

Annual Report 2001



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
AGAINST
RACISM

Introduction

Last year was marked by the relentless fascist and neo-nazi threat, which started in January right through to the general election. Weekly National Front marches in London and elsewhere, increased number of racist attacks and propaganda were the backdrop to the BNP offensive at the general election. Although the BNP had 33 candidates at the general election and no election broadcast, they managed to receive over 50,000 votes, with over 11,000 cast for the BNP in Oldham, where they had their best ever electoral result. This situation did not happen in a vacuum. It was prepared for by the actions of the Oldham police, before and following the publication of their figures for racial violence in January. Their claim that over 60% of racial attacks are directed towards white people, presented by local and national media as fact and a result of so-called 'no-go areas for whites', created fertile ground for the fascists to target Oldham.

The BNP and the National Front are criminal conspiracies against black communities and all those opposed to their politics of hatred. NAAR has been calling for the ban of these groups and their activities. We will continue to campaign against the fascists in the North and elsewhere. Our aim is to forge the broadest possible coalition against the BNP so that they do not gain a base in British politics, in the footsteps of their neo-nazi counterparts in Austria, Italy and France.

*Dedicated to the
memory of Arlene
Mundle, former
member of NAAR
executive committee
and tireless
campaigner against
racism who died
of cancer
2nd March 2001*

Kumar Murshid
Chair

Lee Jasper
Secretary

Activities and campaigns

The NAAR 2000 Annual General Meeting discussed and adopted priorities for the year. The priorities were set in the context of the general election expected for spring 2001 and they included: prioritising the Speak Out Against Racism – Defend Asylum Seekers campaign, campaigning for

the implementation of the Lawrence Report recommendations, opposing the far right, re-establish an annual respect anti-racist festival in London jointly with the GLA, promoting black representation in public life, expanding our anti-racist work in the student movement, promoting the call for an apology for slavery and colonialism.

Immigration and asylum rights

Speak Out Against Racism – Defend Asylum Seekers

As we had predicted, the issue of immigration and asylum was used in the general election campaign to whip up racism. Tabloid media continued its racist coverage of the issue. The asylum application figures for 2000 showed an increase in the number of applications and this was used to further attack asylum seekers in the media.

Set up in June 2000, the campaign grew tremendously in influence and support over the last year. Several very successful events were organised under the slogan 'Hands Off My Friend', an echo of anti-racist campaigns in mainland Europe in the last two decades.

- ◆ On 14th December 2000, a candlelit vigil was held on the steps of St Martin-in-the-Fields near Trafalgar Square, where toys were collected for asylum seeker children. Around 200 people attended.
- ◆ The campaign produced badges, stickers, postcards and the Appeal of the 150 as a poster, launched in a reception on 23rd January 2001 in Parliament. Several celebrities and signatories of the Appeal attended the event.
- ◆ The International Day Against Racism on 24th March was marked by a rally in Trafalgar Square attended by 4,000 people, followed by a march to Downing Street, where the Appeal of the 150 was

handed in. The crowd then formed a human chain around Parliament, symbolising solidarity with asylum seekers.

◆ The first anniversary of the horrific deaths of the 58 Chinese people in Dover in June 2000 was marked in a vigil and a public meeting on 19th June 2001.

◆ In August 2001, Firsat Yildiz, a 22 year-old Kurdish asylum seeker from Turkey was stabbed to death in a racist attack in the Sighthill estate in Glasgow. This tragic murder raised the reality of dispersal onto the national agenda. The *Speak Out* coalition responded by holding a memorial vigil outside the Home Office a week after the murder and handed a letter to David Blunkett, the new Home Secretary, calling on the forced dispersal scheme to be abolished and for the government to develop a more positive approach to immigration and asylum.

◆ The campaign held another successful vigil and *Hands Around the Home Office* on the 16th October 2001 to draw attention to the special European summit on 16th and 17th October in Brussels to review the definition of a refugee within the terms of the 1951 UN Convention.

