

EUROPEAN RACE BULLETIN

INSTITUTE OF
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RELATIONS

• **Monitoring maritime border controls**

By Liz Fekete



The ERA has been investigating EU-sponsored border control enterprises which are set up primarily as military defence systems designed to repel invasion. We conclude that while great emphasis is placed on 'detect and deter' missions, completely inadequate resources are given over to rescue missions and the need to save lives.



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Focus on Operation Ulysses

By Liz Fekete

An official inquiry was prompted in Spain after twenty-one migrants, trying to cross from the North African coast to the Canary Islands, drowned in two separate incidents in June. Their boats capsized after being intercepted by Spanish patrols in waters that had previously been under the saturation surveillance of Operation Ulysses.

What is Operation Ulysses?

The multinational maritime border control project, Operation Ulysses, was set up as part of the EU Council's Border Control Programme, instigated following the Seville Summit of June 2002. Presented as the prototype of policing of coastal frontiers within the EU, Operation Ulysses provides armed vessels from several countries to detect the hundreds of small overloaded boats that set out from North Africa. Once detected, the aim is to intercept the boats in international waters and then return the desperate voyagers to their country of origin.

According to Spanish interior minister, Angel Acebes, the aim of Operation Ulysses is to create a 'rectangular filter' six nautical miles in width, with a length measured in multiples of 12 miles according to the number of ships. He added that any boat attempting to pass through that filter would be detected, since the radars of the ships taking part in the patrols have a 12-mile range.

Under the first phase of Operation Ulysses, initiated in January 2003, armed vessels from Spain, Britain, France, Italy and Portugal patrolled sections of the Mediterranean coastline. This phase – the command centre of which was based in the Campo de Gibraltar port Algeciras – focused on the Strait of Gibraltar. The second phase was launched on February 8 when Operation Ulysses was extended to include the Atlantic zone of the Sahara, which includes the maritime frontier of the Canary Islands. According to Beverley Hughes, the British government contributed a Customs and Excise Cutter vessel to the first phase of the operation and a Nimrod aircraft for the second phase. (The four-engined Nimrod MR2 from RAF Kinloss in Morayshire, deployed in Operation Ulysses, is derived from the first jet airliner and has been used in war time as a spy plane in Iran and Afghanistan. It was recently upgraded as part of a multi-billion pound defence programme and is now equipped with eavesdropping and detection technology.) In addition to providing the Nimrod for surveillance purposes, the Home Office and the British Embassy in Spain have lent administrative assistance to Operation Ulysses.

Why controversial?

Even before it was launched, Operation Ulysses was mired in controversy. Refugee rights groups argued that the aim of this border project – to detect boats in international waters and return all those onboard, regardless of whether they were asylum seekers – was in breach of Article 31 of the Geneva Convention. This states that those who use illegal methods to enter a country should not be penalised if their purpose in so doing is to seek asylum. It was also in breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sets out the right to claim asylum in another country. But in early June, criticism intensified when twenty-one migrants drowned in two separate incidents close to the Canary Islands. The two incidents, which took place on 2 and 10 June, are now the subject of an official interior ministry inquiry.

But since 10 June, there have been further deaths, which have been left outside the scope of the inquiry. On 20 June, eight corpses were recovered from the sea when a boat containing twenty-five people capsized near the coast of Fuerteventura. There are allegations that those on board became nervous when a police patrol boat approached. Panicking, they either jumped or fell overboard. In another incident towards the end of July, two migrants drowned (thirteen others were rescued) when the boat they were travelling in capsized after a vessel from the civil guard approached. The civil guard called off the search on the basis that the water depth at the point of capsize was twelve kilometres. In 2001, fifteen sub-Saharan Africans fell into the water in the same area; their bodies were never recovered.

From Operation Relex to Operation Ulysses

Operation Ulysses is startlingly similar to Operation Relex, the saturation surveillance operation set up by the Australian government after the notorious Tampa incident. It involves a naval blockade and the deployment of spy planes in the Indian Ocean. Operation Relex has been subject to intense parliamentary debate, particularly after 353 people, mostly Iraqis, and including 146 children, drowned when the 19-metre wooden vessel (known as SIEVX*) carrying 397 passengers sank in international waters in the Indian Ocean, north of Australia's Christmas Island, in the Australian Operation Relex border protection surveillance and interception zone. A Select Committee on a Certain Maritime Incident (CMI) raised uncomfortable questions for the Howard government as to why those involved in Operation Relex did not detect the boat in danger and take emergency action to save lives. Since the inquiry wound up, Labor Senators, John Faulkner and Jacinta Collins, have sought to keep the issue in the public eye by persistently questioning officials at biannual senate estimates hearings. There is also a senate motion calling for a full independent judicial inquiry into the sinking of SIEVX and Australia's People Smuggling Disruption Programme in Indonesia. Campaigners involved in the SIEVX issue believe that Operation Ulysses is working very much along the same lines as Operation Relex and that more questions should be asked.

