

New law further attacks asylum and immigration rights

The new Asylum and Immigration Bill was published in June, introducing some of the measures contained in the government's five-year plan announced at the height of the general election campaign. Included in the bill are measures to further reduce appeal rights, most notably on those who are refused a students' visa and other entry clearance procedures, who will not be able to appeal the decision to refuse them entry. The end of appeal rights of foreign students was criticised by Universities UK, the body of university Vice-Chancellors. The Law Society also issued a statement particularly raising concern at the reduction of appeal rights, noting that these reductions are particularly problematic in the absence of significant improvement in the quality of initial decisions.

Not included in the bill is the end of automatic right to Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) for refugees, which has been introduced as a regulation at the end of August 2005. This is a serious departure from the 1951 Geneva Convention, as it will lead to five years of uncertainty for refugees, who may at the end of that initial period, lose their status and be sent to their country of origin as a result of a review. The bill is providing for further increase in the rate of detention and deportation of those whose asylum claims have been turned down.

- NAAR is co-ordinating a briefing meeting on the bill in Parliament on Monday 17 October 2005 at 7pm.

- NAAR and UNISON are organising a national asylum roadshow, to debunk the myths on asylum. Download our Myths and Facts briefing at <http://www.naar.org.uk/resources/leaflets.asp>.

Opposition grows to the destitution of asylum seeker families

Section 9 of the 2004 Immigration and Asylum Act is being implemented through a pilot in Leeds, Manchester and East London. The measure involves the ending of support in benefits and housing to asylum seekers who have come to the end of the process. At the time of the passage of the Act in 2004, many refugee agencies and children's rights organisations raised concern that the ending of support would lead to families facing the stark choice of either having their children being taken into care or being deported to countries which they fled as a result of persecution. As Section 9 is implemented, there are already 116 families affected by it, with 19 having had their support already terminated.

The British Association of Social Workers have issued a statement following the case of the family of Ngiedi Sukula in Bolton, who have lost their appeal against Section 9 in early August, one of the first families to have reached the end of the process. In their statement, the BASW said: "This brutal power is not only an infringement on the human rights of children and families but also calls into question our standing in the international community given our commitment and obligations as a nation state to the Human Rights

Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights", calling on the government to "unequivocally direct children's social services departments to place their fundamental duty to uphold the right to family life before other considerations."

The Children's Commissioner Al Aynsley-Green issued a further statement after meeting the Sukula children, saying that "it is vital to ensure that the State should only ever use its powers to take children away from their families where it is clear that it is the best thing to do for the child and not simply to be 'tough' on failed asylum applicants."

Although no children have yet been taken into care, the families who have lost their support are depending on the donations of friends and supporters, with the continuing threat of action by social services. For more information or to send messages of support and donations, contact NAAR.

• The impact of draconian legislation on desperate asylum seeking families was sharply illustrated by the tragic death of Manuel Bravo, an Angolan asylum seeker who committed suicide in Yarl's Wood Removal Centre on 15 September to enable his 13-year son to remain in Britain as an unaccompanied minor.

Make an anti-racist pledge today:

Join NAAR

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

Affiliation rates: Individuals waged: £10 unwaged/students: £3; Organisations Local unfunded: £15; National unfunded/regional/local funded: £25 National trade unions/funded organisations: £65. 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



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AGAINST RACISM

Autumn 2005 newsletter

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE special issue

National Assembly Against Racism
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Only united communities will defeat terrorism and protect civil liberties

7 MILLION LONDONERS

<http://www.london.gov.uk/onelondon/>

Following the bombings in London on 7 July, the overwhelming response from all sections of society has been a message of unity in the face of attempts to divide our communities and scapegoat Muslims for the attacks. In the first two weeks after the bombings, this message of solidarity and unity prevailed, nowhere better demonstrated than in the Beacontree by-election in Barking. The attempt by the fascist BNP to whip up racism by using the photo of the wreckage of the No 30 bus in Tavistock Square in an election leaflet just days after the attacks was rejected by the voters in the ward, their candidate resoundingly defeated in the by-election.

However, the failed attacks on 21 July were followed by a change in the overall response in the media and by some politicians and commentators. A renewed attack on multiculturalism coupled with the myth of a 'clash of civilisations' between the West and Islam is being pushed onto the agenda. Draconian proposals on civil liberties are proposed for Parliament. In response, a large number of organisations including the Mayor of London, Liberty, Muslim Council of Britain and NAAR came together formulating the statement "Only united communities will defeat terrorism and protect civil liberties", which is the basis of a campaign

'Our lives, rights and freedoms are precious and we will not surrender them. We stand united in our refusal to be defeated by those who seek to indiscriminately murder people of all faiths and races in our country.'

