a suspected cheek fracture, a broken finger and severe bruising.

The wound to the back of his head required 11 stitches.

His school-mate Sylvester Miah, 14, was also set upon but escaped with only slight bruising.

Smith, who did not wield the axe, was accused as he tried to discard a knife and claw hammer near the junction of Romford Road and First Avenue.

Smith, from Wandsworth, admitted causing Mohammed grievous bodily harm with intent, affray and possessing offensive weapons.

Passing sentence...

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Photo: NMP

MM after the attack

Manor Park. We were informed that there were on-going fights between groups of white and black youths in and around Second Avenue, E12 and near the Three Rabbits Pub.

■ On 17 June 1993 at approximately 7.30 pm, MM (aged 14) was standing at a bus stop with a friend when he was approached by a group of white men. The group surrounded MM and his friend and asked them detailed questions about a group of black youths allegedly involved in an attack on a white boy the day before. MM made it clear that he had no knowledge of the attack or its perpetrators and was simply waiting for a bus. It appeared the men were satisfied. But suddenly one of the men turned around, pulled an axe or machete from his jacket and struck MM on the back of the head with it. As MM fell to the floor, he was kicked, punched and hit repeatedly with another weapon. MM's friend managed to escape, narrowly missing a similar beating. MM suffered a large wound to the back of his head requiring 10-12 stitches, two broken fingers as well as bruises to the head, face and body.

This was the second time that MM had been attacked in 1993. Of the five men who attacked him, three were subsequently arrested and charged with grievous bodily harm, and two were never caught.

Shortly after this vicious assault, NMP received information from a number of sources that the attack was part of an on-going conflict in the area following attacks on youngsters in Little Ilford Park. We were also informed that the group of white youths involved were known as the 'Snowhill boys' from the notorious Snowhill Road area of Manor Park. It appears that following the attacks in the park and allegedly threats made to a local mosque, there was

Newham Recorder 16 March 1994

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a fight on 16 June 1993 between a group of black and white youths at which a white youth was stabbed and seriously injured. In response to this apparently escalating situation, NMP workers and volunteers met with a number of local groups and businesses as well as the chair of the local mosque. The network that developed enabled us to respond rapidly to further problems. The council issued an urgent briefing for councillors, and the police stepped up foot and car patrols in the area. It seems that after the attack on MM, there were a number of further incidents, though none as serious. At present, the situation has been relatively calm for some months.

NMP has also spoken to a number of the black youths allegedly involved in these events and reaffirmed our commitment to support those who defended themselves in the face of such extreme racist violence.

Snowhill Road

The area around Snowhill Road and the adjacent estates has had a reputation for exceptionally high rates of racial harassment, particularly during the early 1980s when some of the most vicious attacks took place in the area. In the last few years, however, the attacks seem to have reduced in intensity and frequency. It now appears that racial harassment is once again becoming a serious problem in the area.

■ The S family moved into Snowhill road, E12 in June 1993. In August 1993, their family home was attacked for the first time. Youths gathered outside throwing stones at the windows and shouting abuse through the letter box. According to the council, the harassment was being perpetrated by a group of youths who 'were causing problems for all residents'. And that 'as a result of increased police patrols, the situation has now improved.' Yet on the 5 November 1993, Mr S rang the NMP emergency service line in a distressed state to report that a large lit firework had been placed through his letter box and had exploded in the hall. At the time of his call, he said 10-12 youths were gathering at the top of his road. The police officers who responded to this incident informed the S family that this was not the only attack in the area on that night; indeed, there had been other attacks in that very street.

The S family are currently awaiting a transfer out of the area.

We have also received reports of further attacks in the Snowhill Road area including an incident involving shots being fired from an air gun. Clearly, the situation in this part of Manor Park has not yet quietened sufficiently for black families to live safely and peacefully.

Warrior Square

■ Ms F lived on the fourth floor of a tower block in Warrior Square, E12 with two young children. Over a period of months, she became the target of a vicious and on-going campaign of racial harassment. She was repeatedly abused, spat at and threatened. On 24 February 1993, she was racially abused; later the same day, she was threatened and told 'your kids will die'. The next day, she was further threatened on two occasions. Then on the 28 February 1993, an object was thrown from an upstairs window which struck Ms F's two-year-old child. This became a regular pattern of harassment with objects being thrown at Ms F, her children and friends accompanying her.

The harassment was taking a serious toll not only on Ms F but also on her seven-year-old son T who was according to his school, in March 1993, presenting 'disturbing behaviour patterns at school ... a causal factor in this pattern is the racial harassment to which she and her child are subjected at home apparently from neighbours.'

The housing department's response to the harassment was, according to Ms F, to simply tell her that they could only offer her a two-week stay in a bed and breakfast before returning her to the tower block. A council panel awarded the family the minimum number of points in a racial harassment case. We continued to demand practical support including security film for the windows of the house. Unfortunately, these measures were not installed and one of her windows was smashed on 16 March 1993. Then on 18 March 1993, Ms F was physically attacked by a white man in the lobby of her tower block. The man grabbed her by the throat, punched her and violently banged her head against the wall. After this attack, the family were moved to a bed and breakfast for their own safety.

Despite the housing department's protestations to the contrary, it is clear that Ms F and

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Photo: NMP

Windows broken at Ms F's house

her children did not need to suffer such violence, abuse and degradation at the hands of local racists. Had a serious attempt been made to find the perpetrators rather than, in the view of Ms F, simply 'fobbing her off!', then the situation need not have escalated or, at the very least, Ms F could have been moved to safety earlier. At present, Ms F is close to moving into a permanent property with her two children and will hopefully be able to recover from the trauma of months of racist violence.

West Ham

In the 1992/93 Annual Report, we highlighted the case of Mrs S, a single mother from Milner Road, who had experienced serious and continuing racial harassment. She had to endure attacks not just on herself but on her children as well. In 1993, it became clear that the harassment Mrs S was suffering on her estate was not isolated and that a large number of other families were also threatened. The estate in question was the Woodlands estate beside West Ham Station.

Woodlands Estate

This estate houses a number of convicted racists as well as Stephen O'Connell, the organiser of the British National Party's Newham branch. Stickers from far-right groups have appeared repeatedly in the area condemning 'Race mixing', often with crude racist caricatures. By April 1993, a number of families had contacted us about their fears of further attacks.

■ In May 1993, the P family contacted NMP, stating that since December 1992, they had been receiving on-going racial abuse and threats. On one occasion, Mrs P was stoned on her way to the shops. The door bell was repeatedly rung and racial abuse shouted over the intercom. When the P family contacted us, the situation had deteriorated to the extent that Mrs P was, in fact, too intimidated to leave her home.

■ On 23 May 1993, Mrs R was walking to the shops with her young son when she was confronted by a young white boy who pushed his bicycle into her child, knocking him over. The white boy then sped off, shouting racial abuse at Mrs R. She is often racially abused as she leaves her block. She has had stones thrown at her and has been spat on as she goes to the shops. The perpetrators in this case are all aged between 10 and 17.

■ In April 1993, the front door of Mrs H's flat was covered in racist and sexist graffiti. She is a white woman with mixed race children, and some of the scrawls were sickening references to her children. She was also forced to endure repeated racial abuse, especially on her visits to the shops. Mrs H was also threatened on more than one occasion and frequently stayed away from her home to avoid further harassment. She was finally transferred off the estate.

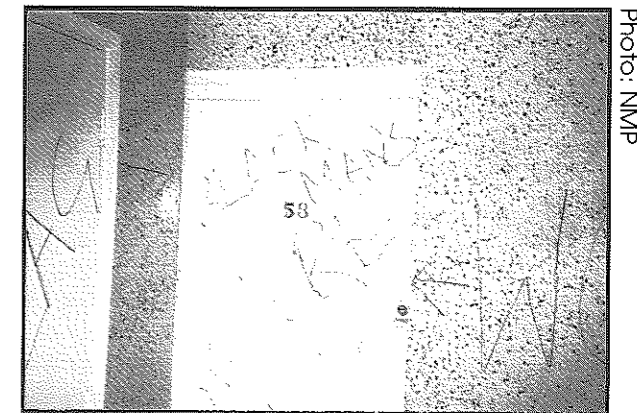


Photo: NMP

Graffiti on Woodlands Estate

In February 1993, we received a report of stones being thrown at a black carpenter as he boarded up a house on Durban Road, E15. We were also informed that the cars of at least two black families in this road had been set alight.

Many of the above incidents were, however,

not reported to the police. Families who spoke to us often stressed that they did not want the police informed. The reason for this was more often than not a fear of retaliation and an anticipation of the police inaction and insensitivity. Take the case of Mrs S from Milner Road.

■ Mrs S had been experiencing racial harassment for some considerable period of time (as reported in the 1992/93 Annual Report) when in March 1993, she was informed by the housing department that she and her children were soon to be moved. On 4 April 1993, before a final offer of accommodation could be made to Mrs S, her family were once again subjected to further violence. Her two young children, A, (aged 5) and S, (aged 3), were playing in the small garden at the back of their house. As in the past, a group of white youths aged 10-15 began throwing stones at A and S. S attempted to hide from the stones being thrown, but being only three, she was not fast enough and was struck on the head by a stone with sufficient force to knock her down. As the youths ran away, they left S bleeding and apparently concussed. Mrs S, who had relatives with her, pressed the emergency alarm provided by the council and requested an ambulance. While she was tending to S, her relatives ran to a nearby address which they saw the youths run to. Naturally, Mrs S's relatives knocked on the door in an attempt to confront the parents of these youths. The door was opened by a woman who, on hearing the allegations, shouted 'bollocks you Paki - go away'. When asked to stop her children from harassing Mrs S, the woman replied 'they didn't do it, if they did, then good - what are you going to do about it?' A small crowd gradually gathered, threatening Mrs S's relatives who, therefore, withdrew. Police officers attending the scene made straight for this small crowd and spoke to the abusive woman. They then returned to Mrs S and stated simply that there was nothing they could do - it was only established through subsequent correspondence that this was because the main child involved was under ten-years-old. As for the dispute with the abusive woman, officers avoided taking action by claiming this was a neighbourhood dispute and not an issue for the police. Mrs S also claims the officers not only chastised her for using the alarm system but appeared to doubt that the injuries to S were caused by children throwing stones, hinting at other causes such as S falling over. They provided no proof for such suspicions. Within weeks of this incident, Mrs S moved out of West Ham altogether.

After further consultation with Newham Monitoring Project, the Students' Union now has a greater knowledge of the extent of racist attacks around the Woodlands area.

One family in particular, who live in Durban Road have been targeted by these racists. The family have had all their windows in their house smashed. The Mother of the family had had on several occasions, both verbal and physical attacks directed at her. Her two year old child has had its head split open with a brick. This family lives in constant terror, not knowing when or where the next racist attack will take place.

A second woman has been targeted who lives in the Woodlands vicinity. She has had her flat broken into, on several occasions, and had it covered in racist and sexual graffiti, the like of "black man's whore". The sole reason for her being attacked is because her partner is black.

The Students' Union is asking for as much information and help from the residents of Woodlands to ensure that these attacks stop.

If there are any of our students involved in these attacks, tell us, we need to know.

Racist scum have no right to be in our Educational Institution, our Halls of Residence, nor in the wider community either.

Racism affects us all, it is like a disease that breeds suspicion, hatred and contempt. Everybody should play their role, no matter how small, in stamping out these racists from the Woodlands community.

STOP THE RACIST ATTACKS!

UEL Students' Union leaflet on Woodlands Estate

On the Woodlands Estate, there are also a large number of flats used by students from the University of East London. We, therefore, met with student union officials who were very helpful in assisting us visit families and passing on information. Indeed, the union went so far as to produce a joint leaflet with NMP condemning racism and asking students to be vigilant on the estate. We pointed out that a number of students had also been victims of harassment on the estate.

In relation to the perpetrators, it is clear that many of them are juveniles who loiter in or around a small parade of shops on the edge of the estate. These youths, some of whom have tacit links to far-right elements, have been implicated in a number of attacks on black families. The council appears to have accepted that it is the 'loitering youths around the shops who are causing the trouble' and have requested the police to take action.

At present, the trouble on the estate does not seem to be as severe as in previous months. The reality is, however, that unless the youths who congregate by the shops are provided for or dealt with, the problem will continue and may possibly be exploited by the far-right, who will thrive on the alienation and economic disadvantage that exists on this estate.

Chargeable Street revisited

In the 1992/93 Annual Report, we reported at length on racial harassment in the Chargeable Street area of West Ham, on the outstanding efforts of the West Ham Ethnic Welfare Association to challenge council and police complicity with the problem and on the failures of the multi-agency approach favoured by the council and the police.

After a brief period of calm, the violence has recently referred to Chargeable Street.

■ In February 1994, SH was walking through the alleyway at the end of Chargeable Street when he was confronted by three white men who jostled and pushed him. SH's response was to ask 'what's that for?' The three men then kicked and punched him. As SH turned to run, one of the men picked up a brick and threw it at SH's head. The impact of the brick was such that SH received a serious head injury and concussion. He was rushed to hospital immediately. Despite a number of local white tenants witnessing the incident, not one came forward to offer help or information. The alley is a well-known danger spot for the families in this area; in fact, it was here that a black youth was attacked two years ago and so severely beaten that his leg was badly broken, resulting in him being hospitalised for over a month.

To the families in the Chargeable Street area, it is clear that despite multi-agency attempts to initiate grand schemes and collective responses the racial harassment that has so plagued the black families in the area has not stopped. Both NMP and the families have repeatedly demanded that those who suffer from this harassment should be placed at the centre of any strategy devised by statutory agencies. Unless this happens and action is taken against the perpetrators, the harassment will continue unabated.

South Newham

South Newham, which encompasses Beckton, Canning Town, Custom House, North Woolwich and Silvertown, has for many years had the highest rates of racial harassment, not only in Newham but often in the whole country. In 1993, we dealt with 59 cases in south New-

ham. These included the murder of Fiaz Mirza, a mini-cab driver killed by racists from Custom House, and a brutal assault on an NMP worker and volunteer. We anticipate the BNP standing candidates in this area during the May 1994 local elections.

Beckton

■ On 19 February 1993, Mr A, who lives on the Winsor Park estate in Beckton, was walking home after visiting friends elsewhere on the estate. He was accompanied by a friend, Mr RA, who also lives on the estate. As the two men approached a roundabout on the edge of the estate, they were stopped by a white man who shouted 'I'm gonna kill you, you Paki bastard', at Mr A. Mr A and Mr RA continued to walk on but the man persisted in harassing them. Mr A was pushed, punched on the back of his head and kicked. At this point, the man was joined by another man and two women. Mr A suffered verbal abuse and then all four individuals joined in a physical attack against him. The two women blocked Mr A's path and as he attempted to pass them, one of the men struck him over the head with what appeared to be a whiskey bottle. Meanwhile, Mr RA had managed to escape and alert friends. The attack continued with Mr A being knocked to the ground, his attackers kicking and hitting him. By the time Mr A's friends had arrived, the attackers had fled leaving him lying semi-conscious on the ground. His injuries included a deep gash on the head, a badly swollen left cheek, bruising around his left eye, loose teeth and injuries on his back and arms.

Mr A's attackers were later arrested and charged by officers from the Newham Organised Racial Incident Squad (NORIS). They have been convicted and sent to prison. Beckton, however, continues to cause concern. Most of the houses in the area are new and many are under the control of housing associations. We have, therefore, made links with most of the major housing associations and have been asked to provide information on practical services provided by NMP, such as our 24-hour emergency service line.

Canning Town

In the past few years, racial harassment in the once notorious area of Canning Town, appeared to be declining. In 1993, the trend seems

to have been reversed with a significant increase in the number of attacks reported to us either directly by victims of racist violence or via local agencies.

■ In October 1993, Mr H from Liverpool Road, E16 contacted NMP to complain of racial harassment. It had begun three years previously when his windows had been broken by stones, and eggs and rubbish had been thrown at his family's home. The situation worsened and in November 1992, fireworks were thrown at Mrs H and her daughter as they walked home. Sporadic harassment continued until late September 1993 when rubbish was thrown into their garden and milk bottles and empty lager cans were thrown at their front door. In subsequent weeks, stones were thrown at the windows and the garden fence was damaged.

The harassment was taking a serious toll on the health of the family, especially Mr and Mrs H who both suffer from diabetes. Indeed, on more than one occasion, Mrs H came close to collapsing as a consequence of the harassment. Finally, due to pressure from NMP, the family were moved in December 1993.

■ The I Family, also living in Liverpool Road, became the targets of what appears to be the same gang. From early January 1993, when they moved into the neighbourhood, they suffered frequent harassment. Rubbish was thrown into their garden, windows were broken, doors were banged, the garden fence was smashed and there was repeated verbal abuse. The harassment gradually increased in intensity to the point that the I children were reluctant to play outside. Indeed, in September 1993, a brick was thrown at the seven year-old son. The family clearly expressed the wish to move from the area and following the intervention of NMP, the family were transferred out.

Custom House and Silvertown

In recent years, Custom House and Silvertown have suffered from high levels of racist violence and have been noted for particularly vicious attacks. Many of the black families in this area are refugees - these families are often left to fend for themselves with little or none of the structured community networks that exist in the rest of the borough. Consequently, many of them feel extremely isolated and vulnerable.

The murder of Fiaz Mirza

■ On Friday 26 February 1993, Mr Fiaz Mirza, a mini cab driver from Manor Park, drove two white men to Custom House. Within hours, he was dead. Mr Mirza was the third Newham resident to be murdered by racists in 14 months. He is survived by his wife and 4 children.

The tragic facts of Mr Mirza's murder are as follows: On the night in question, Mark Lee walked into New Central mini-cabs on Barking Road, E6. He asked for a cab to Custom House and was pointed to Mr Mirza's cab. He directed Mr Mirza to Custom House but on the way asked him to stop at the Boleyn pub to collect a friend, Ricky Lee (no relation). Another cab driver saw this and radioed his controller to ask if Mr Mirza was alright; it was confirmed that Mr Mirza was fine.

Events from this point onwards are based on Mark Lee's statement to the police and the prosecution case at trial. Mark Lee had apparently been to pay his respects to Bobby Moore at West Ham United's football ground, Upton Park. Thereafter, Mark and Ricky Lee had decided to catch a cab home. On the way, they crossed Connaught bridge and told Mr Mirza to stop his cab. When the car had stopped, Mark Lee demanded that Mr Mirza hand over his money; Mr Mirza refused and they all got out of the car. Mark Lee then brutally attacked Mr Mirza, punching him in the face and body and, according to evidence from the post-mortem, kicking him. At this point, Ricky Lee also joined in the attack, and Mr Mirza was apparently knocked unconscious. The two robbed Mr Mirza of his night's takings (£30-40), but not content with this, and clearly motivated by racial hatred, they bundled him into the back of the car and drove towards the docks, where they knew they would not be disturbed. They crashed the car through gate 37 of the Albert Docks and drove to the water's edge. Mr Mirza managed to jump from the back seconds before the car, which Ricky and Mark Lee had escaped from, hit the water. The two then went back to where Mr Mirza had fallen and proceeded to attack him again; according to the prosecution, they beat him violently on his head and body. The two then claim Mr Mirza 'fell into the water'. It is not disputed that when Mr Mirza was in the water, he was still alive, but despite the fact that he could swim, he was in such a shattered physical state that he subsequently drowned. Mr Mirza had over 10 wounds to his head and fifteen wounds

JURY TOLD HURT CAB DRIVER WAS THROWN INTO WATER

'Race killing'

to his shoulders, ribs, limbs, wrists, knees and inner thigh. His body was recovered from the river some days later.

At Newham Magistrates Court where Mark and Ricky Lee were committed for trial to the Old Bailey, NMP supporters in the public gallery were shocked to discover that BNP supporters were present as well. It appeared that members of the BNP (possibly C18) had decided to come to court to show their support for Mr Mirza's killers. On a further occasion, in anticipation of another BNP presence, over a dozen NMP supporters were mobilised but the fascists did not turn up.

During the Old Bailey trial, the main issue of contention was whether Mark and Ricky Lee intended to kill Mr Mirza or whether Mr Mirza's death was an accident. Both defendants pleaded guilty to robbery but not guilty to murder. They claimed that most of Mr Mirza's injuries were caused by the car falling into the river and Mr Mirza's leap from the boot. Additionally, Ricky Lee claimed he was drunk at the time and could not remember much of the night's events.

During the course of the trial, it transpired that Mark Lee had been arrested following a call to Crimestoppers by his step-mother who informed the police that 'I am calling about the missing cab driver, he's in the docks, put there by Mark Lee and Ricky Lee, he went down with his car, they did it for the hell of it'. It also emerged at trial that Mark Lee was having a sexual relationship, described as incest, with his step-sister Julie and that he had told her of the incident.

