

newham

monitoring

project

**Youths are fined
or face threats**
My
force
is racist,
chief says

**NF TO MARCH IN
OLDHAM**
'Malicious
racism'

**BNP MEMBER
SCHOOL
RAN FOR THE
BRITANNIA
CONSERVATIVES**

**BNP looks for
political
'allies'**

No safety in numbers for black and
Asian families living in Newham

Asian
visitors
made to pay
£10,000 bond

**Home Office told asylum
seeker his claim was 'pants'**
Road-rage
stabbing
'by racist'

NAIL BOMBS

**Warmongers fuel
the racist attacks**
Shamed Philip says sorry after
he is condemned for racist slur

Inquiry to examine
racism in prisons

**MENAGER'S 12
YEARS OF TERROR**

Anger as anti-racism
conference fails
to attract top
brass

'Savage racist' Met

Footballers face
race attack inquiry
Racist thugs
torment
boy

**Australians
ignore plea
on refugees**
LEGAL
MILITARY
SIXTEEN
TO
LEGAL
MILITARY
SIXTEEN
TO

Asylum
Detention
centre declared
breach of human rights

**THUGS PAINT BOY
WITH NAZI SIGNS**

Place harassment col
e of the Little Englanders
Asylum
seeker
Ju

nmp staff & thanks

NMP Management Committee

Asad Rehman - Chair
 Yasin Patel - Treasurer
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 (from August 2000 - present)
 Parveen Betab Outreach and Development
 (from October 2000- present)
 Tanuka Chokroborty - Loha Outreach and Development
 (from January - October 2000)

Special thanks to management committee and workers who have left the project this year:

Ashika Thanki
 Gilly Mundy
 Kenny Pryce
 Tanuka Chokroborty - Loha

We would like to thank all of our Emergency Service volunteers for their commitment and hard work over the last year.

Office Volunteers:

Ann Claycombe
 Jesse Fernandez
 Sita Suresh Kumar
 Kate Townsend
 Nicola Murdoch
 Sharon Daley

We would like to thank the following organisations for their particular support of or contribution to our work:

Newham Asian Women's Project
 Southall Black Sisters
 Sree Guru Narayana Mission of the UK
 Malayalee Association of the UK
 Columbian Fathers
 Kick It Out
 United Families & Friends Campaign
 INQUEST
 CAPA
 Searchlight Educational Trust
 St. John's Church Stratford
 Trinity Centre
 University of East London Student's Union
 Black and Ethnic Minority Community Care Forum
 Newham Refugee and Homelessness Forum
 Aston Mansfield
 Deighton & Guedella Solicitors
 Christian Fisher Solicitors
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 Bhatt Murphy Solicitors
 Bindmans & Partners Solicitors
 JR Jones Solicitors
 Ghani & Co Solicitors
 Garden Court Chambers
 Tooks Court Chambers
 Amnesty International
 Liberty

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newham monitoring project

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chair's introduction

This, our twenty-first annual report documents the terrible realities of being refugees or asylum seekers in Newham and east London and the general nature of racism upon our communities. We speak about the individuals, families and organisations that resist this racist onslaught, some through choice, others because their very existence depends upon not yielding a single inch. Our first year of activity began in the aftermath of a murder, so again in our twenty-first year. In April 2001, Shibli Rahman, a 34 year old restaurant worker was murdered outside his home in Bow, Tower Hamlets. His murder was gruesome, his torso sliced open with a twelve inch blade. The immediate response from the police and their treatment towards the next of kin was outrageous. NMP led a subsequent community based door to door survey of the local black community near the Rahman family home that revealed widespread racist abuse and intimidation.

But we continue to rebuild and report upon the growth in our Emergency Service, the training of its volunteers and the daily injustices and abuses of a diverse black community. We continue to search for new ways to engage with our communities and such community development is harder now than in past years. All the more reason to publicly thank three individuals who work for NMP and NMP Anti-Racist Trust - Parveen, Zainab and Ruhul. We also mark special thanks to Ashika Thanki, a former Co-ordinator for both organisations who for a long time was the sole worker during very trying and uncertain times. Now more than ever we need to work with sister projects throughout the country and through our continued involvement with the Black Racial Attacks Independent Network, NMP has forged concrete practical links with such organisations. Our hosting of BRAIN has helped NMP to give practical advice to many projects and individuals in Oldham. Last summer, Oldham, Bradford, Burnley and other northern cities experienced an explosion of community anger at the manipulative intervention of the far right from which the mainstream of politics took poisonous words, rearranged them and spat them back into the local community.

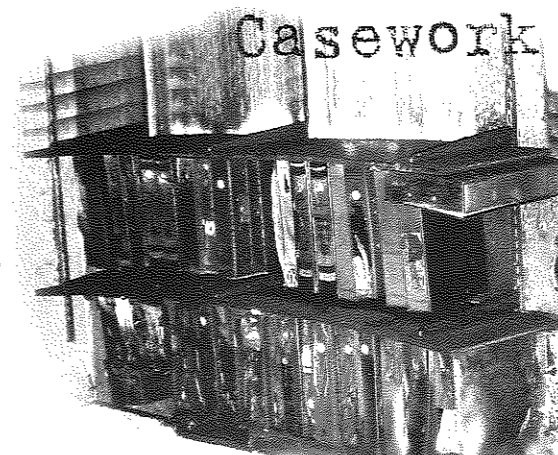
These are dangerous times. From the lips of our most senior political leaders floated not just the

promise of a fairer, more just society, but an anti-racist one. No surprise then at the speed with which such a promise disappeared into the nothingness from which it came. The general election brought out yet again a stench from the mainstream of politics often seen from the far right, who in recent years, have been pre-occupied with other matters. Not any more. The racist bile, insinuations and distortions heaped upon refugees and asylum seekers and ultimately the denial of their humanity came from just about every corner of parliament, city town hall and newspaper - a disgrace, pure and simple. After the destruction and havoc visited upon the US this autumn comes global fallout that stands ready to trample into dust the light of reason itself. In the UK an Afghan mini cab driver is so savagely beaten that he is paralysed from neck to toe. Beatings, attacks upon Mosques, vilification of refugees, asylum seekers and the black community in general is escalating. Worse is to come. In response we are offered the speed of fast tracking for our own protection. Fast track deportations, fast tracking changes in legislation so state officials, especially a new breed immigration official can deal more quickly with black people or those from Eastern Europe. Fast tracking the final destruction of half a century of protection for refugees and the right to asylum established under the Geneva Convention on Human Rights.

Over twenty-one years thousands of individuals have assisted in developing NMP, some as NMP workers or volunteers, others as students or local residents or people further a field who refused to accept that they were powerless to do anything. Our support has come from religious groups, projects for young people, research and educational institutions, parents, charitable foundations and trusts, community and voluntary organisations. It also came from trade unions, local businesses, even at times a range of political parties and groupings, the homeless, and workers from just about every skill and profession it is possible to have. Each gave as they could, time, money, encouragement, and criticism to keep us on course. But finally, it is the 'victims' of abuse and injustice who stand up to resist. Their struggle is not just to save themselves, but all of us - we salute them.

Asad Rehman - Chair

casework overview



The central doctrine of NMP's work since its creation in 1980 has been to provide practical support and advice for those suffering racial harassment and police harassment in east London. This means that casework is pivotal to providing that practical approach to individuals and their situation. Unlike social and welfare agencies, NMP is a community-based project focusing on the needs of individuals and families themselves. Those in need of assistance have full control and ownership over their own case and make decisions of their own choice, ensuring that the family is kept informed and involved at every stage in the progression of the case.

Casework also takes into account the wider issues, concerns and ramifications for the local community. The issues and problems are tackled together to strengthen the community from within. In some instances campaigns are necessary to highlight the injustices and bring them to the public eye. These campaigns are also a direct way of developing community involvement and collective organisation to tackle racial violence.

The basic approach to casework remains the same, although we are continually adapting and re-evaluating our strategies to meet the changes in the wider political arena and the local community.

Objectives in racial harassment cases:

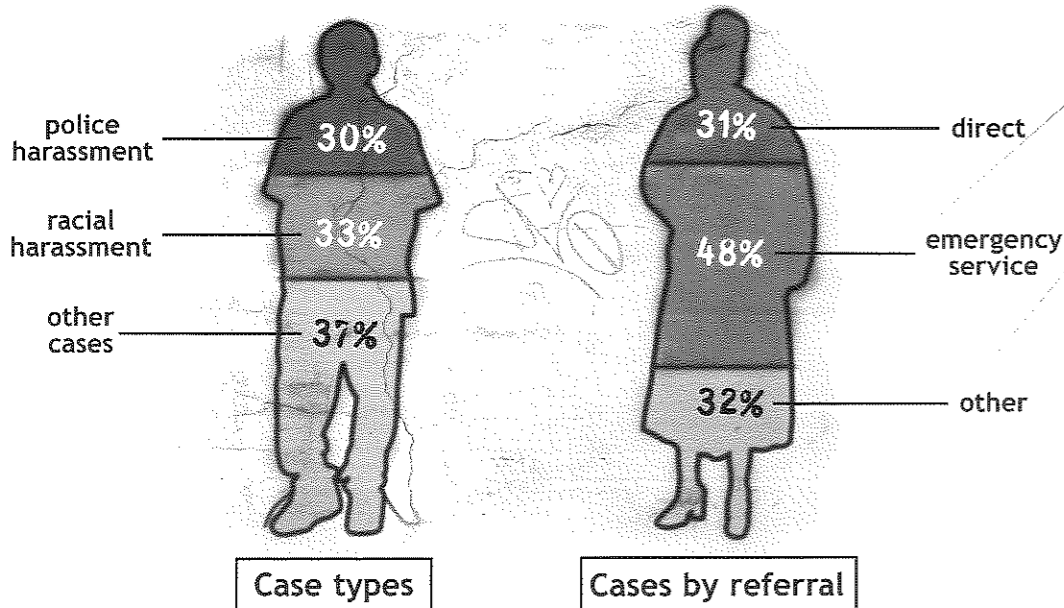
- 1 • Adequately support and advise victims, whilst listening carefully to what they want.
- 2 • Make sure individuals report all incidents to the police and pressurise the police to respond and take action, arrest the perpetrator(s) and bring the correct charges.
- 3 • Pressurise housing associations and the local authority to follow their own racial harassment policies effectively, listen to the victims, and make statutory organisations responsible and accountable to the community.
- 4 • Get councillors and MPs actively involved in working for their constituencies and to monitor the police and local authority policies and practices.
- 5 • Involve other voluntary and community organisations to increase the pressure in exposing police and local community inaction.

Strategies for dealing with police harassment cases:

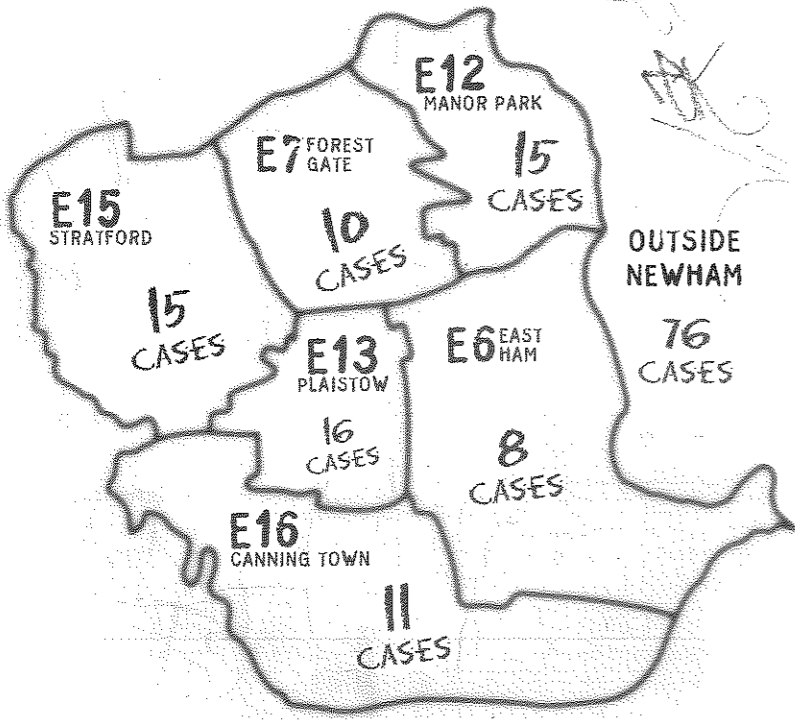
- 1 • Making sure individuals are aware of their rights in the community and when in police custody.
- 2 • Ensure that all individuals receive reputable legal advice from sympathetic solicitors.
- 3 • Assist an individual to make a formal complaint against any maltreatment.
- 4 • Urge elected representatives to acknowledge and investigate police malpractice.
- 5 • Assist community campaigns with the full consent of the family and individuals involved. The launch of a campaign can effectively expose malpractice as well as bring the issue into the public domain.

BREAKDOWN OF CASES.

Each case is unique and therefore varies in length and in the number of interventions made by NMP. A few cases require a single intervention on behalf of the individual and can be resolved fairly quickly. The majority of NMP cases require lengthy interviews, numerous meetings with a range of statutory organisations and frequent correspondence.



Cases by area



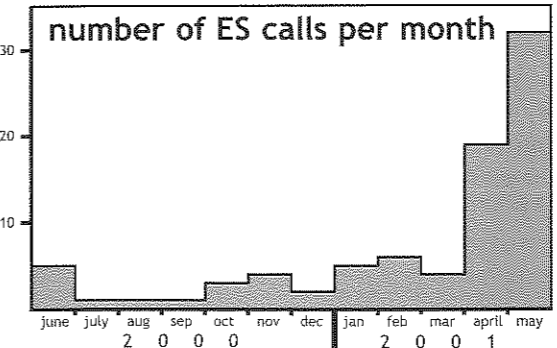
Total: 150 cases

Emergency service

0800 169 3111



The NMP 24-hour Emergency Service line was originally set up in 1983, the first of its kind in east London. It ran with tremendous success until 1997 when, due to funding difficulties, NMP was unable to sustain the service. Since the re-launch in June 2000, 48% of cases have come to the project via the 24-hour Emergency Service. That is an outstanding achievement for the first year of our new easy access number 0800 169 3111. The new service is not only successful but demanding and as a result the Emergency Service worker post has become a full time position. The service has proven to be invaluable to those experiencing violent and persistent harassment.



NMP ensures that through the 24-hour line, practical advice and support is always available by telephone from other workers and committee members. Through our volunteer support system NMP has access to 24 volunteers, who speak 10 different languages within the community. NMP has also identified a number of new communities in the East London area and we are actively seeking to recruit volunteers and translators for those communities.

We will continue to review and improve the Emergency Service, as best practice is important to NMP. We are also members of The Telephone Helpline Association which offers support to non-profit making helplines, including tailor-made training schemes, funding advice and assistance with improving systems and monitoring with a view to quality services.

We currently have 46 trained local volunteers to cover the line out-of-office hours which enables the service to run the help line 24 hours a day seven days a week. Without their continuing and unfailing commitment we would not be able to provide full and comprehensive project support to battle against racial harassment and civil injustice. NMP gratefully acknowledges their help and assistance.

We also received an increasing number of requests during the summer months for information on stop and search. Our records show that high proportions of these calls are from Forest Gate and Plaistow. In other words localised around the centralised Newham police stations. NMP is revising the "Know Your Rights Card" for publication in five different languages.

Many users of the Emergency Service are from friends or relatives of people being detained in police custody. They are often concerned for the welfare of their loved ones and seek help from NMP to monitor those in detention. NMP aims to ensure that each individual's rights are protected and that they receive reputable legal representation.

Our case statistics analysis also indicates that the NMP Emergency Service is used almost equally by surrounding boroughs. Tower Hamlets, Hackney and as far a field as Barking and Dagenham are all users of the service. The majority of callers are experiencing racial harassment in the local neighbourhood and we believe that under-reporting of issues relating to police harassment is still occurring. Many families have a low expectation of police response, largely because such issues are not a priority for the police. Some are wary of putting themselves in a position where they are likely to experience negativity and vicious attempts to belittle their experiences. Finally, it is significant that in the majority of cases, when it was known that NMP had been contacted at the scene via the Emergency Service on any incident, the police responded differently to the individual family and victims.

racial harassment

Racial harassment

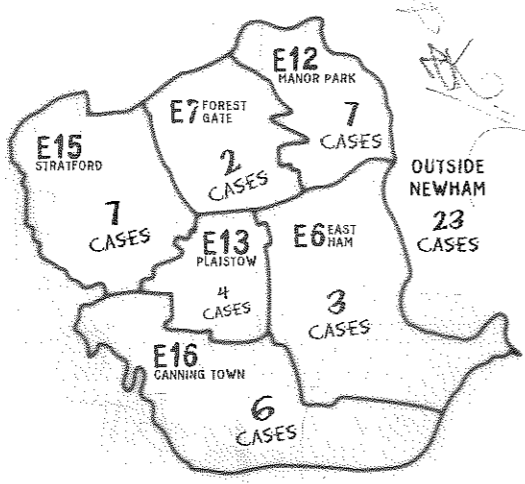


After twenty-one years of monitoring racial harassment in Newham, NMP's casework is evidence that time and again statutory agencies, (particularly the local council and police) are failing to deal with ongoing racism. A large proportion of NMP's current work relates to the failure of statutory agencies to act and implement their own policies and procedures. In light of the advances within the law, such as the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, this lack of action remains damaging to the black community and their confidence in those authorities is still low. NMP continues to monitor and pressure the police, local authority and other agencies to prevent families having to endure prolonged racial violence and safeguard their right to life without the threat of racial harassment.

