



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
AGAINST
RACISM**

annual report 2005

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AGAINST RACISM Annual Report 2005

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Introduction

Racism continues to rise, most notably reflected in the record number of fascist candidates in the general election, against the backdrop of political parties attempting to outbid each other on who is toughest on immigration and asylum. Home Office figures show an increase of 12,000 racist incidents in 2003/4. The 7 July bombings in London were followed by a 600 per cent rise in racist attacks, and a massive clampdown on civil liberties. The so-called debate on multiculturalism reached new lows: the discourse on the Black communities 'sleepwalking into segregation' and so-called 'inter-racial conflict' being responsible for the recent disturbances in Birmingham, masking the reality of institutional racism and its impact on Black communities. The cutting edge of racism is directed towards the Muslim community, although all Black communities are affected by the rise of racism, as was tragically demonstrated by the horrific murder of Anthony Walker in July.

This picture, however, was contrasted by the overwhelmingly united response to the London bombings, displayed at the vigil and minute's silence in the week following the bombings. London winning the bid to be the host of the 2012 Olympics confirmed the multicultural and diverse nature of the city, a fact recognised and celebrated by everyone.

Fighting against the rise of fascism

The BNP stood in 119 seats and saved 34 deposits at the general election, a four-fold increase in the number of seats contested compared with the 2001 general election. Although this did not represent an increase in their share of the national vote, which remains very small, it enabled the BNP to have an election broadcast as well as interviews on the news and in the printed media. The general election results confirmed that the BNP are verging towards a breakthrough into national politics. The BNP attempted to whip up racism in Barking over the racist myth of Africans being given grants to move there and in Keighley, where they scored their third highest vote, on the back of the racist claims of Asian paedophiles targeting white girls. It is also clear that there is growing opposition to the BNP: their attempt to hold a national demonstration in Keighley on 5 November was thwarted by a broad coalition of trade unions, local politicians and Unite Against Fascism successfully campaigning for a ban. Nick Griffin and Mark Collett's trial also saw the broad coalition of forces between the trade unions and the anti-fascist movement coming together to protest in large numbers in Leeds. The next serious attempt by the BNP to spread their presence further will be at the local council elections in May 2006, by attempting to add to their existing

21 councillors. Campaigning against the BNP remains NAAR's number one priority in the coming year.

Defending civil liberties and multiculturalism

Following the bombings in July, the government proposed further anti-terror legislation, with measures to severely curb civil liberties, including the now defeated proposals to hold terrorism suspects for up to 90 days without charge – in favour of 28 days – and introduction of charges of 'glorification of terrorism' which could have meant those supporting the ANC at the height of the racist apartheid regime in South Africa could have faced prosecution. NAAR feared these measures would make us less safe by criminalising the very communities that oppose attacks like those seen in July. NAAR joined in with the 'only united communities can defeat terrorism and defend civil liberties campaign' involving the Mayor of London, the Muslim Council of Britain and Liberty, along with over 300 organisations and individuals.

There has been opposition to the attempt to point the finger at multiculturalism as the root cause of the attacks in London. It is clear that the next year will require a redoubling of campaigning in defence of multiculturalism.

Asylum and Immigration

Parliament is currently debating the sixth piece of immigration and asylum legislation in thirteen years, whilst the negative impact of the previous legislation is working its way through real people's lives. The new legislation proposes to reduce further appeal rights for foreign students' and visitor visas. The proposed legislation also includes anti-terror measures. As in previous years, this issue provides fertile ground for the rise of racism and advances of the far right.

Priorities for the next year

All these issues will remain on the agenda for all anti-racists. Effectively opposing and stopping the BNP making further gains at local level, building unity between Black and Muslim communities, defending multiculturalism and opposing attacks on our civil liberties are the key priorities for NAAR and all those who have been part of our ten year battle to put anti-racism on the top of the national political agenda. As the debate on the root causes of the disturbances in France rages and a comparison of the French model of 'integration' with the British model of diversity, NAAR has an essential contribution to make.

Mohammed Azam, Acting Co-Chair
Lee Jasper, Secretary

Fighting fascism and the far right

Unite Against Fascism (UAF) continues to be a priority campaign for NAAR.