At the time of writing this report, the government has announced its intention to introduce a new Immigration and Asylum bill from January 2002. Although the introduction of green cards and the abolition of vouchers are to be welcomed, the *Speak Out Against Racism - Defend Asylum*



Seekers campaign is concerned about the possible content of the new legislation as indicated in media statements and reports and will continue to campaign to extend asylum and immigration rights.

Vouchers

Since last year, pressure mounted on the government to abolish vouchers and replace them with cash benefits to asylum seekers. NAAR produced and distributed thousands of postcards addressed to the Home Secretary calling for the abolition of the scheme and an end to forced dispersal. The voucher review, announced at the 2000 Labour Party Conference and then expected to report within a few months, was not finalised until the end of October this year. The government is proposing changes to the legislation and a phased abolition of the scheme by Autumn 2002. At this stage, the government is proposing to introduce 'smart cards', which will be used to access cash as well as used to make payments. We have expressed our concern that the smart cards may prove as stigmatising as vouchers and become a form of identity or entitlement card, without which asylum seekers' entitlement to vital services can be affected.

Forced dispersal

Following the horrific murder of Firsat Yildiz in Glasgow, the Home Secretary announced a review of the scheme. The exact new proposals arising from this will not be clear until the proposed legislation is published in the new year.

Detention

Detention of asylum seekers in prisons became an increasingly significant issue in the last year, with several protests organised by the *Wales Assembly Against Racism* outside Cardiff prison and by other campaigns elsewhere. The government is proposing to end the detention of asylum seekers in prisons from January onwards. However, there is particular concern regarding the expansion of detention and its use more systematically. There is also concern that the government's proposed accommodation centres will become de-facto detention centres.

Press coverage of asylum seekers

Over the last year, asylum and immigration remained in the media in a generally negative context, especially over the summer when asylum seekers at Sangatte Red Cross camp became the focus of a hostile campaign in the media. The Guardian and some television companies attempted to provide comprehensive reports on the issue. The expected negative campaign in the media on asylum in the run up to the general elections was offset by the events in the North West. The Express newspaper produced a series of extremely hostile front pages. NAAR maintained a steady stream of press releases, letters and protests against this hostile coverage.

Racist violence, policing and the implementation of the Lawrence Report recommendations

Second anniversary of the Lawrence Report

Following the success of the first anniversary conference NAAR organised in February 2000, a second anniversary conference was organised on 24th February 2001. The conference was even more successful than the first one, with over 500 people from across the country in attendance.

The conference focused on all aspects of institutional racism and attempted to assess the progress made two years on. The conclusions, especially from the family campaigns indicated that progress was very slow, challenging government claims that

over 70% of the Report's recommendations had been implemented.

Several family campaigns attended and spoke such as the McGowan, the Sylvester and the Chhokar families.

Work has already begun to organise another major conference to mark the third anniversary of the Report on Saturday 23rd February 2002 at Congress House in London.

Supporting families

In the last year, NAAR continued its work with the families of victims of racism.

a. Shiblu Rahman, a 34 year old Bangladeshi man was stabbed to death outside his home in Bow, Tower Hamlets on 1st April. This was an unprovoked, brutal racist attack, which was compounded by the delays in intervention by emergency services, especially the ambulance which took over 40 minutes to arrive and a further 20 minutes to take Shiblu to the hospital. The **Justice for the Rahman Family** campaign was set up soon after the murder, to campaign for the perpetrators to be caught and brought to justice and to call for an





investigation into the failures of the emergency services. At the time of writing the report, four white youths are facing trial on murder charges at the Old Bailey. NAAR co-ordinated the campaign, helped organise a big press conference following the murder, produced two leaflets which were widely distributed, helped organise and publicise Shibli's funeral in May. NAAR also held vigils outside the Old Bailey throughout the first part of the suspects' court appearances, specifically marked what would have been Shibli's 35th birthday on 6th June with a candlelit vigil outside the Old Bailey.