There has been a marked increase in the number of racial harassment cases reported to NMP, since the re-launch of the Emergency Service in June 2000. The statistics below illustrate current patterns of racial harassment across the borough. However the statistics do not represent a realistic picture when attempting to measure the extent of racial harassment in Newham. After three years of limited casework, due to withdrawal of funds by Newham council in 1997, NMP is still in a process of re-building itself. The new services are not yet fully utilised by the local black community. However racial harassment has always been vastly under-reported, and we are presently only dealing with a fraction of the racial harassment cases in the borough. This is in comparison to the 400 a year average of police and racial harassment cases dealt with in past years.

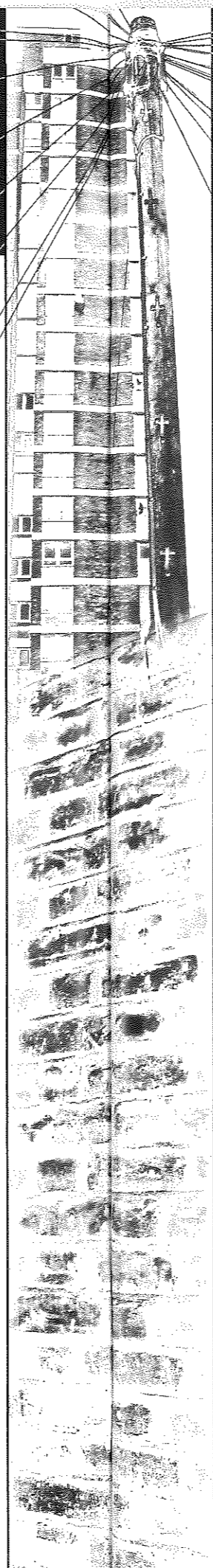
Whether these statistics are representative or not, they cannot reflect the real impact of racial harassment on people and the suffering they experience. Families and individuals are still being subjected to constant abuse, threats and criminal damage to property. Though considered low-level harassment by some authorities, it can be as debilitating as actual assaults.

Racial harassment by area

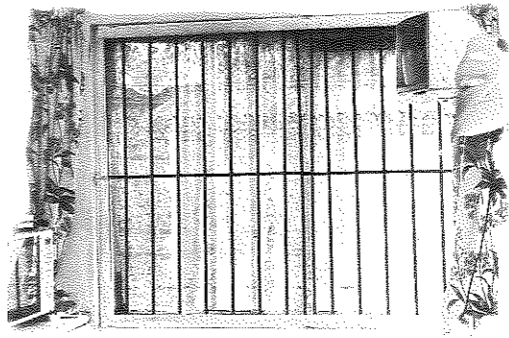


Total: 49 cases

The following section focuses on cases which highlight the failure of statutory agencies to respond to racial harassment, with particular attention to Newham council, housing associations and schools.



Housing associations



Whilst most local authorities have policies for tackling racial harassment, this is not necessarily true of housing associations, the new social landlords who have taken over much of the local authorities' council housing stock. This poses a real problem for black tenants, particularly with the smaller housing associations. One of the main problems NMP faces when dealing with racial harassment in housing association property is that even when there are policies in place, they are simply not implemented. This was also true when east London council housing departments were more directly involved as housing providers, but years of pressure by NMP had made councils more responsive to racial harassment.

Mrs M, Canning Town.

On 3rd October 2000 Mrs. M arrived at NMP's office in a distressed state. She speaks Somali and was directed to NMP by a member of the local Somali community. We found out that she had been suffering repeated racial attacks on her home and she was adamant that those responsible were a family living on the same estate. With the assistance of an interpreter, NMP also discovered that Mrs. M is a senior citizen who lives with her adult son who has severe learning difficulties.

The family endured three years of continuous racial harassment; verbal abuse, stone throwing, spitting and their flat windows were broken on a number of occasions. When these incidents were reported to the police Mrs. M felt they were not taken seriously. Police ignorance and negligence meant that no attempt was made to use an official translator, they expected Mrs. M's son to translate. However due to his disability he did not understand the full extent of the problems and on occasions the family were reluctant to call the police. Not surprisingly,

the racist family continued to threaten and verbally abuse the M family.

Mrs M tried to report the harassment to her housing officer but the housing officer failed to respond. NMP arranged a meeting with Mrs M's housing officer at East Thames Housing Office (ETHG). On the day of the appointment Mrs M waited at the ETHG, for a considerable period of time, to find that the housing officer had mistakenly gone to Mrs M's home. In the meantime a duty officer was contacted by one of Mrs M's neighbours, who heard that some other neighbours had been plotting to firebomb the M family home that very night. A message was passed on to Mrs M's housing officer. NMP took immediate action with a request to report the matter to the police, and find alternative temporary housing for the family. By the afternoon it became apparent that the housing officer had not made any report directly to the police and as a consequence the police did not investigate the threat. As a result the homeless persons unit refused the family temporary accommodation. By this stage the housing officer became evasive.

It turned out that the housing officer did not report the threat to the police for 24 hours and as a result the M family spent a further terrifying night at that address. However, NMP made regular calls to the M family throughout the night and convinced the police to make regular patrols of the estate. Thankfully nothing happened that night although the fear and terror undoubtedly kept the family awake.

During the following month the harassment escalated, with windows smashed continuously. We are not only convinced that the racists took advantage of Mr. M's disability but they spread a vicious rumour that Mr M was a child abuser. NMP lobbied the Community Safety Unit (CSU) to install cameras to catch the perpetrators. By this stage the incidents occurred on a daily basis, the family eventually went to the Homeless Persons' Unit. Typically, the family was offered bed and breakfast accommodation in Margate. Mrs M was petrified of moving into a predominantly white area following her recent experiences and her fears were further fuelled by the press coverage relating to asylum seekers in Kent. Since this was the only offer and wholly unacceptable, the M family felt they had no alternative but to move in with relatives in Waltham Forest, in overcrowded conditions.

A man was later arrested for criminal damage, but he was not part of the gang that lived on the estate or suspected of being responsible for the persistent harassment.

The police released this man with a caution and the racists were never brought to justice. Similarly East Thames Housing Group, failed to take any action against the known racist perpetrators. ETHG had the responsibility to follow their own racial harassment policy, by giving the known perpetrators interviews and issuing formal warnings. If the procedures were applied it could have led to them enforcing a possession order resulting in eviction of the perpetrators. This would have sent a clear message to racists in the area that such behaviour would not be tolerated. Instead this racist family was left to commit the same offences again and drive out other black families from the same estate.

The family was only re-housed in January 2001 after spending three months in an uncomfortable and overcrowded situation in temporary accommodation.

Mrs TJ, East Ham.

In Mrs TJ's case 4 years elapsed before East Thames Housing Group (ETHG) responded to a case of severe racial harassment. Significantly, Mrs TJ had the same housing officer as Mr. M. Mrs TJ also contacted NMP after racial harassment by her neighbours - two white men. Mrs TJ lives with her two children and is registered blind. Mrs TJ had reported incidents of racial harassment to her housing officer from the outset, but the harassment persisted with abusive and racist language, vandalism and shouting in the middle of the night. At times the men next door were visited by friends who lingered outside Mrs TJ's house, hurling abuse at them.

Despite Mrs TJ's reports to the housing office, no action was taken. Eventually the harassment escalated until both Mrs TJ and her son were physically assaulted. Both of the men banged on Mrs TJ's door, claiming her son had scratched their car. Mrs TJ answered the door and they tried to barge into her house. Mrs TJ stood in the doorway in an attempt to protect her son, but one of the men slapped her in the face. Mrs TJ managed to shut the door. Later that same evening, the front door windowpane was smashed. Mrs TJ states:

"When the police arrived, they were talking to each other in the corner and started laughing amongst one another...the police did not take the matter seriously until my brother arrived. I cannot speak good English. My brother can so they started to take it seriously. After this they went next door and arrested the man."

The man was released on the grounds of lack

of evidence. This is a fundamental problem when attempting to bring racists to court. On a separate occasion Mrs TJ's son (NH) was attacked. NH was with a friend on his way home when one of his neighbours shouted 'Paki come here'. The man approached NH, and punched him. The police took hours to arrive but did not take the matter seriously and told NH that they would not be able to do anything. It was only after NMP's involvement that a full investigation was conducted and a charge of racially aggravated assault was brought against the attacker. Disturbingly, when it came to the trial, the charge was reduced to common assault resulting in a small fine.

Despite the fact that the family had been attacked and one of the perpetrators had been convicted, the housing officer was still reluctant to deal with the matter. A letter was sent to the NMP offices stating that:

"If Mrs. TJ is being harassed then she would need to contact her Community Housing Officer and submit evidence of harassment."

The letter from ETHG arrived 4 years after Mrs TJ had reported the first incident, and raised serious concerns in relation to their response to the severe racial harassment being suffered by Mrs TJ. In this instance the housing officer was well aware of the incidents, since Mrs TJ had been to visit her 3 months previously to give a full account of the harassment. A series of 10 phone calls were made by one agency, in an arduous attempt to contact the housing officer, but they were ignored.

In this case NMP had serious doubts as to whether the racial harassment was being taken seriously or whether ETHG were operating a victim orientated racial harassment policy. It is the responsibility of the ETHG to gather relevant evidence under such circumstances. The perpetrators were also in serious breach of their tenancy agreement.

NMP responded, demanding that immediate action be taken against the perpetrators and to re-house Mrs TJ as a priority. In response, ETHG contacted NMP and arranged a meeting with Mrs TJ. ETHG apologised and awarded Mrs TJ maximum points for harassment, bringing her near the top of the list for re-housing.

The Race Relations Act 1976, Section 71 imposes a duty on all authorities to make appropriate arrangements with a view to ensuring that their various functions are carried out with due regard, to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination. It is imperative that these

responsibilities are recognised by the local authority, as contractors, and that they should play an integral part in ensuring that housing associations have appropriate policies and procedures in place which are fully implemented.

In many of our cases involving housing association tenancies, the local authority will not intervene although they have a responsibility to tenants. Housing association employees are often unaware of the integral role that the local authority should play. In one NMP case for example, an East Thames Housing Group officer was unaware that it is normal procedure for the Council to send Alert to attend racial harassment perpetrator interviews. A lack of information and poor training in the area of racial harassment appears to be a major contributory factor resulting in unsatisfactory responses.

DEVELOPMENTS IN LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

The last few years have seen rapid changes to the Council's equality structures, including the disappearance of the network of Race Equality Officers and the privatisation their former role transferred by contract to Alert. In part this has been a reflection of the transfer of social housing to housing associations. There had been a need for some time to re-examine the role of the Council's housing equality teams since their function had become unclear. Their primary task became that of reversing the structures created by the Race Equality Review in 1992, when departments were made more responsible for implementing race equality policies.

However, in the course of an internal review in January 2001, Newham Council proposed that 'equality activities' needed to be 'integrated into mainstream management processes'. In a submission to the Housing Department, NMP raised a number of important concerns about this approach, not least that the review seemed to represent a major step backwards. Moreover, it seemed to run counter to the way that other statutory bodies are adding greater scrutiny and specialism, in order to address their new legal responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to ensure that all aspects of their services are anti-discriminatory.

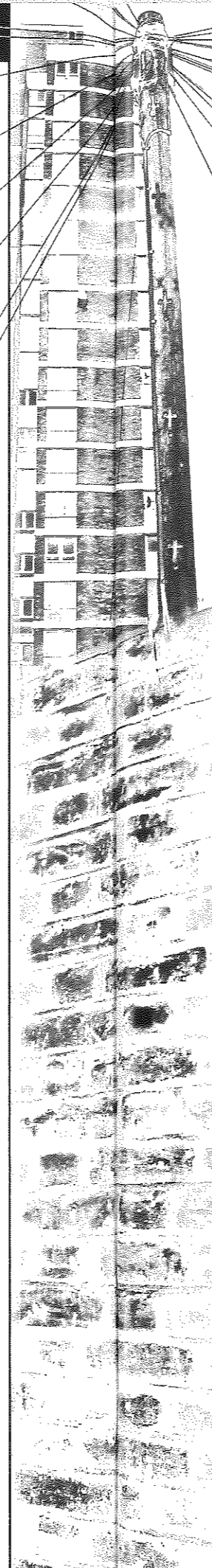
NMP broadly supported the view that a commitment to equality and particularly tackling racial harassment should be the

responsibility of every Council employee. One of our chief concerns about the former race equality structure within the Housing Department and other departments within Newham Council was the tendency to 'ghettoise' racial harassment. This resulted in all casework on incidents of racial harassment being pushed in the direction of Race Equality Officers, which had sole responsibility for implementing procedures, rather than monitoring the effective delivery of overall Council policy. In turn, this led to a situation where Race Equality Officers defended their own positions and departments in the face of legitimate public concern.

A continuous theme of our casework, since the Council adopted a racial harassment policy in the mid-1980s, has been the Council's failure to implement it. Complaints from black people suffering racial harassment have centred on the refusal by local housing officers to recognise peoples' experiences of racial harassment and the racist intent behind experiences of harassment. Incidents were merely categorised as 'neighbourhood disputes or 'anti-social behaviour.' Specialist race equality teams were meant to monitor all cases. This is the danger of 'mainstreaming' race equality issues - when in effect the issue is marginalised.

There are numerous reasons why this drift can happen, as identified in an April 2000 study by the University of East London through interviews with local housing officers. Council staff can (and do) make judgements for themselves about what is 'racist' and what is 'anti-social.' Equally, with an already heavy workload, including rent and enforcement, there is no incentive to act on the issue of under-reporting, particularly as racial incidents are complex and there may be a general pessimism about being able to take effective action. Without effective monitoring, the ways that black tenants are supported is dependent on the commitment of individual staff and managers. The findings took us back to a position where black people suffering harassment were, 15 years ago.

Whilst performance indicators may be effective in monitoring numerical targets, such as the number of black staff recruited at different grades, there is still a danger of cases not being dealt with. The ways in which housing departments respond has an impact on the level of reporting from those suffering racism in the same street or estate. Statistics that may say, for example, that 92% of reported incidents have



been recorded and referred to Alert, but this is meaningless without quality support to individuals and families.

The review notes that the Housing Department 'has established a specialist team to deal exclusively with anti-social behaviour,' adding that it is 'anachronistic for this team to deal with all anti-social behaviour except the most virulent and hate inspired examples.' The assumption is that other, less 'serious' incidents will be dealt with separately. This seems to us to be the wrong approach. Our own casework continues to identify the impact of what has been described as 'low-level racial harassment' on people's lives and is backed up by a further research in 2000 by the Joseph Rowntree Trust. It notes that:

"Everyday, routine racism and the policies and procedures to prevent it do not dovetail when the complainant enters the complaints system. The research shows that people have resorted to a range of informal strategies to prevent racist victimisation before they formalise their complaint. However, the complaint system they enter is event-focused, where evidence of an incident is required. The context and impact on daily lives are not part of this process. The routine nature of racism is not recognised or taken seriously by the agent. The knowledge that black and minority ethnic people have collected about racism throughout their lives is ignored and separated from the incident that they are reporting. Thus, establishing the racist element of incidents falls firmly on those being victimised.

There is a danger that the most 'virulent' and 'hate inspired' examples of racial harassment, with the most readily available evidence, are dealt with rather than those which involve a series of events that may be building up over a period of time.

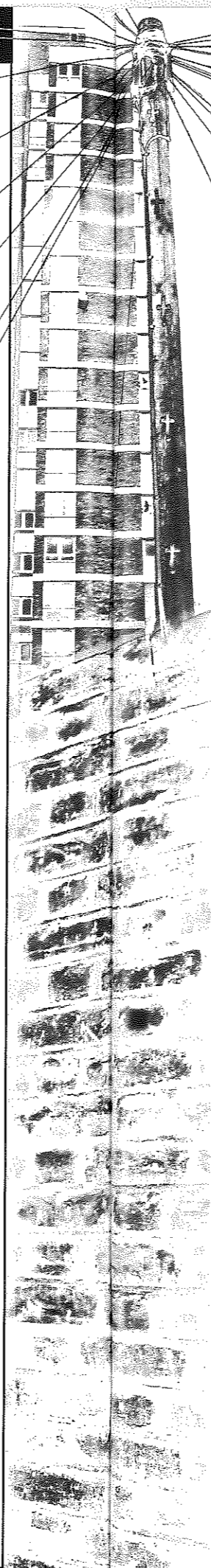
The temptation to divide harassment into 'serious' and 'other' cases can quickly lead to a narrowing of definitions of racial harassment and the racist dimension of incidents being sidelined as simply 'anti-social behaviour'. This runs contrary to everything that came out of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in terms of recognising and accepting that victims of racist crimes are best placed to decide for themselves whether they are suffering racism.

MANAGING ALERT'S COMPLIANCE OF ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS.

The review notes that 'at present much of the casework, advocacy and victim support activity we provide is purchased on contract from Alert. It is the view of the equalities team that this work is valuable and of a high standard.' This is not a view we share. We have a number of cases within NMP where individuals have complained that Alert has failed to keep in contact with them after initial referral or where incorrect information has been given. NMP has had to intervene to get the Council, the police or housing associations to resurrect Alert's involvement. We feel that it is essential that the Housing Department takes responsibility not simply for monitoring the number of cases that Alert deals with but the quality of the support provided. The Housing Department should be aware that individuals do not see the distinction between 'purchaser' and 'provider' and Alert is seen as part of the Council. It is therefore the Council that is judged on its ability to deliver its commitment to racial equality by Alert's compliance with its contract.