UAF held its first national conference in February 2005, attended by 500 people which discussed the rising votes for the BNP, the rise in racism in society which has been the cutting edge of the BNP's increased electoral support and strategies that have been effective in defeating the BNP, in particular the alliances necessary for the defeat of the BNP.

In April, BNP leader Nick Griffin was charged with incitement to racial hatred and UAF organised peaceful protests outside the initial hearings. In November the UAF organised the very successful protest jointly with the Yorkshire and Humberside TUC, and around 1,000 people including trade unionists, students, Black and lesbian and gay communities attended to voice their opposition to the BNP.

The general election confirmed the trend of rising BNP support, which has accelerated dramatically over the last five years. In May 2005, the BNP recorded the biggest general election vote for the far right in British history. Demonstrating increasing strength in a growing number of local geographical areas the BNP saved their deposits in 34 constituencies, compared to just 5 in 2001, 3 in 1997 and none in 1992. The biggest increase in the BNP vote was in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, where their vote increased from 3,245 votes in 2001 to 60,990 votes in 2005, representing 2.8% of the regional total. That is nearly four times their average share of the vote nationally. Indeed, Yorkshire alone accounted for nearly a third of the entire vote for the BNP in the UK. 14 of the 34 constituencies where they saved their deposits were in this region. In the Mayoral election in Stoke on 5 May this year, the BNP received 15,776 votes – 19 per cent of the vote.

While the BNP vote increased throughout most of the country, in one area – Old-



ham – they suffered a shuddering defeat in the general election. In Oldham West and Royton the BNP vote fell from 16.4 per cent in 2001 – the highest in the country – to 6.9 per cent this year and in Oldham East and Saddleworth, their vote fell from 11.2 to 4.9 per cent.

If what happened in Oldham had happened across Britain the rise of the BNP would have been definitively reversed. So it is vital that the lessons of how the BNP was pushed back in Oldham and the reasons for its rise in parts of Yorkshire, particularly the Bradford and Keighley area, are understood: the importance of challenging and opposing the BNP's racism in the broadest possible alliance including those affected by it at the sharp end.

The results this year follow the London Assembly and European Parliament elections, where the BNP received the biggest vote for the far right in British history. In the elections for the European Parliament in June 2004, the BNP won 800,000 votes narrowly missing winning four seats. Again, the biggest BNP vote was in Yorkshire and Humberside – where they won

eight per cent of the vote. In the London Assembly elections, they won 90,000 votes – missing a seat in the London Assembly by just 0.1 per cent.

UAF campaigned against the BNP in the general election, activities included the "Pull the plug on the BNP" campaign where UAF organised a protest outside the BBC against the BNP's party political broadcast and an ad van tour across the country urging people to use their vote against the BNP. Hundreds of thousands of leaflets were also distributed in seats targeted by the BNP. 40,000 people came to Trafalgar Square for UAF's May Day rally and music event headlining Pete Docherty and Estelle, supported by Terri Walker and Roll Deep.

In August, TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber visited Leeds to address a meeting jointly organised by Yorkshire and Humberside TUC and Yorkshire Unite Against Fascism. It was one of a series of regional events by the TUC to deepen the dialogue between the trade union movement and the Muslim community, following the escalation of racism and Islamophobia in the wake of the London bombings and the publication of the TUC's report on poverty and exclusion of British people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.

The BNP has been gaining ground at local level, currently holding 21 council seats across the country. However the BNP has not won a local by-election in the last year and UAF has campaigned against the BNP in all of these by-elections, including in Goresbrook ward in Barking in June where the only BNP councillor in London was defeated and in Becontree, Barking in July.

The BNP will be using the high votes they have been receiving as a launch pad for gaining more local council seats in the 2006 local elections, so it is vital that NAAR and its alliances remain at the heart of the biggest possible campaign against the BNP.