b. The first ever inquiry into police harassment by the newly formed Metropolitan Police Authority investigated the harassment by the Tottenham Police of **Delroy and Sonia Lindo** over the last 8 years. The Lindo Inquiry was initiated by the Mayor's office, through the intervention of our Secretary Lee Jasper, and led to the publication of a detailed report in January, with the conclusions that the Lindo family had been harassed due to negative stereotyping over a long period of time. NAAR supported the family throughout the Inquiry, attended protests organised by the family campaign outside the Daily Mail and the New Scotland Yard. The family are still fighting for compensation through the courts.

c. **Justice for Jevan Richardson** campaign was publicly launched in June 2001, after Jevan Richardson, a 10 year-old school boy hung himself following eighteen months of racist bullying by the head teacher and another teacher at St. Mary Magdalen school, Lewisham, South-east London. Throughout these eighteen months Jevan and his family also suffered from sustained police harassment. On one occasion the police arrested Jevan, Jevan's father Oliver, his sister and cousin, where Jevan witnessed his father being beaten by the police and the use of CS gas spray. Charges were dropped after the police admitted they mistakenly thought they were involved in a local robbery. Following this incident Jevan was excluded from his school. Shortly after the exclusion Jevan took his own life in February 2001. The family is pursuing legal actions, including a judicial review into the exclusion and an independent panel to investigate complaints against the police, similar to the Lindo case. The public meeting in June attracted over 150 people. Both NAAR and LARAG have supported the family and Dawn Edmund Jevan's aunt has been invited to the AGM 2001.

d. **Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign** entered its third year in January and NAAR continued to support the family's call for justice. NAAR helped with the family's financial appeal by circulating it widely, inviting the family to address NAAR events,

especially the *Second Anniversary of the Lawrence Report* conference in February 2001. NAAR also mobilised for the campaign protests outside the Tottenham Police Station and vigil to mark Roger's birthday in August outside the Home Office. The inquest into Roger's death is expected to take place next spring. The family has been invited to address the AGM 2001.

e. The **Chhokar Family Justice Campaign** was set up after the brutal murder of Surjit Singh Chhokar in Glasgow on 4th November 1998. The failures of the Scottish criminal justice system were likened to the failures in the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. NAAR has supported the family's call for justice after the two suspects in the case were acquitted in separate trials after they accused each other. The family addressed the Second Anniversary of the Lawrence conference.

f. NAAR continued to support the **Friends of Mal Hussain**. Last year, NAAR circulated an appeal to its affiliates and supporters calling for an inquiry into the experiences of Mal Hussain and Linda Livingstone in the last nine years of horrendous racist violence and attacks, looking at the responses from the local authority and the police. The appeal gathered wide support including several MPs, Bill Morris and other trade unionists. Mal is currently pursuing a civil action against the police.

Monitoring implementation of the Lawrence recommendations

The Tower Hamlets Lawrence Monitoring Unit was established slightly late, in June 2001, following the recruitment of Khalid Hussain, the project worker. The project is currently establishing a monitoring group of local community representatives, establishing links with and collating information from statutory agencies in Tower Hamlets on the implementation of the recommendations locally. This project was made possible with funding secured from New Settlements New Beginnings SRB programme to establish a monitoring project in Tower Hamlets for the next three years to evaluate the response of the Police, Tower Hamlets Council and the Health Authority to the recommendations of the Lawrence Report. The project will produce its first report in June 2002.

The project has established a community based monitoring panel involving 17 key organisations concerned with the issue of race. This panel had its first meeting on the 29th October 2001. A process of dialogue through initial meetings with the three CEOs of the Tower Hamlets Council, Police and the Health authorities has also been instigated.

The project will have a formal high profile launch early in the New Year. This three-year project will foster a partnership approach between the voluntary sector in monitoring, evaluating and tackling institutional racism in Tower Hamlets. Research is underway on identifying best practice in respect of the Lawrence Report and to look at the relative performances of the agencies in Tower Hamlets when compared to other boroughs. The findings of our experience in Tower Hamlets will help develop similar approaches in other areas. Good practice models will be identified and highlighted.