More and more questions

Spanish interior minister Angel Acebes claimed in parliament that Operation Ulysses in the Canaries has been 'very positive' and had shown 'concrete results' in the matter of reception and interception of irregular migration. But a growing cross-section of Spanish civil society disagrees. The Spanish Ombudsman, the Red Cross, the Spanish Commission for Aid to Refugees, the Spanish League of Human Rights, the Asociación de Trabajadores Inmigrantes Morroquíes en España (ATIME), trades unions and parliamentarians from the United Left are among those calling for a full parliamentary commission of inquiry into these deaths and into Operation Ulysses. ATIME is drawing attention to the 'similarity and repetition of these accidents which are completely avoidable'. The Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) is considering taking an action against the Spanish government for 'indirect responsibility for these deaths' and has written to the European Union's Petition Committee calling for the review of maritime coastline inspections as a result of them. It points out that radar equipment, available in Lanzarote by the defence and interior ministries to detect boats, is not made available to coastal patrols, and that while the Ministry of Defence tracks boats leaving the coast of Africa bound for Fuerteventura and Lanzarote, it does not pass on this information to other agencies – thus putting lives further at risk. Operation Ulysses and the Integrated System for the Surveillance of the Strait (SIVE) place great emphasis on 'detect and deter' missions, while completely inadequate resources are given over to rescue missions and the need to save lives.

The official Interior Ministry inquiry, that opened in September, heard evidence from Juis Gutiérrez Salvador, the chief of the civil guard on Fuerteventura, who said that there were twenty-three people onboard the makeshift raft (patera) on 2 June, twelve of whom died, and that there were twenty-five aboard the raft on 10 June, nine of whom died. Salvador told the inquiry that when the marine patrols approached the pateras, floating close to the coast, the cold and exhausted migrants stood up to greet the coastguards, only to pitch into the sea while the coastguards were still fifteen or twenty metres away. 'They are very tall and, if they are not calm, they raise the centre of gravity over a very unstable surface', Salvador told the inquiry, adding that 'They were wearing a lot of clothing, and almost all of them had hypothermia. Their muscles were swollen from spending 14 or 15 hours in the foetal position. They sank like stones.'

Implications for the British government

We do not know if the RAF were present on 2 and 10 June when the tragedies occurred. But we do know that the Nimrod was patrolling the 60-mile stretch of water between North Africa and the Canary Islands at the end of May. The RAF website, and Paul Gilbridge, a journalist from the *Express* newspaper provide descriptions of a Nimrod mission which involved the interception of two boats packed with ninety migrants travelling from Morocco to Lanzarote. The *Express* journalist describes the Nimrod 'swooping low' over the boats. Flt Lt Richie Williams writes of 'open boats packed with people who immediately ducked

down attempting to hide. We alerted a nearby Guardia Civil patrol boat and stayed close by in case the smugglers tried to throw people out, in which case we could have deployed life boats.' One can only imagine what effect a military aircraft approaching in this way would have on people crammed into unsafe and rickety boats. Further questions need to be asked about Nimrod's role, if any, on 2 and 10 June. If the Nimrod was operational, was it the RAF which passed on information to the Spanish patrol boats about the two crafts which capsized when the marine patrols approached? Was the Nimrod in the area when the boats capsized? Was it deployed to rescue the survivors? In peace time, the Nimrod has been used as a search and rescue aircraft, involved in searching for survivors and coordinating rescues. 'The Nimrod's sophisticated search and location capability makes it the ideal aircraft for this type of operation', the RAF website proclaims.

Whatever the facts about 2 and 10 June, migrants continue to drown in parts of the Atlantic Ocean, previously under the intense surveillance of Operation Ulysses. While millions of Euros are spent fortifying coastlines and equipping armed vessels with the latest technology, no such resources or expertise is given to the basic requirement of saving lives. Spanish NGOs have compiled evidence to prove that civil guard vessels are not equipped to rescue survivors from capsizings and other tragedies. The NGOs accuse the civil guard of recklessly approaching these boats in certain knowledge that they will capsize as those on board panic.