The defence attempted to portray Mark Lee's actions as irresponsible and reckless but not motivated by racial hatred or any intention to murder Mr Mirza. Despite this, he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum of 22 years custody. Throughout the trial, Ricky Lee was portrayed as being little more than a drunk spectator with no active part in the murder of Mr Mirza. He only got involved, the defence argued, out of mis-

Pair 'made jokes' over dock death



Victim Mr Mirza

TWO white youths murdered an Asian minicab driver then "laughed and joked" about the killing, it was alleged.

Ricky Lee, 18, and Mark Lee, 22, no relation, beat Fiaz Mirza, drove his car into Silvertown's Royal Albert Dock and then threw him in, a jury heard.

Before and after the killing, the pair went to West Ham United's ground to pay their respects to Bobby Moore who had died that week.

Ricky Lee, of Alnwick Road, Custom House, and Mark Lee of Randolph Approach, Custom House, deny murder.

Mark Lee has admitted robbery. Ricky Lee denies the charge.

Prosecutor Robert Harman QC told an Old Bailey jury the pair were responsible for a murder which was "brutal, callous and apparently motivated by greed and racial hatred".

Mr Mirza, 42, worked at New Central Minicabs in Barking Road, East Ham.

Mark Lee went to the office and asked for a car.

Mr Mirza was told to drive to Connaught Bridge, where, it was alleged, he was violently robbed.

Escape

Said counsel: "They put him in the boot, drove to the dock and smashed through the gates."

"Mr Mirza managed to escape as the defendants caused the car to drive into deep water."

"They beat him and threw him in the water. Mr Mirza, in his injured condition, had no opportunity to climb out."

The court was told the pair made a joke about the incident during a telephone call.

When arrested, Mark Lee claimed they were playing "chicken" and Mr Mirza failed to jump from the car. The trial continues.

guided loyalty to Mark Lee. Nevertheless, Ricky Lee was also found guilty of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. As the judge pointed out, both men clearly intended to harm Mr Mirza, rob him and subsequently kill him. The judge pointed out that being drunk was not a valid defence.

In this case, the prosecution, as an exception to the rule, clearly raised the issue of racism, claiming that the primary motivation for the killing of Mr Mirza was racial. The judge also acknowledged that the actions of Mark and Ricky Lee were motivated by racial hatred.

The Fightback of Community Associations

NMP has always argued that any effective and longterm response to racist violence must be rooted in those black communities facing the brunt of the violence. Consequently, we stress the importance not only of working day in and day out with families and individuals under attack but also of encouraging and facilitating self-organisation through community associations on estates and in areas that can act as a focus for community defence and resistance.

In past Annual Reports, we have highlighted the activities and successes of community associations such as the Cypress Ethnic Welfare Association and the West Ham Ethnic Welfare Association. These associations were created as a direct response to and consequence of the failure of statutory agencies to respond effectively to racial harassment, provide adequate help and support and take decisive action against the perpetrators. NMP has worked closely with these associations and can say, without hesitation, that there have been noticeable decreases in racial harassment in those areas where associations have flourished. We applaud the unity and determination of those involved in creating a sense of security and a network of mutual support amongst black residents who are no longer afraid that they have to suffer in isolation. This in itself is an important first step in the battle against the racists.

In 1993, NMP continued to commit considerable time and energy to the forging of community associations.

Gwendoline Avenue Community Association

The Gwendoline Avenue Community Association highlighted once again the resolve and determination of the black community to combat racism and challenge those statutory agencies unable and/or unwilling to deal with racial harassment.

Gwendoline Avenue in Plaistow was the scene of a spate of racist attacks beginning in October 1992. The harassment increased significantly following the arrival of a white family from Custom House. Attacks ranged from verbal abuse, threatened and actual assaults, the smashing of windows to a horrific incident in which a seven-year-old child was threatened and attacked with an axe by a nine-year-old child. The response of both the council and the



police was disappointing and predictable. The local housing officers promised to look into the matter but took no action. The police, however, did take some action - they arrested Mr Sahota, a black resident, for defending himself against a vicious attack from his white neighbour. Interestingly, Mr Sahota was arrested by PC Plunkett who was also implicated in the arrests of Tony Deane and Colin Imbert (see last year's Annual Report). Mr Sahota was charged with actual bodily harm even though his wife had called the police for help because her husband was being assaulted by a known racist.

Following this incident, local residents realised that they had to organise and defend themselves because the police and the council were apparently not concerned about the harassment in the area. NMP worked closely with the residents in order to establish the Gwendoline Avenue Community Association (GACA). GACA was determined to bring an end to the racial harassment in the area.

On 20 May 1993, a public meeting was held at which GACA was launched. Three main objectives were agreed upon. Firstly, to campaign for the dismissal of all charges brought against Mr Sahota; secondly, to campaign for the perpetrators to be charged; and thirdly, to demand and secure the eviction of the perpetrators. All the residents were adamant that the racists had to be moved out

of the area. However, prior to the meeting, many were afraid of the consequences of speaking out against the perpetrators. However, the meeting created a sense of unity amongst residents as they realised they would no longer have to suffer in isolation and fear. Additionally, a number of witnesses felt confident enough to come forward and provide statements in connection with the attack on Mr Sahota.

On 8 July 1993, a delegation of over 50 people from GACA attended a meeting of the housing department's racial harassment panel. Residents recounted their experiences of harassment and demanded that the racists be evicted as a matter of urgency.

On 14 July 1993, over 80 members of GACA attended a meeting of Newham Council's Housing Committee to demand the immediate eviction of the racists. Amazingly, Cllr Chaudray, Chair of the Committee, refused to allow any of the residents to put forward their case. The residents, who had packed the public gallery, were outraged by the council's contempt for their concerns. As a result of loud protests from NMP and GACA, the meeting had to be suspended for 20 minutes, and the council agreed to meet representatives of GACA the following day.

The outcome of this determined campaign was that the CPS agreed to drop the charges against Mr Sahota and the police charged the principal perpetrator, Mr Goodall, with actual bodily harm. Mr Goodall is currently awaiting trial. Also the council gave way to the relentless pressure from GACA and NMP and finally evicted the Goodall family. In short, all three objectives of the campaign were met.

Currently, NMP is seeking advice about whether the residents of Gwendoline Avenue, particularly those who are owner-occupiers, can seek financial redress from the council for moving the racists into the area in the first place, a precedent set in a similar case in Bristol. Members of GACA have since offered support and advice to other black communities in Newham who are facing problems of racial harassment.

Gwendoline Avenue Community Association

Important Meeting

On 14th July members of Gwendoline Avenue Community Association attended the Council's Housing Committee demanding action to evict the racists terrorising the area. Unbelievably, Cllr Chaudhary, who is the Chair of the committee, refused to allow residents to be heard. After some protest, the Council agreed to meet representatives from GACA the following day. This meeting went ahead and a number of proposals were made. Before any further action is taken by GACA, the community needs to decide the next step forward in the campaign.

Come to the
G.A.C.A meeting on
Thursday 12th August
at One Love, The Upton Centre,
1 Bishop's Avenue, Plaistow E13. 6.30pm.

Gwendoline Avenue Community Association,
PO Box 273, Forest Gate E7.
If you are racially attacked telephone
081-555-8151 (NMP 24 hour emergency number)

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

Second Avenue Community Association

In recent years, Second Avenue in Plaistow has been the scene of serious racist violence. Most black families living in the area have suffered some form of harassment, including violent assaults. In similar circumstances to those of Gwendoline Avenue, it was the arrest of a young man, Mr Kalaam, that finally prompted the community to take action.

On 18 August 1993, a white resident of Second Avenue was holding the young son of a black neighbour and shaking him violently by the neck. The child was crying out for help. Many of the black residents witnessed this incident but did not intervene. The white man in question was the perpetrator of much of the harassment in the area, and most of the black residents were afraid of the consequences of interfering. Mr Kalaam, however, refused to watch a young child being assaulted. He tried to intervene to ensure the child's safety. At no point did he verbally or physically threaten the white man. In fact, it was Mr Kalaam himself who was viciously assaulted - he was beaten on the arms and head with an iron rod. He fled into a neighbour's house for safety. However, when the police arrived, they arrested Mr Kalaam and later charged him with actual bodily harm, the racist being cited as the victim. The residents of Second Avenue were outraged at the decision to charge Mr Kalaam; in fact, the incident united the local black community.

With the help and support of NMP, a public meeting was held on 14 September 1993 at which the Second Avenue Community Association (SACA) was launched. The residents recounted horrific incidents of racial harassment - women told of how they were verbally abused, pushed and shoved and had their scarves pulled off their heads by white

children, some no more than eight-years-old. They explained that when they went to complain to the parents of the children, they were told to 'fuck off back to your own country, you Pakis' and threatened. One woman told of how she was assaulted in her own home by a white neighbour wielding a plank.

Mr Kalaam's family, in particular, were subjected to a vicious campaign of racial harassment. They were terrorised one evening by a gang of white youths who congregated outside their house, threatening to attack the family and burn their house down. A gun was also pushed through their letter box, and their lives were threatened. In fact, the Kalaam's family were the first family in the borough to have security cameras installed in an attempt to ensure their safety.

On another occasion, Mr Kalaam's mother, Mrs Ali, and younger brother, Koyes, were assaulted by a white neighbour with a hockey stick. Mrs Ali's arms were bruised, and their front window was smashed. The attack was accompanied by vitriolic racist abuse. NMP volunteers attended the scene following a call on our emergency service line. Police officers also attended, but it was only after the forceful intervention of our volunteers that the officers decided to arrest

the perpetrator. He was later charged with criminal damage. The residents of Second Avenue were outraged at this decision, in light of the fact that Mr Kalaam, who had been viciously assaulted, was charged with actual bodily harm whereas a white perpetrator of a brutal racist attack was only charged with criminal damage.

On 1 November 1993, SACA held a second public meeting. It was well-attended with over 20 local families represented. SACA invited

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

PUBLIC MEETING AGAINST RACIST ATTACKS Tuesday 14th Sept 6:30pm

Curwen Primary School
Atlas Road, Plaistow E13

In the past few months have witnessed a large number of racist attacks in and around Second Avenue. The attacks have included a number of Asian children being beaten with weapons. The mother of one family was herself beaten with a hockey stick in broad daylight and youngsters have been arrested by the police for defending themselves against these attacks.

In most of the dozens of attacks that have taken place, the attackers are known. Both the police and the council have been informed and yet no action has been taken against them.

We will not tolerate this situation any longer. As a result of these attacks we have called a public meeting to inform the whole community and to demand an end to this terrible situation. Unless we unite as a community not only will us but also our children continue to suffer violence at the hands of mindless, racist thugs.

Newham Monitoring Project
TROUBLE WITH RACIAL HARASSMENT
OR POLICE HARASSMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE LEGAL ADVICE AND
PRACTICAL SUPPORT 24 HOURS 7 DAYS
RING 081 555 8151

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

the area.' To date, we have received no information to suggest that the council has fulfilled even one of these commitments. We have also received no explanation from the council to clarify their inaction, despite a written request for such clarification.

Fortunately, Mr Kalaam was not solely dependent upon the council. Following a long and determined campaign by SACA and NMP, the CPS dropped all charges against Mr Kalaam. The white neighbour who attacked Mrs Ali was convicted of criminal damage, leaving the way clear for possession proceedings to be commenced against the racist perpetrators. SACA will continue to apply pressure to secure the eviction of the racists.

Conclusion

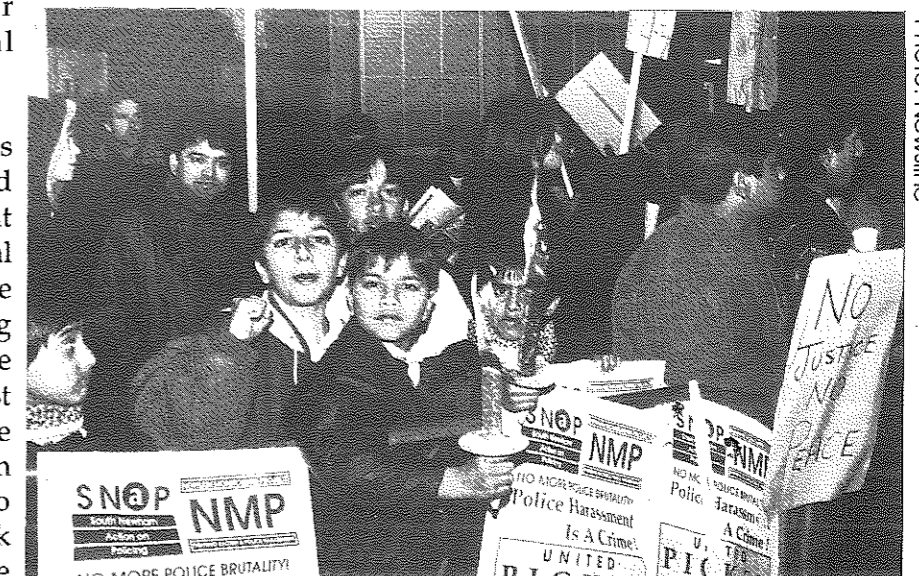
The residents of Gwendoline Avenue and Second Avenue decided to organise for themselves against the racists because they were disillusioned with the council's empty promises. SACA and NMP have exposed the systematic failure of the housing department to address the problems of racial harassment and work effectively with the black community. They have also demonstrated what can be achieved when black people unite and work together.

They are living proof of the success of community self-organisation.

local councillors to attend in order to inform them about what was happening in the area. Unfortunately, only two councillors attended, one of whom left after fifteen minutes. The residents were angry that the council had taken no action against the racist perpetrators who were still residing in the street. They described the fear and intimidation under which they lived. It was decided that SACA would have to take its concerns to the council.

On 25 November 1993, over 40 residents of Second Avenue packed the public gallery at a full council meeting. SACA were granted speaking rights at the meeting. Two residents of Second Avenue and representatives of NMP told councillors about the harassment in the area, demanded to know why the council had done so little to support black residents and asked what they intended to do. One young resident of Second Avenue, Mrs A, recounted horrific incidents of harassment and described how, through becoming involved with SACA, the black residents of the street had regained their dignity and were determined to fight. She called on the council to support SACA, evict the racist perpetrators and thereby send a clear message to all racists that racial harassment would not be tolerated in Newham. SACA also demanded that the council write to the CPS and urge them to drop all charges against Mr Kalaam. Finally, they called on the council to look into the policing of the area because many residents were very concerned, even disturbed, by the way in which the police responded to their complaints of racial harassment.

In relation to Mr Kalaam's case, the council confirmed orally and in writing that they would make a 'formal representation to the Metropolitan police asking that the handling of the case be investigated' and request the CPS to review 'the charges which have been brought.' They also promised to seek 'reassurances about police action to protect families in



Second Avenue Residents join the picket of Plaistow police station

Photo: Newsline

Legal Challenges to Racial Harassment

The primary routes to making a legal challenge against racial harassment are provided by Newham council's legal department and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), via the police. Both the council and the CPS have consistently failed to provide families, who have often bravely fought back against racists, with the legal weapons they need to overcome racial harassment. To better illustrate this, we will use two cases highlighted in previous reports to show the long tortuous process victims are put through, because of the lack of any effective action by both the council and the CPS.

Critique of the council's legal department

Before going on to demonstrate the institutional failures of the various agencies to protect the families and individuals in the cases outlined above, we would like first to provide some background information on the machinations of Newham council's legal department.

The legal department, which obtains all of its referrals from the housing department, is responsible for making legal challenges on behalf of the victims of racial harassment. In 1992, the housing department of Newham council issued a document entitled 'A legal guide for victims of racial harassment', outlining the legal options available for action against racists. According to this document, the options available are:

- a) a warning letter reminding the tenant of his/her obligations under the tenancy agreement not to harass their neighbours;
- b) if the incident is serious enough, or has been

on-going over a long period of time, or if the perpetrator has failed to take notice of the warning letter, the council may apply for a court order to prevent the perpetrator from further harassment;

c) If the racists commit a criminal offence, such as damage to property or an attack on an individual, and the police refuse to prosecute, officers from the housing and legal departments may encourage them to do so. If the police still fail to take action, the council may prosecute if, that is, the victim is willing to attend court. Finally, if the perpetrator is a council tenant and has caused serious incidents of harassment, or minor incidents over a long period of time, the council can apply to the court for an order to evict the racists from their home.

The reality, as is so often the case with council procedures, differs sharply from this. Indeed, procedures often seem to break down after the issue of a warning letter. At this point it appears that councillors and senior council officers in both key departments are either reluctant or actively hostile to further legal action, particularly if this could lead to eviction. Despite parading as the champion of the policy to evict perpetrators of racial harassment, (Newham was the first council to do so back in 1984 with the McDonnell family), the council appears to be terrified of a 'backlash' as well as preoccupied by the cost and administrative bother.

But the ultimate responsibility for the legal side, however, rests with the legal department, with its full time staff of lawyers. Once a case is referred to this department, it is its responsibility to deal with it. It was the all too frequent

examples of incompetence of this department and the bungling of cases, that prompted a £10,000 review of the department, carried out by Duncan Forbes, the author of the Legal Action Group's report on 'Legal remedies to racial harassment', and a highly-respected authority on such matters. Though the report's conclusions were primarily administrative, a number of telling points were raised about the competence of the officers and, crucially, the degree of commitment that the council as a whole has to the policy of evictions. An example of the council's reluctance to follow through its policy is the fact that the majority of evictions for racial harassment are actually carried out on the grounds of 'rent arrears'. This does indeed allow for a swift eviction, but fails to address the fact that to evict for racial harassment is also to provide a signal to other perpetrators of the council's determination to take action against racists.

The 'Forbes Report' considered the facts in 40 racial harassment case-files provided by the legal department and 60 case-files provided by the district housing offices, together with other documents supplied by both departments, including papers on policy and procedure, guidelines to staff, standard instructions and checklists, tenancy agreements, right to buy documentation and the council's list of delegated decision-making. Newham Monitoring Project also provided information and was interviewed by Duncan Forbes.

The report essentially tackles issues of openness and bureaucracy. Several key ways were pointed out for improving the system. In Forbes' opinion, more witnesses need to be persuaded to give evidence. This could be done by providing extra support and protection, building on 'support mechanisms' for victims, by looking in particular at the experiences of local support groups in the voluntary sector. Forbes also held that victims should regularly be provided with information about the progress of their case, and that this would in turn increase the victim's confidence in the council's ability to deal with their case.

Field Estate

The reality of the legal department's handling

of evictions is best illustrated by the case of the C family and AP. As we reported in the 1992/93 Annual Report, the C family and AP both live on the Field Estate, Forest Gate where they had been suffering harassment from two separate groups of racists: the J family from Fowler Road, and Paul Sawyer Brown and his partner Denise Williams from Field Point, Station Road. In this case, NMP demanded action against both the J family and Sawyer Brown. The council decided that action could be taken against Sawyer Brown due to the attack on the families. But when action was taken by the legal department, it was to seek the repossession of Brown's council home on the grounds that Denise Williams, Sawyer Brown's partner, was in fact in rent arrears. What is more surprising is that, despite the wealth of evidence accumulated against Sawyer Brown and his partner to prove their racial harassment, (including numerous incidents to which the police were called and the testimony of the estate caretaker and other witnesses), the legal department cited only one incident - a shout by Sawyer Brown of 'you Paki cunt' - on its Particulars of Claim. The fact that Sawyer Brown was imprisoned for his attacks and arrested again only six weeks after his release was totally ignored. Sawyer Brown's racist rantings from the dock and his record of attacks on the estate were, according to officers from the legal department, never passed onto them by the housing department. Housing department staff, on the other hand, are adamant that they did inform the relevant legal officer.

In the middle of this argument are the C family, left to reflect on why they agreed to be witnesses in the council's action and whether it was all worthwhile. In practice, it seems that rather than adequate support being provided for victims by the council, it is the council who needs the support of the victims.

The fact that such a clear case of racial harassment was pursued so negligently by the council is remarkable - but what is even more remarkable is the way the legal department has gone about trying to avoid responsibility for its actions, or rather lack of action. According to the legal department, it was only when a NMP worker, present on both occasions Sawyer Brown was arrested, was called

in by the legal department two weeks before the actual eviction hearing, that Sawyer Brown's previous racist history was revealed to them. Yet this argument does not altogether ring true. For how can the department profess to be totally ignorant of the race element when on its case file, it had cited a clear incident of racial abuse. Why had the department not, at this early stage, sought further information on the perpetrators they were evicting? It seems the legal department's response to these criticisms was simply to lay blame at the door of the housing department for not providing them with the further information they required. The legal department must have known that calling someone a 'Paki cunt' was not grounds enough for an eviction - it was their responsibility to investigate further. And if the housing department did not provide the necessary back-up information, the legal department should have pulled them up for not doing so.