One of the most disappointing aspects of Newham Council's approach is the emphasis placed on bureaucratic and managerial change. As a result of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, there have been a number of studies addressing ways to improve how racial harassment is tackled. The opportunity for a comprehensive review on how housing departments respond to equalities issues, including proper consultation and greater emphasis on practical strategies to prevent racial harassment, rather than simply managing its aftermath, seems to have been missed. Whether the Housing Equality Team is 'deleted from the establishment' and equality activities are 'integrated into mainstream management processes' is not the key issue. Examining new ways to prevent racial harassment and tackle it swiftly and imaginatively clearly is. That is the challenge set by the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and it still needs to be addressed in Newham.

Concerns about the Housing Department's future response to racist violence against council tenants are based on our casework over the last 21 years and particularly the treatment of families in the last year. One example amongst many is the experience of Mrs AJ and her family, who were effectively abandoned by Newham Council and left to endure a catalogue of terrifying racial attacks.



MRS AJ, CANNING TOWN.

Mrs AJ lived in Canning Town, notorious for a high incidence of racial harassment. Mrs AJ had two young children and was pregnant with her third when she approached NMP in 2000; she had been harassed since 1998. Her front door had been set alight whilst she was at home; luckily a neighbour alerted her.

A number of other acts of vandalism to her property and two arson attacks on her car and shed followed. Mrs AJ's was the only black family on the estate and had been singled out for harassment, but when she went to see her community housing officer, she was told that he was going to lunch and that she had to wait.

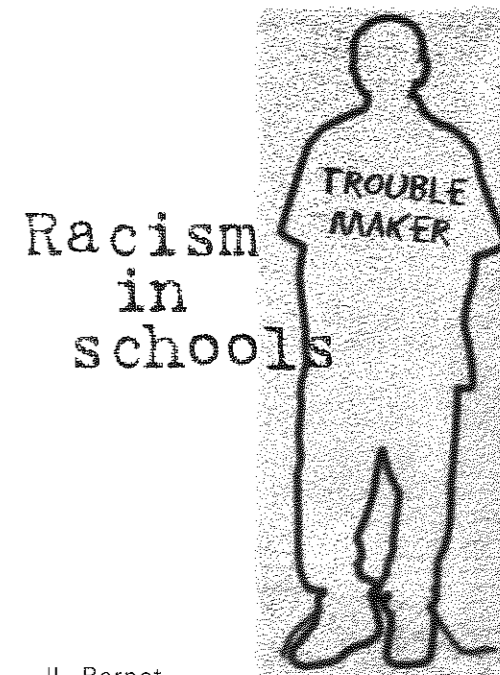
An hour later when Mrs AJ enquired where he was, she was told that he was not going to see her after all and that she was to go to see Alert. He refused to see Mrs AJ. Mrs AJ was heavily pregnant, extremely distressed and her two young children felt terrorised. NMP put pressure on the Council to re-house Mrs AJ as a priority. Within 2 weeks she was offered a property.

In a bungled attempt to deal with this matter they offered her a property on the 3rd floor with no functioning lift. At this point she was about 33 weeks pregnant and unable to climb stairs. The Council deemed this a suitable offer, and considered her rejection of it to be unreasonable. NMP argued that this was totally unacceptable and that it could not possibly be regarded as a suitable offer. The Council finally offered Mrs AJ a property in Stratford.

AN INQUIRY

In July 2001, a report of a six-month inquiry on racism and the response of housing associations, backed by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), National Housing Federation and the Federation of Black Housing Associations (FBHO), was launched. Unfortunately, the inquiry seems to have been a wasted opportunity and we are seriously concerned about its failure to make recommendations based on the experience of people suffering racial harassment. The inquiry report fails to address the implications of the recent riots in Oldham and Burnley and ignores the key issue of housing segregation. Gurbux Singh, chair of the CRE, has conceded that, with hindsight, segregation is a 'major omission' from the report. The inquiry focuses instead on the ethnic composition of housing association boards and management teams and their need

to reflect the communities that they serve. Whilst undoubtedly important, our experience suggests that the implementation of racial harassment procedures is not automatically strengthened by the number of senior black staff in housing associations, just as Race Equality Officers in local authorities offered few guarantees of consistent support. Rather, it is the culture of housing associations in their responses to the harassment of black tenants that needs changing.



JL, Barnet.

JL is a five-year-old black boy who has been singled out and discriminated against by teachers and parents of a school in Barnet, where he is one of approximately six black children. The harassment began in October 2000 after an alleged incident of inappropriate behaviour that involved 15 other children in JL's class. The details of the incident have not been given to his parents. When Social Services completed an investigation into the incident and the behaviour of the class it was found that six children not including JL have behavioural problems, but a hard copy of this report has still not been released.

The other parents at the school in Barnet produced leaflets and boycotted the school, demanding that young JL be thrown out of the school. This group of vigilante parents also marched to the town hall on two occasions. The local press picked up the story portraying a distorted and unbalanced view. Comments were printed by a male part-time PE teacher regarding his resignation puzzled JL's parents. "I felt that I couldn't teach in an environment where I wasn't sure if I might be the next one to have allegations made against me."

Several weeks later JL mentioned that his teacher had hit him and frightened him. JL's parents sought advice from Barnet CRE as soon as the problems started in October 2000. Up to April 2001 nothing concrete had been done to forward a resolution and the family had simply been asked to fill out several forms. The family approached NMP in April 2001 when it was apparent the CRE could not assist in this case in the way the family had hoped. Although this case is outside NMP's catchment area, NMP could not turn the family away. A young boy's future and reputation was at stake.

After a couple of weeks of the family coming to NMP, JL was excluded from school on the 24th April for a fixed term of 25 days. The Head Teacher stated in her letter of exclusion that this was solely to enable JL to find another school and if he returned the exclusion would be made permanent. The family continues to fight the injustice JL has suffered. Young JL is now six and has settled into his new school with many new friends. Social workers and counsellors have been monitoring JL since October 2000. No behavioural problems have been identified and JL has been described as a happy intelligent child, however he has suffered a blow to his confidence after the racism he suffered at the school.

NMP arranged for the JL family to meet with one of the leading discrimination solicitors in central London. He is now working with NMP and the family exploring the legal options open to them.

The above mentioned school failed to dispel the rumours surrounding young JL and this led to him being stereotyped and victimised. The school had a duty to protect young JL and an opportunity to educate the other parents. There was no evidence to support the vicious claims of some parents and teachers. Whilst the diocese of the school have decided to carry out an investigation the spiralling rumours and the effect on JL will not be at the centre of it. The investigation is to appease the other parents and answer questions as to why they had to take action. An independent investigation needs to be carried out with teachers being made accountable for their actions and then answer directly to a disciplinary committee if found to be in neglect of their duty.

As NMP is an independently funded body it has no difficulties in challenging the Local Education Authority on any issue. Many other agencies can have difficulties in dealing with discrimination cases particularly when the LEA

is directly implicated. NMP has observed situations whereby cases have been advised not to contact third parties, solicitors or any independent organisations. This was such in the case of Mr Q.

Mr Q, Plaistow

Mr Q, a 14-year-old black boy, reported that his teacher had racially abused him in May 2000. Mr Q and his parents followed the correct procedures and channels but still found it almost impossible to get his case taken forward. A white teacher in a Newham secondary school was continuing a campaign of bullying and intimidation. The racial abuse continued including an incident when the teacher made derogatory and embarrassing comments about Mr Q in front of a whole classroom of children. The teacher thought it would be amusing to pronounce Mr Q's name in a mocked African accent causing the class to laugh and ridicule Mr Q's Somali background. Furthermore, the teacher threatened Mr Q on several occasions by saying, 'if you don't do what I ask you, I will tell your father to beat you with a bamboo whip', mockingly in an African accent. Mr Q had been singled out to perform menial tasks around the classroom and on one occasion the teacher pulled off his hat, which he was wearing in accordance with his religious beliefs, and threw it to the floor.

Mr Q and his family settled in London 10 years ago after they managed to escape the atrocities they faced, in Somalia. They were granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK. They have suffered continuous racism on the basis that they are black and also refugees. NMP is extremely concerned at the abusive racist behaviour of any teacher who acts in this manner.

Mr Q and his family first contacted Newham Council for Racial Equality (NCRE) in July 2001, when he was given a number of options from mediation to legal action. During this time Mr Q's father was told by the head teacher to withdraw the complaint. He was also told not to continue to contact other agencies, as it would disrupt his son's education. There were rumours that NCRE might face difficulties with future funding if they pursued the case further. NCRE requested NMP's assistance to ensure that all procedures were followed correctly and this enabled NCRE to become witnesses to the

case. Unfortunately, despite the possible action against the teacher, this did not stop him from continuing his racist behaviour. The teacher also began to racially abuse Mr Q's younger sister aged 11 and his older brother who was due to start his GCSEs. The teacher threatened Ms Q with violence as he clenched his fist and held it up to her face saying, 'I'll show you what a hit is'. This incident was reported to the police, resulting in an investigation.

Mr Q's father was faced with a difficult decision, as it became clear that his three children could not remain at the school if he were to pursue a complaint. This is a recurring problem that is faced by many families when this stage is reached. After painful consideration, the Q family decided to withdraw their complaint, insisting that the teacher should not teach any of the three children. The family were prepared to fight despite the difficulties they faced in getting people and the authorities to believe them. However it became apparent that the children would have to be transferred to other schools in borough. In the light of the problems they would encounter, as school places are rare, the family felt pressured and the fight became too much.

The Newham LEA student support services failed to offer the children adequate support. The head teacher stood by the member of her staff, refusing even to consider the numerous incidents, which had been pointed out to her. From this case, it has been shown that head-teachers can lack objectivity and can collude in covering up and dismissing cases of genuine racial harassment. What is needed, therefore, is an independent body to investigate all allegations of this nature outside of the School and LEA.

Ultimately Newham Council and its LEA sought to make the process so complicated and long winded that the family retracted the complaint. This is the pattern NMP continues to see in cases of racial harassment involving schools, where the option of alternative schooling is not available to parents.

Exclusions are used as racist tools against many black children, especially young African and African Caribbean males. Black boys are two-thirds more likely to be excluded from school; this perpetuates a stereotype and prevents black youths from achieving academically. Excluding pupils is no longer used as a last resort for continuous disruptive or violent behaviour, but has become increasingly more

common across schools in London. Children are losing teaching time for minor incidents of bad behaviour. Using exclusions as a common place punishment is an ineffective method of excluding children with difficulties, particularly children from the black community. NMP has witnessed a school taking this one step further by denying the pupil the right to appeal.

Sacked 'nig nog' teacher says he's not a racist

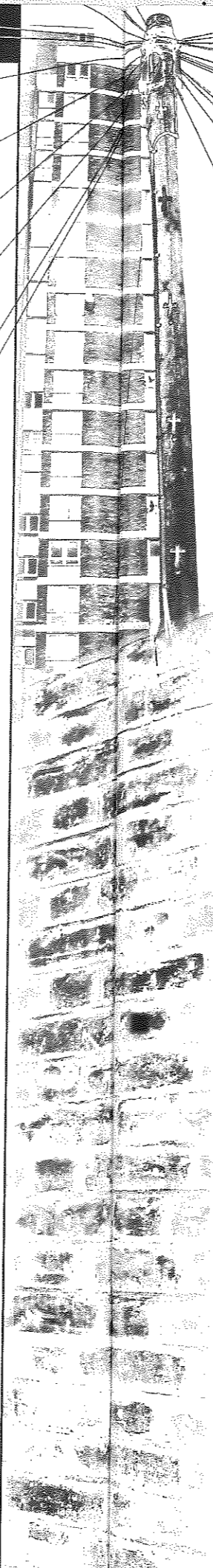
Mr B, Plaistow

Mr B was a victim of a racist attack detailed later (p21) in the Policing Section. Mr B was seriously assaulted by a racist in May and September 2000. As a result the perpetrator was convicted. The school however, offered no support to Mr B during this time. The school stated that Mr B should not bring his problems to school. As the incident was outside school premises, the school were not in a position to assist. Mr B had experienced problems with his teachers since June 1999.

During October 2000 it became apparent that the problems with teachers had escalated. Mr B and his mother felt that Mr B had been singled out for victimisation. He was targeted as the culprit for incidents in class, even when his fellow students agreed that he was innocent. Mr B is a very popular young black boy, with a strong sense of individualism. Teachers have described him as, 'high profile' relating to his status rather than behaviour.

NMP contacted the LEA in November 2000, in an attempt to rectify problems Mr B was having. Discussions with student support services resulted in a meeting with the School Governors. Mr B and his Mother decided to start the procedure to transfer him to another school. The school became obstructive. It transpired that the transfer forms had been misplaced.

NMP have seen numerous cases where it has been extremely difficult to get schools and the LEA to engage in constructive discussion particularly when the school is accused of being at fault. There are numerous glossy policies and documents written by Newham Council and its LEA on how to tackle racism and the importance of grasping opportunities to address internal issues and concerns, but the reality is vastly different. The LEA refuses to admit that they have failed to tackle racial harassment effectively and it continues to perpetuate racist stereotypes.



'Stop these bully teachers'

As the case against the racist teacher continued and enquiries were made, the school sought to isolate Mr B further as teachers and pupils made jokes about the attacks he suffered. The investigation and counselling sessions took up considerable time and as a result, Mr B needed to take time off from school. The period taken off was either side of his Christmas half term. Mr B's mother called the school on a number of occasions but was unable to speak to the Head Teacher. She wrote a letter on 9/1/01 notifying the school that Mr B would be returning to school on 11/1/01. Mr B returned to school only to be sent home at lunchtime. The Head Teacher told him that he had been taken off the school roll and that his place had been given to a new student. The school had not thought it necessary to inform the family of their actions in advance. Communication with the school became extremely problematic, as letters were never received until after NMP had spoken to the Head Teacher. The family received notification in the post on the 12th January 2001; the envelope was postmarked 11th January but dated the 8th January 2001. Letters of appeal and complaint were sent to LEA and the school but no responses were received.

productively with the LEA. Mr B is currently seeking expert legal advice from specialist education and discrimination lawyers.

The trends to isolate, exclude and label black pupils experiencing racial harassment, will be further exacerbated by the Government's policy of devolving more power to headteachers and school governing bodies. Not only will schools have greater powers of selection when children start school, but as NMP's cases demonstrate, they will also take any measures they deem necessary to remove those pupils that they think do not fit in or they regard as being troublesome. NMP will continue to work with families locally to tackle these issues and organisations like Black Racial Attacks Independent Network (BRAIN) to ensure the policy implications arising out of our casework are fed into the national policy agenda.

The bureaucracy within the LEA is frustrating and confusing for families, as it becomes almost impossible to make any progress or even engage in the complaints procedure. Without advice and support many families find it impossible to challenge the system. There are strict guidelines for the LEA and schools on exclusions, appeals and complaints, but as these cases highlight, these are not easy to follow, particularly when certain rights of appeal and procedure are denied to families. Delaying tactics and contradictory explanations are repeatedly seen in cases of discrimination and racial harassment in schools.

The school claims that welfare visits were made to Mr B's home, but that the family had moved. This was not the case. The school later claimed that JS who had been convicted in court for attacking Mr B had told the school that the family had moved.

In Mr B's school record there was no record of communication between the school and LEA. There were also no reports of welfare visits or documents relating to Mr B having been taken off the school roll. There were however documents that appeared to be actively seeking proof of Mr B's bad behaviour and personal problems. Since January 2001, neither the family nor NMP has been able to communicate

School inspector slated for race comments

policing

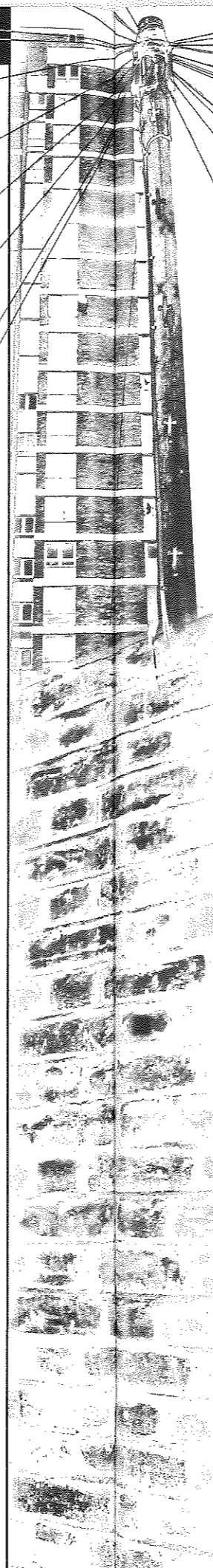
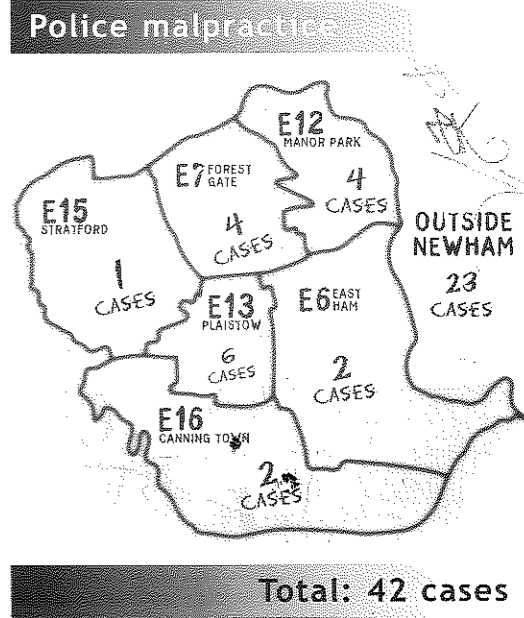


Each year NMP records numerous incidents where the police have responded inadequately to racist violence or have criminalised, victimised and humiliated innocent black people. This year is unfortunately no different. Two years after the Macpherson Report, the creation of the Community Safety Units (CSU) has not fundamentally changed the way in which black members of the community are treated by the police. Racist policing is commonplace for black people in east London, testimony that the police are indeed institutionally racist. Police brutality resulting in deaths in custody and the non-prosecution of those responsible clearly illustrate the fact that the police remain above the law.

victims. They are still criminalising members of the black community for reporting racist crimes. Consequently, their actions continue to perpetuate an atmosphere of distrust and a massive under reporting of racist crimes. Black communities cannot therefore take anti-racist initiatives by the police seriously until the police eradicate racism within their own ranks.