Surely, it was the responsibility of the British government – which boasts about the administrative support it has given to Operation Ulysses – to ascertain the facts about the Spanish civil guards capabilities to rescue survivors of capsizings – before it embarked on Operation Ulysses?

* SIEV stands for 'suspected illegal entry vessel', X for identity unknown. The Moroccan NGO 'Pateras de la Vida' based in Larache can be contacted at pateras_vida@hotmail.com.

Spain – The inadequacy of search and rescue missions

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The Spanish government has indicated that EU border control projects such as Operation Ulysses will continue. Meanwhile, two other tragedies have drawn attention to the inadequacy of search and rescue missions in Spanish waters.

Cadiz: 37 dead in worst tragedy in Spanish waters for many years

The drowning on 25 October of at least 37 immigrants, mostly Moroccans, five kilometres from the port of Cadiz on the Atlantic Coast, has once again raised questions about the viability of Spanish emergency search and rescue missions.

Did the search and rescue mission contribute to the tragedy?

This was the worst single tragedy in Spanish waters for many years. A rubber speedboat carrying up to 50 immigrants had set off from the Moroccan town of Larache, 150 kilometres from the Andalusian coast. It had travelled across the bay of Cadiz, close to the joint naval and airbase used by the US Sixth Fleet and the Spanish navy at Rota, and sank two hours later. The captain of a merchant ship spotted the speedboat in trouble in rough seas about three miles off Cadiz, and sounded the alarm. It quickly emerged that it took the authorities almost an hour to respond to the ship's urgent call for assistance. Rescue services in Cadiz took 52 minutes to launch a rescue boat because they could not find any police officers to accompany them on a Saturday afternoon (police unions claimed that several volunteers were turned away). By the time the rescue vessel eventually set sail, dark was closing in and, as night fell, the search was called off. Within two hours, the capsized boat had been washed up on a beach a couple of miles further on. The merchant captain gave an interview to *El País* in which he asked 'Couldn't someone have come from the base at Rota? They have plenty of launches, landing ships and trained personnel.'

Reports from the Civil Guard, the Cadiz Port Authority, Andalusian regional government, NGOs and political parties confirmed the initial report that emergency services took almost an hour to respond to the alert. The row over who was to blame for the debacle, saw various agencies attempting to blame one other. While the government sub-delegate for Cadiz blamed traffickers and bad weather, the Sasemar Rescue Service attempted to blame the civil guard, arguing that 'It was an immigration problem, not a rescue one'. It later emerged that while the Civil Guard had two boats capable of operating in rough seas harboured at Cadiz port, both had been out of service for weeks. The Samesar Rescue Service had had to borrow a tug boat from a private company to launch a rescue mission compiled of a mixed crew of emergency workers, Civil Guard and national police officers.

Treatment of relatives condemned

Many of the dead were from Hansala, a town of 200 families in the Atlas mountains, 650 kilometres from the sea. The Association of Friends and Relatives of Victims of Clandestine Immigration (AFVIC) which has been helping relatives, has said that by November 15, only three relatives were able to make the journey to Cadiz to identify the body because of problems obtaining a visa. By November 30, only four corpses had been positively identified. By 10 January, only one corpse had been returned to Morocco for burial. The president of ATIME condemned the Spanish authorities for their lack of humanity and called on them to issue visas to the relatives of the dead.

Parliament demands answers

On 11 November, the Spanish national ombudsman opened an inquiry which will include consideration of the actions of the emergency services. Members of the opposition PSOE, who blamed the SIVE system in the Strait of Gibraltar for displacing boats and moving them further towards the Bay of Cadiz, called for the government to make a statement in parliament on the tragedy. The interior minister declined calls to appear in the lower chamber and the government rejected the idea of a special commission to investigate the deaths.

