

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
AGAINST
RACISM

Autumn 2006
newsletter

LABOUR PARTY
CONFERENCE
special issue

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Stop the rise of racism — defend multiculturalism

The last recorded figures for 2005 show a 12 per cent rise in racist attacks. This rise has been accompanied by the unprecedented advance of the fascist British National Party. Both reflect the impact of campaigns to whip up racism against Muslims, asylum seekers and black communities in general. In London, where detailed figures on the breakdown of attacks are recorded, the figures indicate that Jewish people are 3 times more likely to face attacks than white Europeans, Asian and African Caribbean people are 10 times more likely, and Arab people are 11 times more likely. Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and racism towards African and Caribbean people must be opposed by the anti-racist movement and the government. It must be challenged in all its forms.

Unfortunately, a different path is being pursued by some policy makers. There are untrue and dangerous claims that multiculturalism is not working, which contribute to a political discourse which has subsumed the Lawrence report recommendations, at the same time that the CRE is being dismantled.

It is important that the new Commission on Integration and Cohesion does not become a vehicle for covering up the real problems faced by black communities in order to portray them as being the source of all their own problems. The tone of some contributions to this debate is obfuscating the real reason for the black communities' disadvantage

— systematic, institutional racism.

Multiculturalism is a fact of life: academic research based on the last census shows that the degree of segregation is falling across the board, particularly amongst the black communities.

Whilst racist attacks are increasing nationally, in London they have fallen every year since 2001. The experience in London, where diversity is widely embraced, provides a positive antidote to the dangerous and

divisive discourse by demonstrating multiculturalism works. Two thirds of Londoners say multiculturalism benefits London. Defending multiculturalism is an important part of stopping the advance of racism.

The Mayor of London's Rise festival, organised in conjunction with SERTUC, NAAR and trade unions, is Europe's biggest anti-racist festival. Initiatives like these, celebrating diversity, are essential to combating the rise in racism.

- DEFEAT THE BNP • DEFEND MULTICULTURALISM
- OPPOSE RACIST ATTACKS • RESPECT MIGRANTS • SUPPORT ASYLUM RIGHTS

Anti-racist priorities for the Labour Government

Tuesday 26 September, 5.30–7.30pm
The Cross Street Chapel, Manchester
Refreshments provided

Speakers: • **Claude Moraes MEP** • **Lee Jasper** Secretary, NAAR • **Dominique Walker** Sister of Anthony Walker • **Cllr Afzal Khan** North West Rep, MCB • **Dr. Ludi Simpson** Statistician, Manchester University • **Mohammed Azam** UAF • **Cllr Pav Akhtar** National Race Equality Officer UNISON • **Dr. Richard Stone** Advisor to the Lawrence Inquiry & President, Jewish Council for Racial Equality • **Flores Sukula** Let the Sukula Family Stay Campaign

Joint fringe
organised by:



LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE 2006 FRINGE MEETING

Unite to STOP the BNP

Monday 25 September, 5.30pm
Cross St. Chapel, Cross St, Manchester M2 1NL
ORGANISED BY UNITE AGAINST FASCISM

Speakers include:

Ken Livingstone • **Billy Hayes** Communication Workers Union General Secretary • **Bob Abberley** UNISON Assistant General Secretary • **Kitty Ussher MP** • **Sadiq Khan MP** • **Henry Guterman MBE** • **Glyn Ford MEP** • **Mohammed Azam** North West Unite Against Fascism • **Lee Jasper** National Assembly Against Racism • **Sabby Dhalu** Unite Against Fascism



Migrants deserve respect

The positive debate on the regularisation of migrants without papers, which was opened with the Immigration Minister Liam Byrne's comments in May, has suffered a setback with the government stating they are not considering such a measure. A positive case for regularisation is being made, and some unions (including the TGWU), Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, NAAR and the churches are campaigning on this demand.

Over the summer, Romania and Bulgaria's full entry into the European Union unleashed a heightened press hysteria on the issue of inward migration to Britain.

Research from a wide range of bodies including trade unions demonstrate that 95 per cent of Eastern Europeans who came to Britain since May 2004 are in employment, plugging gaps in the market. Far from exploiting the system, there are serious concerns that these workers are being exploited by unscrupulous employers. NAAR believes it is necessary to challenge racist myths against asylum seekers and migrants, as this has an overall impact on all migrant communities, regardless of how long they have settled here.