It is precisely such attempts to shift the blame and to cover up glaring mistakes that further calls into question the council's commitment to its eviction procedures. For many months now, the families have been living in close proximity to the racists, daily facing the threat that the harassment might begin anew. But now they face many more anxious months of unnecessary delay as the council resubmits its Particulars of Claim to the county court, amended in order to fully address the racial harassment issue. It is a delay that was avoidable and would never have occurred if the legal department had carried out proper investigations in the first place.

A history of inaction

The C family and AP, as previously mentioned, were also being harassed by the J family from Fowler Road and, if anything, the harassment instigated by this family outstrips that of Sawyer Brown. Yet the council has taken no action whatsoever, allegedly because the main perpetrator in this case is the teenage daughter of the J family.

NMP have had dealings with this particular racist family since 1987, and even then, we had been informed that this family had been ac-

tively racially harassing black people for quite some time. In March 1989, for instance, ST was viciously assaulted by five people, including EJ, the daughter in question. Following pressure from NMP, the perpetrators, including EJ, were charged with serious offences. In court, however, the CPS reduced the charges, and ST was persuaded to agree to her attackers being 'bound over to keep the peace.' No action was taken against the J family by either the council's housing or legal departments.

In May 1990, the J family were again implicated in the harassment of black tenants. In this case, Mr B was threatened and intimidated by a man who was a friend of the J's and was visiting them. Again, no action was taken by the council.

By 1992, both AP and the C family were frequently complaining of abuse and harassment from EJ and other members of the J family. On one occasion in July 1992, EJ burst into Mr C's flat screaming racial abuse and attempted to strike him in full view of the then local housing officer for the area. Later that same month, EJ pushed and kicked Mr and Mrs C who promptly reported the matter to the police. When the police interviewed EJ, she claimed that Mr C had sexually assaulted her when his wife and three young daughters, as well as a number of neighbours, had been present. Despite a total lack of proof, Mr C was then interviewed by the police under caution. Once again NORIS's response to this case was to placate the situation by advising Mr C against taking any further action and refusing to act against EJ.

On the night that Sawyer Brown was eventually arrested, members of the J family ran into the street screaming racial abuse at a NMP worker and the C family. As recently as October 1993, we reported to the council the fact that EJ had once again been 'bound over to keep the peace', this time following persistent harassment of a Scottish family on Fowler Road. The police again intervened urging the Scottish family not to pursue charges.

Over a number of years, therefore, NMP has consistently catalogued attacks carried out by the J family and demanded action from the

council. Yet it was only in December 1993 that a council officer first acknowledged that 'there is a history of alleged involvement in racial harassment, regarding the J family, any evidence involves the teenage daughter'. The view of the council remains that the 'best prospects of action are dependent upon the outcome of criminal proceedings pending against the daughter'. These are precisely the proceedings in which the police urged the victims to consent to a bindover.

As far as NMP's demand for an eviction is concerned, the officer states that 'historically this course of action is unsuccessful'. The only solution to the problem they offer is to liaise with the police. It seems clear, therefore, that the families are destined to suffer many more years of harassment at the hands of the J family.

This case illustrates precisely the problems many victims of harassment suffer in the face of the indifference and in some instances the outright hostility of the council and the police. The J family will continue to harass, attack and intimidate their neighbours because no effective action has ever been taken against them. In this context, the council's soothing platitudes about 'action against racists' or 'stamping out racial harassment' is no more than hypocritical nonsense.

Furthermore, this case also exposes the futility of most of the council's race structures which are supposed to be there in order to stop such situations arising. Rather than supporting the community and providing practical assistance to the victims of harassment, many race officers seem either preoccupied with internal council politics or, alternatively, are cowed into silence. Action is necessary: the legal department must be confronted, its practises fundamentally changed and its priorities brought into line with those of the community. Racists who are responsible for the continuous harassment of black families in their area must have action taken against them immediately if confidence in the council is to be restored.

Critique of the CPS

Over the past few years, NMP has consistently criticised the CPS for its conduct of racial

harassment cases, both in terms of its formal policy as well as its practical application. Our initial critique of the CPS was set out in the 1987 Annual Report, which was written at the time of the formation of the CPS.

Our concerns in relation to the CPS revolve around three main issues:

■ **Failure to take cases of racial harassment seriously and accept a racial motive.** Even when outside intervention urging that the racial motive to an attack should be acknowledged is accepted by the CPS, there appears to be a failure to argue this in the courts with any conviction. Prosecutors often describe racist attacks and the attempts by victims to defend themselves as 'playground squabbles', or 'neighbourhood disputes', or more commonly as 'six of one and half a dozen of the other'.

An example of this playing down of the racial motive and of incredible CPS incompetence is provided by the case of the Pirt brothers, responsible for the attack on Mr S. As we reported in 1991/92, the S family endured longterm racial harassment which include bricks thrown through a window of their home. The S family said the perpetrators were two white men who lived next door but one.

On 4 March 1992, Mr S's young children were playing in the garden when two men, accompanied by two friends, made taunts and threw beer cans at the children. When Mr S ran into the garden, before he could even speak, one of the men had sprayed ammonia into his eyes. The other man then proceeded to beat him senseless. Mr S spent a week in hospital recovering. His sight in one eye had been irreparably damaged.

Following NMP's intervention the S family were moved for their own safety into bed and breakfast accommodation where the six of them remained for ten weeks cramped into two small rooms. NORIS, having been informed of the case by NMP, arrested Mr S's two neighbours and charged them with GBH.

A few weeks after the attack, the police raided the premises of the Pirt brothers, arresting them for grievous bodily harm and other of-

fences. During the raid, the police confiscated a bottle of industrial ammonia which had been hidden under the floor-boards in the kitchen.

As a consequence of CPS incompetence, three juries were dismissed before the case was even tried. Finally in August 1993, volunteers from NMP were in court to see the alleged instigator of the attack, Trevor Pirt, acquitted, and Kevin Pirt, who has an extensive criminal record, acquitted of the charge of administering noxious substances which caused grievous bodily harm but convicted of actual bodily harm. The CPS had had fifteen months in which to prepare the case. In this period, they had indicated an acceptance of the racial dimension of the case, but the failure to argue this effectively in court was very much in keeping with the whole way in which the CPS had handled all aspects of the case. Interestingly enough, even Judge Stable was moved to criticise the conduct of the CPS in this case.

In response to a complaint from NMP, the CPS stated that 'full medical evidence of the injuries in this case was never produced' by the police because 'sufficient pressure was not brought to bear on police to either obtain the evidence or present full information as to why it was not available'. They went on to acknowledge a number of other difficulties in the preparation of the case and that 'the course of the trial does little credit to the process of criminal justice'. Furthermore, they concluded that lessons must be learnt from this to prevent such matters arising again. Unfortunately, in NMP's experience, lessons are not being learnt. This becomes particularly evident when the treatment of racial harassment cases is contrasted to the CPS's eagerness to prosecute victims of racial harassment who have defended themselves. And this constitutes our second major criticism of the CPS.

■ **The CPS's conduct in relation to the prosecution of victims of racial violence who themselves have been arrested and charged.** Over the years, the CPS has appeared unduly eager to proceed with prosecutions of racial harassment victims. Many examples of such prosecutions have been documented both in this Annual Report and in past Annual Re-

ports. Notable examples include:

- Mr Sahota (see chapter 4)
- Mr Kalaam (see chapter 4)
- Mr Altaf (see chapter 5, 1990 Annual Report)
- Mr Govindan (see chapter 6, 1990 Annual Report)
- Mr Calvert (see chapter 6, 1991/92 Annual Report)
- Mrs S (see chapter 5, 1992/93 Annual Report)

CPS complicity with racial harassment remains an issue of great concern to the black community.

■ **The general failure of the CPS to consult victims of attacks.** There are many examples of the CPS ignoring the victims' stated wishes in relation to the conduct of a case. In many instances, the victims are not even spoken to by the CPS prior to trial. This failure to consult also relates to the charges preferred against the

Judge is furious over spray case

A JUDGE has criticised the Crown Prosecution Service's handling of a case involving an attack on an Asian man. Snaresbrook Crown Court heard that chef Pritpal Singh, 36, was sprayed with a corrosive fluid in Howards Road, Plaistow, on March 4 last year. He was then struck as he reeled in pain, it was claimed. His face was severely burned, and his right eye was damaged. Mr Singh's sight was probably saved by Plaistow Pc Alan Moore, who washed the injured man's eyes immediately after the incident. Three men were allegedly involved in the attack, but only two came to trial. The jury convicted Howards Road resident Kevin Pirt, 25, of assault causing actual bodily harm. But they cleared him of the more serious charge of applying a corrosive fluid with intent to cause grievous bodily harm. His brother Trevor Pirt, 22, also of Howards Road, was acquitted of assault. Both denied involvement in the attack, and blamed the other man — not named in court — for spraying Mr Singh. Charges against the third man were dropped during an earlier hearing at Newham Magistrates' Court, when the Crown Prosecution Service decided to offer no evidence against him. Snaresbrook, Judge Owen Stable said: "That was a very injudicious decision. It left the case wide open. I am going to make a formal complaint about the way the CPS have handled the case. As far as I am concerned, they threw it away." Kevin Pirt was remanded in custody until August 27, when he will be sentenced.

Newham Recorder - 18 August 1993

perpetrators. Take the case of the C family in Forest Gate harassed by Paul Sawyer Brown.

In July 1993, Sawyer Brown appeared in court for an attack on the C family. When Mr and Mrs C arrived at court to give testimony, the y were informed by a police officer that the charges against Sawyer Brown had been reduced from threatening behaviour to disorderly conduct, thus ensuring that no custodial

sentence could be imposed. The prosecutor then approached the family and asked them whether they would be content should the CPS support an application for the two defendants to be bound over. The C family were so disgusted by the reduction of the charges that they did not bother objecting. Subsequently, Sawyer Brown was bound over.

In a letter to NMP after the trial, the CPS addressed the reasons why the prosecutor had refused to answer inquiries as to why the charges had been reduced. The CPS said that without 'wishing to be discourteous', the prosecutor had 'felt that that was not the right time or place to be explaining the reasoning behind the decision'. In a sense, this is perfectly true. The CPS should have discussed the charging of Sawyer-Brown with the victims well before the day of the trial, but of course this did not happen. In addition, the CPS in its letter went on to say that the prosecutor believed relations between the defendants and the C family had in any event approached what could be described as normal. Furthermore, he had gained the definite impression (via the interpreter) that the family were more than content with the course of action proposed and had there been any doubt about this he would have proceeded to trial, 'bearing in mind the sensitivity of the case'. However, what the CPS had not taken into account is the fact that victims are unwilling to express 'doubts' when it means going through the stress of a trial involving charges which bear absolutely no relation to the suffering they have experienced.

The case of Panchadcharam Sahitharan, who was murdered in a racist attack in Manor Park at the end of December 1991, and the subsequent trial of Gary Hoskin for his murder, is also revealing of the CPS's attitude. Here, the CPS failed to keep in contact with the family, and to prepare the case against Hoskin properly. Indeed, the charges against another man arrested were dropped at the committal stage, with the CPS conceding there was no case against him and feebly acquiescing to the defence. NMP's critique of the CPS's handling of this case is detailed in chapter 9 of the 1991/92 Annual Report.

Briefly, NMP's recommendations are as follows:

1) In any case where the victims specify a racial motive the CPS must, in their instructions to prosecution barristers, specify that the attack was racial. The prosecution case should be opened on that basis, making it abundantly clear to the jury, therefore, that this was a case of racial violence.

2) In light of the widespread evidence of racism within the police force, the CPS should treat with suspicion the arrest of any black person who appears to have been the victim of a racist attack and subsequently faces charges arising from actions carried out in self-defence.

3) It is necessary to initiate some form of formal procedure to investigate the reasons why some cases are so shamefully mishandled. Often the police blame the CPS or vice versa. Ironically, many competent defence solicitors are more successful than the CPS at gaining information from the police.

4) It is important that CPS solicitors keep in regular touch with victims and their representatives throughout the preparation of the case rather than as often happens ignoring their wishes or refusing to even meet with them.

5) It is crucial that the CPS formally acknowledges the severity of racial violence and accepts that such attacks cause particular concern throughout the community.

Racial Harassment Bill

1993 has seen a massive increase in interest not just in racial violence but in the possibility of legislation to remedy the situation. From all quarters, politicians have attempted to ride the anti-racist bandwagon, and there have been numerous calls from politicians and 'national anti racist groups', who have little conception of the situation on the ground, for such legislation. Indeed, the one thing those calling for legislation have in common is an ignorance of the problems faced by grassroots organisations in tackling racial harassment.

The rising tide of racist attacks in this country does indeed demand action now - but what is not needed are quick fixes solutions proposed by politicians who want to be seen to be doing something. Many 'experts on race' argue that, with the situation becoming so desperate, legislation in parliament is the only way that the racist tide can be turned. We, as community organisations working day-to-day in support of black people attacked by racists, take the view that a Racial Harassment Bill is unnecessary and indeed that campaigning for it is a diversion. We do so for the following reasons:

■ Firstly, we believe that under current legislation, in particular the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the Public Order Act, there is ample provision for the police to arrest and prosecute perpetrators of racial harassment and intimidation. The problem is that the police do not use the powers that they already have. Time and time again, our experience has been that the police choose to ignore the racial dimension in harassment cases, categorising incidents instead as 'neighbourhood disputes', or arresting the victims rather than the racists. This is linked to the fact that, across the country, harassment perpetrated by the police is one of the most pressing problems facing black communities. Nothing in all the legislation proposed does anything to address this problem.

■ Secondly, we believe that the Racial Harassment Bill lets the police off the hook. What it would inevitably result in is the creation of more specialist squads to which all race cases will be referred. For example, in Newham, we have the Newham Organised Racial Incidents Squad (NORIS) which was set up supposedly to deal with the large number of racial harassment cases in the borough, but in reality, is little more than a sophisticated public relations exercise. The everyday experience in Newham is that when cases are accepted as 'racial', they are passed on to NORIS and are largely ignored by officers on the streets, which is little comfort to a family attacked every night who have to wait hours for the police to help them. For this reason alone, we would argue against ghettoising racist attacks into high profile squads.

■ Thirdly, as our critique of the CPS outlined above indicates, confidence in the CPS's ability to prosecute racial harassment cases is now extremely low. In case after case, the CPS has been criticised for its lacklustre performance, its arrogant attitude in relation to campaigns launched by families, and its frequent refusal to put forward the racial motive.

■ Finally, we believe that a strategy centred solely on parliament ignores the history of grassroots anti-racist struggles. The experience of the 1980s must surely show us that institutional anti-racism can never be a substitute for black people organising themselves to fight racist violence. While well-intentioned councils were organising conferences on 'how bad racism is', grassroots black community groups were doing the practical work at the cutting edge of the anti-racist struggle: supporting our people under attack, organising campaigns, putting pressure on the police to arrest racists. The rising level of racial harassment in this country shows that the paternalistic politics of anti-racism from above has failed.

Our experience, as a community, of police harassment shows that no matter how worthy legislation on racial harassment is, we cannot depend on the police to defend us and put an end to racist attacks. Ultimately, we can only force change through our own actions, with the support and assistance of the wider anti-racist movement.

Police Harassment

In 1993, NMP dealt with 175 cases of police harassment. Below, we document this continuing violence and malpractice unleashed by the police against the black community. In particular, we highlight notable trends and cases and the often tragic effects of oppressive policing on the lives of black people trying to go about their daily business.

Harassment of black women

In last year's Annual Report, we highlighted the case of Gill Smith, a young black woman who was viciously attacked and criminalised by the police, and the subsequent campaign launched by NMP to get the charges dropped. The Justice for Gill Smith Campaign was successful, and the case against Gill was dismissed. Gill is in the process of suing the police for damages.

Below we report on the increasing violence that black women have suffered at the hands of the police. Two important points are painfully illustrated by the cases discussed:

1. It is not only black men who fall foul of racist

policing.
2. Female officers are usually as brutal as their male colleagues, thus belying the argument that an increase in the number of black or female officers will reduce the level of police harassment.

■ On 18 August 1993, YB's 11-year-old child had a playground dispute with a white child who later called her mother. Both parents had a heated argument which resulted in the police being called by the white woman who alleged that YB had threatened her. YB was taken to the police station and released on bail, pending further investigation. At the time, she was five months pregnant!

The next day, officers arrived at her flat and asked her to accompany them to the police station. YB explained that she needed to wait for her sister who had gone downstairs to come back up and baby-sit her two children. But the officers from Leyton police station would not listen and became abusive, one of them stating that 'this fucking bitch is taking too much time.' YB was then set upon by the officers. Her younger child was screaming as he watched his pregnant mother being dragged out of the house.

YB began to scream to get the attention of other

Police Harassment Statistics

Breakdown in terms of manner of referral				Breakdown in terms of police station			
Direct	110	West Ham	9	Plaistow	47		
Emergency Service	38	Forest Gate	36	East Ham	3		
Via other agencies	27	Outside Newham	51	Unidentified	29		
Breakdown in terms of gender and age				Breakdown in terms of area			
Male	81	Female	54	E6 13			
Juvenile/Adolescent	40			E7 33			
Breakdown in terms of nature of harassment				E12 19			
Assault	25			E13 16			
Stop & Search/Traffic	45			E15 12			
Raids	13			E16 34			
Immigration	10			Outside Newham	48		
Verbal Abuse	43						
Other	39						

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residents. When her neighbours attempted to intervene, pleading with the officers to treat her carefully because of her condition, they were threatened with arrest for obstruction if they did not clear off. YB was dragged virtually naked along the corridor into a smelly lift. Because her legs were held apart by the officers, her leggings had rolled down. Her t-shirt was torn and her whole body was exposed. The sight of her swollen and uncovered stomach compelled even more people to plead with the officers - this too proved in vain.

YB appealed to a woman police officer for help, as one woman to another, but got the shock of her life when the WPC told her to 'shut up, you pathetic piece of shit.' When she asked the officers what she had done to deserve such treatment, she was told 'you bastards think you can go round hitting white people and get away with it.'

In the police van, YB was subjected to even more racial slurs. One of the officers put a leg over her stomach, saying 'one less of the bastards.' The WPC informed her male colleagues that 'when I touch them, they make me feel dirty.' At Leyton police station, YB was charged and kept in custody overnight, where she was unable to sleep.

During the night, a lay visitor doing her rounds was so shocked at the state in which she found YB that she demanded that YB be released as she was in no condition to be detained. Her efforts were in vain. After appearing in court the next morning, YB was rushed to the maternity unit of Whipps Cross hospital, where she was admitted for severe abdominal pain and put under observation for a week in order to enable doctors to monitor the foetus. According to YB, 'they could have killed my baby and wouldn't have cared less.'

■ NH was also pregnant when she was severely beaten by police officers on Cann Hall Road, E11. The police had set up a cordon in the area, and NH was concerned as she thought that one of her friends might be involved. She asked the police inspector who was in charge if she could go through to check whether it was her friend who was involved. He gave his permission but as NH proceeded, she was grabbed by two officers who forcefully pushed her out of the way.

NH tried to explain to them that she had been given permission by the inspector. She was again forcefully pushed out of the way. This

time, she lost her balance and clung onto the officer's shirt to prevent her from falling over. Realising that the situation was rapidly getting out of hand, she told the officers that she was pregnant and asked them to be careful how they treated her. Her pleas fell on deaf ears, and she was dragged along the floor by her legs to a police van. Her hands were twisted behind her back as one officer knelt her in the back, saying he hoped her baby was dead. NH was handcuffed, thrown into the van and taken to Leyton police station where she was charged with assaulting a police officer, obstructing a police officer and criminal damage to a police uniform.

NMP is alarmed at the increase in police attacks on pregnant black women. We also note that in both the two cases mentioned above, the officers were from Leyton police station. NMP is closely monitoring the activities of officers from this station in light of the callous attacks on YB and NH.

■ JB is a refugee who lives with her 13-year-old son RB on an estate in Bow. For the past three years, RB has been continuously racially harassed by local white children. Due to police indifference, she decided to keep her son indoors as much as possible so as to avoid the racists. Indeed, on one occasion, the police had the nerve to advise her that 'if they (the perpetrators) knock on your door again, don't open it and don't answer them.'

The attacks became worse, and local white youths began waiting on the staircase for RB. On 18 December 1993, having waited in vain for RB to appear, the gang of youths moved from their usual waiting area on the stairs to RB's front door, and whilst calling out for RB to come out and fight, they kicked and banged on the door. JB asked her son to ignore the taunts.

When one of the youths poured water through the letter box, RB reacted by throwing water at one of the youths - she promptly went to get her mother. The mother banged on JB's door, telling her to come out. When JB came out, she was accused of throwing water on the girl and was slapped by the girl's mother. JB reacted by pushing the woman who shouted to her husband to call the police. Both families were told by the police to keep away from each other. There were no further incidents as JB kept her son indoors throughout the Christmas period.

