

Proud partners of Rise Festival

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
AGAINST  
RACISM

## Summer 2007 newsletter

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# Celebrating multiculturalism – opposing racism

**R**ise: London United Against Racism festival is a fantastic counterblast to those arguing that multiculturalism doesn't work and creates division.

The vast majority of Londoners cite the diversity of communities, freely expressing their cultural and religious difference, is something they most value about London. Rise demonstrates the idea that people need to give up visible cultural or religious identity to successfully live, work and play together is nonsense.

The right to 'live and let live' as long as no harm is caused to others — the principle of multiculturalism — has been hard fought for by each new community to Britain since the 1950s. It is the only way to achieve positive community relations in such a diverse society and is something worth protecting. The alternative, promoted to disastrous effect in other parts of Europe, is assimilation to one supposedly superior culture. This denigrates 'other' cultures and directly leads and encourages deep-seated discrimination and racism.

The ratcheting up of anxiety about



the role of different communities in Britain, and a supposed problem of society fracturing under the weight of its diversity, is unhelpful and misplaced. Such an approach is seized upon by the far right and used to gain support for its politics of hatred. The agenda dangerously shifts the framework for community relations from one that seeks to end endemic racism and disadvantage as a cause of social division onto blaming black communities for failing to sufficiently integrate. The myth promoted by some that Britain is in danger of 'sleepwalking into segregation'

is contradicted by overwhelming academic evidence, by Dr Ludi Simpson and Prof Danny Dorling to name a few.

NAAR is a partner in this annual anti-racist festival organised by the Mayor of London to celebrate London's multiculturalism and make a strong stand against racism. We support the victims of racist harassment, attacks and murders and their families to help them achieve justice. We defend asylum and immigration rights and civil liberties and we make a stand against institutional racism and unfair police stop and search.

## Join us to make a difference

Our campaigns have a real impact on achieving justice and equality and building an anti-racist future. You can make a difference alongside hundreds of others by joining the campaign today.



# Single Equality Green Paper a disappointment — have your say in the consultation

The government is in the process of transforming current inadequate equalities legislation and institutions with the declared aim of harmonising existing law. The process has the potential to allow a once in a generation leap forward, leveling up legislation in all areas to achieve equality. The consultative



## Support an inquest for Jay

Jay Abatan was brutally attacked in a racist frenzy by a gang in Brighton on 24 January 1999. He died five days later. Jay's attackers have never been convicted of murder.

Eight and a half years on, Jay's brother Michael and his family are still bravely fighting for justice for Jay and need your support.

The family have succeeded in forcing the police to admit serious flaws in their investigation and to take disciplinary action against officers. Incredibly, no incident room was set up after the attack to investigate the case and officers gave good character evidence for the accused in court. The family are now campaigning for an inquest into Jay's death to find out exactly what happened.

You can help by signing the online petition to the coroner of Brighton and Hove, urging a reinstatement of an inquest for Jay. Please visit [www.justiceforjay.co.uk](http://www.justiceforjay.co.uk).

green paper for a Single Equalities Bill — 'A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for a Single Equality Bill' — was published on 12 June, after more than two years of preparation and examination of the existing equality legislation. The proposals have been met with dismay by equality campaigners across the spectrum.

As NAAR had feared, the framework for the proposals in the green paper is based on the flawed context set out in the earlier 'Equalities Review' which failed to provide a clear understanding of what discrimination is. It instead developed an analysis that effectively puts the blame of much inequality on its victims. The green paper is very weak. It would not extend existing measures such as the public sector duty to promote equality to the private sector and in fact would weaken the current positive duties for the public sector. This is particularly disappointing to anti-racist campaigners as the positive duty on race came in as a result of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry as part of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Whilst the green paper proposes to bring British law into line with European law with regards to positive action, measures would remain voluntary and not backed by

monitoring or enforcement.

Another demand of many in the equality and trade union movement for the law to enable representative or 'class' actions has also been ruled out. This measure would ensure that groups, not just individuals, are enabled to take legal action against discrimination. The need to expand employment tribunals to hear other discrimination cases is also omitted.

The coverage of the publication of the green paper spoke volumes of its direction and focus: enabling women to join golf clubs and to breastfeed in public. Whilst these are of course applaudable, they do not reflect the scale of inequality facing women, or other people.

The green paper is open for consultation until 4 September. We call on all those concerned at the future of legal tools to fight against discrimination to make their voices heard. The NAAR will be making a submission calling on the above measures and others to be included in the bill when it is published. You can make your voice heard by attending a seminar organised by the Mayor of London on 27 June and by making a submission yourself. For further details and to register, visit [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk) or contact the NAAR.

### 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: £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](mailto:info@naar.org.uk) Web: [www.naar.org.uk](http://www.naar.org.uk)