CSUs were set up within the Metropolitan Police to combat all hate crimes. Yet NMP still needs to apply sustained pressure in order to get the police to prosecute racists and take incidents of racial harassment seriously. White perpetrators however are finding it easy to allege they are being racially harassed and to receive support from the police. CSUs have served as a very effective public relations exercise by giving the Commissioner a new box to tick, rather than genuinely tackling crimes against black communities.

The number of NMP cases where there has been police malpractice is just under a third of our total caseload, co-existing equally with the number of racial harassment cases for the year. It is hardly surprising that the black community remains fearful and cautious of the police.



Police response to racial harassment



no.122 who made counter-allegations against the O family. Mr O explained to the police that his family had been harassed for 2 years continuously. The police ignored him, told him to keep his mouth shut and advised the family to stay inside. After the visit from the police, the neighbours assembled outside the O family house. Denise pushed Mrs O violently, shouting at her abusively. Mrs O did not call the police as they had already demonstrated they would do nothing about the ongoing harassment.

In May 2001, Denise attacked Mr O, pushing him repeatedly. Denise lunged at Mr O's 16-year old daughter, grabbing her throat. Mr O's daughter had a bruised neck and breathing difficulties as a result of the attack. When the family called 999, the police said they would attend. A couple of hours passed and no officers arrived on the scene. Mrs O was in fear for her family's safety and decided to go to the police station herself. A police officer eventually turned up and warned Denise about the attempted strangulation of Mr O's daughter.

However, the harassment continued and the violence escalated, resulting in a severe attack on Mr O a week later. This time it was Maxine and her daughters Joanne and Lauren from no. 75 who launched an attack on the O family. Maxine shouted at the O family from the street whilst other racist neighbours came out in support. Joanne slapped Mr O's 14-year-old daughter in the face. Threatening racist neighbours surrounded the O family who were petrified. Lauren's friends attacked Mr O on his doorstep, leaving him with a broken nose, black eye, severe head injuries and stitches to his face.

Despite serious attacks on the O family, the police made them feel that they were somehow responsible for what was happening to them. At one point, the O family called the police while their neighbours were harassing them, but the police suggested that the families should sort it out between themselves by talking to each other. The attempt by the police to mediate was a crude and insensitive method of dealing with the ongoing harassment. Mrs O contacted NMP and the attitude of the police towards the O family changed dramatically. The police response transformed from mediating a neighbour dispute and investigating counter-allegations against the O family to investigating persistent racial harassment against the O family. A man has been charged for the attack on Mr O, and Denise who attempted to strangle Mr O's daughter has been charged with common assault. The case continues.

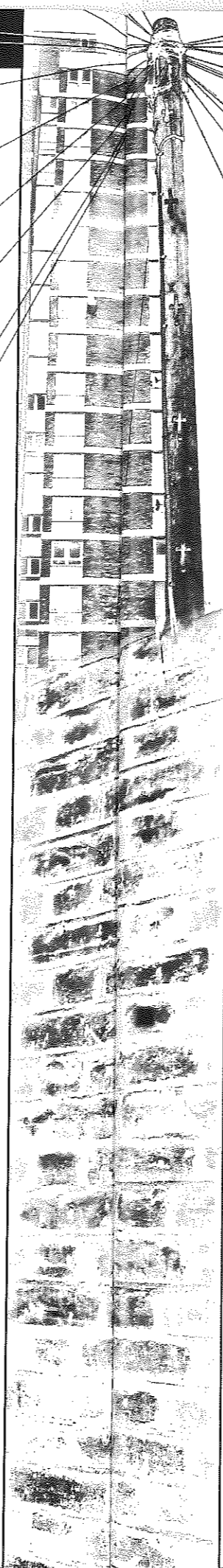
The police often pretend to have difficulty distinguishing between a neighbourly dispute and a case of racial harassment even where there is clearly a culprit and a victim. They ignore racist motives and suggest that mediation should take place between the parties. This is clearly unacceptable in a situation where individuals are expected to face the very people who have been terrorising them. This also results in time wasted in investigating the counter-allegations made by racists and prolonging the suffering of people on the receiving end of racial harassment. For example, in the case of the O family, NMP had to point out the severity of the racial harassment before the police took it seriously.

Mrs O, Hackney

Mrs O who lives with her three children and husband in Hackney has been harassed since 1999. Mr O suffers from severe depression and is registered disabled. He is largely confined to the house. A number of neighbours on the street have ganged up in an attempt to terrorise the family and drive them out of the area.

Two of the main culprits are the residents at no. 122, Robert and Denise. Another of the racists is Maxine who lives at no. 75 and her children frequently join forces with no.122 to harass Mrs O. The O family were persistently tormented, and the children threatened and sworn at in the street.

Mrs O went to the police on a number of occasions but felt ignored. Eventually, the police spoke to the residents at no.75 and



INEPT INVESTIGATIONS

NMP has been approached by a number of people in the last year who suffered severe racist attacks and complained the police have ceased their investigations. Commonly files are misplaced, obvious lines of enquiry are simply not pursued and cases are closed as a result. By the time the cases reach NMP, in some instances a year after the incidents, it is almost too late to gather evidence due to the long period that has elapsed.

White Hart racist attack

Mr RN was attacked by a group of racists in the White Hart Public House in Green Street in April 2000. Mr TSB was in the pub that day and pleaded with the landlords to call an ambulance. The landlords disappeared into a backroom where they hid, without calling an ambulance or the police. Mr TSB attempted to call the police on his phone, but the racists grabbed his phone, picked up a table and smashed it over Mr TSB's head. Mr TSB tried to escape but his attackers followed him and smashed bottles on his head repeatedly while he crouched on the ground covering his face with his hands in an attempt to protect himself. Another friend of Mr TSB's fled the scene and called the police. By the time they arrived, the seven attackers had left although there were numerous witnesses still present. Mr RN and Mr TSB suffered serious injuries and were rushed to hospital. Mr TSB lost a considerable amount of blood and was unconscious for a few hours.

Three men were subsequently arrested in relation to the incident. The police told Mr TSB that the men would be returning to the police station pending further investigation, and that they would contact him. However, the men do not appear to have returned to the police station, and Mr TSB heard nothing from the police. Mr TSB contacted the police to ask them why there had been no ID parade. The police responded by telling him that they would contact him when they arrested the men again. Mr TSB heard nothing more from the police and in July 2000 the police closed the case.

Mr TSB and Mr RN contacted NMP almost a year after the incident. They felt their plea to the police for help had been in vain and they had many unanswered questions regarding the nature of the police investigation. We believe there were a number of flaws in the investigation. The police failed to obtain forensic

evidence from the scene at the time of the incident and failed to take statements from key witnesses. Mr RN knows who his attackers are. They are regular customers at the White Hart Pub and live in the locality. Mr RN and Mr TSB were told to look out for their attackers but both are too scared to go into the White Hart Pub since the horrifying attack on them. Mr TSB now suffers from depression and severe headaches; he is still on medication. The case has been reopened and the police have to repeat the process of collating information due to the shabby way in which the original investigation was conducted. Mr TSB and Mr RN are considering what further action they may take with regards to the flaws in the original investigation. The current investigation is ongoing.

Mr AV, East Ham

Mr AV was walking down High Street North in East Ham when two white men approached him. One of them head-butted Mr AV in the nose while the other punched him in the face. Mr AV was knocked to the ground where he was repeatedly kicked by both of the men. He had a broken nose, required stitches to his lip and was badly bruised. He was taken to Newham General Hospital, only to find the men who had attacked him also in the hospital. It seems they got into another fight after attacking him. Mr AV called the police; but the racists spotted Mr AV and left before the police arrived.

A week later, police contacted Mr AV, telling him they knew who the culprits were. Three ID parades have been arranged, but Mr AV was not informed of two of them and the perpetrators did not turn up to one due to alleged illness. At one point the police claimed they had left a message with Mr AV's father, but his father lives in India. Finally without consulting Mr AV, the case was closed. With NMP's help, Mr AV had the case reopened in the hope that he will still be able to recognise the men who attacked him so brutally. The case continues.

BLACK BUSINESSES OWNERS

For many years black business owners have been suffering racial harassment. A number of convenience store owners and off-licence proprietors have been attacked by racists. Shopkeepers who are seen as an easy target have regrettably been subjected to a continuous barrage of racist graffiti and verbal abuse. Unfortunately, the police have responded poorly and see shopkeepers who

report numerous "low level" racial crimes as a nuisance. The police should be aware of the compounding effect of continuous harassment and the terrifying inevitability of the next incident on the victim. Shopkeepers should not expect to be told by the police that harassment is a hazard of the job.

Mr A. Stratford (as reported in Annual Report 1999-2000)

Mr A first contacted NMP in March 1996. He had been suffering from racist attacks, verbal abuse and vandalism for nearly three years. Mr A is the license holder of a small convenience store in Stratford. He was working one evening when he heard a loud thump against the outside wall of his shop. 'I went outside. Straight away, I got a punch on my nose,' he remembers. 'Two boys started to attack me.' They broke his nose then kept punching him until he managed to escape into the shop. Mr A. knew his attackers - they were part of a group of local teens that routinely harassed him and his wife. 'While they're passing, they knock on the windows, they throw something, they say racial insults - 'You Paki!' Mrs. A. explains.

Over the last six years, the group has broken windows, thrown firecrackers into the store and smashed bottles on the front steps. Once when the police arrived, a scene developed outside the shop with one of the boy's mothers screaming racial insults at Mr A. The police did not reprimand or arrest her. Instead, they pushed Mr A inside and told him to get ready to go - not to the hospital, but to the police station. Two months later, the police had not charged either of the boys with the assault. Mr A believes that if he had not called NMP, no charges would ever have been made.

"I have felt that the police have offered me and my family very little support or assistance. In all those instances where I have called the police, they have shown much greater sympathy with the perpetrators than with me."

After the initial police complaint was instigated, the Directorate of Professional Standards and NMP are now monitoring the community safety unit's response. There is a known group of youths that are responsible for the violence and vandalism that has been inflicted on Mr A and his family.

A member of the same racist gang was charged with offences relating to an Asian owned takeaway just a few doors away from Mr A's shop. The mother of this 19-year-old boy was also arrested when she became involved in trying to defend her son's racist behaviour.

In May 2001, another member of the racist gang was charged with harassment against Mr A. The court date was postponed and a new date has yet to be fixed. Mr A has been subjected to racial harassment and robbery. Given that both types of crimes are committed by the same racist gang of youths, Mr A finds it understandably difficult to distinguish the two.

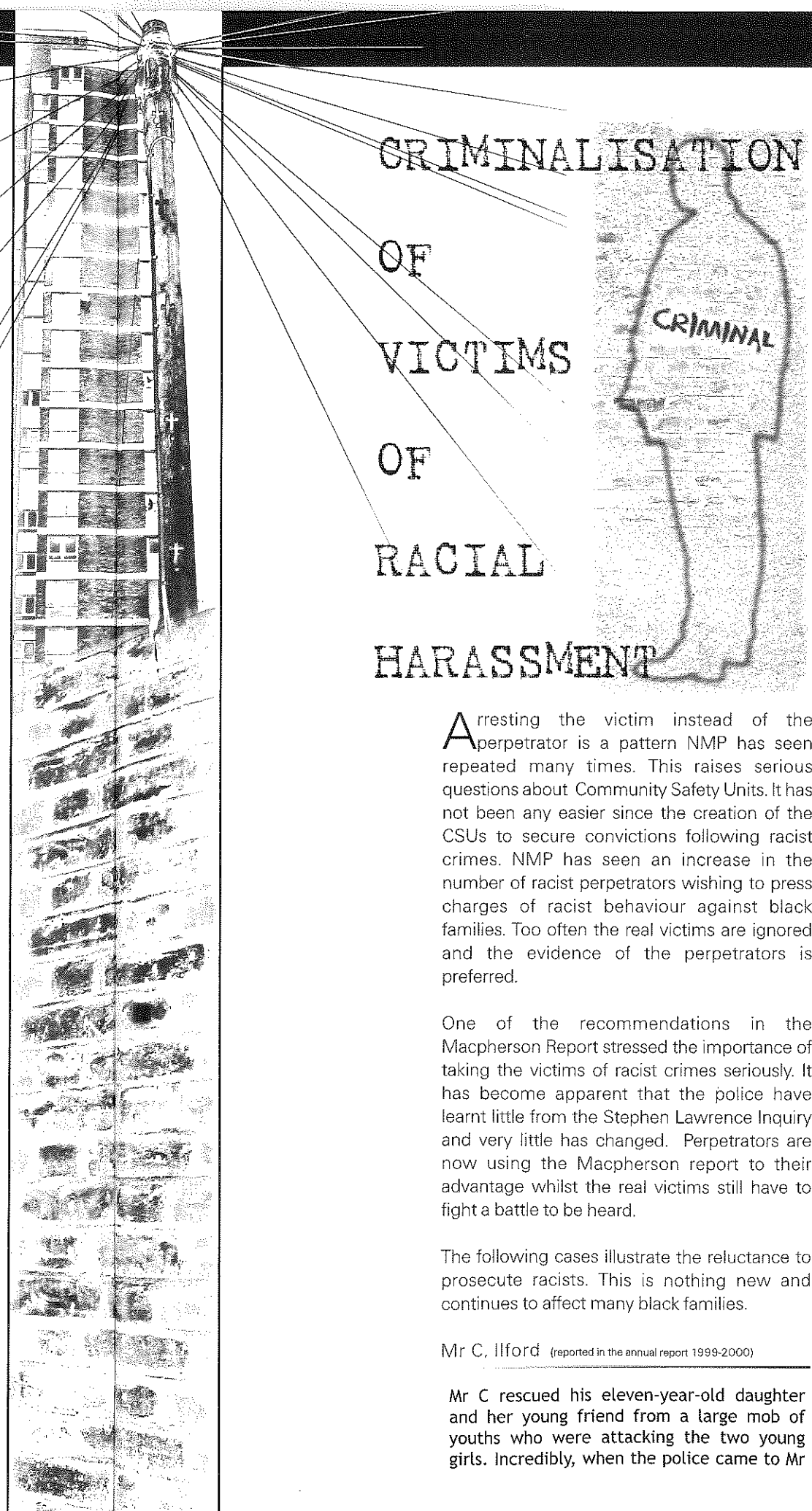
Mr A's solicitors who were referred by NMP are now assisting Mr A in an extensive formal complaint against the Metropolitan Police, with some incidents dating back to 1994. Mr A has a catalogue of complaints against the police. The incidents range from rude and abrupt officers to negligence and improper handling of evidence leading to a half-hearted investigation. The response the family get from dialling 999 in an emergency has always been embarrassingly poor and they are still receiving unacceptable responses to emergency calls. Now the family nearly always use the NMP Emergency Service for a volunteer to speak directly to officers attending the scene.

The racists have effectively been given a licence to continue with their racist behaviour as it has not been made clear to them by the local authority and the police that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated. However, Mr A's family continues to stand their ground and will not be forced out of their home or business by racists. For over five years, NMP has been providing support to Mr A and his family and will continue to do so.

Mr A now finds it very hard to trust any statutory organisation whether it is the police or the local authority. After 7 years of continuing harassment and little or no support, from them, he is reluctant to sign statements or hand over video footage without some form of advocacy from NMP or his solicitor. Mrs A says she has seen a visible change in her husband, she says:

'He was depressed for quite a while, now he's coping because of NMP, they've helped a lot.'

CRIMINALISATION
OF
VICTIMS
OF
RACIAL
HARASSMENT



Arresting the victim instead of the perpetrator is a pattern NMP has seen repeated many times. This raises serious questions about Community Safety Units. It has not been any easier since the creation of the CSUs to secure convictions following racist crimes. NMP has seen an increase in the number of racist perpetrators wishing to press charges of racist behaviour against black families. Too often the real victims are ignored and the evidence of the perpetrators is preferred.

One of the recommendations in the Macpherson Report stressed the importance of taking the victims of racist crimes seriously. It has become apparent that the police have learnt little from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and very little has changed. Perpetrators are now using the Macpherson report to their advantage whilst the real victims still have to fight a battle to be heard.