On 28 December 1993, police officers from

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Limehouse police station arrived at JB's flat and arrested her for allegedly throwing water on the girl and beating up the mother who they claimed was now seriously ill. JB protested that she, in fact, was the victim and not vice versa. On the way out, one officer picked up a stick from under the staircase and said it was evidence of the weapon used in the assault.

At the police station, JB asked that her solicitor be contacted but was told that this was impossible as it was a public holiday. She then asked for her son to be contacted but was threatened that if she did not behave, he would be taken into care. She was taken to a room in order to be strip-searched by a WPC and told to take off her clothes. When JB asked the WPC why she was wearing gloves, the WPC replied 'in case of AIDS.'

Because of her continuous questions as to the whereabouts of her son, the WPC became irritated and warned her that 'you won't see your child again, we are taking him into care.' When she protested, she was surrounded by a number of officers who assisted the WPC in dragging JB to a cell with her blouse over her head. The officers informed her that she was being 'difficult' and that they had their own ways of dealing with difficult people.

In the cell, JB, who suffers from high blood pressure, began to gasp for air. She staggered to the cell door to call for help but was told to 'stop pretending.' By this time, she could not speak, and the officer realised that something was wrong. He ran to get other officers - when they returned, JB was lying on the cell floor. They began to ask her whether she had had a heart attack before, whether she had a mental problem or whether she was on drugs. The officers panicked when they noticed that her condition was deteriorating and eventually called an ambulance. According to JB, 'I felt as if they were killing me, but I was even more scared that they would take my son away into care.' JB was never charged with any offence.

Putting black children in care at the slightest excuse and on the basis of fabricated allegations is one of the many ways that statutory agencies collude with each other in destroying black families. NMP will be assisting JB in her determined effort to seek redress.

Criminalisation of black children

The criminalisation of black children is a

standing issue of concern within the black community. In the past year, NMP has dealt with numerous cases of black children being victimised and criminalised by the police to such an extent that the children are left terrified of the police and deeply distrustful of the system as a whole.

■ CL is a 13-year-old who lives with his mother on the Windsor Park Estate in Beckton. On 14 June 1993, CL had a dispute with his mother who called the police and informed them that there was a 'berserk male' in the house. No attempt was made by the police to ascertain full details of the situation. Within minutes, police vans and cars had swamped the area with battle-ready shield-carrying officers from the Territorial Support Group (TSG). There were about 30 police officers present on the premises and like any other child, CL was petrified at the sight of so many police vehicles and officers. According to him, 'I looked outside and saw loads and loads of police cars and vans and officers with shields who looked as if they were armed. I was really frightened. I was running around my bedroom and did not know what to do. I heard the police coming up the stairs and I barricaded myself in the bedroom. I could still hear the sirens and the armed police and at the end I was trying to get up to the loft away from them. I thought that they were going to take me away. I had never been in trouble before and I was really frightened. They were coming in and they were really big men. I was up in the loft frightened and I could hear loud crashes.'

The loud crashes were of the police breaking down CL's bedroom door. The police then dragged CL out of the loft. He was hit in the face and on the head with a truncheon whilst being kicked on the ground by officers who were shouting racist abuse. In the course of their attack on CL, officers damaged his bed and wrecked his bedroom. The same iron bar used to break down his bedroom door was used to hit his legs.

On the way to Plaistow police station, CL was called a 'black nigger' and told 'you will be dead by the time you are 20.' At the station, an officer warned him: 'If I ever catch you in here again, I will tear your balls off' whilst another officer stated: 'If you were three years older, you would be in a carrier.' CL was then charged with assault and criminal damage.

NMP was contacted by the Newham Consortium for Youth who provided bail support for CL.

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

We wrote to the Chief Superintendent at Plaistow police station to protest about the brutalisation of CL by his officers and express our disgust at the criminalisation of a child who had himself been a victim of harassment by the police. We demanded that all charges be dropped and that the officers in question be held accountable for the violent force used on CL that night. The CPS were also approached and requested to drop the charges against CL. In their usual reactionary manner, the CPS refused to drop the charges because according to the Senior Crown Prosecutor, 'Bearing in mind the circumstance and nature of the offences, I take the view that it is in the public interest to proceed.'

We are at pains to understand how it could possibly be in the public interest to prosecute a juvenile like CL. Clearly, the time and expense incurred in prosecuting CL would have been put to better use if police officers guilty of acting outside their authority and criminalising innocent people were brought to justice - sadly, a most unlikely scenario.

In a combined effort by Newham Consortium for Youth, CL's solicitor and NMP, pressure was brought to bear on the CPS. We are happy to report that on 6 October 1993, all charges against CL were withdrawn. At the moment, CL is considering whether to pursue civil action against the police. NMP will be assisting him in any way we can.

Brampton Manor Students Under Attack

Brampton Manor School, E6 - Thursday 4 March 1993:

School had just finished for the day. Most of the children were on their way home when a minor scuffle broke out between two black students which was immediately broken up by fellow students. All of a sudden, a police car arrived and began to question the two pupils. The others informed the police that there was no problem and that they were all on their way home. One of the officers began to threaten the children whilst another officer called for back-up assistance.

Within minutes, there were about 20-30 officers on the streets. The officers were aggressive and offensive to say the least - they began to

physically assault some of the pupils and racially abuse others. What happened on the day is best told by the children themselves, all of whom were between 12 & 14-years-old at the time.

'I was stopping one boy getting provoked by a police-woman who was making sarcastic racial remarks and as I turned I saw one black boy being violently pushed into a police van. The black boy's brother wanted to know why his brother was being arrested but the policeman also arrested the boy's brother.'

'Once I saw the vans, I knew someone had to get pulled up and I was right. I saw my cousin being harassed by a policeman and when I tried to calm things down, the policeman started on me as well.'

'Basically the police were harassing us and sizing themselves up to youths, being abusive, patronizing, racist and sarcastic. They were dragging up the youths and pulling and pushing them about.'

'They tried to push me into the van but I refused, saying I didn't do anything. He grabbed my collar and tried to throw me into the van but I still wouldn't go in. He turned me round so I was facing the side of the van and rammed my head against it. He threw me inside the doors. I couldn't resist as I felt dizzy and I was in pain. I was on the floor of the van and the policeman was shouting "get up" but I couldn't as I felt so dizzy. When I didn't get up, he stood on my left shin with one foot still shouting "get up" while applying more and more pressure. I told him, "I'll do anything you want, just leave me alone."'

'I was talking to R, the owner of the off-license telling him what was going on with the school children and the police when someone shouted "your brother's getting nicked." I turned around to see my brother being forced into the police van. He wouldn't go in so the policeman grabbed his head and knocked it on the outside of the police van and threw him in. He was lying down on the floor of the van, and I saw the policeman stomp on my brother's leg. So I ran round to the door of the van as I was really distressed and frightened for my brother. I shouted at the officer to leave my brother alone. A policeman grabbed me and threw me into the van. I was going peacefully because all I wanted was to be with my brother.'

'There was no need for all these policemen and women. They were sarcastic, rude and fed us with verbal abuse. Some policemen were being racist.'

'It was no way near called for to have 20-30 policemen and women there for a situation of two friends fighting. The policemen didn't need to get involved for it was already sorted out before they came.'

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

'They wouldn't answer a simple question we asked, which was - why have you got so many police vans and cars for two school children?'

'From the looks of the so-called back-up, it seems the whole police squad were there. I was thinking it couldn't take all of them just to sort out a little fight with two kids.'

'The police are aggressive, ignorant and arrogant. Because they are in authority, they think they have the right to do anything. I think this was out of order seeing as we are juveniles.'

On the way to Plaistow police station, the following conversation took place between the officers and the children:

Officer 1 to MH: *'What do you want to be when you grow up? Malcolm X or Something?'*

MH: *'Yes, hopefully.'*

Officer 1: *'Don't be so fucking stupid, Malcolm X was a thief and so are you.'*

Officer 2 to AH: *'Do you think you are Malcolm X?'*

AH: *'Yeah.'*

Officer 2: *'You fucking kids don't know what you're doing and this is the future of England.'*

After taking statements from the Brampton Manor pupils, NMP made a formal complaint to the Chief Superintendent at West Ham police station about the incident, demanding the immediate suspension of the officers involved and the instigation of disciplinary proceedings against them and an inquiry into the arrests. NMP also demanded that a letter of apology be sent to the children involved and that the police refrain from criminalising young people in order to justify their actions. We successfully ensured that all charges against the three children who were charged were dropped. They now intend suing the police for damages.

The case of Brampton Manor clearly illustrates the endemic racism prevalent amongst Newham's police officers. It is indeed a sorry state of affairs when twelve police vehicles, some containing officers from the Territorial

Support Group (TSG), are called to deal with school children. The officers knew perfectly well that the children did not constitute a public order threat - yet they treated them like hooligans. The violent, racist and abusive behaviour of the officers was nothing less than cowardly. Such thugs should be thrown out of the police force - it is more likely, however, that they will be promoted.

Home raids

Police raids on the homes of black people occur with ever-increasing frequency and on the flimsiest of excuses. Invariably, the police leave damage and destruction behind them.

■ AG is a single father of twins aged 11. Early one morning in June 1993, he was awakened by the sound of his front door being kicked down by police officers who had come to search his home.

Finding nothing, the officers began to interrogate AG's 11-year-old twins in their father's absence. They later took AG to Forest Gate police station, callously leaving the twins behind uncared for. Unknown to AG, the police had seized a letter from his home with his sister's address on it. They immediately headed for her home in Stratford.

AG's sister BG returned home from night duty to find that the police had gained entry to her flat. There were two police vans and several more police cars outside and a number of officers inside the flat. On entering her home, she identified herself and asked what police officers were doing there. She was told that her address had been found at her brother's home and that they had come to look for evidence in connection with charges to be brought against her brother. BG could not believe her ears when she was told that the only reason that the police had raided her home was because they had found her address at her brother's home and not because they had any evidence linking her to any criminal offence. BG also found that her front door had been smashed and her room lock damaged. Her home was turned upside down with male officers making sexual jokes and innuendoes as they painstakingly went through her underwear searching for 'evidence'.

BG immediately got in touch with NMP to report

this harassment. We protested to the Chief Superintendent at Forest Gate police station, condemning the behaviour of his officers as despicable. We demanded an explanation for the raid on BG's home and the immediate payment of compensation for the damage done to BG's door and lock.

On 8 September 1993, we received a letter from the Community Liaison Officer at West Ham police station, accepting responsibility for the damage caused by his officers and agreeing to cover the cost of repairing the damaged items.

■ On 20 October 1993, a group of about 20 plain-clothes police officers surrounded the home of the K family in Walthamstow. They began to bang on the front door and succeeded in breaking and entering. Twelve-year-old NK came to find out what the commotion was about and thrown against the wall, held by the throat and asked to 'spit out the fucking drugs.'

As NK began to faint, three other officers ran upstairs and grabbed Mrs K and 14-year-old IK who was thrown violently against the wall, resulting in a severe asthma attack. Seeing her son gasping for air, Mrs K urged the officers to give him his inhaler - they ignored her. With the assistance of a police dog, they rampaged through the family's belongings, even searching under the floor boards.

To the horror of the K family and despite their protests, the police dog was made to sniff through their personal belongings, including the family's Koran (which according to Islamic custom, no animal may touch). The officers eventually left without offering any apology for their actions or informing the K family what exactly they had been looking for and why. Over the next few days, IK's condition got worse, and he had to be taken to hospital.

The K family rang NMP's emergency service to report the harassment. We complained on behalf of the K family to Inspector Link at Leyton police station, expressing our outrage at the police's treatment of this innocent family. We urged him to investigate the matter and notify us of what action, if any, he intended to take against the officers responsible. We are yet to receive a reply.

We also contacted the K family's MP and their local councillors and asked them to lend support to the Ks in their search for redress. One of the councillors, Cllr Amarjit Devgun of the London

Borough of Waltham Forest, wrote to Chief Superintendent Nettleship at Leyton police station, supporting NMP's calls for an investigation into the matter. He urged the police to examine its method of approach when dealing with such matters and suggested that when officers are undertaking such tasks, community relations should be at the forefront of their considerations.

NMP are appalled at the bull-in-a-china-shop modus operandi of police officers carrying out raids on the homes of black people. We note the refusal of senior officers to examine our complaints thoroughly and their often careless and arrogant attitude towards the black community.

Policing and racist immigration laws

The problem of police officers enforcing racist immigration laws, such as the recently-enacted Asylum & Immigration Appeals Act, impacts daily on the lives of black people and refugees through the country. The recent murders of Joy Gardner and Zairean refugee Omasase Lumumba by the immigration police and the prison authorities respectively are chilling reminders of things to come. NMP strongly supports the demands of the black community for public enquiries into both murders and the prosecution of the guilty officers. Meanwhile, we wonder where they will strike next?

It is important to place events in Britain within a wider context. For there are waves of deportations currently sweeping across all the countries of what has come to be known as 'Fortress Europe.' There is considerable evidence that the police and the immigration authorities across Europe are working closely together, bent on monitoring the black community down to the last person. The case of OM below is a typical example.

■ It was around 10 am on Sunday 5 September 1993. OM, a Nigerian, was preparing to go to church when he heard the downstairs door of his shared apartment being pounded on. He opened the door and was confronted by two uniformed police officers from Forest Gate police station and a woman immigration officer. The officers demanded to see a Mr B who they

had come to question regarding his immigration status.

OM informed the officers that he did not know this person whereupon they proceeded, without explanation, to question him about his own immigration status. He was asked to produce identification; however, when he presented his driving licence, he was told that this was insufficient proof. He explained that his passport was with the Nigerian High Commission for renewal and produced a receipt to that effect. But the officers insisted that this, too, was insufficient proof. OM was then taken to Forest Gate police station and detained in custody.

OM continued to protest his innocence, reminding the officers that they had not come to look for him in the first place. Nevertheless, he was kept in custody for over four hours, during which he was racially insulted and locked in a cell. His cousin eventually attended the station, bringing with him confirmation of OM's status, namely that he has indefinite leave to remain in the UK and a valid work permit. OM was then released without an apology and with a further insult by the immigration officer, who promised that she would continue to investigate OM's status - clearly implying that she believed that he was lying.

OM lodged a complaint at NMP about his unwarranted harassment and arrest. In a letter to Superintendent Solman at Forest Gate police station, we demanded an immediate explanation for the conduct of the two police officers. We demanded to know: a) why was OM taken into custody? b) why was his explanation of his immigration status not accepted? c) was it the usual practice for police officers to arrest any black person at a property if the individual being sought was not present? (d) what steps did he intend to take in order to prevent a repetition of this humiliating episode?

NMP have also lodged a formal complaint with the Immigration Service Complaints Section at Lunar House in Croydon about the behaviour of the immigration officer and have requested legal advice from the CRE as OM is determined to pursue the matter.

Harassment on the streets

■ On 12 April 1993, ZG was arrested on the landing of Roland Court, E16. He was charged with disorderly conduct, and his old friend Ms L was charged with obstruction.



Photo: NMP

Mr ZG after his arrest and beating by

Ms L had asked ZG to 'talk to' her ten-year-old son in his capacity as a well-respected local figure. In the course of talking to him, Ms L's son J began crying and shouting. Within minutes of J crying, however, police officers arrived at the scene in a number of cars and vans. The officers came up the stairs and via the lift, and as they approached ZG, J became silent. Without warning, the officers grabbed ZG's arm, twisting it violently behind his back.

On hearing the commotion outside her flat, Ms L rushed out to see her friend pinned against a wall by two officers who were dragging him to the ground. When she attempted to intercede, explaining her relationship to J and ZG, an officer swore at her. Ms L insisted that ZG was a friend but she too was arrested and taken downstairs to a waiting van.

The most serious aspect of this incident, however, was ZG's treatment at the hands of police officers. ZG was thrown into the lift under a shower of blows, repeatedly racially abused and dragged to a nearby police van. Inside the van, he was kicked and punched and had his handcuffs tightened to such an extent that they bit into his flesh, causing deep cuts.

ZG and Ms L were conveyed to Plaistow police station. At the station, ZG repeatedly requested a doctor as did Ms L on his behalf - no doctor ever arrived. ZG was charged and despite his protestations was effectively forced out of the police station.

Within minutes of arriving back at Ms L's flat,

ZG collapsed and was transported by ambulance to Newham General Hospital. He remained in hospital for several days, as a result of head and neck injuries, and had to wear a neck-brace on being released. He has since returned to hospital for additional treatment.

At Newham Magistrates Court, ZG was convicted of assaulting a police officer while Ms L was acquitted. ZG was, however, acquitted on appeal at Snaresbrook Crown Court. Sadly, this was not the end of his nightmare. As a result of being assaulted by the police, ZG is exhibiting symptoms of 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder' and is undergoing treatment.

This case clearly highlights how an ordinary member of the community can end up living in virtual terror of the police, particularly if he or she has been 'marked down' by officers on the beat.

Police complaints

■ In February 1993, NH was mugged in Queen's Market on Green Street, E7. She reported the incident to the crime desk at Plaistow police station, where she gave a statement which included her personal details. Nine days later, the incident was reported in the local newspaper, the Newham Recorder, complete with explicit personal details, including NH's name, age, occupation and address. This information had only been given to the crime desk at Plaistow police station - like NH, we could only conclude that the Newham Recorder had obtained the information from Plaistow police station.

NH was shocked that the police had breached confidentiality by putting her, the victim, at the mercy of her attacker. The article caused severe embarrassment and distress to NH and her family, leaving them feeling vulnerable and exposed as NH's attacker could now easily trace them to their family home. Indeed, having once been burgled and threatened with a knife, NH's old mother was petrified that the attacker might strike again.

NMP complained to the police, highlighting the obvious distress which the unauthorised disclosure and subsequent publication had caused to NH. We demanded an immediate investigation into how details given in confidence to the police were made available to Newham Recorder.

Whereas we recognise that it is sometimes necessary to distribute a description of the attacker, we do not see the justification for including full personal details of the victim in a newspaper article.

The police notified us that the officer concerned had been 'seen and suitably advised'. This did not, however, satisfy the issues we raised, namely: a) how did the Newham Recorder obtain the information in this case? b) what mechanisms does Plaistow police station have in place for passing on information to the press and why did they fail in this incident? c) what was the 'suitable advice' given to the officer? (d) would any formal action be taken against this officer? The police replied to our queries by stating that their press officer had made a 'mistake' and that they did not envisage taking any formal action against her.

Unfortunately, this was not the first time that the police had made the 'mistake' of disclosing a victim's personal details to the Newham Recorder without authorisation. In our last Annual Report, we detailed the case of Mr A, who disturbed a burglar in his home, took photographs of the burglar and himself, showing the injuries received from the attack, and handed them over to the police. Less than two weeks after the incident, Mr A was shocked to find his photograph splashed on the front page of the Newham Recorder. Like NH, Mr A's personal safety was jeopardised by the cosy relationship which exists between the Newham Recorder and the local police.

Far from accepting such slap-on-the-hand discipline by the police, NMP insists on getting serious answers to proven examples of police misconduct raised by cases such as this. It is most disturbing to find victims of crime exposed in this way by the very people who are supposed to protect them. The last thing that victims who have already suffered the indignity of being attacked need, is to have their personal details splashed on the pages of their local newspaper.

NMP lodged a formal complaint on behalf of NH. The results were predictable. The Police Complaints Authority (PCA) accepted that a mistake had been made yet concluded that an apology was enough. Needless to say, NH's

opinion on the matter was never sought. The local police apparently gave an undertaking to examine procedures for the release of information to the media. This is precisely what had been promised after Mr A's case last year.

■ On 15 September 1993, 14-year-old GH and four of his friends from Stepney Green School were walking along Durham Road, E1 when they passed two police officers on horseback. They cracked a joke amongst themselves. One of the officers, overhearing the joke, turned and asked GH what he had said. GH informed him that the conversation was private and did not concern him.

Apparently taking offence, the officer mounted the pavement with his horse and approached GH, telling him that he could not talk to the police like that. When GH protested, the officer responded by edging his horse closer as he bent down to grab GH by his tie and attempt to lift him up. At this stage, GH was standing on the pavement with his back against the wall facing an extremely aggressive officer on horseback who proceeded to subject him to a tirade of racist abuse. GH was advised not to 'fucking fuck with the police because the next fucking Paki I see, I'll batter him, now get your black shit face out of here before I break your fucking nose (sic).'

NMP was also contacted by two teachers who witnessed the incident and submitted statements to us and the police. We immediately complained on behalf of GH to Superintendent Shepherd at Lemn Street police station, demanding that action be taken against the officers concerned. Our complaint resulted in an internal inquiry conducted by the Area 2 Complaints Unit and later forwarded to the CPS. On 11 January 1994, the Principal Crown Prosecutor, having considered the matter, concluded that he was not 'satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction' and that he had, therefore, 'decided that criminal proceedings should not be instituted.'