Racist violence and policing



The latest Home Office figures show a 7 per cent increase in the number of racist incidents across the country in 2003/4, bringing the total to 52,694. There were 35,022 racially or religiously aggravated incidents, an increase from 31,034 in the previous period. The Metropolitan police recorded an annual fall on the number of racist incidents in London, however, from

over 23,000 in 1999/00 to just over 15,000 in 2003/4. The national figures for 2004/5 are likely to show a further increase, as the period coincided with the general election campaign which featured hostile campaigning on asylum and immigration. The aftermath of the bombings in London saw a 600 per cent rise in racist attacks in the days after the bombing, including three murders.

Racist attacks and violence continue to be of great concern to Black communities. A Guardian/ICM poll published in March 2005 showed one in five people from minority ethnic communities considered leaving Britain because of racist abuse and violence.

The horrific murder of 18 year old Anthony Walker in Liverpool in July 2005 brought to national attention the continuing scourge of racism in its sharpest expression. NAAR has supported the Walker family, attending and speaking at the 1,000 strong vigil in Liverpool. NAAR was

also represented at Anthony's funeral and helped organise the transport from London to the funeral.

Stop and search

Although the number of stop and searches in 2003/4 reduced by 15 per cent from the previous year to 738,000, 15 per cent of these were of Black people, 7 per cent of Asian people, and 1 per cent of people from other ethnic backgrounds, representing 23 per cent of all stop and searches. Black people were 6.4 times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people, Asians twice more likely. It is particularly worrying that despite a significant fall in the total numbers, disproportionality in stop and search is a continuing problem.

The current year's figures, when published, are likely to indicate a rise in the overall number of stop and searches, particularly under anti-terrorism legislation and indicate an increase in the disproportionality affecting Asian communities.

Supporting families



Justice for Jay Abatan

Jay Abatan, a 42 year old Black man was attacked by a gang in Brighton on 24 January 1999. He died in hospital 5 days later after sustaining severe head injuries. No one has yet been tried for Jay's murder. His family is concerned about the nature of the initial investigation, following reports conducted by the police which highlighted serious flaws. One of these remains undisclosed, and NAAR has worked with his family to see the release of this report. NAAR's work included enlisting the support of PCS, the trade union of which Jay and his brother were both members at the time of the attack. Jay's brother Michael addressed PCS national conference and Black Members' seminar, TUC Congress, NAAR fringe at

Labour Party conference and the NAAR AGM. We have also helped produce a leaflet, petition and launch a fighting fund. A vigil is being planned to coincide with the anniversary of Jay's death in January 2006.

Justice for Elmas Ozmico

Elmas Ozmico, a 40 year old Kurdish mother of two died in Dover, after arriving at the back of a lorry, at the end of a harrowing eight-day journey, during which she was accompanied by her two young children and a relative. Having developed a boil, she didn't receive necessary medical attention until after it was too late and died as a result of blood poisoning. An inquest in May 2005 found Mrs Ozmico's death in July 2003 was due to natural causes, a verdict disputed by her husband, Haci Pekkelo. NAAR has worked closely with Mr Pekkelo and Mrs Ozmico's relatives in Britain throughout the last two years, identifying legal representation and attending the inquest. A judicial review of the inquest verdict is currently being sought by the family.

Sukula Family Must Stay

Ngiedi Sukula and her children aged between 1 and 19 have been one of the first families in Britain to be affected by Section 9 of the 2004 Immigration and Asylum Act, measure that removes support from families of failed asylum seekers. Since

August 2005, the entire family is surviving on the donations and support from members of their campaign in Bolton. NAAR has ensured that the family was provided a platform at events such as the NUS Black Students' Conference in May, the NAAR fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference in September and at the Parliamentary meeting on the concerns about the current legislation going through Parliament. Through NAAR's intervention, the British Association of Social Workers issued a strong statement against this inhumane measure, followed by critical statements by the Children's Commissioner. NAAR recently nominated Flores Sukula for the Peter Duffy award, one of Liberty and Justice's annual human rights awards.