Public sympathy for victims

In early November, around 300 people gathered in Cadiz harbour to protest the tragedy and lay flowers of remembrance. The protest was organised by trades unions and NGOs, such as Algeciras Welcome and the Association for Human Rights. On the weekend of 8/9 November, churches throughout the province of Cadiz held prayers in memory of the dead and after Sunday mass, congregations gathered outside churches to remember the dead. The city councils of Cadiz, Rota and Puerto de Santo Maria declared a day of mourning. Many students organised their own protest around the theme of 'All of us are migrants.' In a highly symbolic event students packed themselves onto a rubber boat and a wooden boat. The students on the rubber boat wore gags to symbolise the lack of rights of migrants. The wooden boat was meant to symbolise the interchange of cultures that has arisen out of the centuries old tradition of migration to Spain by sea. (*Guardian* 12.11.03, *El País* English language version 12,15,19,21.11, 22.12.03, *El País* 4,6,9,11,12,14,16,18,21.11.03, *Diario de Cadiz* digital 19.12.03, 10.1.04)

Canary Islands tragedy – fifteen believed dead

On 2 December, fifteen Africans died when their boat capsized in a storm 20 miles off the shores of Fuerteventura, in the Canary Islands. Eleven of the dead were from Mali, two from Gambia, and one from Morocco. A further 108 were rescued. The survivors were from Mali, Gambia, Morocco and Mauritania.

Details of rescue mission

Civil Guard radar detected four small vessels carrying 107 Africans attempting to reach the shore. Three of the boats were intercepted by authorities, but the fourth, with 31 adult men aboard, continued on its journey, although the boat was in trouble. As a coast guard boat went to meet the vessel and began to communicate, via megaphone, with its passengers, some of them fell overboard, apparently due to strong winds, the lack of space on the boat and a panic induced by the interception. In the chaos, more passengers fell overboard. Some were rescued, but fifteen were finally unaccounted for. A sea and air search was abandoned because of bad weather conditions which would have allowed no survivors.

Rescue vessels inappropriate

It is estimated that thirty-six immigrants have died in the coastal area of Fuerteventura. The Red Cross has repeatedly urged authorities to update the rescue vessels which are more appropriate for coastal patrol and drug-trafficking control than saving lives. (*El País* 3.12.03)

COMMENT – Netherlands: anti-immigration and the road to intolerance

By Robin van Stokrom

Dutch Justice Minister Piet Hein Donner last month advocated the idea of a two-tier justice system in which foreigners who commit crime would be sentenced differently from Dutch nationals. How has a country which once had a reputation for tolerance descended to such illiberalism?

During the second half of 2004, the Dutch government will hold the EU presidency. Human Rights Watch (HRW) has expressed the hope 'that the Dutch government will seize this opportunity not only to improve its own asylum policy, but also to extend its humanitarian tradition to the broader European community.' But, this hope is unlikely to be fulfilled. For, in recent years, the Netherlands has forfeited its image as an open society which welcomes refugees. Immigration policies have become very strict and the attitude towards foreigners generally hostile. Racist tendencies are emerging as a fear of foreigners is exploited in order to create a sense of Dutch national identity.

Whereas the immigration debate in southern Europe is focused on the clandestine entry of people who seek illegal work, in the Netherlands as in other northern European countries, the debate has focused on asylum seekers. During the 1990s, EU-member states made it more difficult for refugees to enter and to receive residence rights on political or humanitarian grounds. European countries are now engaged in a competition as to who can accept the lowest number of refugees – and the Dutch are winning. As HRW concluded in April 2003: 'over the past several years, the Netherlands has left behind its traditionally protective stance toward asylum seekers to take up a restrictive approach that stands out among Western European countries.'

In fact, in 2001, only 219 asylum seekers were granted permanent residence in the Netherlands: the lowest figure of all European states. (In 1996, around 9,000 asylum seekers were granted refugee status.) Even in Italy, where the extreme-right is in power, the number of asylum seekers that received a residence permit in 2001 is higher than the Dutch figure: 15.9 per cent of applicants in Italy were successful as compared with 0.6 per cent in the Netherlands.

Influence on welfare groups

The strictness of current policies are even influencing refugee NGOs. In Friesland (a region in the North with its own distinct culture and language, and a strong socialist tradition) the Frisian branch of the refugee welfare NGO Vluchtelingenwerk, which campaigns for better refugee policies, recently suggested to Frisians that they should be less friendly to refugees. Instead of trying to influence the government's harsh policies, it told Frisians that their welcoming attitude to refugees was problematic in the light of the strict current policies of the government. For it gave refugees the impression that they were welcome in our country, which ran contrary to fact.

There are also refugee NGOs engaged in sending asylum seekers back to their countries of origin. One is Maatwerk bij Terugkeer, an organisation set up by the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development and the Central Mission Commissariat. Maatwerk, a charity, co-operates with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) that manages the REAN-project, Return and Emigration of Aliens from the Netherlands. IOM co-ordinates the 'voluntary' return of refugees in Europe. But the reality is that if an asylum seeker refuses to return voluntarily, he or she runs the risk of being deported, forcibly.