The following cases illustrate the reluctance to prosecute racists. This is nothing new and continues to affect many black families.

Mr C. Ilford (reported in the annual report 1999-2000)

Mr C rescued his eleven-year-old daughter and her young friend from a large mob of youths who were attacking the two young girls. Incredibly, when the police came to Mr

C's house, much later, they offered no words or actions of support but arrested him instead and later charged him with five different offences.

Mr C is an upstanding member of the community and as a result of rescuing a young girl from a mob of racist has been criminalised and suffered further racism this time at the hands of the police. The injustice did not stop there, only four of the five charges were dropped. NMP and the community joined together to complain and petition the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to drop all charges. After a year and considerable cost to the family - both financial and personal, the magistrates delivered a "no case to answer" verdict. NMP questioned the motives of the reviewing CPS lawyer in a number of complaints. The CPS answered by saying all procedures and review policies had been followed. Mr C is now making a formal complaint against the police in relation to the officers at the scene and the conduct of the CSU investigation. Two of the three attackers were convicted and the third conviction was quashed on appeal.

Mr B and Mrs D. Plaistow

B, aged 13, was first assaulted in May 2000 when he was out with friends. A neighbour and father of one of his friends (JS) came out of his house and began shouting at B. JS then attacked B who told NMP:

'He wanted me to fight his son, and I didn't want to fight him, so he hit my head on a car engine, then took me to another car and hit my head on the car bonnet, with his hand in my mouth ripping my gums.'

The man had screamed racial insults at B on many occasions previously, but the suddenness and viciousness of the attack took the boy by surprise. His mother Mrs D rushed to the scene and called the police. JS was later summonsed to court for common assault. The family believed that the statutory organisations they had approached would protect them. In conjunction with Alert, the family sought an injunction against JS but it expired on the same day it was issued. Despite Mr Shadrack's foul language, the magistrate decided not to extend the injunction.

Three months later in September 2000, JS was walking towards B who was with two younger friends aged 9 and 11 years. JS started hurling disgusting abuse at B and attacked him. Three independent witnesses described their disbelief at the obscene (and un-publishable) language JS used and how he threatened to attack them if they

intervened. Another witness describes her distress at seeing so much blood at the scene of the assault. B describes:

'He head butted me, then when I was unconscious he kicked me, I had blood all over my face.'

The police were called again, but JS had already left the scene and was making counter-allegations, insisting that B and his mother had harassed him and his family repeatedly. The police reacted strongly to the counter-allegations JS made.

In response to these false allegations against B and Mrs D, the police sent 10 plainclothes officers to arrest Mrs D in her own home. She felt trapped:

'Somebody assaults your child, you phone the police, you get an injunction, you do all the right things. You don't expect to get arrested for it.'

Mrs D was charged with harassment while B was also charged with harassment and a bogus firearm offence.

Finally, Mrs D called NMP for help. NMP found a solicitor for the family immediately. It transpired that in the three months between the attacks on B, JS had spread rumours in his favour. He had also contacted a number of statutory organisations in an attempt to get them on his side. His plan had worked, so much so that when the second attack on her son happened and Mrs D reported it to her housing office, Mrs D discovered that East Thames Housing Group would not believe what she had to report. JS had already applied for a transfer and was hoping to move out of London. Mrs D asked her local councillors for support against JS, only to find that Cllr Fredrick Warwick was already supporting JS. The racist attacker did not stop there but used his solicitor and son's tutor to write to B's school and cause severe problems for B (see racial harassment chapter).

B's attacker was finally convicted in June 2001 of Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), but only after NMP had exerted a lot of pressure on the police and CPS and worked closely with B's solicitor. After 11 hearings and numerous antics on the part of the CPS, no evidence was offered against B and he was finally free from bail dates and continuous worry. After 12 hearings, the CPS offered no evidence against Mrs D. There is great cause for concern about the way in which the police and the CPS dealt with B and Mrs D. The family are currently seeking legal advice on the prospects of suing the police. Mrs D states:

'I don't know where I would be without my caseworker and the whole NMP crew, they have really been a tower of strength.'

Mr Al, Bow

Al, SI (his brother) and SJ (their cousin) who are Bangladeshi were out near an estate in Bow Common, an area recognised by the local black communities as notorious for racist attacks. A woman from the estate approached the men and asked SI why he was looking at her car. SI said that he was sorry but he liked cars. The men got into their car which was parked nearby, but a man from the estate came towards them and kicked the car door. The man reached into the car, grabbed Al and punched him in the face several times. SI got out of the car to stop the man attacking his brother, but two men attacked him. More people arrived from the estate with hammers and axes. SI was hit with a hammer on the jaw and head. He was also struck with an axe on his hand and leg leaving two deep lacerations. Meanwhile Al was surrounded and attacked. He was hammered and axed on the head numerous times while he was being held in a headlock on the ground. He remembers what was said by one of the racists:

'This is our territory, tell your people not to mess with us... you people think you're bad, cos there's a lot of you in this area, but there are a lot of whites around here.'

When the police arrived on the scene, they arrested SI on suspicion of ABH and handcuffed him. SI's hand was bleeding from his injuries and he was in a lot of pain. The police refused to listen to anything that SI had to say but dragged him to a police car where he was left with the car doors unlocked. One of the men who had attacked him tried to get into the car and attack him yet again. The police took the man away, and locked the car doors. SI said, *'I'm badly hurt and need an ambulance'*, to which the police replied, *'Do you want me to keep the door open, stop complaining'*. SI was left unattended in the car for about half an hour, still bleeding. By the time SI was finally taken to the hospital, he was extremely shaken and could not move his leg, yet the police continued to harass him. The police would not remove SI's handcuffs when he went to the toilet, despite several requests by nurses who could see that he was in pain.

Meanwhile Al was found by the police at the scene in a state of semi-consciousness, having sustained serious head injuries. He requested an ambulance but instead was thrown into the back of a police van. The police told Al, *'Shut up...stop faking it'*. They even went as far as to say, *'They always say*

that don't they'. When the police left Al in the van, he lost consciousness. Finally, a paramedic arrived and realised that he was in a serious condition. Al was taken to the hospital in the police van and not in an ambulance. A week later, the police arrested Al on suspicion of GBH and violent disorder.

By this time, SJ had managed to flee the scene. He tracked down a police car and told the police that his cousins were being attacked. He returned to the scene with the police. When he arrived one of the racists head-butted him, the police told him to run, but made no attempt to protect him. He fled the scene again, but was grabbed around the throat by one of the racists. The police rather than protecting SJ arrested him. Currently, all three have been charged with common assault; SJ and SI are only 15-years-old. No charges have been brought against the racists and the family are considering their options with regards to a police complaint.

In all three above cases, the real victims were charged and had to face the nightmare of unnecessary court appearances and a criminal conviction. Each in turn was the victim of many types of racism. In each case, the victim suffered physical attacks yet were then subjected to institutionalised racism from the state. First the police sided with the racist perpetrators, despite the fact that in all cases the evidence in support of the victims was overwhelming. The police actively sought to prove that B and Mrs D who are black were racially harassing a white family although there were witnesses to prove that the

white adult had brutally assaulted a black minor on two occasions. The police were also aware that JS had a history of violence and that all his victims were black.

In short, the police response to racial attacks remains poor in most cases. New public relation techniques and training on race issues have not improved their performance. In the case of Al, SI and SJ, police officers at the scene chose not to protect the victims, ignored violence against black people and collaborated with white racist perpetrators.

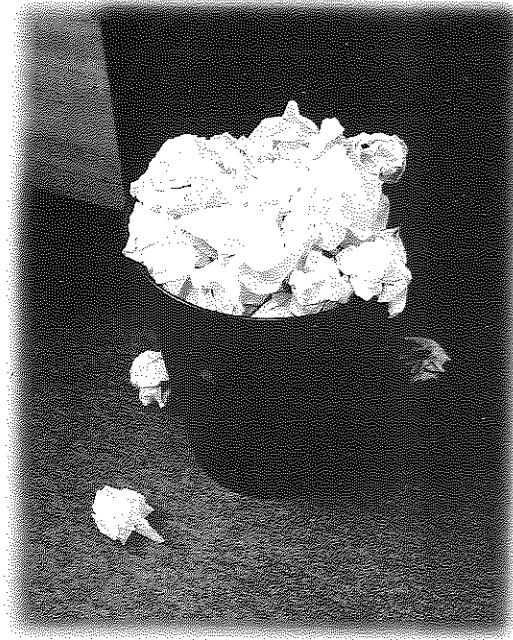
The CSU chose to accept that B, a young black boy, was responsible for harassing a 43-year-old 6'1" tall white man. B was categorised as a young offender. Sadly, stereotyping of the black community (in particular, of young African-Caribbean men) persists with a very high price for the real victims of racist policing.

In all three above cases, the CPS response was woeful. The case lawyers failed to review the cases fairly and properly, thereby subjecting black victims to a prolonged ordeal. Racial motives were not identified and there was no sympathy for the victims of racial harassment. It seems that the CPS is worried about appearing to act favourably toward black defendants when there is a racist element by dropping obvious bogus charges.

STAMP OUT 'THE LINDO SYNDROME'!



Police complaints



A sergeant from the DPS strongly urged Mr N to initiate a civil action against the Commissioner, on the grounds that continuing the complaint was likely to lead to civil litigation against him by the officers under investigation. According to notes taken at the time by an NMP worker, the officer's exact words were:

'This is a serious allegation, and I don't know the officers, I have not met them but they are likely to take out a civil action against you. As this allegation is a blot on their reputation.'

This statement was clearly untrue. NMP sought legal advice on behalf of Mr N and fortunately there was no arguable claim. Mr N was understandably distressed by the threat of possible legal action against him.

NMP immediately complained to Sir John Stevens, Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Police Complaints Authority. In answer to NMP's concerns, the DPS inspector for the Newham area stated that the comment made was true yet he could not personally recall such litigation taking place. The inspector also stated that due to the length of time that had passed and the difficulty in substantiating such a complaint as there were no witnesses, *'This in turn could lead to consequences for all those involved.'*

The investigation into the complaint is still ongoing and NMP will continue to monitor its progress.

In the first stages of the complaint, NMP was extremely concerned about the rather inappropriate attempt to dissuade Mr N from pursuing the complaint. We are unaware of any instance where a complainant has been sued simply for making a complaint. Lawyers we consulted were equally baffled by the sergeant's comments. Indeed, were such actions possible, they would fatally undermine the complaints process. Equally, we are concerned that officers within the Directorate of Professional Standards may be routinely giving inaccurate information to complainants about the implications of continuing a complaint.

Mr N, E16

Mr N came to NMP in August 2000. It transpired that following an incident with the police, he was taken to Plaistow police station and received injuries whilst in custody. Mr N. was still extremely upset; he admitted to feeling embarrassed about the attack and was unsure what to do, as he did not think anyone would believe him. NMP assisted Mr N in instigating a police complaint. Mr N had to convey his account of the attack to several unsympathetic officers before the case was referred to the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS) where the complaint is now being investigated.

outreach & community development

Outreach & community development



NMP SUPPORT TEAM

NMP is re-evaluating its work and seeking to provide a wider range of support services to complement its casework, the central focus of the organisation. We have identified the need for a more personalised support service to victims of racial harassment, because people experiencing harassment are often isolated and vulnerable and this can lead to social exclusion.

Although NMP caseworkers actively work with individuals and families, a caseworker's time is in the end often limited in working through all of the effects of racial harassment. As a result NMP will launch a pilot scheme to tackle isolation caused by continuous racial harassment. An advisory group made up of volunteers, management committee members and a trainer counsellor has researched the project. Everyone has contributed to ensure the success of a well-rounded project. The support team will meet regularly with individuals on a one on one basis.

The aims of the scheme are as follows:

- 1- To offer one on one companionship
- 2- To empower and increase confidence
- 3- Dissolve feelings of isolation
- 4- Introduce involvement into local community services
- 5- To improve the quality of life for individuals experiencing of racial harassment

The support team will be co-ordinated by an NMP worker and volunteers will have a key role as members of the team. The pilot scheme will have three dedicated local volunteers to be matched suitably with 'cases'. Volunteers will receive specialised training and counselling skills to deal with racial harassment. The support team volunteers will not give advice or advocacy on behalf of individuals, but they will give specific support in times of intense stress such as court visits. Caseworkers will still carry the role for making suggestions and be present at important points in the individuals' case.

Supervision will be set in place in order to maintain high levels of good practice and address each issue that arises. Volunteers will operate in an atmosphere of trust and free communication which must exist for volunteers and individuals to achieve their goals. These activities will not be based around institutions and organisations since many suffers of racial harassment have already visited a number of statutory organisations and this might be the only stage where they are able to discuss their experiences freely.

Unlike similar befriending schemes our project will not be a long-term relationship. Our aim is to enable people to enable them to feel confident within the community. We anticipate each client may participate in the scheme for approximately 2-6 months. NMP will launch the pilot support team in autumn 2001, with a full analysis and final report by April 2002. The report will form the basis of adaptation and improvement for the project team. We intend to apply for funding for full implement next year.

ASYLUM AND REFUGEE RESEARCH PROJECT

There are approximately 20,000 asylum seekers living in Newham. Following on from the Community Development Audit (see 2000 annual report), NMP has noticed an increase in attacks on refugees and asylum seekers at both a national and local level. NMP recognises the need for focused outreach work and publicity to ensure that refugees are aware of and have access to our casework services. As part of the outreach work, NMP is conducting a research project, specifically aimed at grassroots organisations in the east London area that work with asylum seekers and refugees. The project aims to provide a thorough analysis of issues and it will identify problem areas for individuals and organisations, and put forward specific, practical recommendations.

NMP is continuing to make links with organisations and will offer training where required. A massive publicity drive and distribution of racial harassment and Emergency Service leaflets took place earlier this year, resulting in increased calls to NMP. We hope this development will include young people, in light of the completed action research project on racial tensions in the Teviot and Aberfeldy areas of Tower Hamlets, commissioned by the Bright Street Project (see section on youth work NMP anti racist trust). A policy paper with recommendations for good practice on race youth work has been produced by NMP. NMP will be developing its work with young people with plans to employ a youth worker in the future.

COMMUNITY LED FUNDRAISER

For years NMP relied on the support of the local community. NMP has a large support network in the local community, including volunteers, people who have been involved in campaigns and those making regular donations. Last year Mr Suresh Manambur contacted NMP and suggested approaching the Malayalee community for fundraising. Over several weeks

members of the Malayalee community and NMP visited people in their homes, contacting community members some of whom were not aware of NMP's work. A total of over £2,000 was raised through donations. A social event was held on March 25th this year, to thank the community for all its support at the Sree Narayana Guru Mission on Barking Road. Mr Manambur Suresh explains why he supports NMP:

'NMP has been an inspiration for me since its beginning in 1980. The dedication and willpower of NMP activists opened my eyes to a new form of activism. They often have to put their personal safety at risk to work for NMP. At least 10 years ago, when I went to the NMP office in Katherine Road I had seen an activist with severe and shocking face injuries but still he was in the office with the same old spirit. He had to go to Custom House to help a victim of racism when he was attacked. The racist fled because the victim knew the basic art of self-defence. I was also inspired and awed by the dedicated work of many others and now of-course the new team - thank you to you all. NMP has been involved in numerous victorious fights. Among them stand the Govindan case and Mr A case, both Malayalees. I salute them for their courage. These are the people who take a community forward. This was the driving force behind our attempt to raise some funds for NMP. We had approached about 100 people and they contributed generously.'

NMP has dealt with many cases from the Malayalee community, The Govindan family for example (see annual report 1990). In 1990 as part of Mr Govindan's case, NMP initiated a campaign under the banner of 'Police Harassment is a Crime'. The campaign was co-ordinated alongside the Sree Narayana Mission of the UK and the Malayalee Association of the UK both of which are community groups in which Mr Govindan has been a longstanding and prominent member. The pressure brought to bear on the police by that campaign forced

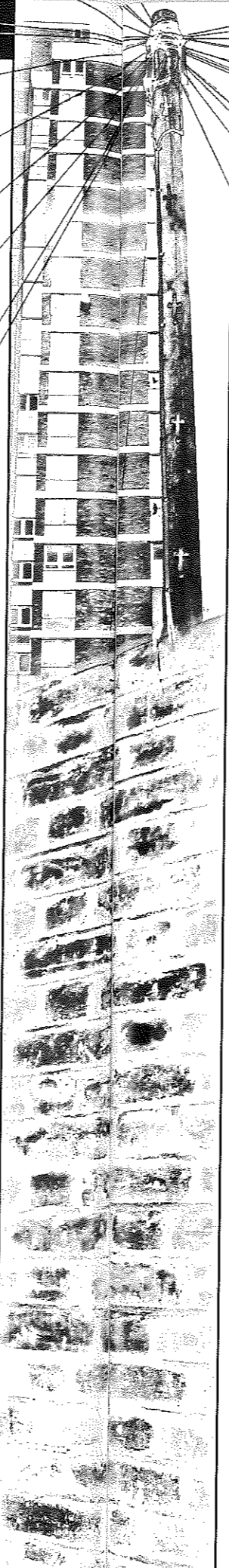


സ്വഹരം മോണിറ്ററിംഗ് പ്രോജക്ടിന് ലഭിക്കുന്ന രാജ്യവാസികൾക്ക് പണം ശേഖരിക്കുന്നു

ലഭിക്കുന്നു : രാജ്യവാസികളിലെ ഓരോരുത്തർക്കും വിവേകമുള്ളതും തിരിച്ചറിയപ്പെടുന്നതുമായ പ്രവർത്തികൾ വഴി സ്വഹരം മോണിറ്ററിംഗ് പ്രോജക്ടിന് പണം ശേഖരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവർക്ക് പണം ശേഖരിക്കുന്നതിന് കൺവീനർ മണമ്പൂർ സുരേഷ് കിരീടം നൽകിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവർക്ക് പണം ശേഖരിക്കുന്നതിന് കൺവീനർ മണമ്പൂർ സുരേഷ് കിരീടം നൽകിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവർക്ക് പണം ശേഖരിക്കുന്നതിന് കൺവീനർ മണമ്പൂർ സുരേഷ് കിരീടം നൽകിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

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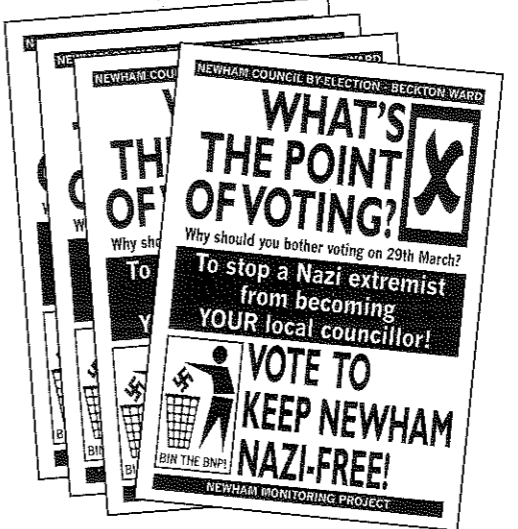
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the police to charge one of the perpetrators with assault. The campaign was a success and an inspiration to others standing up against the racist oppression and police.