Defending civil liberties

The government's response to the bombings on the 7 July and the attempted bombings on the 22 July was to introduce a new terror bill, widely criticised as being excessive and unfair. NAAR joined in with the broad campaign initiated by Liberty, the Muslim Council of Britain and involving the Mayor of London around the 'only united communities can defeat terrorism and defend civil liberties' statement. The 1,000 strong public discussion meeting on the 12 October highlighted the lack of consensus on the government proposals, in particular with regards to the now defeated 90 day detention for terror suspects, bringing together representatives from the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats, the Muslim, Sikh and Jewish communities, the Met Black Police Association, the journalist Madeleine Bunting and many others.

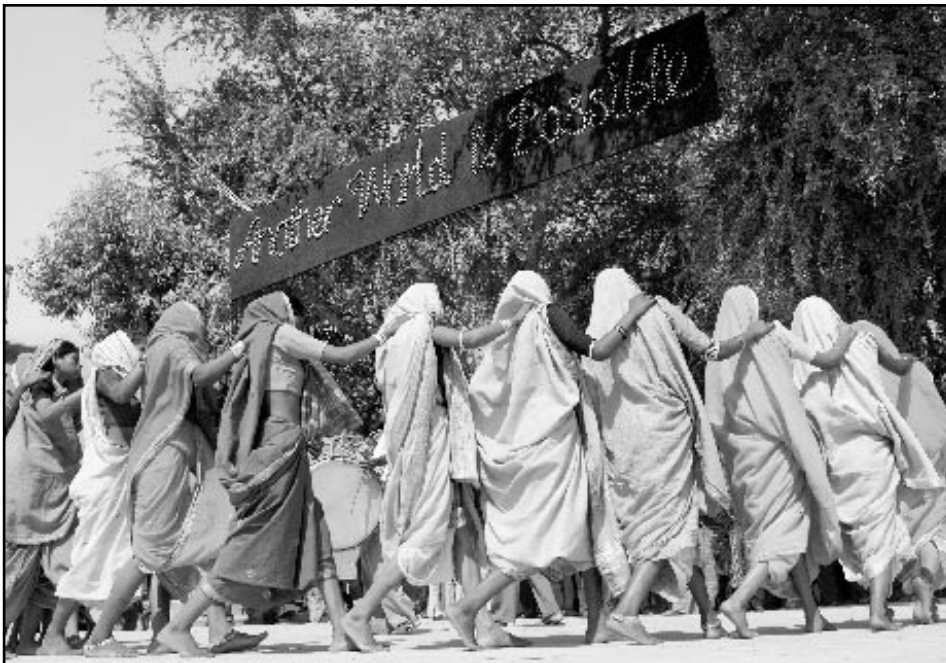
NAAR helped organise a successful lobby of Parliament and public meeting on the day of the government's defeat on the detention proposals on 9 November. As the



bill moves through its stages in Parliament, NAAR will continue to take part in any activities and highlighting the necessity for

unity between Britain's diverse communities as the best defence against further terrorist attacks.

European Social Forum



Having played a central role in the organisation of the European Social Forum in London in October 2004, NAAR continued to participate in the European Social Forum in preparation of the Athens ESF in spring 2006. This involved participation in the preparatory assemblies, establishment and co-ordination of the anti-racism network of the ESF and contribution to the development of the themes of the Athens ESF to include a strong strand on the fight against racism and Islamophobia,

the rise of the far right across Europe, the attacks on immigration and asylum rights and the demands for equality. NAAR also continues to take up the issues affecting minority women, in particular in relation to Muslim women in Europe. NAAR will be making seminar and other meeting proposals with European partners in the Athens ESF.

The ESF process is helping NAAR forge stronger links at the European level with organisations and movements.

ID cards

This year also saw the revival of proposals for a compulsory identity card and a national database (the National Identity Register, NIR), in which a wide range of information would be held. The government argued that the card and the accompanying database are necessary for the fight against terrorism, the prevention of 'illegal' immigration and benefit fraud amongst other reasons. Despite the complete lack of evidence on all these points and widespread opposition, the measures are currently going through Parliament.