Campaigning against the fascists

Oldham, Burnley and Bradford

Since January, there has been a sharp rise in fascist activity in the North of England, especially following the announcement by the Oldham police that the majority of racist attacks in Oldham were perpetrated by Asians against whites. Unproven claims by the police that there were 'no-go areas for whites' were picked up by the national and local media. This in turn led to the targeting of Oldham and Burnley in particular by the neo-Nazi groups such as the National Front and the BNP. The National Front organised fascist marches up and down the country, terrorising local communities and attacking black people in their way.

The BNP's 'new' leadership in Nick Griffin, a convicted racist, meant that they received their best ever general election results in Oldham and Burnley, although their share of the vote nationally is extremely small.

NAAR organised several delegations to Oldham and Burnley. These visits forged strong links with the local Asian communities and laid the ground for the establishment of a broad based campaign against the BNP in the run-up to the 2002 local elections. In July, NAAR hosted a delegation of Asian community representatives who visited Parliament and the Greater London Authority to express their views on what needs to be done to avert the threat of the BNP.

NAAR lobbied for National Front marches in London and elsewhere to be banned by the Home

Secretary.

During the general election campaign and after the BNP results in Oldham and Burnley at the general election, the BNP was given extensive media coverage against which NAAR organised email and telephone complaints to the BBC and a protest outside GMTV studios in London.



Coalition Against Racism – Unite to Stop the BNP

Over the summer, the Coalition Against Racism was established as a tripartite partnership between the TUC, Oldham's Asian community organisations and NAAR. The campaign was launched on 14th November in Oldham with a public meeting with John Monks and many others.

The campaign will organise events in the run-up to the local elections and mobilise the anti-racist vote. A multi-faith social event is being planned for Eid/Christmas this year. Local meetings and further delegations are also being planned. The focus of the campaign will be in April when a major national event will be organised in Oldham. There will be mass leafleting throughout the election campaign. The NAAR conference in February will have a major focus on the fascist threat in the North.

European and international work

European links and meetings

NAAR has continued to take part in UK Race in Europe Network and in European Network Against Racism, which held its first biennial General Assembly in March. This was a good opportunity to network with European campaigns against racism and for asylum rights.

NAAR also received a delegation from *SOS Racism* in France and held discussions about the current rise of racism in Britain and in Europe.

World Conference Against Racism

The World Conference Against Racism took place in South Africa at the end of August. Secretary of NAAR, Lee Jasper attended as a delegate for the NGO forum. The USA and British governments refused to recognise slavery as a crime against humanity, a longstanding demand of many African and Asian countries that NAAR takes up through the Apology Campaign. NAAR and Liberation organised a joint report back meeting at the House of Commons on 1st November.

Respect Festival

The first joint Greater London Authority, NAAR and TUC Respect festival, held on 21st July in London's Finsbury Park was a huge success. The festival picked up the idea launched by the trade unions in the mid-1990s of holding an anti-racist festival under the theme of *Respect*, incorporating music and entertainment promoting cultural diversity, intertwined with a powerful anti-racist message through speakers, stands and stalls, publications and site decorations.

The NAAR was responsible for ensuring the anti-racist message got across and for organising a large team of volunteers to publicise the festival and to run the anti-racist exhibitions and events on the



day. This network of volunteers is being maintained and built up to engage with next year's festival. The *London Assembly Against Racism* is maintaining a close working relationship with the GLA in promoting Respect, but also to develop the anti-racist agenda in London more generally.

Staffing and Office

Sabby Dhalu joined the staff full-time in January 2001, helping to ease the pressures on the office created by Jude Woodward's work on the Respect Festival. Khalid Hussain began working for NAAR in June as a project worker for the Tower Hamlets Lawrence Report Monitoring Unit. Kate Hudson continues to ensure our tax and national insurance returns are accurate and on time.

Many students, individual NAAR members and members of the executive have volunteered in the office throughout the year. Many of them organised NAAR events in their own areas, spoke at meetings on behalf of NAAR, run stalls and generally helped the fight against racism. The list is too long to be complete. Our thanks to all of them.