Yet again, the fact that there was plenty of independent evidence against the police officers was side-stepped on the spurious grounds that the CPS could not guarantee a conviction. We cannot help but contrast this refusal to prosecute police officers with the considerable ease with which the CPS is prepared to prosecute innocent black people

against whom the police have fabricated allegations.

The PCA also decided to recommend no formal disciplinary charges against the officer concerned. On 18 March 1994, they stated that despite the fact that the evidence of the two teachers and one of GH's friends largely corroborated GH's version of events, there was a serious problem with the evidence. It seems that the testimony of two other witnesses (whose identities are being withheld from NMP) was sufficiently contradictory to prevent the PCA from taking action. Were it not for these two witnesses, however, the PCA claimed that 'serious consideration would have been given to formal disciplinary action against the officer.' GH's complaint was, therefore, rejected with no prospect of appeal.

■ The police complaint made by NMP which proceeded furthest was that of Mr R. On the morning of 20 May 1992, Mr R was sleeping at his home in East Ham when three plain-clothes officers attached to Islington police station came to arrest him. When Mr R asked if they had a warrant, he was told 'we don't need one pal.' Two officers went straight upstairs to Mr R's bedroom to search for evidence which, according to them, would establish that Mr R had written a threatening letter, the nature of which was not disclosed to him.

Mr R was arrested and taken to Islington police station. He was initially released on bail pending further investigation. However, he was eventually notified that no further action would be taken, it having transpired that the arresting officers did not have lawful cause to arrest him. The police did not even have the courtesy to apologise to Mr R.

NMP made a formal complaint on behalf of Mr R against the officers involved, especially one DC Collins. We demanded an immediate investigation into the incident and an explanation for the unacceptable behaviour of the officers who entered Mr R's home without a warrant and never provided Mr R with a search record.

The Area 1 Complaints Unit submitted our complaint to the CPS. In an astonishing letter dated 18 August 1993, Principal Crown Prosecutor, Robert Saunders, explained why criminal proceedings were not to be instituted against DC Collins. He conceded that DC Collins when arresting Mr R had 'acted on a minimum of

information which, had it been investigated properly beforehand, should have given him pause for thought before making the arrest' and that DC Collins had, therefore, 'committed the offence of falsely imprisoning Mr R.' Nevertheless, he went on to conclude that despite there being 'sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of a conviction', it was not in the public interest to prosecute DC Collins as 'criminal proceedings are lengthy, expensive, and stressful for all concerned' and 'not necessarily desirable.' According to Mr Saunders, 'perhaps the effect of a prosecution would be out of all proportion to the seriousness of the alleged offence, or perhaps there are good reasons for the alleged offender's conduct.'

Quite frankly, this is a remarkable confession and indicative of the fact that there is one law for black and another law for blue. Can anyone imagine the CPS refusing to prosecute a black person because proceedings are too lengthy, expensive and stressful for all concerned? NMP has no hesitation in stating that DC Collins escaped being charged with false imprisonment because he is a police officer. This is totally unacceptable. Mr R had his home broken into by three trespassers who violated his privacy, abused him, falsely imprisoned him and carted him off against his will to a police station where he was further detained and humiliated and fingerprinted.

Following an investigation by Area 1 Complaints Unit, it was decided that DC Collins would face internal disciplinary proceedings for abuse of authority, specifically oppressive conduct. The hearing took place on 12 November 1993 at Tintangel House, 18 months after Mr R's wrongful arrest. The 'prosecution' was conducted by the complaints officer, Chief Inspector Keenan. DC Collins was defended by a representative of the Police Federation. And the 'judge' was apparently a senior police officer from Area 1, the same area where DC Collins was based. There were no independent observers allowed to attend, despite repeated requests. Only serving police officers were present. The NMP worker accompanying Mr R was not even allowed to enter the room when Mr R gave evidence. At the end of the day, DC Collins was not surprisingly cleared of all charges. Mr R is currently seeking advice on a possible civil action against the police.

What a farce!

The cases outlined above clearly illustrate that the police complaints system is a complete farce. It lacks independence, accountability, credibility and competence. The majority of those who adjudicate on behalf of the PCA have no legal background and limited legal knowledge. In our experience, their decisions bear no relation to reality.

As far as the public interest is concerned, we suggest that it would be best served by sending a clear and unambiguous message to 'gung ho' police officers that unlawful, violent and racist behaviour will not be tolerated in any shape or form. Unfortunately, the PCA is inherently unable to send such a message. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the community, black and white, has no confidence in a system where police officers investigate other police officers.



Photo: Jon Walker

Colin Imbert, beaten by police on 23 March 1993. A civil action is currently being sought following a raid in 1992 by police officers from Forest Gate, reported in last year's Annual Report, which resulted in Colin's mother collapsing with a heart attack

Justice For the Dray Family

Containing the Community

In previous Annual Reports, NMP has documented policing against black people in Newham and how such policing reflects the attitudes and priorities of the police as a whole. The agenda of the police is clear: inner city communities like Newham must be contained and controlled. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that police harassment and malpractice has reached endemic levels as whole communities have been written off and stereotyped as potential threats to public order.

NMP has always strived to combat this cynical disregard for the rights of local people and demand that the views of local people are taken on board (forcibly, if necessary) by the powers that be.

In November 1992, NMP was approached by the Dray family for help following the arrest and assault of Lee and Tony Dray. Their story is unfortunately a familiar one. After months of persistent harassment, after regular formal complaints which were ignored or belittled, the two brothers were again arrested, with two others, Stephen Rozee and Chris Moore, by officers from Plaistow police station, allegedly because they had been involved in a fight outside Newham Community College - something they have always denied and for which they were never charged. During their arrest, they were assaulted, with Lee in particular receiving serious injuries to his head, and subsequently charged with affray. In addition, Lee was charged with assaulting a police officer. The Drays had sought help from a number of agencies, including Newham Council's Police Unit, without success, before NMP took up their case.

Largely due to the determination of the family and the strength of the evidence showing the innocence of the four young men, a campaign demanding an end to police harassment and justice for the Drays was formed which attracted considerable local support. What made this campaign unusual, however, was that the Drays are a white working-class family and that their campaign was supported by large numbers of both black and white people. Moreover, the fact that NMP played a central role in supporting the campaign represented a new direction for the Project. For, despite its history of opposition to all forms of police harassment, NMP works primarily with black people under attack. This campaign is, however, an important one, which may help to highlight important lessons for how black and white unity, so often talked about but seldom defined, may be realistically achieved.

The ordeal begins

At around 3pm, on Friday 13 November 1992 in Jones Road, Plaistow E13, Lee, Tony, Stephen and Chris were stopped by two officers, PC Olver and WPC Exton, who allege that Lee Dray refused to speak to them about the fight outside of the College and that they were subsequently assaulted. Their request for additional officers brought a number of police vans and cars to the scene. The four were arrested. Tony, who was 15-years-old at the time, was punched in the face and had his head slammed against a car.

On arriving at Plaistow police station, the four were kept waiting in police vans at the back of the station. It was here that Lee Dray was



Photo: Sharon Dray

Lee after the beating by Plaistow police officers

punched in the head, pulled out of the van by his ears and thrown into a second van. He was kicked and punched and his face was squashed against one of the van's benches. Lee alleges that the officer responsible for this appalling assault was PC Fortune. Photographs taken in the cells testify to the brutality of the officers involved.

To make matters worse, there was an incident the following night outside Newham Squash Club next to Newham Leisure Centre, and Newham Way, again involving PC Fortune. After one person had been asked to leave the Club by five officers who had entered the premises, his friends also decided to leave. Outside they were pushed into the adjacent park by officers who attempted to make them run across it. These officers then began punching them and a number of arrests were made. Tony Dray was amongst those arrested, and despite being a juvenile, his mother was prevented from finding out what was happening to her son by officers at the scene.

The campaign

In January 1993, Cllr James Goodman, who is Newham Council's spokesperson on policing, tabled a number of questions concerning the case to the Newham Police Community Con-

sultative Group (PCCG). Meanwhile, the Justice for the Dray Family Campaign was launched. A public meeting held on 25 February at the Keir Hardie Neighbourhood Church in Canning Town attracted over 100 people, with many local people coming forward with their own stories of harassment. At this meeting, the name of PC Fortune kept coming up, as did a pattern of police harassment of young people in the South Plaistow/Canning Town area. It was agreed that people would attend the next PCCG meeting and demand an explanation from the police and action from the council.

On 18 March, some 70 people packed the PCCG meeting at East Ham Town Hall. After a stormy meeting, and despite objections from the police, the PCCG's police complaints sub-committee agreed to move its next meeting from the Town Hall to Keir Hardie Neighbourhood Church. The Campaign immediately decided to mobilise as many people as possible to be there. On 13 April, the Church was again packed, although more subdued than the public meeting, as many people were worried about speaking publicly about their own sto-

Justice For the Dray Family Campaign
with support from Newham Monitoring Project
PO Box 273 London E7. Tel: 081-552-6151. Fax: 081-552-6284

**Beaten
by
Plaistow
Police!**

Could you or your children be next?

Public Meeting
at
KEIR HARDIE NEIGHBOURHOOD CHURCH
FIFE RD, CANNING TOWN (opposite primary school)
on
Thursday 25th February, 7.00pm
Also supported by South Canning Town Detached Youth Project
If you need transport to the meeting, contact them on 071-411-0992

Promoting the first and second meetings at Keir Hardie Church

ries of police harassment in front of senior police officers like the Community Liaison officer, Chief Inspector Ibbotson. PC Fortune was again named several times by local residents, and Chief Inspector Ibbotson's statement that PC Fortune had been transferred to East Ham police station was greeted with derision. The sub-committee agreed to call upon the PCCG to hold an inquiry into policing of young people in the Canning Town area.

NEWHAM POLICE COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE GROUP

PCCG Enquiry into police harassment of young people in the Canning Town area

Conducted on
17th and 18th June 1993
at the Youth House,
Fords Park Rd,
London E16

During May, the Campaign entered into protracted correspondence with the Crown Prosecution Service concerning their inability to bring the case to trial. The four defendants were forced to attend five hearings in all, each time finding that the CPS did not have the necessary papers to set a date for the trial. This delay resulted in Lee Dray losing his job. Finally, Newham Magistrates Court decided not to accept the continued waste of the court's time and the case was thrown out. Amazingly, the CPS decided some weeks later to re-instate the case, despite protests from the Campaign and local councillors. At this stage, over 1000 signatures had been collected demanding that the charges be dropped.

The PCCG Inquiry

In June, the PCCG held its inquiry in Canning Town, chaired by Cllr James Goodman. Some 30 young people were interviewed by the panel. Amongst the many shocking cases outlined in the inquiry's report, those in the panel below highlight the extent of police harassment in Canning Town.

The conclusions and recommendations of the report are as damning as the cases from which they are drawn. However, the Inquiry panel acknowledged the limited scale of their report and, therefore, recommended 'that the Youth

The Inquiry Report

and Community Section of Newham police invite an independent external organisation to conduct an investigation into the behaviour of police officers in the Canning Town area'.

The panel noted that:

'It is . . . likely that the experiences of the young people interviewed by the PCCG are not unique. On the contrary, as the young people themselves stressed - this is part of growing up in East London - it is "normal".'

Cases from the PCCG Inquiry

■ Boys, aged 13 and 14, are stopped by a police officer and searched, trousers being pulled down in broad daylight. They are abused and their cigarettes are taken off them.

■ Boy, aged 15, walking with a cousin, aged 19 are stopped by a police officer. They are told they were causing a disturbance. Both are searched and on finding that the 15-year-old had a £10 note on him, told that they will be arrested if they do not give the money to the officer. The boy refuses and both are taken to the station. The 19-year-old is badly beaten by the police in the cell and needs stitches to his eye and has a gash on his face. Neither are charged.

■ Group of boys - aged 14 to 16 - playing near Newham Leisure Centre are stopped by police who tell them that they will be in prison by the time they are 18.

■ Young man, aged 25, is stopped with a black friend. The police search the black friend and racially abuse him. The police threaten to 'nick him' when they next see him alone. The young man says - 'it's much worse for black people - they get picked on more'.

■ Young man, aged 24, has been stopped, searched and questioned by police at least once a week since the age of 14. He says that officers sit in cars staring at him and 'if you look at them they stop you' - 'the standard question is 'how long have you lived round here'. He says 'if you live in this area, they know you and pick on you'.

CONCERN OVER 'HARASSMENT'

WE write to express our views as councillors who attended the meeting of the Police Complaints Monitoring Sub-committee of the Police Community Consultative Group on April 13.

We share the concerns of residents who have expressed serious allegations that young people are being targeted unnecessarily by police officers

to the extent that this is being viewed as harassment.

We feel the article (Recorder, April 22) failed to highlight the depth of concern expressed by residents.

We have received a worrying number of complaints from residents concerning allegations of police misconduct. The numerous incidents

which have been drawn to our attention has made us anxious.

We are concerned that a serious rift in police community relations with the Canning Town, Custom House areas is developing, which, if not dealt with urgently and expediently, will cause irreparable damage.

We have written to Chief Supt

Brown seeking assurances that he will investigate these serious allegations, examine the conduct of his officers, and to express to them that police misconduct will not be tolerated and is unacceptable. We have also requested he meet residents. — ALEX THOMPSON and JAMES GOODMAN, Newham Council.

Newham Recorder 13 May 1993

They also recommended that the Chair of the PCCG request a meeting with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and other relevant local representatives to raise the concerns outlined in the report, with a view to 'finding positive solutions to improve relations between the police and the community'.

The panel concluded that:

'Overall we have found that (the) approach to policing in an area of very high youth unemployment and extreme urban deprivation has criminalised a whole section of young people and has led to a breakdown of Police-community relations.'

The police response

The report was discussed at the PCCG meeting in September and, predictably, the police refused to comment, claiming that they had not had enough time to examine the report's contents. They also continued to state that the report was 'anecdotal' and that where specific allegations were made, they would be investigated. They, therefore, deliberately failed to consider one of the central points of the report that young people are unwilling to complain about police misconduct because of fear of retribution. Indeed, for this very reason, both NMP and the Campaign had at no time demanded that the cases in the report should be investigated by the police. Instead, we wanted to see some recognition that there is a problem at street-level, and a commitment from senior officers that action would be taken internally.

Most of the recommendations were accepted by the members of the PCCG; however, the police's refusal to reply to the report meant that a decision to meet Commissioner Paul Condon was delayed until after the next meet-

ing of the PCCG on 11 November, when the police responded by giving a long explanation of the various sections of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act covering police powers. Chief Superintendent Brown also stated that 'such allegations do much to undermine the confidence that the public have in its police service'. However, for many residents in Canning Town, any confidence that they may have had has long been shattered by the actions of police officers on the streets, not by any report.

The trial

On 22 November, over a year after the incident in Jones Road, Lee and Tony Dray, Stephen Rozee and Chris Moore stood trial at Snaresbrook Crown Court. From the start, the evidence presented by police officers was wildly contradictory, and after hearing six days of prosecution evidence, the judge threw the case out on 30 November. The trial still left a number of unanswered questions, not least of which was why the prosecution was ever brought.

Amongst the most extraordinary evidence presented came from PC Olver, who was the officer that the four defendants had allegedly assaulted:

■ PC Olver said that he had no dealings with Chris Moore and had not even seen him at the incident. When asked if Chris had assaulted him, he denied it. Why then was Chris Moore arrested for assault?

■ PC Olver claimed that he had been given the full committal papers in order to identify the boys and make a second statement. This claim was also made by a number of other officers,

who also admitted unauthorised access to custody records. Why was PC Olver allowed to write a statement, supposedly based on 'what he remembers' in this manner? Is it common practice for officers from Plaistow to have such extensive access to case papers?

■ PC Olver claimed that, because he is fat, he was worried that he would have been unable to catch Lee Dray if Lee had run away. This was his reason for grabbing hold of Lee as soon as he got out of the police car and before he had even spoken to Lee.

■ Olver admitted that he did not check how badly injured the person assaulted at the college was and did not even know whether an arrestable offence had been committed. By what authority in law did he, therefore, grab hold of Lee Dray?

Olver's evidence was not alone in failing to stand up to cross-examination. For instance, a number of other officers claimed to have seen the assault on PC Olver. Although PC Olver claimed that the incident took place before other officers arrived at the scene. The details of how the four youths were arrested were even more confused, and there was no explanation then or since of how Lee received his injuries.

■ PC Simpson stated that, at Plaistow police station, he had taken Lee from one van into another, where he was joined by PC Fortune. PC Fortune stated that he escorted Lee out of the van. Neither officer wrote anything in their statements about Lee being covered in blood, although in court, PC Fortune said that the blood in the photographs must have come from the cuts on Lee's face. There were no cuts on Lee's face - he was bleeding from a serious injury being his ear.

The evidence of PC Fortune is central to the question of how Lee Dray was brutally injured. Another of PC Fortune's colleagues, PC Williams, was certain that Lee had no blood on his face when he left Jones Road, and yet Lee's face was covered in blood by the time he was photographed in the cells at Plaistow police station. His injuries must logically have been inflicted sometime between leaving Jones Road

and being placed in a cell at the police station.

Under cross-examination, PC Fortune claimed to have 'restrained' Lee on the grounds that he was being violent, something which is contradicted by PC Simpson, who said that Lee was quiet. The method of restraint included 'holding' Lee's head against the bench of the police van - although Lee describes this as having his head 'ground' forcefully against it. It is, therefore, perhaps unsurprising that PC Fortune admitted having his hands checked by a police surgeon because he was concerned about a 'malicious' complaint against him - particularly because in his nine years as a police officer, he has faced eight such 'malicious' complaints, all of which have been dropped. Is this medical check on officers' hands now becoming standard practice at Plaistow police station?

Following the police evidence, there was one final witness: a 'passer-by' named Matthew Haslett, who allegedly intervened to assist WPC Exton. His evidence had been described as crucial by the prosecution when requesting an adjournment to locate him. Sharon Dray, in a statement to the PCCG after the trial, said,

'His statement had puzzled me for over a year. I just couldn't work out why he was lying - the police to my mind had reasons to lie, they were accused of assault, but this witness had no reason.'

The reason became clear when Haslett, who was reluctant to give evidence, was finally persuaded to do so.

Only minutes before Haslett took the witness box, the prosecution informed the defence, with some embarrassment, that their 'crucial' witness, who the CPS had claimed had no criminal record, had in fact appeared at Newham Magistrates Court on assault charges on the morning of the incident in Jones Road, and was on his way from the court to a friend's house when he became involved. His statement, however, states that he had travelled from the Thatched House area of Leytonstone. When asked why he had lied, he said that he had told the CID officer who interviewed him that he has come from the court in Stratford.

Haslett was extremely aggressive when cross-examined; He swore at the defence barristers, claimed that PC Olver was bleeding from the nose, which the officer had earlier denied. He claimed that WPC Exton was kicked by the defendants when lying on the ground, which she had also denied. Then came the most astonishing piece of evidence of the trial: Haslett stated that he worked as a chef at Limehouse and Plaistow police stations up until five months before the incident at which he had been 'passing by'; he had been suspended because of the criminal charges against him. He stated that he had received a letter of commendation from a senior officer at Plaistow to take to his court appearance that day. Was Haslett's presence at the arrest of the four youths mere coincidence? What motive did he have for backing the police's hugely inconsistent story - had he been promised something, like his old job back?

South Newham Action on Policing

Following the inadequate response of the police at meetings of the PCCG, a meeting was held in Canning Town of those involved in the Justice for the Dray Family Campaign, and it was agreed to form a new group, South Newham Action on Policing (SNAP), to campaign for fair and equal policing in the south of the borough, regardless of age, race or the area in which people live. It was decided that the group would prioritise promoting legal rights for young people and campaigning against police harassment. The importance of the group is best summed up by Sharon Dray, the Chair of SNAP:

'It has taken a long time, nearly a year of constant lies about my sons, to learn what I have learnt in campaigning against this injustice. I have learnt that you can make people listen, you can show the police that their behaviour will not go unchallenged, and most importantly of all, I have learnt not to believe that police officers always tell the truth. I have seen that for myself. If I don't let other people know what I have found out, then after the fuss has died down, someone else's children could face what Lee and Tony have had to face, but

without the help to fight against the lies. What use will knowing what is really happening be then?'

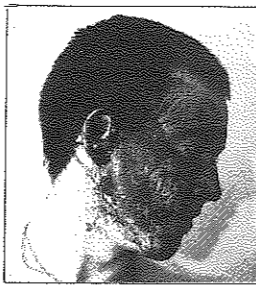
The Bootleg Newham Recorder
ALL THE NEWS THAT OTHERS REFUSE TO PRINT • Free

VICTORY!

Case against the Drays is thrown out by the court. Campaign says:

We Told You So!