NAAR circulated a briefing (<http://www.naar.org.uk/newspages/051031.asp>) for the Lords on the impact of ID cards on Black communities which was mentioned in the debate in the House of Lords which can be seen at the link <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldhansrd/pdvn/lds05/text/51031-05.htm>

NAAR also called on its members to lobby their MPs, highlighting the disproportionate negative impact on Black communities of the implementation of ID cards and the NIR, adding its voice to those opposing the Bill like No2ID and Liberty, calling as a fall back position for a voluntary scheme, if one is introduced. A briefing is also planned for MPs, coupled with articles and other media work around this issue.

Immigration and asylum

General election campaign

Immigration and asylum dominated the general election campaign in the five months from January 2005, with the Conservative Party forcing the issue onto the top of the election campaign with its post-election campaign 'it is not racist to limit immigration' and the government responding with a five year plan announced during the election campaign, including ending of permanent leave for refugees; target for the monthly rate of removals to exceed the number of unfounded applications by the end of 2005; strong border controls with fingerprinting of all visa applicants and electronic checks on all those entering and leaving the country; maximising returns to safe countries and finding ways to return unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

NAAR responded to policy proposals including an annual quota on asylum seekers and migrants first announced in January, countering this with the facts around asylum seekers coming to Britain and our obligation under the Geneva Convention.

NAAR worked with the Jewish Council for Racial Equality and Sir Bill Morris to call on the government to not be drawn into a negative rhetoric on the question of immigration and asylum, and raised concerns over some of the proposals in the five year plan announced by the government.

NAAR organised email protests against Channel 4's 'Immigration is a time-bomb' programme for its inflammatory and racist content, which led to complaints being sent in the days following the broadcast. The program criticised the Britain's multicultural society and demonised the Muslim community. NAAR also highlighted the fire bombing of a mosque in Worthing within hours of the programme being broadcast, calling for an investigation into the incident.

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality (IAN) Bill 2005

In October, NAAR organised a successful Parliamentary briefing meeting on the current bill and regulations with Asylum Rights Campaign, Liberty, the TUC, Commission for Racial Equality, Refugee Council and Universities UK. The main concerning element of the proposed legislation is the drastic reduction of appeal rights including for students visas and the inclusion into the bill through government amendments of anti-terror measures such as the stripping of British citizenship from dual nationals who are suspected of terrorism and extending the grounds under which the govern-



ment can exclude people from applying for asylum.

Campaigning for better rights

NAAR has also joined ranks with the Terence Higgins Trust to condemn the proposals on compulsory tests for TB and HIV on all new migrants. These proposals will discourage people from coming forward for testing and treatment, and could lead to a rise of racism against those perceived to be migrants. NAAR also supported the Trust's campaign for free HIV treatment for all residents in Britain, launched as a result of recent changes to the rules governing the treatment of HIV sufferers.

Section 9 campaign

London and the North West are two pilot regions in the implementation of Section 9 of the 2004 Asylum and Immigration Act, which deals with the withdrawal of support from asylum seekers who have come to the end of their application process. Over 100 families are currently affected. Concretely, the measure has meant families with small children are destitute and have to rely on donations to survive. There is also the threat of the children being taken into care under local authorities' existing duties.

NAAR supported the Sukula family in Bolton who are affected by Section 9. After NAAR's intervention in the case, the British Association of Social Workers and subsequently, the Children's Commissioner have intervened, raising concern about the measure. NAAR continues to offer ongoing support to the family's campaign.

Racism in asylum and immigration detention

In March, the BBC documentary 'Detention undercover - the real story' exposed appalling degradation and racism experienced by asylum seekers at Oakington reception centre. NAAR worked with Diane Abbott MP who placed an Early Day Motion in Parliament, calling for an inquiry into the findings of the documentary. An independent inquiry has found that there 'was the existence of a sub-culture at both Oakington and amongst escort staff of contempt for foreigners, managers, and the Immigration Service' and that 'sub-culture also evidenced a casual acceptance of violence and abuse,' describing the nature of the problem as 'appalling'.

Migrants Deserve Respect

NAAR liaised with migrant doctors, UNISON Black Members' officer, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and Sir Bill Morris to launch the 'Migrants Deserve Respect' statement to highlight the positive contribution of migrant workers to Britain economically, socially and culturally.