Student Assembly Against Racism

SAAR has had a very successful year with many new students and student unions meeting regularly to co-ordinate anti racist activities. We ensured a very large profile for the *Speak Out* campaign at NUS conference — including a refugee guest speaker and have continued the student *Speak Out* coalition. Many students volunteered at the *Respect* festival — an event which brought us into contact with many new students and young people. We have linked up with the youth in Oldham and intend to launch a broad based *Stu-*

dent and Youth Coalition Against Racism — mobilising students against the BNP. We have set up a Northern SAAR group coordinating anti racists who can support the communities in Oldham, and have written a briefing on the situation in Oldham that was circulated to every student union, and ensured that NUS NEC supports the *Coalition Against Racism*. We supported the NUS Black Students Campaign's demand for a full time Officer — a priority in the coming year.

Lesbian and Gay Coalition Against Racism

It's been a busy year for LAGCAR. Our Summer Newsletter was produced courtesy of UNISON and we had a presence on the Pride marches in London, Brighton and Cardiff.

Along with Stonewall, we contributed to the *Speak Out Against Racism* campaign during the General Election. The LAGCAR banner appeared on the various demonstrations in support of the campaign.

We continue to meet quarterly and

have plans to improve our website and have applied to the Citizen 21 project to fund this initiative. We continue to tackle the issue of racism in the lesbian and gay community and will be highlighting instances of Islamophobia in the wake of the September 11th atrocities.

In the run up to the local elections we will be holding a public meeting in support of the *Coalition Against Racism*.

Accounts

Income

<i>Grants and donations</i>	
Lord Ashdown Trust	£10,000.00
The Barrow Cadbury Trust	£10,000.00
Churches Commission for Racial Justice	£7,000.00
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	£10,000.00
UNISON	£15,000.00
Small donations	£4,102.00
	£56,102.00

Other Income

Sales	£11.00
Affiliations and memberships	£3,700.00
Conferences and campaigns	£15,010.00
Interest	£316.00
	£19,037.00

Total **£ 75,139.00**

Income and Expenditure Account to 31/4/01

Expenditure

Staff costs	£48,739.00
Campaign costs	£16,258.00
Travel	£2,008.00
Post and couriers	£2,677.00
Telephone and fax	£4,436.00
Stationery and office expenses	£1,305.00
Photocopying	£1,073.00
Equipment hire	£1,546.00
Minor equipment costs	-£65.00
Cleaning	£512.00
Audit	£1,081.00
AGM and Annual Report	£574.00
Insurances	£318.00
Bank charges	£46.00

Total **£ 80,508.00**

Balance sheet

Deficit/surplus	-£ 5,369.00
Taxation	£ 58.00
Balance income over expenditure for year	-£ 5,311.00
Balance brought forward 1/4/00	£ 11,908.00
Balance carried forward	£ 6,597.00

Extracted from the full Annual Accounts as audited by Gotham Erskine, Chartered Accountants.

Signed by the officers on 9th November 2001.

Once again we would like to thank our funders in the last year, in particular the Lord Ashdown Trust, the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Churches Commission for Racial Justice, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, and UNISON.

Local groups

Birmingham Assembly Against Racism

The largest part of BAAR's work during 2001, has been around asylum rights. A successful public meeting in Birmingham helped bring together a broad based local organisation to campaign around asylum rights. BAAR, Birmingham Trades Council and other organisations filled a 52 seat coach to the 24th March rally. We also took part in Refugee Week.

The campaign for justice for Errol and Jason McGowan has continued to fight on and has made headway despite an outrageous verdict of suicide at the inquest for Errol. We will continue to do all we can to promote the campaign in the Birmingham area, until justice is achieved.

BAAR was deeply involved in the Jhumat family campaign. While, in the end, Mr Jhumat pleaded guilty to a minor offence, it is clear that the vigorous campaigning in his defence played a major role in forcing the Crown to retreat from pressing the much more serious assault charge against him.

The Birmingham review of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry produced a report damning institu-

tional racism in almost every aspect of life in the city. BAAR supporters played a large role in getting the inquiry to sit in Birmingham in the first place and were involved in the report hearings.

