



Opposing racism, celebrating unity and multiculturalism

By Lee Jasper, Secretary, NAAR

The latest Home Office figures show a 12 per cent rise in the number of racist attacks recorded by police around the country. This has occurred in a climate of increased racist hostility and attacks on multiculturalism which saw the fascist BNP more than double its council seats in May's local elections. Hysteria on the question of so-called 'foreign prisoners', insufficient opposition to the racist myths perpetrated by the BNP and the high profile given to them in sections of the media meant that the BNP now has 49 councillors around the country. Their vote has increased 75 fold in the last 5 years since the 2001 local elections when they won their first three seats.

The accelerated rise of the BNP must ring alarm bells for all those who oppose racism and value democracy. Fundamentally, their race-hate must be challenged and we must promote initiatives celebrating diversity and promoting multiculturalism.

The response to the bombings in July 2005 showed the strength of support for diversity, most notably in London. The attacks which affected all communities in London failed to divide Londoners, who responded in unity to oppose terrorism and any attempts to use racism to scapegoat any section of our society. Elsewhere in Europe, the far right have taken positions of power and, instead of challenging their politics of hatred, mainstream politicians have capitulated to them, which has served to further legitimise their fascism and embed it in mainstream politics. This



has expressed itself in a dialogue that demonises communities facing racism, particularly Muslims and asylum seekers. For example, when the right wing Danish newspaper Jyllen-Posten published racist cartoons depicting Muslims as terrorists and suicide bombers, these were re-printed elsewhere across Europe in the name of freedom of speech. In Britain, the BNP published the cartoons as part of their local election campaign, which they declared a 'referendum on Islam'. The Muslim community saw these images as a direct provocation, many of which were racist caricatures. Yet some sections of the press

characterised this response as 'incompatible with western values'. Black journalist Gary Younge quoted Steve Biko who said, "not only are whites kicking us; they are telling us how to react to being kicked".

It is crucial that the myth of a 'clash of civilisations' is challenged, as it is being used to justify Islamophobia and encourage division. NAAR exists to bring together all those opposed to racism and support all communities facing racism. We will continue to use every opportunity to undermine racism at all levels.

Join NAAR today and make a stand against racism!

The rise of the BNP can be stopped

The 2006 local council elections saw the continued electoral rise to the BNP. They now have 49 councillors, including 11 in Barking and Dagenham which has already seen 2 racist attacks, including the near-fatal stabbing of an Afghan man. Where the BNP hold council seats, racist attacks have increased. The BNP aims to win seats on the London Assembly in 2008 and the European Parliament in 2009 following the example of their fascist European counterparts who now hold seats in government in some countries and in others, directly influence government policy because of their electoral weight. If the BNP make a national breakthrough, it will be more difficult to reverse this than to prevent it from happening in the first place.

The hostile climate on asylum, immigration and islamophobia legitimised their racist propaganda,

such as the lie that new African migrants were given grants for housing and the false claim in Keighley that exclusively Muslim men were grooming young white girls for sex. The media has a responsibility to expose the BNP for their fascist policies, their admiration of Hitler and their criminal convictions, instead of giving legitimacy to their views.

Unite Against Fascism brings together Black, Jewish, Lesbian and Gay communities with trade unions and all those who oppose fascism to tackle their politics of hatred head-on and turn out the vote against the BNP.

This strategy has defeated the BNP in Oldham, where their vote



has halved in the past 5 years and where they have been prevented from gaining seats. NAAR will be working with UAF to ensure defeating the BNP is a priority in the year ahead.

For info contact Unite Against Fascism on unite@ucu.org.uk or 0207 833 4916

Equality in our lifetime — government must grasp the opportunity

By Milena Buyum, Coordinator NAAR

The current shake-up of all equality legislation and institutions established to promote equality has been described as a 'once in a lifetime opportunity'. This opportunity is in serious risk of being missed, unless the growing concern by the Black community, lesbian and gay and disability rights groups amongst many others is listened to and acted upon.

In January this year, the passage of the Equality Act sealed the structural framework of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights, despite significant concern about the lack of statutory representation for Black communities. Demands for a Statutory Race Committee, guaranteed places for commissioners with lived experience of racism, a ring-fenced budget for race equality work, and criticism leveled towards the absence of such representation for the other four strands — with the

exception of disabled people who will have a statutory committee and one guaranteed disabled commissioner — have been ignored.

The complete refusal to take on board the criticism of people ranging from the Mayor of London through the former CRE commissioner Lord Herman Ouseley and Black community organisations such as the 1990 Trust, and the National Coalition of Black-Led Organisations and NAAR, has been further compounded in the Equalities Review — one of the two current reviews affecting Black communities along side the Discrimination Law Review — which published their interim report in March.

The interim report has been roundly rejected by most organisations which work in the field of opposing discrimination in all its forms.

It reverses the gains of the last 30 years, by setting a framework about the root causes of discrimination with an incorrect analysis that places the responsibility of discrimination

on those discriminated against. It also rejects outright some of the long-standing demands for legislative reforms such as positive discrimination and extension of public sector duties to promote equality to the private sector. The Equalities Review final report is expected to be published in the autumn. Damning submissions to the Equalities Review by the Mayor of London and NAAR, are on the NAAR website.

NAAR will be making a further submission to the Discrimination Law Review running in parallel with the Equalities Review which is expected to produce a Green Paper which the government will be consulting on. The Green Paper will form the basis for Single Equality Act that will be the legislative framework for all future equalities work.