Many people who had received help from NMP attended. Mr Govindan was one of the guest speakers and was still noticeably affected by the harassment he had suffered. He made a heart rendering speech. Talented members of the Malayalee community also provided entertainment, through poetry and songs. Ravina Krishnan performed Bharathanatyam dance. The support the Malayalee community has given NMP is invaluable and we wish to thank them for their contribution.

NMP ROUTS FASCISTS IN BECKTON



NMP has led the campaign to drive the BNP and the far right out of Newham for over 21 years. In March of this year NMP launched a 'Bin the BNP' campaign against far-right BNP candidate Michael Davidson, who stood in the March 29 Beckton by-election. Beckton ward, in south Newham, is an area where the BNP has done well in previous local government elections.

In May 1994 elections, Michael Davidson and another BNP candidate, Peter Hart, came within 66 votes of securing a council seat. Davidson has since stood in Canning Town & Grange in 1998, in the European elections of 1999 and for the Greater London Assembly in 2000.

NMP is always concerned that the Nazis would take advantage of the hostility towards asylum seekers that the Labour Party and certain sections of the press have encouraged. Voter disillusionment, especially so close to the general election and in an area where local

elections have some of the lowest turnouts in the country, could have given the BNP their first elected councillor since Derek Beackon on the Isle of Dogs in 1993.

However NMP mobilised black voters in the Beckton ward to stop Davidson and the BNP from sneaking into office. In 1994, NMP succeeded also in bringing black voters to the polls to stop the BNP in Beckton, Custom House & Silvertown.

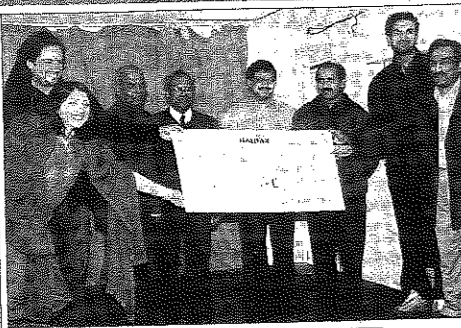
For this year's Beckton bi-election, NMP called on everyone in Newham who is opposed to racist violence and harassment to take a stand against the BNP. During the campaign, NMP ferried elderly and isolated black voters to polling stations, and patrolled polling stations ensuring voters were not intimidated by BNP activists. The high police presence on the streets of south Newham during the election, reflected fears of tension between the BNP and the local community.

NMP also organised a community-wide protest outside East Ham Town Hall during the count to send a loud clear message that whenever fascism shows its face local people will be there to show their absolute opposition. There was a good turnout from members of the community and anti fascist groups.

The fascist British National Party received 17.12% of the vote without running any active campaign. The BNP gained 163 votes in a seat won by Labour with 384 votes. The turnout for the election, at 24.3%, was higher than expected so close to the General Election. Nevertheless the election demonstrates that there is a solid core of racist support in and that a more concerted effort by the far right must be met with vigorous opposition by anti-fascists.

We know from bitter experiences that BNP represent a threat to black people living in the south of the borough and any increase in support for fascist candidates always leads to an increase in attacks on our communities. At the moment, the Nazis are disorganised and divided among themselves. We intend to remain vigilant and will organise opposition to the BNP and all fascists whenever and wherever they push their poisonous racism.

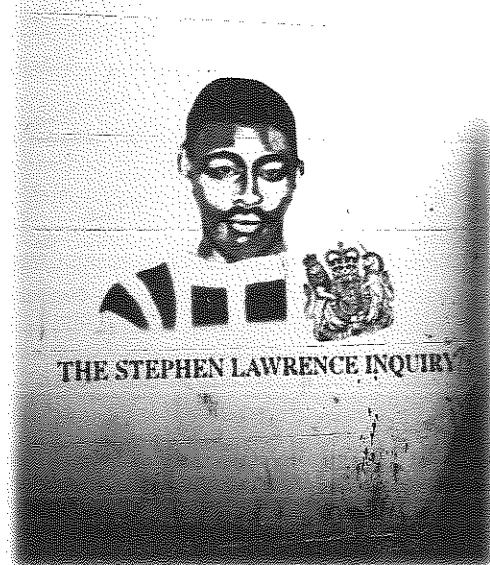
Recorder, Wednesday, April 11, 2001



Cheque mates' war on hate
MEMBERS of an Asian community raised more than £2,000 towards the cost of an anti-racist group's telephone helpline. The Keralaans, part of the Malayalee community, presented Newham Monitoring Project £2,000, during a social at the Sree Narayana Guru Mission, Barking Road, Canning Town. The Stratford-based Project, providing advice and support to racial harassment victims, have re-launched their Casework Support and round-the-clock emergency telephone service. Manambur, left, is pictured with Project members and supporters. "We are very pleased

issues of concern

WHAT HAS CHANGED POST-MACPHERSON?



In this chapter, we assess what has improved and what has worsened since the publication of the Macpherson Report in 1999. We also set out what we believe is essential for genuine progress to be made in the years ahead.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM DEFINED

Sir William Macpherson defined institutional racism as "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin." He added that institutional racism "can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people. It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership. Without recognition and action to eliminate such racism it can prevail as part of the ethos or culture of the organisation. It is a corrosive disease."

This definition targets the systematic abuse of power on racial grounds by organisations and largely mirrors the concept of institutional racism that has developed since the 1960s. However, there is a major problem with it, namely Macpherson's use of the word "unwitting". Although he is not saying that all racism is unwitting and unintended, critics have interpreted and twisted his definition in this way. They have conveniently ignored those aspects of the definition and the Report as a whole that focus upon the nature of racism and how it becomes rooted in the structure and culture of an organisation. They have personalised and justified institutional racism on the grounds of unwitting prejudice – hence the bizarre situation of reactionaries, from politicians to tabloid editors, who previously had nothing but contempt for anti-racism suddenly jumping onto the bandwagon.

More than two years later, however, institutional racism is alive and kicking within the police, other statutory organisations and private institutions. Some progress has been made but sadly the anticipated gains have been few and far between. A number of important challenges remain in the struggle to improve community relations and the criminal justice system. Furthermore, there is now an added urgency in light of the recent attacks on New York and Washington DC, the military response by the West and the rise in Islamophobia and proposed enactment of further draconian laws.

Meanwhile, an ideological backlash is in full swing. A number of politicians, academics and journalists have predictably condemned the Macpherson Report as no more than a McCarthyite attack on British society and the police in particular. They have seized on the word "unwitting" as ammunition to mock the Macpherson definition as politically motivated. They maintain that institutional racism is unprovable in that you can be a racist and not even know it. They portray anti-racists as unreasonable and anti-British.

Racism, of course, comes in all shapes and sizes. It can be subtle and unwitting. It can also be conscious, deliberate and rooted in the belief that black people and refugees are inferior and should not enjoy equal rights. It can result in overt and covert racial discrimination and in racist policies and practices. It can impact on a daily basis on the lives of black people and refugees. At the end of the day, the crucial issue is not what institutional racism is but what it does.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM EXPOSED

Significantly, public and private institutions have begun to address their culture of racism and the lack of diversity amongst their ranks. A number of studies have been commissioned to scrutinise the nature and extent of the problem. The Denman Report, for example, recently highlighted widespread institutional racism within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). A further report exposed the virtual "apartheid" between black and white prosecutors at the Croydon branch of the CPS.

It is commendable when an organisation recognises that racism exists at an institutional level. This is an important first step to take in combating the problem. However, such recognition will be cosmetic and meaningless in the long term if not accompanied by an effective strategy to tackle the problem, a clear commitment to structural change and decisive action to eradicate racism and discrimination. Words alone are not enough. Neither are simply hiring more black staff and providing a service that is more culturally sensitive.

POLICE RACISM

Since 1999, a number of senior police officers across the country have stated publicly that their particular forces are institutionally racist. This is a positive development. But has there been real change on the ground? Has the police

response to racist crime improved? Are more racists being prosecuted? Has the debate shifted away from there only being a few bad apples in the barrel? Is the canteen culture of which black officers regularly complain being seriously challenged? Are more police officers being disciplined, sacked or prosecuted for racist conduct? Are there less complaints and civil actions against the police for racist conduct? Are rank and file officers as willing as their superiors to accept that racism is institutionalised within the police? Is stop and search being used in a less discriminatory way against black people? Is the practice of over-charging black people on the decline? These are the real questions that need answering before the black community will accept that the police are genuinely moving forward.

At present, the jury is still out. However, progress has been extremely limited. For example:

- Some police officers are clearly taking racist crime more seriously and using the full power of the law to take action against the perpetrators. Many officers, however, continue to respond inadequately and, on occasion, harass, criminalise, assault and even kill innocent black people (see chapters on policing and deaths in custody).
- The number of officers being disciplined, sacked or prosecuted for racist conduct remains woefully low, and the Police Federation who represent rank and file officers continues to resist calls for greater accountability.
- Predictably, some police officers have argued that the Macpherson Report has had a damaging effect on police morale and the battle against crime. Apparently, the officer on the street is so wary of being called a racist that s/he is reluctant to stop, search and arrest black people. It should be noted that there is no evidence whatsoever to support such a proposition.
- The creation of a Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) has provided a useful forum for debate on and scrutiny of policing matters; however, the MPA has limited power in that it has no jurisdiction over police operational matters.
- The Macpherson Report concluded that the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) is "widely regarded as unjust and does not inspire public confidence." Whilst the

discredited PCA is going to be replaced by a slightly more independent complaints body, police officers will continue to play a role in the investigation of complaints against other police officers (see chapter on police complaints). The failure to transform the PCA root and branch is a wasted opportunity.

- The Macpherson Report recommended that race relations legislation should be amended so that chief police officers would be liable for the racially discriminatory acts and omissions of their officers. This was extremely important, as the police had hitherto enjoyed a privileged position not enjoyed by other statutory bodies. If you were racially discriminated against by a police officer, you could only take legal action against the individual officer and not against the police service. Sadly, the government has diluted the Macpherson recommendation by limiting the extension of the Race Relations Act to acts of direct discrimination. In other words, there will be no legal power to sue a chief police officer for indirect discrimination by his or her officers, in other words for the very institutional racism identified by the Macpherson Report.

LEGAL REFORM

The Macpherson Report raised concerns not only about the police but also about the criminal justice system as a whole. Unfortunately, the legal reforms proposed by the government since 1999 have for the most part been negative in that they are likely to entrench racism and cause greater injustice. On the positive side, there is now greater disclosure in inquests and some legal funding available for those acting for the families of the deceased. However, inquest law remains in dire need of systematic reform. On the negative side, there have been a number of worrying developments:

- The government has unsuccessfully tried to restrict the right to jury trial for defendants charged with offences triable in either the Magistrates Court or the Crown Court (for example, theft, burglary, criminal damage, ABH and GBH). Amazingly, it was the House of Lords that blocked the government's proposed legislation.

Research clearly show that a higher proportion of black defendants elect jury trial than white defendants as magistrates are rightly perceived as middle class, pro-police, more likely to convict than a jury, and more likely to send a black defendant to prison for a like offence than a white defendant. However, it is likely that the

new Home Secretary, David Blunkett, is likely to try again where his predecessor, Jack Straw, failed. It is essential that any attempt to restrict the right to jury trial is opposed both inside and outside parliament.

- The government is using the failure to secure the conviction of those who murdered Stephen Lawrence as a basis for challenging the fundamental principle of double jeopardy, namely that you cannot be tried again for the same offence if you have already been acquitted of it. It is imperative that we do not lose sight of the larger picture. Whilst it would be wonderful if the murderers of Stephen Lawrence could be brought to justice, the double jeopardy principle must not be compromised in any way. It is black people and others who are regularly criminalised by the police who will suffer the most if the state is allowed to have a second attempt at prosecuting someone already acquitted on an earlier occasion.

- The government has introduced a number of laws that restrict the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and institutionalise their second class status (see chapter on racism and asylum). It is imperative that we condemn the government and sections of the media for contributing to the rise of racism and xenophobia in Britain by criminalising and demonising refugees and asylum seekers. Those who argue that there is no connection between racism and government asylum policy are blind and are ignoring the obvious.

- Racially aggravated offences have failed since their introduction in 1998 to improve the response of the police and the CPS to racist violence. NMP has always been opposed to such hate crimes. Our fears have been realised. A disproportionate number of prosecutions for racially aggravated offences target alleged crimes by black people on white people or on other black people.

THE FUTURE

We will have to be vigilant in the years ahead if we are to ensure that the lessons of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry are not ignored or marginalised. For institutional racism and unjust legislation must be systematically combated. Time will tell whether we have made genuine progress or not.

REFORMING POLICE COMPLAINTS?



A CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT POLICE INVESTIGATIVE BODY

Amongst the many key recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, reform of the system of investigating complaints against the police is very important, because it is central to the Inquiry panel's overall aim of seeking greater accountability and restoring public confidence. The threat of effective sanctions against police misconduct dictates whether the use of stop & search will continue to be targeted at black people, whether officers take racial harassment seriously and whether senior officers are held to account for the actions of their subordinates. As the Inquiry report states,

"it will be no surprise that almost universally, we were told that there is little confidence amongst minority ethnic communities in the present system... there is no doubt but that this lack of confidence affects adversely the atmosphere in which racist incidents and

crimes have to be addressed."

The main reason why the Lawrence Inquiry found so much distrust of the current complaints system, itself a product of reforms forced by the Scarman Inquiry into the Brixton riots in 1981, was because the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) is widely seen as toothless, ineffectual and lacking independence. There are numerous examples to illustrate this point but locally, the PCA 'supervised' investigations such as the one into death threats by Forest Gate police officers against Malkjit Singh Natt in 1991, captured on tape, resulted in the derisory punishment of the docking of one day's pay. As a result of the PCA's failings, complainants have turned in increasing numbers to the civil courts for some form of justice, forcing the Metropolitan Police to set aside millions of pounds of public money to compensate for the actions of its officers.

The Lawrence Inquiry report commented that

"investigation of police officers by their own or another Police Service is widely regarded as unjust and does not inspire public confidence." The challenge for the government was to enact new reforms that addressed this lack of trust in investigating complaints by setting up a genuinely independent body to carry them out. Sadly, whilst some of the government's plans are to be welcomed, it seems that the new Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) will be just as dependent upon the police as its discredited predecessor.

EVENTS SINCE THE LAWRENCE INQUIRY

The decision by the then Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to implement in full the recommendations of the Lawrence Inquiry led to a feasibility study into options for an independent complaints system. The consultants KPMG undertook this study and it reported in May 2000. In parallel with this project, the civil rights organisation Liberty conducted its own study, published in the same month. Unfortunately, whilst involving lawyers and police staff associations in the preparation of these reports, neither Liberty or KPMG consulted organisations working at a grassroots level with black communities.

The first opportunity for 'consultation' came with the release of a Home Office paper requesting comments by the end of June 2000, followed by the release of a document, 'Framework for a New System', on which further comments were requested by the end of February 2001. By this stage, the basic tenets of government 'reform' had already been set. NMP, along with other organisations, nevertheless made submissions and argued that an opportunity for meaningful change had been wasted.

NMP'S CRITIQUE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS

- IPCC investigation teams will include 'seconded senior police investigators' and a mix of 'police and non-police members,' with a civilian manager.