'We support the police and measures against those who plan, support or carry out such terrorist attacks. However, a number of the security measures which the government has said it is considering risk criminalising or excluding people who condemn terrorist attacks and whose cooperation is indispensable to the work of the police in fighting terrorism.'

'We believe that the fight against terrorism requires a broad consensus around its means and the involvement of all communities to isolate and defeat those who would use terror to divide us.'

Signatories include:

- Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London
- Shami Chakrabarti, Liberty
- Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Muslim Council of Britain
- Mohammed Sawalha, Muslim Association of Britain
- Sadiq Khan MP
- Alex Salmond MP
- Mark Oaten MP
- Frank Dobson MP
- Tony Lloyd MP
- Nicky Gavron AM, Deputy Mayor of London
- Lord Bhatia
- Lord Ahmed
- Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP
- Hugo Charlton, Chair, Green Party
- Amrik Singh, Sikh Federation (UK)
- Colin Slee, Dean of Southwark
- Confederation of Indian Organisations (UK)
- David Prentis, General Secretary, UNISON
- Billy Hayes, General Secretary, CWU
- Paul Kenny, General Secretary, GMB
- Keith Norman, General Secretary, ASLEF
- Kat Fletcher, President, National Union of Students
- Margaret Lally, Refugee Council
- Christina Odone
- George Monbiot
- Gary Younge
- Roy Greenslade
- Steve Richards
- Lauren Booth
- James Wood QC, Doughty Street Chambers
- Ian McDonald QC
- Karon Monaghan, Matrix Chambers
- Peter Herbert, Society of Black Lawyers
- Louise Christian, Christian Khan
- Gareth Pierce, Partner, Birnberg Pierce Solicitors
- Yasmin Qureshi, Human Rights Advisor to the Mayor of London
- National Assembly Against Racism
- 1990 Trust
- Halkevi, Kurdish Community Centre
- Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism

against the proposals curbing civil liberties. A public meeting, **United communities defeating terrorism**, will take place on Wednesday 12 October at 6.30pm at Westminster Central Hall. See listings on p3 for more details, contact the NAAR office or visit www.naar.org.uk.

National Assembly Against Racism fringe meeting

The agenda against racism in Labour's third term

Tuesday 27 5.30pm. Ash and Beech room, Quality Hotel, West Street, Brighton
Details inside



The rise of the BNP poses a threat to us all

The general election this year confirmed that the BNP continue to pose a real threat to our society. Having quadrupled the number of seats they stood in from 2001, they saved 34 deposits this year (up from 5 seats in 2001). Their national vote also quadrupled, registering the largest vote for a far right party in the history of British general elections.

The BNP hold a record 21 councillors around the country, seats they captured since 2002. Where they have a presence and get elected, racist attacks increase — for example in Barking, where they registered one of their highest votes, racist attacks soared in the year a BNP councillor was elected.

Unite Against Fascism came together almost two years ago to stop the BNP making the national breakthrough fascists have made across Europe. The European experience shows it is infinitely easier to stop them gaining a toe-hold in mainstream politics by mobilising all those who oppose them, than it is to get them out of office. This is why UAF brings together trade unions, black, Jewish and lesbian and gay organisations, disability rights campaigners together with all those who face the threat of fascism. In areas such as Oldham such an alliance came together and tackled racism head on, pushing the BNP back.

The BNP's goal is to advance

further in the forthcoming 2006 council elections next May, where they will be hoping to gain several more council seats and using the high votes they received in the general election as a launch pad. UAF wants to raise awareness around the threat of all those who oppose fascism to turn out the vote of the decent majority of people to vote against the BNP.

Forthcoming events and activities:

- **UAF's national conference on 5th November at TUC Congress House will launch campaigns in areas the BNP are targeting for 2006. Speakers include Ken Livingstone, Margaret Hodge MP, Billy Hayes, CWU General Secretary, Mick Connolly, South East Region TUC, Kat Fletcher NUS President, Henry Guterman MBE Holocaust survivor, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Muslim Council of Britain General Secretary.**
- **2nd November — A presence outside the court case where Nick Griffin is facing charges for incitement to racial hatred is being organised with trade unions.**
- **A regional tour of the Love Music Hate Racism's documentary film "Who shot the Sheriff?", highlighting the role of music in defeating the fascists since the 1970s is also being organised with Amicus.**

Contact UAF for more details on unite@natfhe.org.uk, www.uaf.org.uk, or 0207 833 4916

Justice for Jay Abatan

Jay Abatan was murdered in a racist attack in Brighton on 24 January 1999. Jay was accompanied by a friend and his brother Michael, who were also attacked. Five days later, Jay died in hospital. Six years on, no one has yet been tried for Jay's murder. The family experienced a catalogue of failings in the police investigation. The defendants only faced trial for attacking Michael due to a lack of evidence — the jury were not allowed to hear of Jay's murder. In court, police officers gave good character evidence for the defendants. The family were unaware that they knew the defendants. The police launched inquiries into the investigation, however the family have not seen the report. Leaked extracts in the press catalogue 57 failings in the investigation into Jay's murder. The family are demanding the release of the Avon and Somerset report into the first investigation.