Human rights violations

In April 2003, HRW, after three months research, concluded that the Dutch government had, 'breached the Netherlands' refugee and human rights obligations'. In its report, *The Triumph of Efficiency Over Protection in Dutch Asylum Policy*, it identified three main areas in which the Dutch state violated international human rights legislation: 'inappropriate treatment of migrant children', 'restrictions on asylum seekers' rights to basic material support, such as food and housing' and the 48-hour policy, the so-called AC-

procedure. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), which is responsible for the admittance of foreigners, takes 48 working hours to decide if someone should be returned. 'The AC procedure', writes HRW, 'is regularly used to process and reject some sixty per cent of asylum applications, including those lodged by people fleeing countries torn by war, ethnic strife, and grave human rights abuse.' Above all, independent judicial review of this process is not taken seriously.

The government detains asylum seekers in a closed detention-centre, if a negative decision is made after the 48 working hours, and in an open centre after a positive decision. Deportations take place as soon as it is known where the person comes from. There have been examples of any asylum seekers from Africa being simply sent to Senegal, where many are then jailed. If the IND, however, makes a positive decision after the 48 hours, the refugee must wait for years for the next decision as to whether permanent residence will be granted.

Asylum and integration

Restrictions on asylum rights reflect broader tendencies in the Netherlands. It is clearly a sign of the times when opinion-formers within the second largest party, the PvdA (Labour Party), call for a ban on child benefits for 'foreigner' families if they bear more than one child. Such proposals aren't coincidental. Tougher laws on asylum go hand-in-hand with a broad and nationalist tendency to 'white-out' foreigners and recreate a national identity. Within this new policy outlook learning to speak Dutch is not a right but a duty with penalties for failure. An 'integration course' costs a 'foreigner' 6,000 euros (half a years pay on the minimum wage).

Increasingly, a distinctive 'other' culture is presented as a threat to social cohesion. This view is not restricted to the extreme-right. On the contrary, demands for 'integration' of any foreigner go hand-in-hand with demands for a quota or even a ban on further immigration. Such demands now come from all major parties. As the former parliamentary leader of the PvdA, Jacques Wallage, told the Parliamentary Commission on Integration in October 2003, whereas before, he might have been afraid of being called intolerant, now notions such as 'full is full' (the country is full) have become commonplace.

The government itself can hardly be more explicit. The 'multicultural' society, where different cultures co-exist under the same set of formal rules, is believed to have failed. 'Integration' of foreign cultures, or as some say 'assimilation' into the Dutch way of life is seen as the way to deal with feelings of insecurity within the 'host population'. In the yearly presentation of the budget, in a ceremony where the Queen as head of state announces plans, a distinctive 'other' culture was discussed as a threat to social cohesion. While at the same time, massive social and welfare cuts were presented as offering people more responsibility over their own lives.

The politics of immigration

Issues of immigration and integration have traditionally been separated, but now there is even a special department of Immigration and Integration, operating a new ministry within the Justice Department. The long tradition of separating the two issues was mainly because of the plurality within Dutch society itself. The country has had -as most other countries- a long tradition of different cultures, ranging from Catholics and fundamentalist Christians to socialists and liberals. These groups used to have their own magazines, radio and TV stations, sports clubs and so on. But now because the differences between such groups are less clear and the groups have become much less segregated, a new line of demarcation is being made between the Dutch and foreigners. It is essentially Islam which is now being discussed by both politicians and sections of the media as a threat to 'Dutch values'.

Tougher immigration laws for asylum seekers have been implemented since the 1980s, under former Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, currently the head of the UNHCR. More and more it has become a political issue – evolving into a new consensus on strict policies, which now embraces many parties from right and left. Today, with the current right-wing government, led by conservative Christian-democrat Jan-Peter Balkenende, laws become yet more repressive and get passed without much opposition.

It is doubtful whether current policies would have been any different if the populist anti-immigration politician Pim Fortuyn were in power. (He was shot dead just days before the May 2002 elections.) Some

of his ideas on immigration were actually less strict than current policies.