BAAR has circulated a highly successful petition and a statement opposing the rise in anti-Muslim racism following the 11th September. We intend to use the statement and petition as part of a campaign later this year.

In the summer, Birmingham City Council made a decision to suspend emergency payments to Somali women with Dutch passports who have come to Birmingham. Threats were made that once payments had ceased, if the women did not leave Birmingham, their children would be taken into care. BAAR won the support of several prominent councillors in opposition to this. Since then, the policy has not been implemented, but neither has it been rescinded. The purpose, or at least the effect may be to deter other Somali families coming from the Netherlands. We will not give up until this act of discrimination and the racism on which it rests are gone.

Coventry Against Racism

During the past year, Coventry Against Racism has mainly focused on the *Speak Out Against Racism – Defend Asylum Seekers* campaign.

Much needed publicity for the campaign followed a public meeting in the spring, which was addressed by a Coventry Labour councillor, along with speakers from Coventry TUC and the Midlands Refugee Council. A further public meeting, extensive leafleting and information stalls took place during Positive Images, Coventry's annual multi-cultural festival, and as part of the festival benefited from city wide publicity and support. An initiative by Coventry TUC to win social justice for travellers and gypsies in the area, through the formulation of a policy produced in a pamphlet, to be presented to local authorities has the full support of CAR.

As well as public campaigning, we have assured that our views have been heard at consultative meetings organised by the City Council on Re-

generation schemes, the Race Equality Policy statement and future plans for intermediate care for elderly people in the city.

In addition, we have supported individuals who have suffered racial harassment in their neighbourhoods, and we are regularly urging the city council to ensure that appropriate anti-racist education is presented in an imaginative way and included on the curriculum of all schools in the city.

In recent weeks, CAR has written to the leader of the Council, urging them to launch a campaign in defence of ethnic minorities and asylum seekers in the city, as the racist backlash from the war in Afghanistan is felt.

Our monthly meetings and regular mailings keep members informed of local and national events, and NAAR's current policies, and provide a platform for discussion and future planning. Testing times lie ahead and we are aware of the urgent need to recruit new members to help meet the challenge.

Greater Manchester Assembly Against Racism

For the last six months the priority has been organising in support of those communities under attack in Oldham.

We have identified three key areas of concern: the criminalisation of the youth who have protested on the streets, the racist media campaign about events in Oldham and the need to combat the threat that in May 2002 the BNP could win council seats in Oldham.

The most immediate threat is obviously that of the BNP and the fear that racist attacks and divisions will be stoked up in the build up to the local elections, and that any BNP councillor elected would be on the Council for 4 years.

Greater Manchester AAR and its members

have been active in supporting many campaigns in Oldham, most successfully in supporting the formation of the '*Unite to stop the BNP, Coalition Against Racism*'.

The delegation of representatives of Oldham, Burnley and Bradford Asian community organisations to meet Parliamentary representatives and Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London; proved the catalyst in the formation of the *Coalition Against Racism* (PO Box 263 Oldham OL8 1PZ, Tel: 0161 624 1060).

Greater Manchester AAR meets on the third Monday of each month at the Friends Meeting House, Manchester. For details: 0161 223 4470 or 07736105995.

Outgoing Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

Officers 2000/2001

Co-Chairs

Diane Abbott MP
Cllr Kumar Murshid

Secretary

Lee Jasper

Treasurer

Mick Connolly

Vice-Chairs

Milena Buyum (ex-officio)
Dave Weaver

Campaigns Officer

Atma Singh

Legal Officer

Peter Herbert

Assistant Secretary

Jude Woodward (ex-officio)

Committee named posts

Parliamentary liaison

Harry Cohen MP

European Parliamentary liaison

Vacant

Committee members

Sadhu Biring
Maggie Bowden
Hilary Brown
Mary Davis
Jayne Fisher
Lloyd French
Sharon Hall
Colenzo Jarrett-Thorpe (seated)
Raj Jetlwa
Mahmuda Kabir
Kofi Klu
John McDonnell MP
Rita Patel
Cordell Pillay
Dr Richard Stone
Wilf Sullivan
Rev Arlington Trotman
Nasir Uddin
Ashok Wisvanathan
Glenroy Watson
Claudia Webbe