What you can do:

- Sign the petition calling for the release of the report
 - Send our model letter to the Home Secretary supporting the demands of the family
 - Order leaflets, stickers and other materials to raise awareness and support for the family
- Contact NAAR on denis@naar.org.uk or 020 7247 9907 for more information or write and send cheques payable to Justice for Jay c/o NAAR, 28 Commercial St, London E1 6LS



Fight for Muslim women's right to choose in Belgium

The Belgian anti-racist organisation MRAX is taking legal action in the Belgian Council of State to overturn school regulations banning the wearing of a hijab.

MRAX wants a national debate around their five proposals which include:

1. reaffirm the principle of neutrality in school, based on exchanges between cultures, and not on uniformity or exclusion of diversity
2. no to ghettoised schools : to avoid this, invite the francophone community of Belgium as well as the institutions to reaffirm the commitment to freedom as a rule and its restriction as an exception.
3. introduce courses of comparable philosophy and religious education as well as anthropology as part of the national curriculum
4. reinforce democracy in schools, by improving the functioning of the school councils, ensuring that they are representative, as well as encouraging a real dialogue in educational establishments.
5. improve teacher education to include cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.



MRAX states it wants respect for religious liberty, which is guaranteed in the Belgian Constitution and international treaties as well as equality and anti-discrimination laws. MRAX says banning girls from wearing a veil at school is xenophobic and displays cultural ignorance. 80 percent of schools in the French community in Belgium ban the wearing of head garments, including the Muslim veil.

• For more information, visit www.mrax.be
Source: *Expatica News* www.expatica.com.

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Labour Party conference fringe meetings:

Act now — Stop the BNP

Monday 26 September, 5.30pm – 7.30pm

St. Paul's Church, West Street Organised by Unite Against Fascism.
Speakers : • Ken Livingstone, *Unite Against Fascism Chair* • Dawn Butler MP • Billy Hayes, *CWU General Secretary* • Margaret Hodge MP • Dr Abdul Jalil Sajid, *Muslim Council of Britain* • Barry Camfield, *TGWU Assistant General Secretary* • Glyn Ford MEP

The agenda against racism in Labour's third term

Tuesday 27, 5.30pm. Ash and Beech Room, Quality Hotel, West Street, Brighton. Organised by NAAR. *Speakers:* • Shami Chakrabarti, *Liberty* • Claude Moraes MEP • Dr Richard Stone, *Advisor to Lawrence Inquiry* • Lee Jasper, *Secretary NAAR* • Michael Abatan, *Justice for Jay Abatan Campaign* • Pav Akhtar, *NUS Black Students Officer* • Amina-Mariam Osman, *Protect hijab* • Flores Sukula, *Sukula Family Must Stay campaign*

October

What History Should Tell Us About The Future
7 October 2005, 4 – 7pm, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London A keynote lecture by Willie Madisha, President of COSATU. Black History Month event organised by SERTUC.

United communities defeating terrorism

Wednesday 12, 6.30pm-9pm. Westminster Centra Hall. Public meeting in defence of civil liberties. Speakers include Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, and Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty.

Meeting in Parliament on new Asylum and Immigration Bill

Monday 17, 7pm. Committee Room 11, House of Commons

United Families and Friends Campaign

Annual procession against deaths in custody
Saturday 28, assemble 12noon in Trafalgar Square. For more information, call 07770 432 439 or 07956 629 889.

November

Nick Griffin incitement to racial hatred trial

Wednesday 2, from 9am followed by rally at 12noon Protest outside Leeds Crown Court, Oxford Row. Organised by Yorkshire and Humberside TUC and Yorkshire UAF. Contact UAF on 020 7833 4916.

Unite Against Fascism national conference

Saturday 5, 10am – 5pm. TUC Conference Centre, Great Russell St, London May 2006 local elections campaign launch

Student Rise week

Saturday 5 to Sunday 13 For more information, contact SAAR at contactsaar@hotmail.com

NUS Black Students Conference

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 Black students can attend for free — for further details, contact pav@nus.org.uk

NAAR AGM

Saturday 26, 9.30am – 5pm. TUC, Great Russell St, London Members and affiliates only. To join, fill in the form on p4