This is far from being 'independent of the police' and why the government contends that this will achieve 'the optimum in both performance and public confidence' is unclear. NMP has argued that other professions, including lawyers, journalists, magistrates, Department of Social

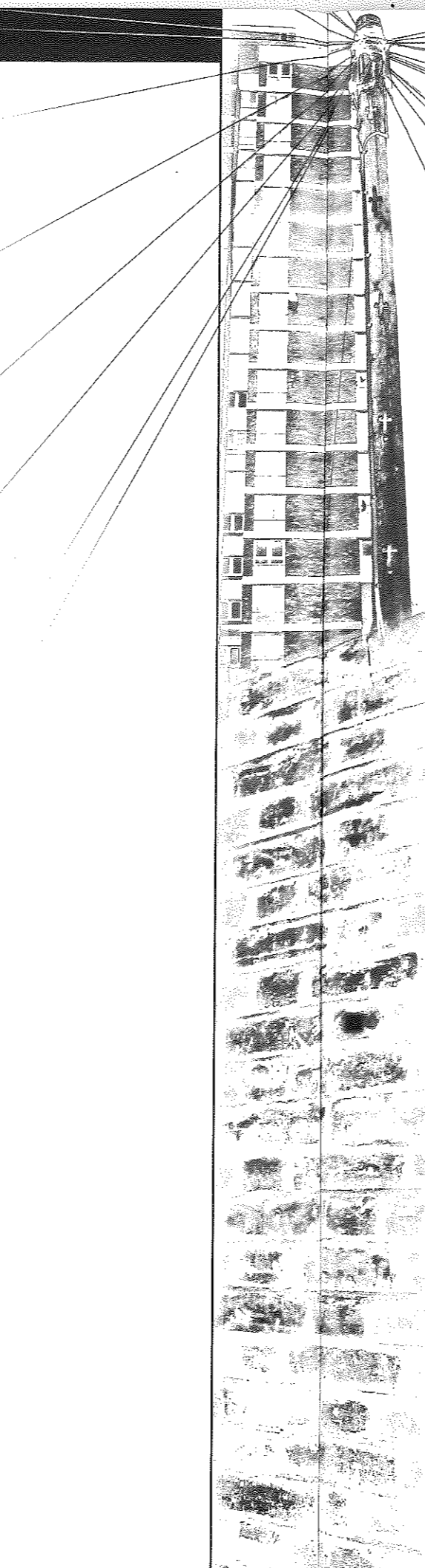
Security and Inland Revenue staff, have the experience needed to implement the legal powers of a complaints body and many of the investigative skills to deal with police complaints. If necessary they could be trained to learn skills they did not already possess.

We disagreed with the study by Liberty, which proposed the use of secondments from other investigative organisations, arguing that in order to begin to restore public confidence, any new police complaints body needs to be seen as powerful, professional and possessing quality staff. We noted that the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) has an in-house, permanent team of lawyers who investigate alleged miscarriages of justice. It does not rely on police officers. The IPCC should follow the CCRC's lead.

- Many investigations into serious complaints will continue to be investigated by the police under 'supervision' by the IPCC, just as they are under current legislation by the PCA.

It is astonishing that the government has ignored the main reason for the inclusion of changes to the police complaints system in the Lawrence Inquiry Report. Public disquiet about the investigation of complaints against police officers by other officers will not be eased by reforms that do not address the issue of the police investigating themselves. One of our major concerns over the years has been the conduct of these investigations. We have repeatedly encountered complaints against investigators whose main task has appeared to be persuading a complainant to drop their case or to opt for an informal resolution of their complaint.

In the most serious cases involving deaths in police custody, the submission by the United Families and Friends Campaign highlights how self-investigation translates into families feeling that they and their loved ones have become the focus of the inquiry rather than the police officers under scrutiny. This can lead as in the case of the death of Roger Sylvester, to the outside police force investigating the death itself rather than the formal complaint. UFFC argued that currently, "there has been a marked unwillingness of the supposed supervisory body, the PCA, to intervene to prevent this situation from arising. We have no confidence that the IPCC will have any greater enthusiasm for doing so."



- The powers of independent investigation teams are indeed severely limited.

On paper, some of the proposed powers of the IPCC, such as the legal obligations placed on Chief Officers, are the stronger features of the government's proposals. However there has been a reluctance to give investigators the full police powers of arrest. NMP argued in its submission that if IPCC staff were to enjoy such powers and were to take a more proactive role in the prosecution of police officers who have broken the law, the Crown Prosecution Service would be compelled to give far greater consideration to continuing with a prosecution. At present, prosecutions of police officers are rare. Furthermore, there is no reason why a permanent investigative staff should not have extensive legal powers to carry out their own investigation and to compel individual officers and police forces to co-operate fully with an investigation, backed by recourse to the courts to enforce these powers.

- The IPCC, Chief Officers and Police Authorities will have the 'discretion' to disclose information on the investigation to a complainant, subject to a harm test.

We believe that a complainant should have a mandatory right of access to an investigation report. In our submission, we argued that "the 'harm' test is a recipe for disaster and will inevitably result in widespread nondisclosure." NMP utterly rejects the government's assertion that there are 'genuine considerations for the integrity of the complaints system and the inquest process from unrestricted disclosure of investigating officers' reports' The government has failed to demonstrate how the integrity of either process will be compromised. The suggestion put forward by the Police Federation that full disclosure would lead to what they describe as 'self-censorship' (and others would describe as 'covering up') is another powerful argument for taking the investigation out of the hands of the police completely.

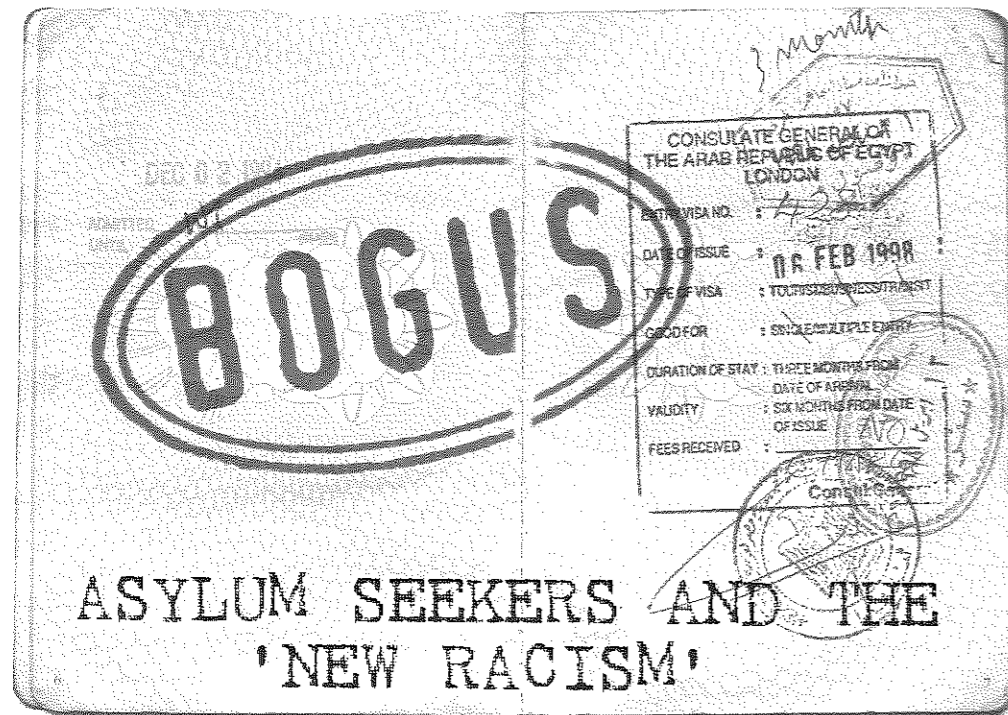
The need for what the government describes as 'the integrity, candour and quality of investigation reports' can be readily achieved by investi-

gations conducted by a public body that has no vested self-interest in censoring its findings. Critically, if proposals to continue 'supervised' investigations were dropped, the question of ownership of investigative reports, currently held by the investigating police force and used by the PCA as an excuse for the lack of openness under the present system, would be avoided. Finally, families who have suffered a racist murder or a death in police custody have a right to know the full facts about the circumstances of the deaths of their loved ones and the way those deaths have been investigated. As the coroner's court inquest is currently the only avenue they have for these facts to be examined, full disclosure is essential.

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Despite a number of highly critical responses to the government's proposals, the Home Office is ploughing ahead with its reforms and the IPCC will be created in 2003. As its reforms amount to little more than tinkering with the current system, it is highly likely that we will see the wholesale transfer of its existing chair, Alistair Graham, and members to become the 'board' of the new body. This will hardly be seen as a clear break with the past and demonstrate that the IPCC will be any different from the discredited Police Complaints Authority and it will do nothing to convince the public that changes are anything but cosmetic.

Since it took one independent inquiry to create the PCA and one to bring about the IPCC, there is a danger that we may wait another fifteen to twenty years before investigations of complaints concerning police conduct are genuinely independent. Meanwhile, abuse of stop & search and flawed investigations of racist crime will continue to be investigated by police officers 'scrutinising' and covering up for their colleagues. As the Lawrence Inquiry becomes an ever more distant memory, we have every reason to fear that the lack of a robust and fully independent complaints process will encourage the police to fall back on longstanding methods of policing black communities.



Ms. EJ is from Nigeria and came to Britain to seek specialised long-term care for her young son who has one kidney. Her story begins with a shopping trip and ends as a testimony to the increasingly rabid hostility and racism that asylum seekers face in Britain.

At around four in the afternoon, I went to the Stratford shopping centre to do some shopping. A security guard told me that I looked like someone who they were looking for and the police came and arrested me. I was with my three-year-old son, Demi. When we got to the police station, the police kept asking who I was. They called me a "fucking nigger" and told me to go back to my own country. I just responded in my own saucy way.

My Home Office documents were in my bag. The police told me the Home Office said I was an abscondee. They then twisted my arm behind me and began pushing me. They called me a "dirty, fucking nigger" and said that I was ripping the government off. They did this in front of my son.

My son has one kidney. He needs medication five times a day. He missed two treatments because I was detained at the station. Finally, the police followed us to our house so that I could pick up the medication. I was cuffed even though there was no way I could escape. The police told me that they had good news and they had bad news. I said I wanted to hear the bad news first. They told me that my deportation papers had been signed. The good news was that I could take 20 kilos. I said, "What's good about

that?" I told them that I had applied for compassionate leave to remain for my son's health. I said I needed to speak to a solicitor. They just said, "You nigger you are using the NHS for free." They did not let me see a solicitor.

They brought me home and packed my things. Then they shoved the things almost on top of my head in the car. They told me I was going to be deported, so I had to put my son in foster care. He cried when I left him in care. There was nothing I could do. I spent the night locked in a cell. Later I heard one of them say, "I think we are barking up the wrong tree. I think we have the wrong person." After spending 25 hours locked in a cell for doing nothing, they let me go. I requested to see the head of the police station. They said that he was unavailable. I told them that I was not leaving until I spoke to him. I waited six to seven hours.

After Demi left the foster care, he suffered another infection and had to be hospitalised. The police later came to my house and apologised. I knew their apology did not mean their acceptance that they did something wrong. I wanted it in writing. I never received anything. Three months later, they decided to close my case without my permission. I phoned the police station. They told me that the officers involved in the incident are no longer with the metropolitan police. Soon after I went to the police station and saw them there.

I know the police are racist. Why would they detain me for 25 hours and put my son in foster care? They told me I am ripping this country off. I told them they ripped my forefathers off. The officer said, "You have the guts to say something in the police station? It's only me and you in here, nobody will see us." Later when I requested the video from the police station, I was unable to get it. I know the police are still doing things like this. It won't stop. I can bet on that. If you think it's getting better, it's just on the surface. People are suffering a lot because of them; people are going through a lot. The Home Office should have sent my papers long ago. It took how many years just to go through the queue—almost four?

People here are racist toward immigrants. They say one thing and do another. They see you and smile, but they treat you completely different. I can't describe how it made me feel. I was very concerned about my son's health. I don't like him apart from me. I want the apology in writing because I know the police are going to come back. They are going to make me a scapegoat.

Ms EJ's horrific story has become a common occurrence in Britain as the full force of racism hits asylum seekers. Virulent racism which up until recently has mainly focused on black communities has re-focused its tentacles in 2001 against one of the most vulnerable groups of all: asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers are people who have been forced to flee their homes because of violence, torture, rape and many other serious human rights abuses. In numerous instances, Britain has played a big role in creating the very conditions from which asylum seekers flee, because it is a major exporter of military equipment to repressive regimes across the globe. Instead of accepting the consequences with compassion and responsibility, Britain welcomes asylum seekers with a series of repressive policies, over-aggressive policing, and dismally inadequate 'services'.

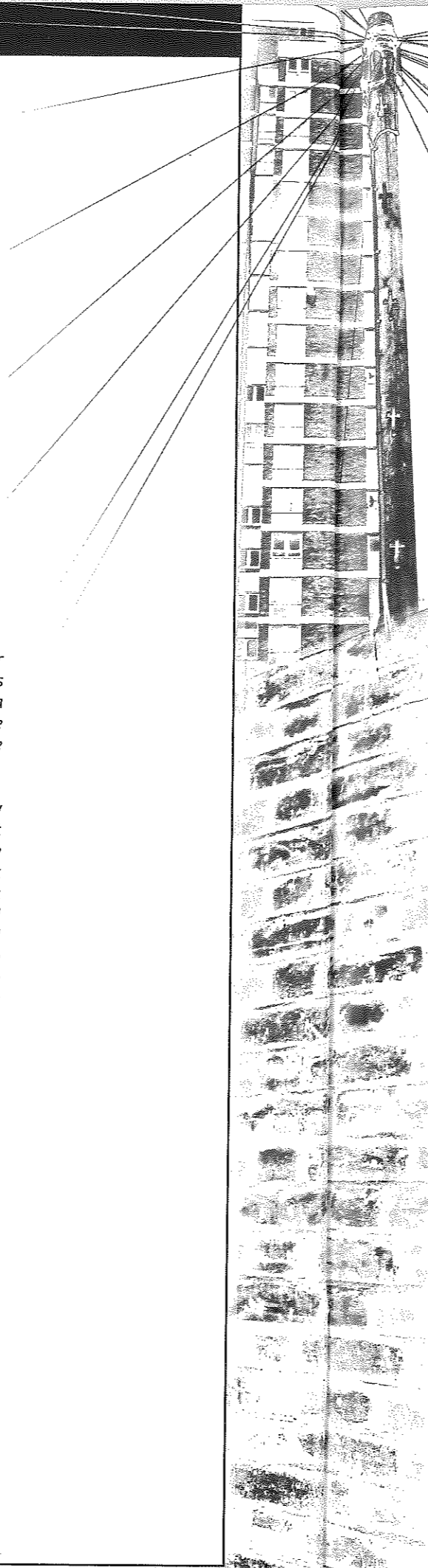
These include the government's 'services' on housing, holding facilities, a humiliating voucher system, and the infamous dispersal programme. A Shelter study released in January 2001 concluded that asylum seekers lived in appalling and dangerous conditions, marked by dampness, overcrowding, poor sanitation, unhygienic cooking facilities and inadequate means of fire escape.

In addition to substandard housing, the National Asylum Support Scheme is planning to provide two new holding centres in Liverpool and Leeds, on top of many other operating locations across the country. Asylum seekers are being held in appalling prison-like conditions without having been convicted of any criminal offences. Additionally they are subjected to further humiliation. Since April 2000, asylum seekers are not entitled to receive benefits. They are only allowed £10 in cash per week and vouchers for specified goods that combine to meet only 70% of the official minimum level necessary for survival.

The voucher system not only makes it impossible for asylum seekers to meet their daily needs but it also creates second class members of society with humiliating pieces of second class currency. A part of the disgraceful and degrading government policy operates through the dispersal scheme, which was introduced in April 2000 to disperse 65,000 asylum seekers across nine areas around Britain. In effect, the dispersal scheme places asylum seekers in predominantly all white communities living in areas of multiple deprivation where the issue of the lack of resources is exploited by the British National Party and the media to detrimental levels. The dispersal policy not only forces asylum seekers to live in isolation, without social and community support, but in hostile and dangerous communities. This tragic turn of events can be illustrated through the deplorable incident in August 2001, when two Turkish asylum seekers were stabbed - one fatally - by white men in a racist attack in one of the dispersal centres in Glasgow.

Another dreadful policy implemented by the Immigration and Asylum Act of 1999 gave wider powers to the immigration service by empowering immigration officers to arrest asylum seekers. As a result, immigration officers can now enter a person's home and engage in police searches without police involvement. Giving police powers to ordinary government officials not only expands the racist draconian measures of the police state, it severely undermines basic human rights and protection for asylum seekers.

The government is providing these types of 'services' to asylum seekers without a strong public outcry because of ingrained racism, hysteria and fear around asylum seekers exploited by fascists, the media and politicians. By way of illustration, earlier in the year, the



Daily Mail reported that, 'some supposed asylum seekers repay our generosity by cheating the benefit system...begging and thieving in town and city centres, and even setting up violent and criminal networks'. Soon after, the Evening Standard announced that 'Handouts to refugees are robbing the British poor' and the Sun in reported that asylum-seeking 'Beggars build mansions with OUR handouts'. The Sun concluded, 'We need deportations on a huge scale'. Clearly these statements form an integral part of the Home Office plans to increase the number of deportations from 12,000 this year to 30,000 next year and 57,000 a year by 2004.

Other Newspaper stories have also been filled with fanciful tales of 'bogus' refugees, 'floods of illegals swamping Britain', asylum seekers 'clogging up NHS lists', and a drain on local authorities. This bombardment with false and opportunistic press reporting not only reflects popular racism, but intensifies and focuses it into an even more dangerous tool.