On 30th November 1993, the trial at Staines-based Crown Court of Lee and Tony Dray, Stephen Rozee and Chris Moore was halted by Assa Recorder McComb because of insufficient evidence. The defendants' case has caused considerable concern locally and has resulted in an inquiry by Newham Council's Police Community Consultative Group, which found evidence of widespread police harassment of young people in the Canning Town area. The credibility of prosecution witnesses, mainly police officers from Plaistow police station, had already been thrown into doubt by the widely differing stories of the events that took place prior to and following their arrest.



Outrageous
Mr Courtney Griffiths for the defence on Monday is totally outrageous that this case was ever brought to trial, wasting huge sums of public money, on the basis of spurious evidence.

For those not familiar with the case these are the facts. On Friday 13th November 1992, the four boys were arrested in Jones Rd by police officers from Plaistow Police Station. Lee Dray was put into a police van and punched around the head by police officers. He was then pulled out of the van by his cuts and thrown into a second van, where he was kicked and punched and

Lee after the assault. This must never be allowed to happen to you or any of your children...

had the face ground against the floor of the van. Whilst Lee was being arrested, his brother Tony, who was then 15 years old, was punched in the face in what even a witness for the police describes as an unprovoked and brutal attack, and had his head slammed against a car and was also arrested. Photographs taken at Plaistow Police Station, including the one above, are testament to the brutality of officers involved in these arrests.

Contd over

The Bootleg Recorder has been produced by South Newham Action of Policing (SNAP), a new group set up following the Dray case to demand an end to police brutality, and to promote the legal rights we all have but are often not told. Please support SNAP and demand better policing in our community. See over for further details.

After the trial - announcing the victory

SNAP NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT
South Newham Action on Policing
NMP FIGHTING RACISM & POLICE HARASSMENT

**NO MORE POLICE BRUTALITY!
Police Harassment
Is A Crime!**

UNITED PICKET
of Plaistow Police Station

Thursday 18th November

Plaistow Police Station, 444 Barking Rd, E13
6pm-8pm

ORGANISED BY:
Newham Monitoring Project, South Newham Action on Policing, Justice for the Dray Family Campaign, Malkjit Singh Natt is Innocent Campaign, Defend the Deane Family Campaign.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS RING NMP ON 081-552-6284

Leaflet for Plaistow police station picket



NMP and SNAP's picket of Plaistow Police Station

Picket of Plaistow police station

SNAP and NMP called an angry picket of Plaistow police station on 18 November, just days before the trial, which over 100 people attended. The picket highlighted not only the Campaign but also the demands of the Second Avenue Community Association for charges against Abdul Kalaam to be dropped (See Community Associations Chapter). This was a practical example of the struggles of the black and white communities coming together, and as such should be viewed as an important step forward, particularly in linking the police's failure to respond to racial harassment with their seeming enthusiasm for harassing young people in south Newham.

Those involved in setting up SNAP are clear about the reforms of the police that are urgently needed: proper, local democratic control, with powers to force senior officers to explain the actions of their junior officers; an end to the discredited police complaints procedure, where police officers are investigated by their colleagues, and the creation of an independent police complaints system; and a greater willingness by senior officers to suspend and dismiss individual officers in cases involving se-

rious complaints of misconduct. These are demands which NMP has long advocated, and in the coming year, we are committed to helping SNAP's development as a campaigning group. In the process, both black and white communities in south Newham may also slowly begin to create a common history of resistance to all forms of injustice.

Photo: Newslite

East End In Crisis

The last year has seen a tremendous upsurge in racist activity throughout East London. On a number of occasions the media 'bandwagon' has rolled into the area to highlight this new phenomenon. At NMP we have repeatedly had to inform not just the media but a plethora of national anti-racist organisations of the reality of racial violence and the long tradition within the communities of east London of fighting back.

The tradition of resistance within the black communities of both Newham and Tower Hamlets is one that stretches back many years. It is a tradition drawn upon by a new generation who continue to assert their independence and militancy in the face of a stark political and economic environment.

In the late '70s and early '80s, at a time when the National Front (NF) looked set to take council seats in a number of east London wards, a similar upsurge of violent racist attacks and fascist activity took place. The fight back of the black community is well-documented in the book 'Newham: the forging of a black community' (NMP, 1991). In Tower Hamlets, the community response to this violence led to the NF being physically driven out of Brick Lane and to a one-day strike against racial violence involving 10,000 Bangladeshi workers who marched to central London in order to make their demands heard.

Issues faced by Bengali youth in Tower Hamlets.

Links between NMP and community organisations in Tower Hamlets were forged in the 1980s. But in 1990, the increasing number of calls being made to the NMP 24-hour emergency service line from young people in Tower Hamlets suffering high levels of police harassment, demanded a more concerted approach. Hence, after a number of incidents on Stepney's Ocean Estate, NMP supporters and

volunteers met with a group of young people from the area. It soon became clear that not only were police a major problem but the Liberal neighbourhood authority were compounding social problems in the area by their reluctance to give any resources to the Bengali community, particularly to young people.

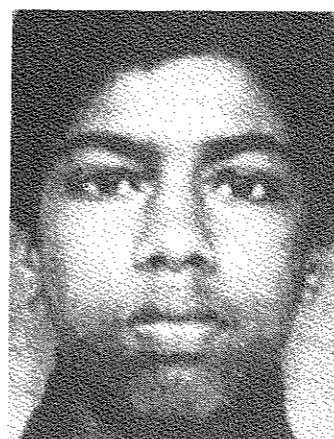
As a practical consequence of the failure to make any youth provision, young people had nowhere to go. NMP, in conjunction with local students, organised a series of 'raves'. NMP also cooperated with local community groups to produce 'rights cards' which were then distributed amongst young people. In addition, links were also forged with various other organisations such as a group, providing basic support to isolated families suffering extreme forms of racial harassment, working on the Teviot estate, Poplar. More information about this work can be found in NMP's 1992 and 1993 Annual Reports where we documented the role NMP played in supporting a picket organised by 'Ocean Youth' of Poplar College to defend students victimised by the college's disciplinary procedures.

The attack on Quddus Ali

In September 1993, against a backdrop of a sharp rise in racist activity Quddus Ali, a 17-year-old boy from the Canon street area was set upon and beaten by up to nine grown men. Quddus and three friends had just left a video shop and were on their way home. As they walked past the Dean Swift pub near Watney market, Whitechapel, they were stopped by a number of men who threatened and abused them. Quddus' friends managed to run away. Quddus was unable to escape and was left to the mercy of a group of thugs. He was kicked to the ground and savagely beaten.

The community response.

The horrific attack on Quddus took place on 8



Quddus Ali

September. Two days later, on 10 September, hundreds of young people from across the borough flocked to a vigil outside the London hospital, Whitechapel, organised by various political and community groups. Inside the hospital's intensive care unit lay Quddus Ali on a life support machine.

By 5.00pm, more than 500 young Bengalis had gathered outside the hospital. The mood, at this point, was militant, but restrained. The police, for their part, appeared to be caught off guard by the size of the protest and continually attempted to corral the youth into one small area outside the hospital. The constant pushing and shoving by officers was causing unnecessary aggravation though this had not, as yet, led to any confrontation.

However, after a number of emotionally charged speeches, the police decided to move in to the heart of the vigil in order, it would seem, to deal with a group of children throwing rolled-up stickers at a police officer. Given the history of police violence and racism indicated above (and outlined below) this was a stupid and insensitive step after which, confrontation, was inevitable.

As the police attempted to arrest sections of the crowd, the surrounding youths fought back, forcing the police to retreat. At this stage these officers withdrew only to be replaced by the riot police with dogs who proceeded to attack the youth as they spilled onto the Whitechapel High Road. After a few minutes, NMP workers, community activists and local youth workers managed to pull the young people together into a group. The main purpose of this was to calm the situation and prevent further arrests and injuries. The police overwhelmingly outnumbered the demonstrators and seemed to be using indiscriminate vio-

lence against the protestors, including young children.

Once the situation had calmed down, the youth set off on an impromptu march to Brick Lane. The intention was to rally there and then proceed by either sending a delegation to Leaman street police station or picketing the police station itself in support of those arrested.

However, the police were not content to allow the peaceful demonstration to continue to Brick Lane unchallenged and proceeded to hound and chase the youth. In Brick Lane itself, even though it was clear the young people were in no way a threat to the police, police officers continued to rampage. Community activists, including NMP workers and volunteers, succeeded in putting a lid on any further violence by taking the young demonstrators to a park from where they could safely travel home. Even at this stage, the police, in full riot gear, surrounded the park, their numbers easily in excess of those of the youth. Despite this, the protest dispersed peacefully with no further arrests.

The final tally was nine youths arrested, while scores had been injured. For several days afterward, hundreds of police officers occupied Brick Lane.

The political defence begins

Throughout the next day, Saturday 11 September, meetings of young local people, community elders as well as activists and political groups, were held. 'Youth Connection', an alliance of over 30 different youth clubs and groups, called a series of meetings in Hanbury Street, E1 inviting delegates and representatives from estates throughout Tower Hamlets. The media, which had descended on Tower Hamlets like locusts, were firmly shut out of all meetings. Leaders of Youth Connection set a lead in protesting at the police's provocative actions with a call for a mass demonstration, sweeping aside calls from more conservative elements for informal meetings with the police and return to the previous status quo. To this end, delegates were sent to other parts of London with a large concentration of Bengali youth,

Police hurt in Asian protest

Lawrence Donegan and John Ezard

SIX people needed hospital treatment last night after a vigil in east London by about 600 people in protest against the attack on an Asian student, Quaddus Ali, ended in violence. Scotland Yard said 10 people were arrested. Five police officers and one civilian were treated at hospital, while 20 other officers received minor injuries. Eyewitnesses said police were attacked with stones and banners while attempting to arrest a demonstrator. Brian Williamson, the manager of a grocer's store opposite the Royal London hospital,

scene of the vigil, said until then the protest had been peaceful. "That all changed when the police moved in." Kevin Blowe, who was at the vigil for the Newham Monitoring Project, said police over-reacted to a few young Asians flicking rolled-up Anti-Nazi League stickers at them and made an arrest. "A lot of people were leaving the vigil because they were bored, when three officers went to arrest one of the young men. The crowd grabbed the lad back, then other police moved in." Humajun Kobir, aged 15, who was among the demonstrators, said: "Once the police arrested someone everyone just rushed in and started beating the police up. There were about 10 officers and they were all get-

ting beaten up. That's when the riot police came." A police officer said: "They promised us there would be no violence and it would just be a peaceful vigil. For that reason we only had eight to 10 officers at the scene to start with." Mr Ali, aged 17, from Stepney, was with three friends when he was set upon by a group of eight whites, including a number of skinheads. He still critical but stable last night, a hospital spokesman said. The attack has prompted renewed calls for legislation to deal with racially motivated violence. There were 4,140 racial incidents in London in 1992. The largest group of victims were Asians.

The Guardian September 11th 1993

such as Drummond Street in Camden Town which had itself recently seen demonstrations against racist violence.

Meanwhile, the police's overbearing presence in Brick Lane had not decreased. Indeed, hundreds of police, many in riot gear, had swamped a relatively small area of Brick Lane, stopping any young black person congregating in a group, and searching and intimidating them.

That evening, however, the police's true colours were seen. Firstly, the most senior officer in East London, DAC Taylor decided to pay a visit to Brick Lane, to speak to the 'community' and, in time honoured fashion, to offer meaningless platitudes about 'partnership' and 'joint action' to tackle racist violence. He would not address individual cases, nor would he comment on the brutality of the police at the vigil and their virtual occupation of Brick Lane. Nevertheless, DAC Taylor did manage to comment that if it were not for the 'gang fighting' there would be no need for such police actions! But when pressed, no recent instance of so called 'gang fighting' could be cited. Ironically, Whilst DAC Taylor was 'consulting' with the community in a meeting room in Hanbury street, outside a police officer in riot gear had decanted from a van and was 'questioning' a number of young people including

Young Asians unite on racism

A MILITANT group set up by young Bengalis angered at racist acts came into the open today, writes Shekhar Bhatia.

The organisation, called Youth Connection, has been established to help Asian youngsters who suffer at the hands of racists or get into trouble with police.

The group claims to have 500 members and meets around Brick Lane to co-ordinate action and rallies against the British National Party.

One of the group's leaders, Helal Ahmed, 24, said: "We are ready to take action against racists or police harassment, lawfully or unlawfully. You have to fight violence and racists - you just

one of the Youth Connection delegates. When this individual protested one of the officers grabbed him by the lapels and shook him violently. Some youth then ran into the meeting, demanding the presence of the DAC outside so that he could see first hand the reality of community policing in the East End. A senior officer was promptly despatched to deal with the problem. He returned after despatching the riot officer and in a state of irritation having seen reality impinge on this PR exercise. The DAC would not comment further on this and the meeting soon ended.

The second incident that night further highlighted the racism of the Metropolitan Police, but this time at the highest levels. As DAC Taylor was speaking, a mob of up to fifty BNP members were leafleting the Isle of Dogs in preparation for the forthcoming local by-election in the Millwall ward. Apparently, after leafleting, this mob left the Island and travelled to Whitechapel ending up at the Blind Beggar pub on Whitechapel High Street. The police have subsequently admitted that up to this point they had kept the group under covert surveillance. However, they cannot account for what happened next.

After a drinking session at the pub it seems that the group, congregated near Brick Lane, entering the Lane from a side street. In full view of the police, they then charged down Brick Lane smashing shop windows and damaging cars. As the local Bengali youth poured out from the cafes they were met by a wall of police officers which prevented them from reaching

can't let it happen." Mr Helal and about 75 demonstrators, including members of Militant and the Socialist Workers Party, confronted the BNP in Brick Lane yesterday.

Other young Asians have decided to join him to voice their protest rather than let militant groups take up the mantle, he said.

Today the organisation unveiled a huge banner outside Thames Magistrates Court where nine people were appearing on riot charges.

Mr Helal said: "We want the charges dropped and we want the real villains, the BNP, put in the dock."

Evening Standard 13th September 1993

the BNP mob, who rapidly escaped down another side road. Not one of the attackers has been caught or prosecuted, despite the fact that they were, on the police's own admission, under covert surveillance, and despite the massive police presence in Brick Lane, which had previously prevented Bengali groups gathering in groups of five let alone forty to fifty. In fact, the police presence, it would seem, far from deterring the BNP actually encouraged them. Either they knew they could bank on the police's inactivity or were confident that they would be safe from the further inevitably violent wrath of the youth.

Immediately after the BNP attack and the clear police complicity with it, community anger boiled over. Hundreds of young people congregated in Brick Lane demanding action. Despite the time, 12.30 pm, and the cold, they set off on a march through the community, the aim of which was to reach the police station. Dozens of young people joined the impromptu demonstration, which was re-routed by the police. Some young people were seen climbing from their windows and joining the march despite the concerns of their parents. This generation is sick of the racism that has plagued their community and, like the generation which had driven the fascists from Brick Lane in 1978, they now clearly feel that their fight has to be taken to a higher and more organised level.

On Monday 13 September 1993, at 9.30 am the nine young men arrested three days earlier at the vigil made their first court appearance. A picket was organised by Youth Connection and was supported by NMP. The nine were all charged with Section 1 of the 1986 Public Order Act - Riot! On conviction this carries a maximum of 10 years imprisonment. All the nine were under 25, two under 17. At least two of the defendants required hospital treatment, after their arrest (see below). In court the nine had draconian bail conditions imposed by the police removed. They were told, however, that they had to be indoors at 10 pm every night.

In Brick Lane meanwhile the police presence remained as conspicuous as ever. And it was becoming increasingly obvious that this would

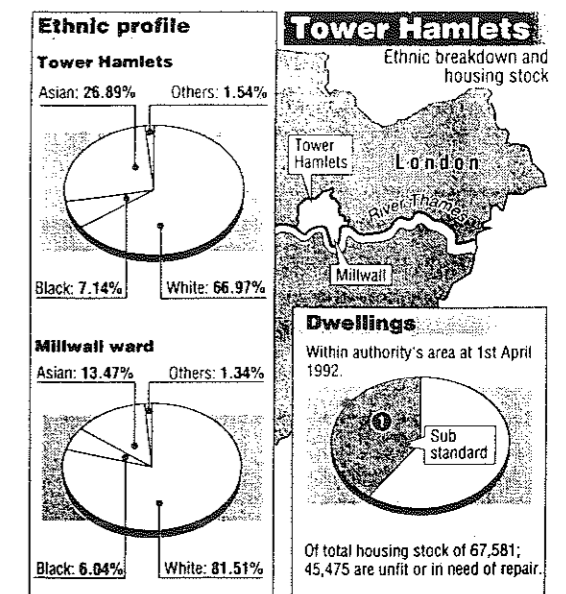
remain to be the case, at least until after the Local election in Millwall.

The background to the BNP on the Isle of Dogs

On Thursday 16th September 1993 history was made in the Isle of Dogs. For only the second time in British political history an openly fascist party had won a local council seat. Amidst scenes at the election count of seig-heiling skinheads, the BNP candidate Derek Beackon, accompanied by a motley crew of neo-nazis, was told that he had won 1480 votes, winning the seat by just seven votes.

This victory, which despite media speculation came as a surprise, outraged many sections of the community, white and black. Only a few months earlier, in another local election, the BNP had come third, defeating the Tories.

On the Island itself, since the election the BNP have done a great deal of low-profile campaigning work, particularly on the estates. They feed off the simmering local discontent over housing and unemployment. The danger is that now, after securing one council seat, they are increasingly looking like the only viable alternative to the other failed and discredited political parties. And due to the decentralised system of local government introduced by the Liberals, whereby council services are controlled at a neighbourhood level by the councillors from that area, a very small number of



NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

councillors control huge budgets. This means that in the Isle of Dogs, the BNP need only to win two more seats to gain control of a budget in excess of £20 million. The prospect of this for black families living on the Island is terrifying.

At the end of the day, the Isle of Dogs housing and other social problems are due to the policies of the present Conservative government which has presided over increasing poverty throughout the country.

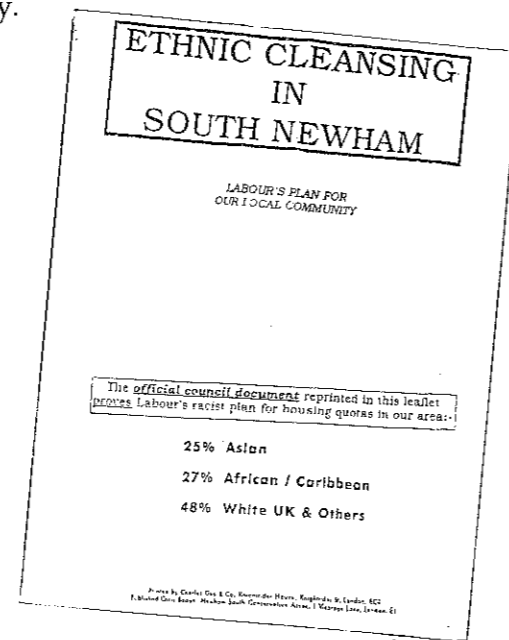
Political Parties play race card.

The sad truth is that at the Millwall by-election, as at so many previous elections, the established political groups - Labour, Liberal, Conservative - all played the race card. The Labour candidates, far from offering an alternative vision for the future, were, in fact, so racist that a number of principled Labour activists on the ground refused to canvass for them. Labour also declared, only a few days before the count (apparently basing its predictions on false canvass returns), that there was a serious prospect of the BNP winning thus elevating the BNP's appeal in the eyes of the local electorate.

The Labour party's response to complaints of racism at the ward level has been abysmal. The results of an internal party inquiry have not been made public. Furthermore, the divisions within the local Labour ward led to a formal split in February with elements that local anti-racists believed had pandered to the racist vote going off to form the East London People's Alliance (ELPA). ELPA, who claim to have 25% of the vote on the Island, will be standing candidates in the May elections on the issue of the 'hidden homeless'. The very real threat is that ELPA will split the anti-BNP vote in May thus giving rise to the conditions whereby the BNP can gain control of the neighbourhood.

The Conservatives throughout east London have also succeeded in turning race into an electoral issue. In a local council by-election in Silvertown, Newham, earlier in the year the Tories distributed a leaflet alleging the Labour council was 'ethnically cleansing' the area of whites by giving housing preference to black families.

But it has been the Liberals of Tower Hamlets who have come in for the most sustained criticism for producing, over the years, election materials that pandered to racial prejudice through its message of 'Island homes for Island people'. National press coverage of Liberal election tactics finally panicked the Liberal Democrat leadership into promising an internal inquiry, although this fell well short of an investigation into institutionalised racism within Tower Hamlets council policies. In the past, the Lib-Dems have consistently denied that there is a need for such an inquiry although they were well aware of the allegations against them, particularly the concern over their housing practices which have been criticised by the Commission for Racial Equality.