- Download our 'Myths and Facts' pack from our website and get in touch to participate in our asylum seeker national speaker tour.



Terrorism debate risks exacerbating racism and Islamophobia

Islamophobia is finding fertile ground in the climate of hostility being created around the threat of terrorism. Following the bombings on 7 July 2005, NAAR supported the Mayor of London's campaign to defend civil liberties and defeat terrorism by uniting all communities. The co-operation of the Muslim community is a vital component in the fight against terrorism.

Dr Mohammed Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, states that it is "vital for British Muslims and the government to work together in isolating the extremists". Unfortunately the recent proposals on passenger profiling have led to concerns that Muslims and Asians

in general will be particularly targeted. This summer two Asian students were thrown off a Monarch flight after passengers were fearful for their safety, an example of what Chief Superintendent Ali Dizaei called an offence of 'travelling whilst Asian'.

Under anti-terror measures, stops and searches on Asians in the 18 months after September 11 increased by 302% and 230% for African-Caribbeans. Five years on, this disproportionality continues to be a problem. Research from across Europe also documents invasive raids on mosques and mass identity checks producing no chargeable suspects. The disadvantage and discrimination experienced by Britain's Muslims is



Commission on Equality and Human Rights must be representative

The CEHR is due to begin functioning in October 2007. It will replace the existing three equality commissions — Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission and Disability Rights Commission. The CRE was supposed to continue until 2009, reflecting concerns over the impact of its abolition on the focus in fighting racist discrimination. But the announcement that the CRE's Chair, Trevor Phillips, is to be appointed Chair of the CEHR, has been accompanied by speculation that the CRE may be closed and merged into the CEHR sooner.

Meanwhile, anti-racist and equality campaigners are eagerly awaiting proposals from the Discrimination

Law Review. The DLR is charged with introducing proposals for a Single Equality Bill — which campaigners hope will radically improve anti-discrimination law and include much stronger provision for positive action, positive rights and duties to equality and monitoring and delivery of those duties, right across society. The DLR is well behind schedule — many groups, including unions and race equality groups, had argued that a Single Equality Act should have been put in place before the existing commissions were closed and the CEHR established. Now there is significant concern at the timescale and lack of public discussion taking place.

Ministers have said that the DLR's proposals will be informed by the Equalities Review. Trevor Phillips chairs



evident from all social indicators, which reveal that 69% of Muslims live below the poverty line compared with 22% of the country as a whole, and that Muslims face three times greater unemployment rates. Islamophobic campaigns whipping up hostility to Muslims add to the racism already experienced in these communities.

The joint work between the Muslim Council of Britain and Trades Union Congress in tackling Islamophobia is to be welcomed.

Human Rights

this Review, which produced its Interim Report earlier this year. The Report was widely criticised by equality campaigners for its failure to take the impact of discrimination into account, its low quality of research and its attacks on equality campaigns themselves. The final report is due at the end of the year.

Engaging with the debate on the future of equality is essential — meaningful law, incorporating stronger enforcement powers, access to justice, legal aid and transparency, for example, can help offset the weaknesses of the CEHR.

NAAR will join others in making a strong submission to the review and will contribute to the seminar on 9 November at London City Hall. For details of how to register to this seminar, visit www.london.gov.uk or www.naar.org.uk

Stopping the BNP's advance: a priority for the labour and anti-racist movements

This May the BNP stood more candidates than ever, receiving the highest vote in local elections for fascists in British history. They now have 49 councillors nationally, their largest group now being in Barking and Dagenham where the evidence indicates that racist attacks have dramatically increased in parallel with the BNP's rise in activity in the borough.

The BNP's electoral advance is a further step towards a national breakthrough. The anti-racist and the labour movements must make it a priority to halt and reverse this advance by significantly stepping up the campaign to ensure the BNP do not gain a seat on the Greater London Assembly in 2008. In 2004, less than 6,000 votes separated the BNP from a seat on the Assembly. The campaign to stop the BNP in London must start now.