Instead of confronting this mountain of racism, the government makes the claim that issues around asylum are not about race and racism. Much of government policy is at the forefront of the culture of racism towards asylum seekers, which comes not only through the Home Office but, via local authorities, schools, and the through living rooms across the nation. Politicians of all hue are also exploiting the hysteria and fear around asylum seekers by playing the usual political game of vying for votes.

The government's claim toward creating a just and anti-racist society is more hollow now than during the pre Stephen Lawrence inquiry period. The Race Relations Amendment Act which came into force last April has a list of government departments and officials who have been omitted from observing the few safe guards have been enacted. These public officials and departments like the Immigration and Nationals Directorate are, for all intents and purposes "untouchable", free to dispense racism and discrimination, administer deportations and detention. Such officials feel secure in the knowledge that the government is unwilling to confront this racism, unwilling to address the suffering, violence and dehumanisation from which refugees flee, but only for these horrors to greet them in the UK.

RACIAL HARASSMENT AGAINST ASYLUM SEEKERS: the case of Mr AA

On a grass roots level NMP has witnessed a terrifying increase in anti-asylum feeling and the number of racist attacks is increasing on asylum seekers in Newham. Mr AA's case highlights some of the problems, which are common to so many who have fled life-threatening situations with hopes for sanctuary in Britain. Many are greeted with animosity and violence and in some cases death.

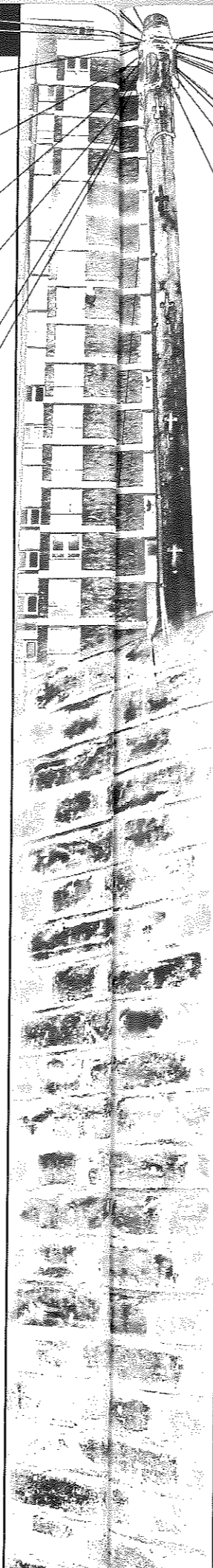
Mr AA fled Somalia in July 1994 to claim asylum in Britain. After witnessing years of civil war, his father was approached by an employee of General Aideed, a member of the Habargedir clan. A new Habargedir government was expected soon and Mr AA's father was expected to sign his property over to them, in return for protection. Mr AA's family had struggled over the years to maintain their trade business and were reluctant to hand over their livelihood to the Harbagedirs, as he suspected that corruption would follow and they would be dispossessed of their property. Mr AA's father refused this proposal outright.

The employee left but returned a few weeks later armed and accompanied by other armed men. He said that if Mr AA's father did not comply, he would shoot Mr AA's younger brother and sister. Mr AA's father refused and the men shot Mr AA's brother and sister. On hearing the gunshots, Mr AA rushed to the scene and witnessed his father being shot dead as well. He was then told that if he said anything about what he had seen then an even worse fate would befall him. After reporting the incident, the employee denied the whole thing had ever happened. Mr AA began to hear from sources that the employee had vowed to 'deal with the witness'. Mr AA fled Somalia in fear for his life. In his statement to the Home Office, Mr AA states:

'I was extremely frightened, knowing that he could kill me just as he had killed three other members of my family. I hid, always fearful for my life'

'I now ask that I be allowed to stay in the UK on the basis of what has happened to me in Somalia, and also because of the fact that I will very probably be killed should I return there'

Mr AA has now been granted asylum and indefinite leave to remain in the UK. He lives with his surviving brothers and sisters who he supports in Newham. His mother was helped to flee Somalia this year after parting



with a large sum of money but was dumped in Turkey, Mr AA is desperately trying to bring her to the UK where she can be reunited with her children and family.

Mr AA contacted NMP this year, although his family had been racially harassed since 1999 by a group of youths from his tower block. The harassment began with name-calling: 'Refugees' and 'Somalis what are you doing here, go home'. Mr AA's family ignored them until the situation worsened.

One day MA Mr AA's sister who was only 10 at the time was in the lift on her way back from school. Two of the group who were harassing the family were in the lift with her. One of them grabbed MA's head, and whacked it against the side of the lift. MA had severe bruising to the front of her head. Her older sister took her to the housing officer, at the tower block. Despite the brutal attack on MA he refused to help her and stated that it was a police matter. This is typical of the response received by victims of racial harassment from members of the Council and housing associations who turn a blind eye to what is happening and avoid their responsibilities. On other occasions, she was approached by the racists who pushed her and pulled her headscarf off repeatedly. Although none of the incidents above were reported to the police, Mr AA eventually started reporting further attacks on his family in the hope that they would get some justice and protection from the perpetrators. They soon realised that this would not be the case.

In September 2000 GA, (Mr AA's brother) aged 15 was attacked by the same group of racists. GA was playing on his bike around the tower block, when five boys approached him. The boys grabbed his legs and hurtled him to the ground where he smashed his shoulder. GA managed to get up but received a further blow to the temple when one of the boys hit him with a metal bar. Again GA got back up and tried to escape but found that he was surrounded. The boys beat, kicked and punched him repeatedly. The one with the metal bar again struck GA on the face and broke his nose. He also received stitches for a laceration to the eye.

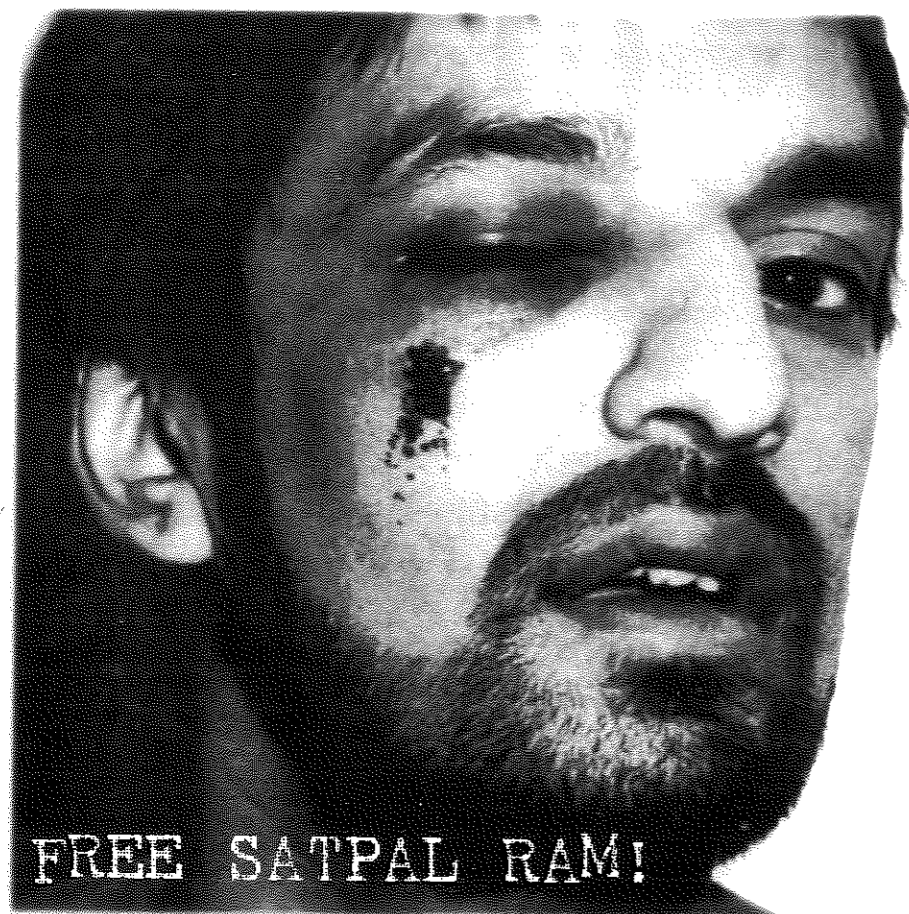
The ambulance and police were called, Mr AA and his brother waited downstairs for the ambulance to arrive while the perpetrators stood close by goading them. Despite the lingering presence of the racists, the police took a considerable time to arrive by which time the perpetrators had made their escape. The main perpetrator was eventually arrested and charged, with a trial date set for May 2001. Two days before the trial GA

was attacked again, this time by friends of the perpetrators. Two boys approached GA, one was brandishing a knife. The boy attempted to cut GA's leg with the knife. Luckily for GA the knife slashed his trousers, missing his leg by millimetres. The police still have not caught the perpetrators.

The trial, which was postponed, went to court in July 2001, but after waiting two hours Mr AA was told that the case had been thrown out of court. Mr AA was told that there had been a police error during the investigation and the major evidence was inadmissible in court. NMP is investigating this matter at present. The perpetrators are still at large and the family is living in fear. The family, including very young children are afraid to go out. They hurry home after school and remain in the flat on the 21st floor of a tower block unable even to go outdoors to play.

This case appalling on its own is just one of the many where asylum seekers are suffering from severe racial harassment. It demonstrates yet again our painful history, experiences and how the police and the court system collude with known racists and fascists against asylum seekers, and black people.





For many years, NMP has supported Satpal Ram and his campaign for freedom. Satpal's case has become a cause celebre and a terrifying example of racism in the criminal justice system and the Prison Service.

We have documented the facts of Satpal's case at length in previous Annual Reports. Briefly, Satpal was racially attacked in an Indian restaurant in Birmingham in 1986. He was racially abused and stabbed twice with a piece of glass by a drunk white man called Clark Pearce. In self-defence, he used a small knife that he used to open boxes in the warehouse where he worked. Both Satpal and Clark Pearce were taken to hospital. Clark Pearce died.

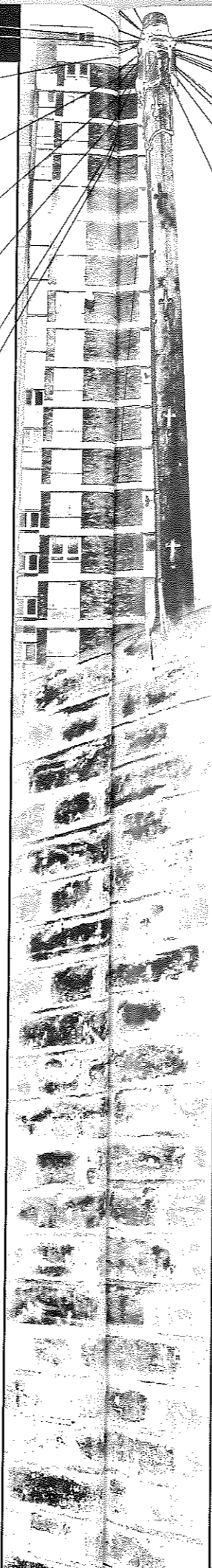
Satpal was charged with murder and stood trial before an all-white jury. He was appallingly represented by his lawyers in a number of crucial respects:

- His lawyers hardly visited him in prison and only took a very brief, inadequate statement from him. The Queen's Counsel who headed Satpal's legal team spent a mere 40 minutes with Satpal before the trial.
- His lawyers convinced Satpal to abandon the obvious defence of self-defence in favour of the partial defence of provocation. Legally, this made absolutely no sense.

- The racial context of the case was effectively ignored at trial.
- Several Bengali waiters from the restaurant who were independent witnesses gave evidence at trial without an interpreter although they spoke little English.
- Satpal was persuaded by his lawyers not to give evidence in spite of the fact that the jury, consequently, heard no evidence in support of Satpal's defence that he was provoked into stabbing Clark Pearce.

Not surprisingly given the conduct and approach of his legal team, Satpal was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. Ever since, Satpal's family and the Free Satpal Ram Campaign have been campaigning tirelessly to quash Satpal's conviction. Satpal's case has attracted support from around the world.

Inside prison, Satpal has consistently protested his innocence. Consequently, he has been viciously persecuted within the prison system. He has spent an inordinate time in segregation and has been moved from prison to prison more than eighty times. No other prisoner has been subjected to such inhuman and degrading treatment. Hiding behind walls of silence, prison



officers have stereotyped and brutalised Satpal. They have assaulted him and falsely and maliciously accused him of being disruptive and a threat to the public. Even the Home Secretary has been reluctant to challenge the Prison Service. As a result, Satpal remains in prison after 15 years despite the Home Secretary setting Satpal's tariff at 11 years (ie the minimum period of imprisonment).

In October 2000, Satpal's case was considered by the Parole Review Board. In spite of opposition from prison officers, the Parole Review Board took the unprecedented step of recommending that Satpal be released immediately. The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, responded by challenging the decision and demanding further clarification from the Parole Review Board. However, none of these developments were made public at the time.

In January 2001, the Minister for Prisons, Paul Boateng, met the Free Satpal Ram Campaign. Although he knew about the Board's recommendation, he made no mention of it and instead suggested that Satpal be de-categorised and moved to an open prison.

In May 2001, Jack Straw rejected the recommendation of the Parole Review Board. This was highly unusual, especially given Board had stood by its recommendation despite sustained political pressure.

We condemn Paul Boateng and Jack Straw without reservation. They should be ashamed of themselves. They had the opportunity to order the immediate release of an innocent man, a victim of racist violence unjustly imprisoned. Instead they collaborated with prison officers to ensure Satpal's continued incarceration, even though Satpal has already spent four years more than his tariff sentence in custody.

Satpal was sacrificed so that the government would not be accused of being soft on crime by prison officers and others. A Judicial Review of the Home Secretary's decision to reject the Parole Review Board's recommendation is currently pending in the High Court.

There has been another unfortunate development. The Criminal Cases Review Commission's provisional decision is that Satpal's case should not be referred back to the Court of Appeal. This is a great setback in the fight to re-open Satpal's case. His lawyers are currently preparing further submissions in the hope of persuading the Criminal Cases Review Commission to reconsider.

Perhaps the most devastating news for Satpal was the death of his mother in September 2001. The Prison Service's repression of Satpal even extended to insisting initially that Satpal would have to be handcuffed if he wanted to attend his mother's funeral. This beggars belief given Satpal had visited his mother in hospital on seven occasions without handcuffs and with a minimal prison officer escort. As a result of enormous pressure from Satpal's supporters and lawyers, he was eventually allowed to attend his mother's funeral without handcuffs.

Satpal Ram is a courageous man who has remained resilient in the face of tremendous adversity. NMP will continue to play an active role in the Free Satpal Ram Campaign and we call upon all our supporters to get involved.

For more information on the Free Satpal Ram Campaign and forthcoming activities, please contact PO Box 30091, London SE1 1WP, tel: 07947-595367, email: freesatpalcampaign@hotmail.com

statement of financial activities for
 the year ended 31st March 2000

balance sheet as at March
 31st 2000

| INCOME AND EXPENDITURE | 2000 | | 1999 |
|---|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | |
| Incoming resources | | | |
| Grants | 13,000 | 41,952 | 54,952 |
| Other Income | 16,640 | | 16,640 |
| Total Incoming Resources | 29,640 | 41,952 | 71,592 |
| Resources Expended | | | |
| Staff Costs | 23,358 | 14,637 | 37,995 |
| Other Operating Costs | 1,795 | 13,217 | 15,013 |
| Total | 25,153 | 27,855 | 53,008 |
| Loss/Profit for the Year Before Taxation | 4,487 | 14,097 | 18,584 |
| Taxation | -35 | | -35 |
| Loss/Profit for the Year After Taxation | 4,452 | 14,097 | 18,549 |
| General Reserves at 1st April 1999 | | 2,767 | 2,767 |
| General Reserves at 31st March 2000 | 7,219 | 14,097 | 21,316 |

| BALANCE SHEET | 2000 | 1999 |
|--|---------------|--------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Debtors | 224 | 1,340 |
| Cash at Bank & in Hand | 23,500 | 3,347 |
| Total | 23,725 | 4,687 |
| Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year | -2,408 | -1,918 |
| Net Current Assets | 21,316 | 2,769 |
| Capital & Reserves | | |
| General Reserves | 7,219 | 2,767 |
| Restricted Reserves | 14,097 | |
| Total | 21,316 | 2,767 |

| | | |
|-------|---------|--|
| 383 | 495,711 | |
| 0 | 7,988 | |
| 383 | 9,576 | |
| 383 | 17,564 | |
| 0 | 490 | |
| 4,383 | 19,468 | |
| 4,383 | 19,468 | |

| INCOME AND EXPENDITURE | 2000 | | 1999 |
|--|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | |
| Incoming resources | | | |
| Grants | 3,500 | 0 | 3,500 |
| Other Income | 6,085 | 0 | 6,085 |
| Total Incoming Resources | 9,585 | 0 | 9,585 |
| Resources Expended | | | |
| Staff Costs | 2,367 | 6,367 | 8,734 |
| Other Operating Costs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Loss/Profit for the Year | 7,218 | 6,367 | 13,585 |
| General Reserves at 1st April 1999 | | 0 | 0 |
| General Reserves at 31st March 2000 | 7,219 | 14,097 | 21,316 |

balance sheet as at March
 31st 2000

statement of financial activities for
 the year ended 31st March 2000