Newham Conservatives' 'ethnic cleansing' leaflet

Physical intimidation of black voters

During the Millwall election, the presence of BNP thugs on the streets also had the effect of deterring black families from attending the polls to vote. In particular, tower block entrances would be patrolled by groups of BNP thugs who would harass and intimidate black people. Furthermore, on a number of separate occasions, gangs of white youths were seen walking up and down the streets shouting abuse and singing 'Rights for Whites' and 'Rule Britannia'.

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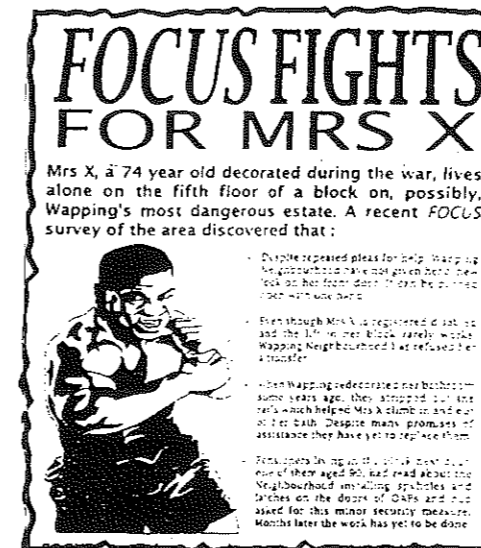
tion had called a demonstration, asking people to assemble in Altab Ali Park, on Whitechapel High Road, on 3 October 1993.

By the day of the demonstration, the BNP had already won its seat and regular protests were being held at the top of Brick Lane where the BNP conducts a regular paper sale. These protests had succeeded in physically disrupting the paper sale to the extent that, for the first time in many years, the BNP had been prevented from selling its papers over several successive weeks.

The Youth Connection march was organised at relatively short notice. Despite this, hundreds of local Bengali youth attended the demonstration which attracted a total of over 2,000 people. The march focused on the following demands: the dropping of the charges against the Tower Hamlet Nine; opposition to the BNP; an end to police racism and racial violence. Predictions, from a number of sources, that trouble would occur, proved unfounded as the demonstration was tightly stewarded. The community had shown yet again that the leadership of 'national' groupings such as the ANL and ARA was not required and that true opposition to racism must come from the grassroots. The youth proved capable of leading their own struggle and forced the rest of the 'movement' to fall in behind them. It was in this vein that the youth went on to organise the defence of their brothers, the 'Tower Hamlets 9', arrested at the vigil on 10 September 1993.

Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign

The campaign was launched on the 11 September 1993 with members of Youth Connection calling for support for the nine youths arrested outside the hospital and organising the first picket of the newly-named 'Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign'. The campaign's aims were simple: the dropping of the charges against all nine youths; an end to the ongoing police investigation which was based at West Ham



One of the Liberal Focus racist leaflets

It is clear that many black families did not exercise their right to vote. However, given the obstacles they faced this is hardly surprising. And if they did succeed in getting past the BNP thugs on the streets and at the polling stations, they were faced with a choice of candidates, which it would have been hard to differentiate between.

Youth Connections organises demonstration

Youth Connection is made up of over thirty local youth clubs and estate-based youth groups. The organisation made a definite decision not to adopt any formal structure so as to allow its members to react as quickly as possible on an ad-hoc basis as and when required. Within hours of the disturbances at the vigil outside Whitechapel Hospital, Youth Connec-



The Youth Connection March

Police Station; and an end to police brutality.

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Photo: David Hoffman



The Tower Hamlets Nine outside Thames Magistrates court

Newham Monitoring Project was asked to help run the campaign and immediately sought the direct involvement of all of the defendants. Due to the fact that most of those arrested were from the Canon Street area, it was decided that, with the support of the local youth, meetings of the campaign should be moved to the Berner Club off Canon Street. The policy and direction of the campaign were determined by discussions at open meetings, the only exception being when legal issues were discussed. The next court date was set for the 26 October 1993 and NMP immediately set about mailing hundreds of anti-racist organisations and individuals across the country, including various student and trade unions. The response, though slow at first, steadily picked up with the campaign being invited to meetings across the country.

From picket to picket

Extensive development work carried out in the community, including meetings in youth clubs, colleges and local mosques, meant that the second picket held by the campaign attracted a great many more supporters. Inside the court, the judge granted the nine bail and told them to return to court in December.

But attendance at the third picket, on 21 December, was disappointing, with the bitter cold and the tube strike certainly contributing to the diminished numbers. Inside the court,

however, important decisions effecting the Tower Hamlets 9 were being made. And following the hearing the police instructed the tv and print media to hand over all film and photographs of the events that took place outside Whitechapel hospital on 10 September 1993. When they refused, the police took the media to the High Court - and won!

Thirty police officers, and a riot van, were deployed to cover the fourth picket on 1 February 1994 which was attended by 100 local youth, at least half of whom were from Poplar College. The police adopted a very heavy-handed approach. Apart from their actual numbers, the officers' attitude toward the demonstrators was extremely aggressive, with some supporters attempting to join the picket experiencing abuse from individual officers and complaining that their leaflets were torn up. Furthermore, the police took the extremely unusual step of stopping members of the public from entering the court building, which effected not only a pupil of the barrister representing the nine but relatives of defendants involved in other cases being heard in court that day which had absolutely nothing to do with the Tower Hamlets 9. Interestingly enough, it was only black people who were stopped, questioned and forced to explain their reasons for attending court that day.

Why the police decided to adopt such a provocative profile is up for debate, for at each of the three previous pickets in support of the 9, there had been no disturbances, either inside or outside the court; and the police presence had been minimal.

But the police deployment outside the court could not effect the proceedings inside the courtroom, which marked the first real success for the campaign.

As soon as the defendants arrived, the prosecution held lengthy discussions with defence lawyers. Eventually, prosecution lawyers informed the court that they no longer wanted to pursue the charge of riot against the nine as a

whole and that the case against three of the defendants would be dropped altogether. The remaining six defendants, however, would still face public order charges of a serious nature, including violent disorder and assault. The news was greeted with cheers outside the court.

Since then, the Tower Hamlets Nine campaign has gone from strength to strength. Although the priority is still to continue to protest at every court appearance of the last six defendants, the campaign has also been forced to take on a number of other responsibilities. This has included the campaign's participation in the organising-committee for the national TUC 'Unity' demonstration on 19 March - and responding to the horrific racist attack on Mukhtar Ahmed.

The attack on Mukhtar Ahmed

On the 8th February at 11.30pm Mukhtar Ahmed, a 19-year-old Asian youth, was attacked by a gang of over 20 white youths on Vallance Road, E1. Mukhtar didn't know his attackers. They had simply shouted "get the paki" before running after Mukhtar and his three friends. Mukhtar, who lived nearby, ran in one direction, while his friends escaped in the other. But the gang caught up with Mukhtar. It was only due to the shouts of passers-by that the gang stopped beating him and ran off.

The savagery of the beating Mukhtar received was truly horrific. It was effectively an attempt to kill him, by concentrating the full force of the attack on his head. The rest of his body was virtually unmarked, but his head injuries were so severe that it was first feared he may not survive.

Mukhtar was admitted to the London Hospital's intensive care unit (where Quddus Ali had lain). By Wednesday morning, news of the attack had spread throughout the community and was accompanied by the reports of still more attacks. An Asian man on the Isle of Dogs was dragged from his car and beaten; two young boys were attacked outside Sir John Cass school (one had a milk bottle smashed in his face) and another youth was stabbed in the

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cheek.

By Wednesday evening, it became clear, from the response of many young people that they wanted some action taken and Youth Connection and the Tower Hamlets Nine agreed to organise a community vigil. Despite this, the Anti Nazi League decided, with no hint of consultation, it would call its own vigil outside the London hospital. When members of Youth Connection, the Tower Hamlets Nine and Newham Monitoring Project objected vehemently at a consultative meeting called at short notice, the ANL ignored our criticisms (they had even come to the meeting with posters advertising an ANL vigil already printed up!) Such blatant disregard for the struggles of the local community continues to be a trademark of the so-called national anti-racist groups. However, regardless of such irritating diversions, the community went on to organise its own vigil on Friday 13th February. With only one day available to mobilise, we managed to gather over 400 people, mainly local youth, in Altab Ali park to listen to speeches from local representatives as well as the family of Mukhtar Ahmed. Meanwhile, the ANL vigil, which drew a crowd of twelve, was cancelled.



Mukhtar Ahmed

The protest at Altab Ali park was much more than just a peaceful vigil against racial violence - it was a defiant shout from a community that unfortunately still has to be wary of its allies.

At the time of writing, Mukhtar is making a tremendous recovery and has been released from hospital. We presently look forward to the TUC demonstration against racism on 19th March 1994. Hopefully the very genuine crisis in East London will force unity and principled support for the communities in struggle.

Photo: Phil Maxwell

Fascism & Anti-Fascism

In September 1993, the fascist British National Party (BNP) won its first election victory, when Derek Beackon was elected as a local councillor for the Millwall ward in Tower Hamlets. This victory, resulting from the particular circumstances of urban decay and alienation of local people, nevertheless gives a clear indication of the increasing support for fascism. This support, as we warned in last year's Annual Report, threatens to spread to other parts of east London, and in particular to areas like the south of Newham, which has a history not only of popular racism but also of being a potential recruiting ground for the far right. In 1983, when the National Front (NF) received only an average of 0.8 % of the vote nationally, Newham South had the highest NF vote in the country with 993 votes, representing 3.7 % of the poll. In earlier elections, they did even better, gaining 4.7% in 1979 and 7.8% (nearly three times the national average) in 1974.

On 20 October 1993, NMP organised a public meeting on anti-fascism and community resistance, which launched our campaign against the use of racism for electoral gain during the local government elections in May 1994. The meeting was attended by over 100 people. Earlier the same day Greater London Radio (GLR) interviewed NMP about the campaign, and then approached the BNP who announced that they would be standing candidates in the Custom House & Silvertown ward of Newham. That this ward should be targeted is no accident. In a by-election in the same ward during May 1993, Dave Gladstone, the Conservative Party candidate and Chair of Newham South Tenants Liaison Committee, distributed an openly racist leaflet entitled 'Ethnic Cleansing in South Newham', which claims that the La-

bour council is engaged in 'racial engineering to change the ethnic make-up of our local community and give Asians and Afro-caribbeans a majority of new lettings'. Following widespread condemnation of this attempt to play the race card, a second leaflet was distributed by Newham South Conservatives after the election of Derek Beackon in Millwall.

Just as in Millwall, mainstream political parties are in a position to fuel popular racism. As A Sivanandan notes, 'the BNP did not give rise to racism - racism gave rise to the BNP'. Increasing levels of racial harassment in Custom House, Silver Town and other areas in the south of Newham make these areas likely targets for the BNP. From the start, however, NMP's campaign has focused not only on the BNP but also on the use of racism as a means of getting votes and stirring up trouble.

The Election Campaign

Following the public meeting, NMP drew up a list of BNP activists in Newham, based on information from contacts around the borough. These include:

■ Steven O'Connell, the senior BNP activist in Newham, who lives on Milner Road in West Ham, which has a history of racist attacks. O'Connell has written to the *Newham Recorder* who have obliged by printing his letters on a number of occasions.

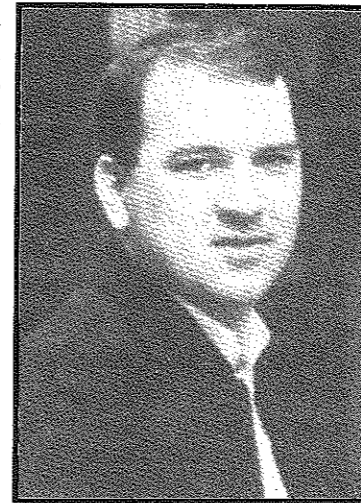
■ Steven O'Shea, a BNP activist, has been linked to serious racial harassment on Folkestone Road in East Ham. He was also part of a gang who attacked a black man in the Blind

Beggar Pub in Bethnal Green during the Millwall by-election.

■ Mark Tweedy, a BNP activist, who lives on Woodford Road in Forest Gate, is known to have run for the BNP in the London Marathon in 1987. He is suspected of being responsible for the daubing of the house of two ANL supporters in Stratford.

■ Nicky Cooper, who lives in Skipsey Road in East Ham, is a member of Combat 18, the paramilitary fascist group. He was involved in an assault on two Asian youths in Mile End.

We established that BNP members in Newham meet and drink in a pub in Canning Town before going to leaflet estates in the south of the borough. We, therefore, asked supporters to inform us whenever the BNP distribute leaflets so that an immediate response could be organised. NMP anti-fascist leaflets have been given out in Rathbone Street Market, where



Steven O'Connell from Milner Rd in Stratford

Photo: Searchlight

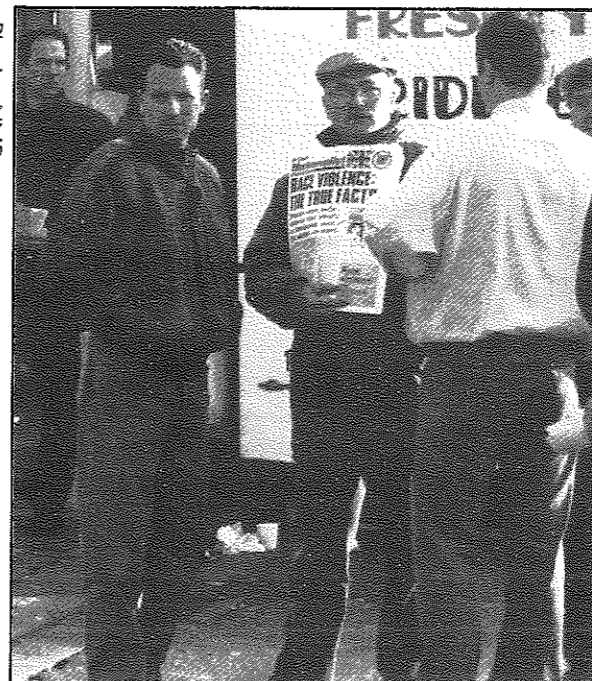
the BNP have held an irregular papersale, and in areas like Custom House, Silvertown and Canning Town. A network of around fifty local people has been set up to ensure that the response is both regular and swift. The aim of this strategy has been to inform local people of the bankruptcy of BNP policies and what the implications of these policies would be for the local community.

In order to encourage community opposition to attempts to play the race card in the forthcoming elections, an advert was placed in the *Newham News* in February 1994, asking for local voluntary, religious and community organisations, councillors, MPs and tenants' and residents' associations to affiliate to our campaign. A second advert in March 1994, includes a wide range of local groups, including West Ham United Football Club, pledging to support the fight against the BNP and the use of racism by any political party in the elections. The purpose of this very simple public statement is not only to present a united response to the threat of the BNP but also to make anti-racism an issue for the elections in Newham. Hopefully the campaign will act as a spur for local anti-racists not to dismiss, because of what happened in Tower Hamlets, the possibility of effective action against the BNP.

To date, the fascists have not had it all their own way on the streets of Custom House. Local residents have chased off members of the BNP who were seen leafletting in the area. It was becoming quite clear that some local people were becoming more aware of the implications of BNP activity in their area and were willing to act. Concerns about the violence that invariably accompanies the BNP's presence was shown in Silvertown, where two black men were brutally attacked by BNP supporters in two separate incidents in early February 1994.

As the elections draw nearer, NMP's campaign will intensify, for we are aware of the size of the task that lies ahead. Although the BNP, which will be concentrating its tiny membership on work in the Isle of Dogs, is unlikely to win a seat, it could potentially do well in an area which shares many character-

Photo: NMP

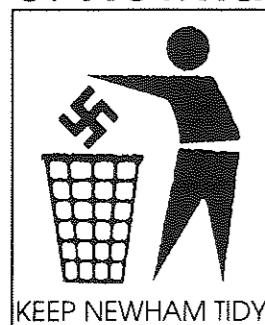


Derek Beackon in Rathbone St Market

istics with Millwall - isolated geographically from the rest of the borough, largely over-

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Nazis Out of Newham!



Stop
the
BNP!

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE TURN OVER

NMP's leaflet against the BNP

looked when funding is allocated, with few organisations left which genuinely represent local people. On the day of the election, NMP plans to organise transport for isolated black families in south Newham who are worried about their safety. In the long-term, however, the BNP will only be marginalised by vibrant, locally-based and active community campaigns which place demands upon local elected representatives - in other words, by offering a political alternative to the BNP. This is the challenge facing mainstream politicians and anti-fascists committed to smashing fascism.

NMP has long argued that for campaigning against racism and fascism to be effective, it must be organised at a local level within communities. The way forward must be to respond to local issues of concern and provide a consistent and principled service in areas where black people live under siege. National activities, whilst important in publicising the truth about fascism, are no substitute for local action, and their impact on local communities where there is the potential for BNP support is minimal. This is why NMP's campaign is concentrating on local work.

The other major issue of the past year has been

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the way that the police have responded to anti-fascist demonstrations. Public order legislation introduced in the 1930s to restrict Mosley's Blackshirts from marching in east London is increasingly used against the opponents of, and in order to defend, today's fascists. This must surely be an important lesson for those who call for the BNP to be banned: legislation of this kind will undoubtedly be used to proscribe organisations on the left and anti-fascist groups. It is impossible for ideas to be banned, and a state ban on the BNP will do nothing to undermine the popular racism which provides fascism with its base of support on white estates in east London.

The BNP bookshop

The BNP's headquarters/bookshop in Welling has long been a focus for national anti-fascist activity. There have been a number of demonstrations which have passed the bookshop, and a long-running campaign to persuade Bexley council to shut it down. In 1993, following the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in Eltham, around 3,000 people attended a march in Welling organised by Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE). The BNP headquarters became the target of the anger of the marchers and was bombarded with missiles. Riot police and police on horseback responded by charging protesters, which resulted in fifteen demonstrators being taken to hospital.

On 16 October 1993, the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) and the YRE, under the banner of Unity, again called on anti-racists from across the country to join a march against the BNP headquarters. The march was attended by over 30,000 people, and was supported by a range of black and anti-racist organisations, including NMP. In the weeks preceding the march, there had been a number of vicious racist attacks across London, including the attack on Quddus Ali and, on the weekend of the march, an attack on a man in Ilford, who was brutally assaulted and beaten and then run over by the assailants in his own car.

From the start, the police presence on the demonstration was little short of a military exercise, planned and executed to what appeared to be

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Police lines at the Welling march in May 1993 - in October the police were better prepared

a pre-determined outcome. When the police deliberately blocked the route agreed with the march organisers, a violent situation was engineered with large numbers of people unable to move in any direction. Consequently, the police charged into the crowd of demonstrators with horses and riot shields, attacking people at random.

In the aftermath of the Welling demonstration, NMP's response was to condemn the way that the police approached what was organised as a peaceful protest. Riot police with CS gas prominently on display were deployed at the assembly point, and the rhetoric of senior police officers in the days prior to the demonstration was such that police officers attending the march expected a fight - indeed, if, as the police claim, there was a 'hard core' of demonstrators who turned up to battle the police, then it is hardly surprising since the police had billed the march as a battle from the start.

The media's response to the Unity march was predictable. Not only did they condemn the organisers but they also attempted to portray the anti-racist movement as having respectable and violent faces, the former role being taken by the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) which organised its own demonstration of 3,000 people in Central London on the same day. Unfortunately, the squabbles between the ANL and the ARA have since degenerated even further. Channel 4's shameful *Devil's Advocate*

debate between Paul Holborow of the ANL and Marc Wadsworth of the ARA plunged the anti-racist movement to new depths of bitter sectarianism and tried to reduce anti-racism in this country to a dispute between the two groups. Wadsworth, in condemning the violence of the ANL, accepted the police version of events and thus ignored the anger of black community groups across the country who were on the march and who experienced police violence at first hand. Such 'left-bating' is unacceptable and plays into the hands of our common enemies.

There is an urgent need for consistent and principled unity in action. In that sense, the Welling march was a positive attempt to unite the divided anti-racist movement in one massive show of strength against the BNP. But for the anti-racist movement to have a wider impact in defending black communities and defeating white racism, a demonstration now and again is not enough. We must learn the lessons of history. We must build communities of resistance across the country in order to challenge the forces of racism and fascism. We must refuse to allow our enemies to divide and rule us. We must organise and unite in practical activity whenever the need arises. For to engage in petty sectarianism in these dangerous times is to fail our communities. This we must avoid at all costs.

Photo: Darren Jacobsen

NMP & The Media

To say that the British media has developed racial hysteria into an art form is to state the obvious. Race reporting in Britain is charged with sensationalism and the stereotyping of black people. NMP has always recognised that the press are more concerned with manufacturing public opinion than presenting or reporting news. It is certainly not interested in investigating the issues underlying the news. At best such issues provide sensationalist headline items which disappear just as quickly as they came.