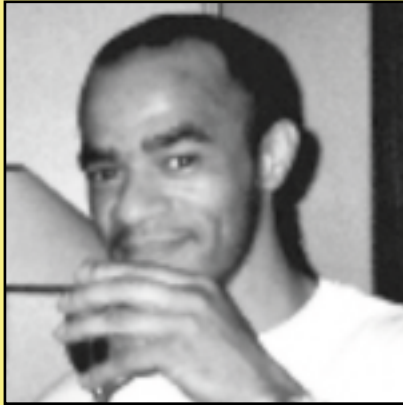
Developing a broad-based, united campaign in Barking and Dagenham will be crucial

for halting the BNP advance in London. NAAR supports the anti-fascist campaigning that has been conducted in that borough and welcomes initiatives that can strengthen and broaden its current scope. In that respect the recent establishment of the Barking & Dagenham Alliance Against Racism & Fascism (BDAARF) is particularly welcome. It is a black community organisation which has already held a successful picket of the council meeting in September with widespread support, including from the South East Region TUC, TGWU South East and East Anglia Region and the Anthony Walker Foundation, amongst others. BDAARF has called on pickets of the monthly council meetings. The next protest is on Wednesday 11 October from 5.30pm.

For more information on the campaign to stop the BNP, contact the NAAR office or visit the Unite Against Fascism website at www.uaf.org.uk.



Justice for Paul Coker



Paul Coker died in custody on 6 August 2005, after being restrained by officers from Plumstead police station. He was 32 years old. Paul was arrested after police were called to his girlfriend's house, following a non-physical dispute between them. Even though the officers were advised the dispute had been resolved, 15 officers came and witnesses say they heard Paul screaming for his life.

Paul's family is campaigning for justice. NAAR supports this family campaign and calls on all those who are concerned at the continuing scandal of deaths in custody to join the United Families and Friends Campaign's annual procession to Downing Street on Saturday 28th October from 1pm at Trafalgar Square, London.

For more information visit the UFFC website <http://www.uffc.moonfruit.com/>

8 October, 12noon-4pm

70th Anniversary of the Battle of Cable St

Cable Street, London E1

Procession, street theatre, exhibition, films, music, stalls, mural. Presented by the Cable Street Group & Alternative Arts. Sponsored by LB Tower Hamlets, TGWU, UNISON. For more information contact cablestreet4.10.36@hotmail.co.uk.

Diary

October

7 October, 10am-2pm

West Midlands UAF conference Birmingham Council House. Victoria Sq. Details on www.uaf.org.uk

8 October, 12noon-4pm

70th Anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street
See below for details

11 October, 5.30pm onwards

Protest against BNP councillors
Barking Town Hall, Clockhouse Ave, IG11. Nearest tube: Barking

28 October, 1pm

United Families and Friends annual procession to end death in custody
Trafalgar Square, London
Nearest tube: Charing Cross

30 October, *date subject to change*

Protest at Nick Griffin and Mark Collett trial
Leeds Crown Court, visit www.uaf.org.uk for more info

November

9 November
9.30am-2pm

Equality in our lifetime?
Discrimination Law Review Seminar — help influence the future of equality law
London City Hall
email paul.jenkins@london.gov.uk for info and registration

10-12 November

IMAAAN Conference
— support for LGBT Muslims and their friends
www.imaan.org.uk

18-19 November

NUS Black Students' Conference
Wolverhampton
contact ruqs@nus.org.uk for more info

Saturday 25 November
9.30am to 5pm

NAAR AGM
TUC Congress House
Great Russell St
Nearest tube: Tottenham Court Road

Make an anti-racist pledge today:

Join NAAR



Time to unite against racism

The National Assembly Against Racism campaigns against racism in all its manifestations. With national black organisations playing a leading role — in alliance with the Jewish and Muslim communities, the trade unions, the student movement, religious groups and many others, NAAR has set about building a mass anti-racist movement uniting all those who believe racism must be fought and not appeased.

Name.....
Address.....

Tel..... Email.....

Affiliation rates: Individuals waged: £15 unwaged/students: £3; Organisations Local unfunded: £25; National unfunded/regional/local funded: £50; National trade unions/funded organisations: £100. Please make cheques payable to NAAR and return to: NAAR, 28 Commercial St, London E1 6LS. Tel: 020 7247 9907. Email: info@naar.org.uk Web: www.naar.org.uk