Myths and facts on asylum

In order to counter the myths spread about asylum and immigration NAAR updated the fact sheet and run a roadshow in conjunction with UNISON, which will be repeated this year with UNISON branches and regions, creating links between the union and asylum seekers and campaigners at local level.

Rise festival

Following the success of the Respect festival, the Mayor of London organised the newly named Rise in Burgess Park on 16 July. Following the tragic bombings on 7 July, the festival was renamed London United, to assert London's diversity and unity. The festival was supported by SERTUC and NAAR. Over 100,000 people flocked to the park to hear Lemar, Ragav, Horace Andy, Terri Walker, Kano and many others.

NAAR through London AAR co-ordinated over 200 volunteers for the festival and promoted publicity in the run up to the festival. All volunteers received free membership of NAAR and a commemorative certificate from the Mayor. NAAR also co-ordinated the Unite Against Racism marquee which included stalls from the Stephen Lawrence Trust, Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign, Justice for Errol and Jason McGowan, Operation Black Vote, 1990 Trust and many others.



Following the success of the festival, the Mayor of London, SAAR and the NUS Black Students Campaign have organised a Student Rise Week with students unions around London during November, promoting the message of Rise to students around London.

Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism



LAGCAR has had an active year, taking up the key priorities of NAAR in the lesbian and gay movement. We ensured that UAF had a profile and presence at a number of events, addressing the rally at London Pride on the threat of the far right to Black and lesbian and gay communities, working with the NUS LGBT Campaign and UAF to counter demonstrate against the national front picketing Manchester Pride, working with SERTUC and UAF to distribute a leaflet in Soho on the sixth anniversary of the nail bombings to turnout the pink vote against the BNP in the general election.

We have also been active in working with Imaan, the LGBT Muslim group to

challenge homophobia and racism. This included helping to organise and raise sponsorship for their national conference in April, and issuing joint statements against lesbian and gay organisations, which have whipped up Islamophobia.

LAGCAR also had a presence at trade union conferences and worked with trade union LGBT sections, and LGBT Black representatives to raise an anti-racist profile in the trade union movement. LAGCAR is currently working with the Black lesbian and gay groups to ensure that there is a high profile for the Black community in London's Europride 2006, and will be organising initiatives around the 2006 elections.

Student Assembly Against Racism

The Student Assembly Against Racism has been successful this year in achieving wide support for NAAR's campaigns and getting large numbers of students active in our work on campus, in students' union and in the NUS.

A key priority has been mobilising students to campaign against the BNP with Unite Against Fascism through raising awareness among students of the threat posed by the BNP and campaigning to implement 'No Platform' policies.

At this year's NUS Conference we won policy against the BNP, in support of student asylum seekers and opposing the use of racism by politicians and the media in the run up to the general election. We facilitated a UAF fringe meeting which was addressed by Holocaust survivor Henry Guterman MBE and NUS President Kat Fletcher.

We supported student asylum seekers facing deportation including Azim Ansari at Oxford and Courage Idiagbonya at Newcastle and opposed the removal of international students right to appeal visa refusals. We have also supported Daniel Sukula and his family who have been made destitute under Section 9 of the 2004 Immigration and Asylum Act.

We supported the initiatives of the NUS Black Students' campaign for increased Black representation. SAAR promoted volunteering at the RISE festival to students and have successfully involved unions around London in "RISE Student Week" – a program of cultural events and initiatives, with the Mayor of London and the NUS Black Students' Campaign – NUS conference also voted to support these initiatives.

Since the London bombings in July SAAR has worked closely with the Federation of Student Islamic Societies and NUS and with Islamic societies on campus to promote a message of unity and to oppose terrorism and racism. We opposed attacks on the rights Muslim students including the report 'When students turn to terror' by Anthony Gles who has called for quotas to limit the number of Black students at universities and for the banning of Islamic societies.

Local group reports



Birmingham Assembly Against Racism

In the last year, supporters of BAAR have worked mainly through Unite Against Fascism to counter the growing threat posed by, in particular, the British National Party. We have had some success in this work, but the fact remains that in each of the four Birmingham constituencies where the BNP stood in the general election, they polled around 5 per cent.