The black community is today under siege from the racist hype of the media. When the press is not busy reporting on the influx of drugs into good old Britain by yardies, it is examining black sexuality or highlighting the 'exotic' cultures of 'Third World' peoples. But of course the press is at its most confident when reporting on issues here at home. A policeman dies and attention is focused on Jamaican yardies. There is an immediate scramble to visit Jamaica and make programmes on yardie culture and how it is linked to 'black crime' in Britain. Joy Gardner is murdered by immigration police and the national debate is centred around the 'violence' of black women, the influx of illegal immigrants and, most importantly, how to deport them.

Stephen Lawrence is killed and the headlines are about the fact that black people are unsafe in Britain, and not about *why* they are unsafe. Quddus Ali is attacked and the pattern, of sensationalised treatment but no serious investigation, is repeated. Mukhtar Ali is viciously attacked in East London. Another race statistic. And the beat goes on...and on.

It is in light of this that NMP continues to monitor the coverage of race issues in both local and national press, to keep tabs on emerging trends in racist reporting in order to effectively challenge the media.

Reporting demonstrations.

"Anatomy of a race hate riot", this was how the *Evening Standard* of 18 October 1993 saw fit to describe the largest anti-racist demonstration in over a decade which took place in Welling, south London where the BNP has its national headquarters, and was attended by approximately 40,000 people. Billed as a 'Unity Demo', the march was sponsored and attended by a wide range of black and anti-racist organisations.

Even before the march took place, it was advertised by the press, who predicted violence, as a 'race hate protest'. The way in which events were subsequently reported made the kind of evening TV news and Sunday paper headlines that black people have become accustomed to. In the aftermath of the march, most broadcast and print media talked of little else other than the violence that took place that day, or, if they did manage to go further than this, they were concerned about fascism in a generalised way. Predictably, there has been significantly less concern from the media about the nature of racist attacks that have taken place, the majority of which are not organised by the fascists. There is a distinctive lack of column inches detailing the extent to which mainstream politicians have not only played the race card but have also orchestrated a climate whereby a naked racism struts without shame.

Another example of this kind of racist media hype is the reporting which preceded the Joy Gardner protest march in north London on 7 August 1993. On this occasion, the press, in its wisdom, predicted that the streets of north London would be used as a battleground as the black community were bent on revenging Joy's death. It was not a question of if but when the predicted violent backlash would occur.

This media propaganda of 'black violence'

was so successful that on the day of the march itself, virtually all shops in the Hornsey area of north London were boarded up. There were even more policemen than there were marchers. As Joy herself had been widely reported to be a very 'violent' woman, presumably the same could be expected from those who came to protest over her death.

These portrayals of black people, which are only too typical, totally demean the lives of black people in Britain and ignore the black experience and the black perspectives.

No Platform for Fascists.

It has long been the position of principled anti-racists and anti-fascists not to share any platform with fascists as doing so would be tantamount to legitimising them. Thus, anti-fascists have not only urged journalists to deny fascists the public space in which to air their views but have also declined to participate in studio discussions with fascists.

It was with this broad understanding that participants in the BBC's 'After Millwall' programme and Channel 4's 'Bloody Foreigners' agreed to take part in the two programmes. But the programmes raised fundamental questions about journalists understanding of the 'No platform' policy.

While both programmes effectively supplied the fascists with the oxygen of publicity, Channel 4's 'Bloody Foreigners' went one step further. It gave viewers the fabricated impression that both fascists and anti-fascists alike were in the same studio to discuss and debate the pros and cons of fascism. This was totally dishonest of the producers and was rightly condemned. But we have come to expect such dishonesty from the media which goes to great lengths to protect the freedom of speech of fascists!

As CARF has argued, weak and ineffectual interviewing of fascists by journalists who are not equipped with the facts and who fail to ask probing questions, only serves to supply the fascists with a platform to propagandise their views. Journalists ought to be aware of the

immense power which the medium of television gives the fascists to air their poisonous views and present a violent, undemocratic creed in acceptable terms.

One of the most powerful weapons which we have at our disposal in fighting and unmasking nazis and educating the public about fascism's undemocratic nature is television. Fascism is not a set of ideas that can be politely discussed. Therefore, by debating with Fascists, rather than relegating them to the margins of society where they rightly belong, we are helping to bring fascist views into mainstream political debate. When television then aids fascists by giving them an open platform to put forward a palatable and respectable image, it undermines the efforts of anti-fascists to expose the nazis for what they really are - violent common criminals.

NMP challenge Channel 4.

NMP, who participated in 'Bloody Foreigners', wrote a strongly worded letter of protest to the producers of the ITN programme which was shown on Channel 4 on 7 November, 1993. We expressed our outrage at the fact that in the present climate of rising racist activity, producers of this programme saw fit to give fascists from across Europe, who blatantly lied about the nature and activities of their organisations, an unprecedented platform to air their views.

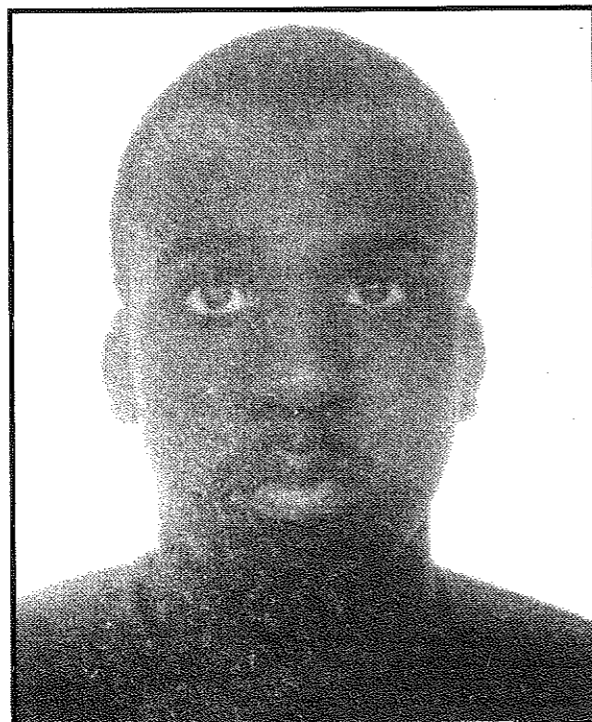
We were appalled at the fact that the programme's panel included representatives of some of the most extreme groups on the European fascist scene. We registered our disgust at the dishonesty of the programme's editors who manipulated viewers into believing that fascists and anti-fascists were in the same studio which was decidedly not the case. We also condemned the irresponsible manner in which the programme was produced and presented.

Channel 4's reply stating that the programme was 'a good first stab at covering a difficult subject' is totally unacceptable. It is sad to note that the present vogue within television is to debate fascism, rather than investigate it. This

Hackney Council be held to account for the Hui family. In August 1993, Mr and Mrs Hui, their supporters and NMP dominated a *Kilroy* TV episode on racial harassment. We continued to put pressure on the council and support Mr and Mrs Hui until eventually the council had no choice but to give way and Mr and Mrs Hui were rehoused in a safer neighbourhood, but Hackney Council's despicable conduct in this matter highlights once again how statutory agencies fail to respond effectively to racial harassment without constant pressure from community organisations prepared to stand with local people and challenge the authorities.

Walthamstow Asian Youth Movement

Waltham Forest has witnessed an increase in the number of racist attacks over the past year. The case of Mrs Sharma in particular, attracted national media coverage. She was the victim of a horrific campaign of harassment. The statutory agencies failed adequately to help or support her. This case so enraged local youth that they decided that something had to be done. They formed the Asian Youth Movement (AYM) and contacted NMP for advice and guidance about how to address problems of racism in their area and how to help victims of racial harassment. They called for a march through Walthamstow to express their outrage at the council and police response to racial harassment. About a hundred people marched through Walthamstow in an encouraging display of community organisation and resistance. The AYM have continued their campaigning work. They have spoken at several schools and colleges in Waltham Forest, printed leaflets highlighting the problems in their area, circulated a petition condemning the failure of the statutory agencies to tackle racial harassment and managed to collect more than a hundred signatures. NMP assisted in facilitating many of these activities, and we have also undertaken several joint initiatives with the AYM.



Oliver Campbell

Justice for Oliver Campbell

NMP continues to campaign on behalf of those who have been unjustly imprisoned. Take the case of Oliver Campbell. Oliver was found guilty of murdering a Hackney shopkeeper in July 1990. He was given a life sentence in December 1991. Oliver has always protested his innocence and believes he was 'fitted up' by the police. Of particular concern is the fact that Oliver has severe learning difficulties and is highly suggestible. Indeed, Oliver was convicted mainly on the basis of a garbled confession he gave under pressure without a solicitor present. No forensic or reliable eye witness evidence was ever presented by the prosecution in their case against Oliver. The prosecution did, however, offer the very unreliable and circumstantial evidence that Oliver had once owned a cap similar to the one found at the scene of the murder, even though the cap found did not have any hair or skin samples that matched Oliver's. We are hopeful that the Court of Appeal will quash Oliver's conviction.

NMP have been working closely with friends of Oliver in organising and supporting the Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign. In July

1993, we were part of a delegation that raised concerns about Oliver's conviction at a full meeting of Newham Council. In September 1993, we organised a public meeting where speakers from other miscarriage of justice campaigns, the M25 and Winston Silcott defence campaigns spoke in support of Oliver. The meeting was a great success with over 80 people in attendance. In November 1993, we organised a benefit to raise funds to continue the fight to free Oliver. His appeal will be heard shortly.

Black people are time and again victims of miscarriages of justice. NMP is committed to challenging the police and judicial system in order to ensure that the lives of innocent black people are not destroyed by yet more miscarriages of justice.

Local and National Links

Throughout 1993, NMP was inundated with requests to speak at meeting and conferences. We were also visited by groups and individuals from around Britain and across the world.

Locally, we have visited and spoken at many schools, colleges and youth clubs including Forest Gate School, Woodside School and East Ham College. Increasingly students from schools and colleges have started to use the 382 Centre as a resource base, particularly our library. However, many young people just drop in to find out more about NMP, how we fight racism and most importantly, how they can get involved. We hope to strengthen our relationship with local schools and colleges and we hope that in time more young people will become involved in local campaigns and initiatives.

We have been invited to speak about a whole range of issues at universities across London, (eg London School of Economics, University of East London, University College of London, School of Oriental and African Studies) and nationally, (eg Essex University and York University). Also we have spoken at numerous colleges and youth clubs across the country. These visits allow us to share our experiences, but equally important to keep up-to-

date with developments and initiatives around the country. We look forward to continuing this work and establishing new relationships as well as maintaining old friendships.

Nationally, we have been involved in various initiatives. We were invited to Coventry to launch the Coventry Anti-racial Harassment and Attacks Network (CAHAN). We ran workshops on how NMP organises within the black community. We welcome the increase in black community-based and community-led initiatives - this is the only effective and long term strategy for combating racism.

Numerous individuals and groups have visited the project from as far away as Brazil and the USA. Closer to home, we have been visited by representatives of community groups and anti-racist projects in Germany, Belgium, Holland and France.

Resources

■ Available from NMP

Annual Reports (1983-1992)

Newham: The Forging of a Black Community (1991)

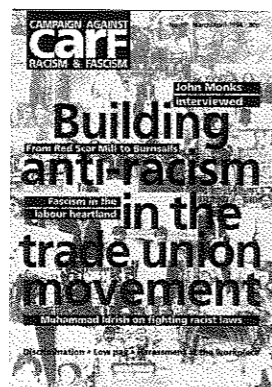
History of the struggles of the post-war black community in Newham (published jointly with the CARF).

Racism and Racist Violence in Schools (1990)

Newham Monitoring Project Exhibitions

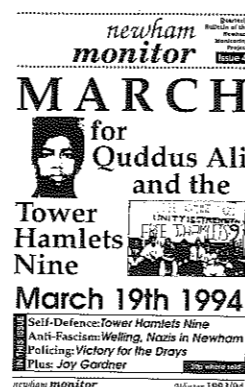
The History of Racism in the East End (23 panels)
Conspiracy (12 panels), which documents different campaigns and struggles of black people in Britain.

NMP has an extensive library on issues relating to racism, fascism and policing. Telephone for details.



Campaign Against Racism & Fascism (CARF) magazine

Copies available from NMP or on subscription from BM Box 8784, London WC1N 3XX



Newham Monitor
Quarterly bulletin of NMP, detailing cases, campaigns and community resistance in Newham. Free to members, copies 30p.

Affiliates

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

Art of Change* • Asian Ltd • Australian Institute of Criminology* • Beckton Against Racism • Behno-Ki-Milan • Bengali National Association • Black Justice Project* • Birnbergs & Co Solicitors • Cairde Na nGael • CALA Training Centre* • CAPA* ‡ • City of London Anti-Apartheid Group* • Columbian Fathers • Community Links • Cumberland School NUT Group • Defend the Deane Family Campaign • East London Teachers* • Eastwards Trust (Hostels) Ltd • Edward Son and Noice Solicitors • Fellowship House Asian Womens' Project • Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! • Forest Gate Youth Centre • General Union of Palestinian Women (UK)* • Greenwich Action Committee Against Racist Attacks (GACARA)* • Gujarat Welfare Association • Gwendoline Avenue Community Association • Inquest* • Jewish Socialist Group* • Justice for the Dray Family Campaign • Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign • Little Ilford Youth Centre • Leeds TUC* • LSE Women's Group* • Manor Park "Faith in the Community" Project • Newham Asian Women's Project • Newham Citizens' Advice Bureau • Newham Community Advice Unit • Newham Community College Students' Union • Newham Community Housing Ltd • Newham Consortium for Youth • Newham Drugs Project • Newham Gatekeepers • Newham Rights Centre • Newham UNISON • Newham Voluntary Agencies Council • Nottingham Anti-Fascist Action* • Ocean Youth* ‡ • One Love Community Association • Plashet School NUT Group • Poplar College Students' Union* ‡ • Racial Harassment Project (Sheffield)* • Sheffield Community Safety Unit* • SARI* • Second Avenue Community Association • Sherico Care Homes • SOLON CHS* • South Newham Action on Policing • Theatre Royal Stratford • Tom Allen Community Arts Centre • Tower Hamlets Against Racism* ‡ • Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee* ‡ • Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign* ‡ • University of East London Students' Union • University of Brighton Students' Union* • Vicarage School, PHU • Waltham Forest Trade Union and Community Resource Centre* • Workers' Power* • Youth Connection* ‡

* Other organisations which support and agree with the aims and objectives of NMP although not based in Newham. ‡ Organisations based in Tower Hamlets

Financial Report

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1993

INCOME	1993 £	1992 £
Grant Funding	111 018	117 933
Other Income	2 237	4 137
	<u>113 255</u>	<u>122 070</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries and National Insurance	67 841	64 844
Rent, Rates, Light and Heat	2 187	3 440
Repairs and Maintenance	4 141	3 527
Insurance	1 390	1 515
Telephone	4 731	5 014
Stationary, Postage & Office Material	6 198	8 278
Printing, Publicity and Reports	8 455	14 018
Literature and Subscriptions	652	839
Audit and Accountancy	2 398	1 592
Legal and Professional Fees	460	913
Courses, Conference and Training	1 840	3 536
Motor, Travel and Subsistence Expenses	3 090	5 038
Volunteers' Expenses	1 161	3 046
Bank Charges	316	168
Equipment Purchased	-	2 985
Recruitment Advertising	4 542	2 520
Sundry	295	-
Book Expenses	-	2 252
	<u>109 697</u>	<u>123 435</u>
Taxation	890	(126)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE PERIOD	<u>4 468</u>	<u>(1 491)</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 1993

CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors & Prepayments	19 122	2 366
Cash at Bank and in Hand	<u>7 657</u>	<u>22 195</u>
	26 779	24 561
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and Accrued Expenses	<u>12 381</u>	<u>18 089</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>14 398</u>	<u>6 472</u>
Represented by		
Accumulated Surplus	7 749	3 301
Defence Fund	6 649	3 171

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT

VOTE FOR EQUALITY NOT FOR HATRED

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
ELECTIONS
MAY
1994

A STATEMENT

"We, as Newham-based groups and individuals, wish to express our opposition to racially motivated violence, and our support to black and Asian residents of the borough suffering as a result of such violence. We note the 420 racial attacks in 1993, and the two racist murders in the borough in the last two years. Against this background, we are gravely concerned that these attacks will increase if racism is used as a means of winning votes in the local government elections in May 1994. In particular, the decision of fascists to stand candidates has to be viewed with extreme alarm. Already, they have started to spread their poison in the community by bringing in teams of leafletters from outside the borough to peddle their racist filth.

We call upon all the other political parties and all our communities in Newham to unite against the fascist threat and against any attempt by any party to use racism for electoral gain. We reject attempts to scapegoat any section of the community for the economic and social problems that this borough faces. We believe in equal rights for the whole of the community in Newham, in securing better housing, education and other social needs. The fascists have no policy to meet these needs, only violence and harassment of local residents."

THIS STATEMENT IS SUPPORTED BY:

West Ham United Football Club • South Canning Town Detached Youth Project • Community Links • Royal Victoria Dock Water Sports Centre • Custom House Baptist Church • Newham Asian Women's Project • Eastwards Trust (Hostels) Ltd • One Love Community Association • Emmanuel Youth Project • Docklands Action for Community Enterprise • Community Development Team, Winsor Park Community Centre • Docklands Citizens Advice Bureau • Newham Sixth Form College • Newham Alcohol Advisory Service • Theatre Royal Stratford • Young Black Women's Project • University of East London Students' Union • Beckton Ecumenical Team of Ministers • NEWTEC • Credit Union Development in Newham • Newham Action Against Domestic Violence • Shortstop Housing Project • Newham Black and Ethnic Minority Community Care Forum • East London Small Business Centre • Greater Sylhet Friends Assoc. • Lister Community Assoc. • Asian Ltd • African Caribbean Resource Centre • St James Church • Vicarage Lane Centre • Newham Women's Activities Project • Assoc. of Brothers Union • Community of Zairean Refugees in GB • Newham CRE • Cairde Na nGael • Refugee Forum • Christian Care Centre • St Johns Church, Stratford • Newham United Reformed Churches Group • Newham Play Assoc. • Newham Pensioners Forum • Age Concern Newham • Single Homeless Project • Bemersyde Point Tenants and Residents Assoc. • Rodinglea HA • Benjamin Zephaniah • Sheltered Accommodation Residents Assoc. • Newham Care and Repair • Sub-Co Elders Day Centre • Mankuva Seva Mandal • Canning Town Muslim Welfare Assoc. • Gujarat Welfare Assoc • Church Action on Poverty • Newham UNISON • Rev. Julian Scharf • West Ham and Upton Park Synagogue • St. Francis of Assisi Stratford Justice and Peace Group • Columban Fathers • Bengali National Association • Racial Justice Group (Brentwood Diocese) • Justice and Peace Group (Forest Gate) • Cllr. Alex Thomson (Ind.) • Cllr. Fred Jones (Lib-Dem) • All Labour Councillors, LBN • All Prospective Labour Candidates (May 1994 Local Elections) • South Newham Action on Policing • R. Cole • D. Howells • P. Donovan • D. Jayawardane • K. Piper • F. Giorgi • D. Connor • S. Davanegra • C. Condon • J. Wrafter • Rev. Burke • Sr. Horgan • Bruce Kent • M. Kelly • B. Patel • L. Garfield • Alf Lomas MEP • Carole Tongue MEP • Tony Banks MP • St Saviour's Church, Forest Gate • Tamil Welfare Assoc • Newham Community Housing • P & C Stack • Studio 3 • M. Dommett (Prospective Lib Dem Candidate, May Elections) • Cllr Jim Newstead • Euro Driving Centre • Newham Liberal Democrats • Fellowship House Asian Women's Project • Solon Housing • Clays Lane Housing Co-op • Oliver Stoll • S Goswami • Newham IWA • Peter Skyte, London Regional Officer MSF • Coffeeman Ilford • Rev John Whitwell, Little Ilford Rectory • Newham Deanery Synod • Action and Rights of Disabled People in Newham • Council Workers Against the Nazis • Refugee and Migrants Action Group • Eritrean Association in East London • Newham Bengali Community Trust • Katharine Rumens • Newham United Tamil Assoc • Asian Assoc • Newham Lesbian Group • International Centre for Tamil Affairs • Cllr Lew Boyce • Sickle Cell Society (East London) • Neighbourhood Care Project • UK Hindi Samiti (Newham Branch) • Newham African Caribbean Alliance • Newham North West Labour Party • Memorial Baptist Church Plaistow • Rhona Badham • Theatre Venture • Cllr Graham Lane • Aston Community Involvement Unit • Beckton Against Racism • Newham Women's Support Group, The Froud Centre • Evangelical Christians for Racial Justice • Cllr Alec Kellaway • St Andrews Church • Newham Renewal Programme • Justice for Oliver Campbell Campaign

NEWHAM MONITORING PROJECT (NMP)

is a local community organisation which provides practical advice and support to those suffering racial harassment. We run a 24 hour emergency service, undertake education work and campaign activities.