SAAR reps

Denis Fernando (ex-officio)

LAGCAR reps

Darryl Telles
Anne Kane

Standing Orders Committee

Karen Chouhan
Anni Marjoram
Mike Wongsam

London NAAR

London NAAR has been meeting regularly. We have organised activities to support the *Speak Out Against Racism – Defend Asylum Seekers* campaign. Such activities included leafleting for the national demonstration at Trafalgar Square on 24th March 2001 and the vigil at the Home Office on 16th October 2001 and stewarding at the events.

In the summer we actively promoted the anti-racist *Respect* festival held at Finsbury Park on 21st July 2001 by distributing leaflets and posters throughout London, co-ordinating our activities with local NAAR groups. Members attended volunteers meetings at the GLA and helped set up and or-

ganise the festival on the day, providing stewards and selling programmes and t-shirts. We also gave out NAAR leaflets, sold campaign badges and collected donations. London NAAR's membership grew as a result of the *Respect* festival and we are planning to be centrally involved in next year's *Respect* as well.

We also supported family campaigns such as the *Justice for Jevan Richardson* campaign and the *Justice for the Rahman* family campaign.

We are currently planning a Christmas vigil in solidarity with asylum seekers on the steps of St Martins in the Fields in Trafalgar Square.

Wales Assembly Against Racism

Protest against the detention of asylum seekers in Cardiff prison was widespread in Wales and included opposition by all four parties in the National Assembly for Wales. WAAR organised a demonstration outside the prison on the 19th May that attracted some 200 people and a further protest at the prison on the 20th August in solidarity with the imprisoned asylum seekers who had gone on hunger strike and to remember Firsat Yildiz. A public meeting is planned to address government proposals for new asylum and immigration legislation.

WAAR has continued to support people who have been victims of racist violence.

As a result we remain concerned at the level of institutional racism in the criminal justice system in Wales. Members attended the five week trial for the racist murder of Jan Pasalbesy. Support was extended to his family throughout and in particular after the return of guilty verdicts when the judge concluded that in his view the crime had not been racially motivated.

WAAR called for a ban on planned BNP and NF activity in Wales during August. The *Unite Against Racism* statement has been circulated widely in Wales prompting welcome support.

Sheffield Assembly Against Racism

Sheffield NAAR has worked closely with the Student Assembly Group at Sheffield University. In May alongside Sheffield Black Health Forum, we organised the Northern NAAR Conference which attracted over sixty people from a range of Black organisations as well as anti racist activists from across the region. Amongst others Mal Hussain and Clifton McGowan reminded us of the continued absence of justice for the victims of racist violence. Mrs Asghar spoke of the failure of the criminal justice system in prosecuting racist murderers.

The conference enabled us to link up with Oldham Bangladeshi Youth Association. We have publicised widely the work of the *Coalition Against Racism* in Oldham and organised a meeting of over eighty students, which saw Ashid Ali explain the roots of the crisis in Oldham. Sheffield NAAR will play a significant role in supporting the work of the coalition over the coming months. Already, the local TUC has committed itself to sponsoring transport for activists keen to play their part in defeating the BNP at next year's local elections.

Lewisham Anti-Racist Action Group

LARAG is closely involved in supporting the *Justice of Jevan Richardson* campaign and helped organise the very successful public meeting. LARAG will continue to do all it can in support of the family.

There has been success in the fight for justice of the mother and son from Brockley who were exposed to horrific long-term harassment from neighbours, with no support from their landlord, a Housing Association. The independent report, achieved through pressure of LARAG has condemned the whole approach of the Housing Association

as well as the police. The Association has accepted all the findings, which are to be made public as soon as the key recommendations have been implemented.

During the General election LARAG organised a *Vote Against Racism* campaign as the fascist BNP were standing in Lewisham East. A *Unite to Stop the BNP* campaign is currently being organised in Lewisham. It is gaining widespread support from across the political spectrum, with a meeting and information campaign planned for the New Year.