Birmingham has a large Black population, more than half of it Muslim, but unlike many other places in Britain, this population lives largely in areas where the BNP has no base, and most Black people in Birmingham do not see the BNP as a real threat. However, NAAR supporters are working with all communities to convey the scale of the danger.

Last month African-Caribbean and Asian youths confronted each other on the streets of Perry Barr. Shops and individuals were attacked. Both communities came together in the Peace march following the disturbances, recognising that poverty and deprivation undermine the unity between communities which is a pre-condition to challenge the racism that poses a common threat.

Coventry Against Racism

CAR has continued to support Coventry's multicultural summer festival. We organised a street stall distributing anti-racist publicity. A public meeting celebrated anti-fascist struggles from Cable Street to Coventry and screened a short film produced by a local school-based project against racism. CAR also supported the formation of a West Midlands co-ordination of anti-fascist campaigns. We have continued to work with the City Council's Hate Crime Reduc-

tion Unit to promote better facilities for reporting racist abuse and violence. Another successful public meeting was held in October as part of Coventry's Peace Month.

Lewisham Anti Racist Action Group

Over the last year LARAG has been very active locally, and on a broader scale with NAAR and UAF. Our priority has been anti BNP/NF activities, including leafletting to get the vote out against BNP and NF candidates. We have also supported local activists and UAF at anti-fascist demos in Eltham, Woolwich and Medway.

We held our 3rd May Day event in conjunction with local trade unions. We supported the Parliamentary meeting by NAAR on the proposed changes in the asylum laws. LARAG has raised funds to provide support for victims of race hate crimes and local initiatives. We had a presence at Lewisham People's Day and provided volunteers for the rise festival. LARAG holds monthly meetings, has produced a newsletter and attends LAAR meetings.

London Assembly Against Racism

With the rise of the far right activity, LAAR has been active in opposing the BNP, leafletting various parts of London during the year, particularly in the run up to the general election in May. During the summer we also campaigned against the BNP in two wards in Barking: Goresbrook, where the BNP lost their only council seat in London, and in neighbouring Becontree.

LAAR helped to co-ordinate the volunteers for London's anti-racist Rise festival. We promoted the festival around London. We helped set up and organise the festival on the day, providing stewards and selling programmes, t-shirts and badges. We also gave out NAAR information and stickers and collected donations for the Mayor of London's fund for the victims of the London bombings. Our involvement reinforced the anti-racist message and increased NAAR membership. In October, we attended the United Families and Friends annual demonstration against deaths in custody. LAAR members volunteered in the NAAR office.

Sheffield Assembly Against Racism

In the last year, Sheffield AAR prioritised challenging the BNP's attempt to take advantage of the recent escalation of racism and Islamophobia. We worked closely with

Unite Against Fascism in Sheffield and Yorkshire around the general election and following the London bombings. In particular, we were able to bring together a range of figures in the Muslim community to take part in the dialogue with TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber, designed to deepen the relationship between the trade union movement and the victims of racist discrimination.

Our other main campaigning work has been exposing the racist myths which led to the BNP's breakthrough in Bradford in the 2004 election. We spoke at anti fascist and trade union meetings across the region challenging the view that there is a link between social customs in the Muslim community and the sexual 'grooming' of young girls.

We also alerted people to the dangers of the new government equality agenda and the potential for anti racism to be marginalised. As part of our wider endeavours we will continue to press for a coherent and effective challenge to institutional racism.

Wales Assembly Against Racism

Wales AAR organised in support of the Unite Against Fascism campaign this year. The BNP stood two candidates in Wales for the general election in Wrexham and Swansea East. Activity focused on Swansea East where an active local group fully supported by the area TGWU office, and which involved all the mainstream parties, distributed UAF leaflets to every home in the constituency. The BNP gained 770 votes in Swansea East and 919 votes in Wrexham. This mirrored the trend elsewhere with an outcome for the BNP seven to nine times greater than its result in 1992.

WAAR was also involved in the organisation of a demonstration in support of a Cardiff mosque that was attacked following the 7 July bombings.