NAAR urges everyone concerned to make submissions to the forthcoming consultation on the proposed legislation. For more information, contact NAAR.



Justice For Jay

Jay Abatan, a 42-year old black man was attacked by a gang in Brighton on 24 January 1999, at the end of a night out to celebrate his recent promotion. His brother Michael and a friend were also attacked. Five days later, Jay died in hospital, having sustained severe head injuries. No one has yet been tried for Jay's murder.

Two men were eventually arrested and charged with manslaughter but by the time of the trial, these charges were reduced to affray and actual bodily harm to Michael, due to a lack of witnesses. The jury was not allowed to hear of Jay's death as the judge ruled that this would prejudice the trial. In court, investigating police officers gave good character evidence for the defendants, despite having told the family they did not know them before.

Complaints about the investigation by family led to a police inquiry leading to the replacement of the initial investigating team. It was then stated that the murder was being treated as a racist killing – two years after it took place. Recently, a further inquiry by Somerset and Avon police was completed.

It is believed these reports highlight serious flaws in the initial investigation, which did not follow any of the recommendations of the Lawrence Report, published a month after Jay's death. Please the campaign for Justice for Jay.

For more information visit www.justiceforjay.co.uk or phone 020 7247 9907.



Let the Sukula Family Stay!

The Sukula Family fled the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2001 and came to Britain after Ngiedi Lusukumu, the mother of the family, was badly beaten by the militia as her husband was suspected of opposing the government. In 2005 their asylum claim was rejected. Two of the children, Daniel and Flores, are both students in Bolton and are excelling in their classes. Further to the threat of deportation, the family are also being subjected to Section 9 of the latest asylum and immigration legislation, which leaves families at the end of the application process without maintenance support, effectively throwing them into destitution, with

the threat of having children taken into care. This system is being piloted on targeted families currently and is inflicting misery in the process.

For petitions, model letters and other ways of supporting the Sukula family please visit www.sukula.org/



Paul Coker Justice Campaign

Paul Coker from Plumstead, South East London, died in police custody in the early hours of 6 August 2005.

Paul was arrested after police were called to a house in Plumstead following a non-physical dispute between Paul and his girlfriend. Even though they were advised that the dispute had been resolved, 16 police officers turned up. Restraint methods were used on Paul. He died 2 hours later in Plumstead police station.

The family are demanding justice for Paul Coker.

If you would like more information or for copies of the family's petition please contact info@naar.org.uk

2007 bicentenary of slavery abolition commemorations

By Kofi Mawuli Klu, Joint Co-ordinator, Rendezvous of Victory (ROV), Executive Committee member, NAAR

2007 will be the 200th anniversary of the British Parliamentary abolition of the slave trade. Activities of

commemoration are being planned by a wide range of organisations, partnerships and networks.

Rendezvous of Victory (ROV) is working together with Anti-Slavery International (ASI) and the World Development Movement (WDM) as joint convenors of the 2007 Bicentenary Cross-Community Forum

(2007 BCCF).

The main purpose of the 2007 BCCF is to draw peoples from diverse communities to share perspectives, identify common grounds and carry out unifying programs of positive action to address the fundamentally

2007 bicentenary of slavery abolition commemorations

... cont'd from p3

critical issues in the present that arise from the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade of the past which are still crucial to genuine community development, integration and cohesion in Britain today.

In addition to supporting the Operation Justice Eternal (OJE) campaign of demanding posthumous glorification in 2007 for our martyred

Black Abolitionist freedom-fighters, ROV is also actively pursuing the realisation of the demands raised in the Apology of Substance campaign of the National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR). Instead of a "Slavery Memorial Day", ROV is supporting the institutionalisation of an Anti-Slavery Resistance Day to be annually marked on the 23rd

of August, thereby upholding the decision of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) to mark the beginning of the Haitian anti-slavery revolution as the International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

For more information, visit the NAAR website on www.naar.org.uk

Student Assembly Against Racism

The Student Assembly Against Racism (SAAR) is a national anti-racism campaign working to unite all young people and students to stand up against all forms of racism in education and wider society. We run campaigns against the growth of the far right, against racist attacks, for an end to racist 'stop and search policing', in defence of asylum seekers and against Islamophobia.

SAAR highlights the importance of students being active in campaigning against racism – black students Stephen Lawrence and Anthony Walker were murdered in racist attacks. The Lawrence Inquiry recommendations identified that education has a role to play in cutting out racism at its roots. Often the victims and perpetrators of racist violence are young people.

SAAR is active in initiatives on campus include Student RISE every autumn which hosts activities to bring an anti-racist message to colleges and universities, and has raised awareness when the BNP have attempted to have a presence on campuses.

For more information visit www.naar.org.uk/saar or e-mail contactsaar@hotmail.com

Unite Against Racism and Homophobia

The Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism (LAGCAR) provides a space for lesbians and gay men to campaign against racism, homophobia and bigotry. It unites the lesbian and gay community with the black community against our common enemies.

The fascist nailbombings in London in 1999 targeted the Black, Asian and lesbian and gay community. The fascist BNP target sections of Black and Muslim community and also attack the lesbian and gay communities.

Working together means stronger campaigns which can play a part in stopping the advance of fascists such as the BNP.

For more information contact www.naar.org.uk/lagcar or e-mail lagcar@hotmail.co.uk



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

Affiliation rates: Individuals waged: £15 unwaged/students: £3; Organisations Local unfunded: £25; National unfounded/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