Frits Bolkestein, currently European Commissioner of internal markets, began in 1994 to highlight in his right-wing liberal party Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD), the issue of immigration. He was one of the first to abuse the issue of 'integration' for advocating stricter asylum policies. In parliament he attacked his own government, a coalition of the PvdA, the VVD and social-liberal Democrats 66 (1994-1998). The following government (1998-2002), of the same coalition, brought in many new laws to restrict entry and residence. One of the most infamous pieces of legislation is the Koppelingswet, the 'Linking Law' which denies 'refused' asylum seekers and any illegal resident basic rights to housing, education and health care. It relates also to asylum seekers who are still appealing against an IND decision.

The effect of the media

The mass media plays a crucial role in public debate. But most news outlets do not counter the false claims of the Dutch government, do not carry out investigations into the situation of refugees and do not open up a public debate based on the facts of immigration. For the majority of the electorate who supported Pim Fortuyn, the issue which motivated them was migration/integration. As the general attitude in Dutch society against foreigners and Muslims, in particular, has hardened, politicians eagerly feed this feeling, afraid that being perceived as soft on the issue will lose them votes.

Because of the Fortuyn effect, the media landscape changed dramatically. As veteran journalist John Jansen van Galen put it in the Amsterdam based newspaper *De Parool* in November 2003: 'It was a politician, Pim Fortuyn, who changed the general tack. But, ever since, all the media advocates the new ideology: against Islam and the Antilleans, against privacy and state-benefits and against tolerance. Is resistance still possible against the all-embracing ideology of zero tolerance.'

Stricter asylum policies

The government is thinking up yet new ways to make the regime even more strict, especially for 'official' asylum seekers. Within the EU, the Dutch government is working on ways to keep them out of the Union in the first place. During the summer 2003 Thessaloniki summit of EU states, the Dutch backed a British plan to create processing centres outside the borders of the EU, from which refugees would be selected and then distributed among the European states. This plan was defeated because of strong opposition from, among others, Germany. But still the Dutch government want to take the idea forward with a 'coalition of willing' partners within the EU.

Detention centres outside the European borders would clearly not stop the main problems. 'The more we close Europe, the more attractive it will be for criminals to traffic refugees for big money through the holes of the fences. Because external borders of Europe cannot possibly be absolute,' argues Jeroen Doomerik, a scientist at the University of Amsterdam. And other critics maintain that independent scrutiny of asylum procedures will become even harder.

Public opposition

Laws and practices are currently so tough that some recent polls show a large proportion of the population actually wants less stringency. There is concern as to what should happen to asylum seekers that have been in the country for a long time without being granted asylum or who might be awaiting a court decision. Local people who have befriended refugees are beginning to protest. Though against the law, some churches and even some local authorities offer shelter and other means of subsistence to the destitute.

The government has had to tolerate such acts of 'civil disobedience', but recently came up with a policy to legalise around 2,000 asylum seekers who had been in the country for more than five years and who are still waiting for a first decision by the IND. Although the problem of the refugees who are appealing against the first decision of the IND (of whom many have been in the country for over five years) is not solved, this legalisation gives the government a pretext for then actively pursuing local authorities which are resisting central government edicts.

Refugee support organisations, churches and the organisation for local governments are strongly opposed to the limited number of asylum seekers who have been granted residence. They argue that those who have been in the Netherlands for over three or five years should get a permanent residence permit. These demands are widely supported by Dutch citizens. (Even Pim Fortuyn said he wanted to offer permanent residence permits to about 10,000 people who had been in the country for five years, if they spoke Dutch and did not have a criminal record.)

The way forward?

There are, however, alternative ideas that could be explored in the future as well. One of those calling for a new approach is Jeroen Doomernik. He argues for a layered system of social rights and starts from the proposition that anyone should be able to work in the EU.

For, he states, most people do not stay in the Netherlands longer than necessary, simply because they come to earn enough money so as to create better lives back home. But if people do stay, work and pay taxes, they should obtain rights to welfare benefits after several years, gaining more rights as they work more years. It basically resembles a multi-layered system of access to social and political rights. This proposal would solve the issue of migration, as anyone would have the universal right to emigrate. 'The likely alternative', says Doomernik in *The myth of restrictive immigration policy*, a report for the Dutch government, 'is to be found in a moral liberal immigration regime, which can do justice to growing mobility in the present-day world and leaves behind the assumption that immigration is an aberration merely requiring stricter rules for it to go away.'

Another idea, which has been put forward recently, is more repressive and more likely to gain a foothold in public debate. It is in line with general economic and business-interests, but is brought forward by the progressive institution the Third Chamber, formed by a group of Dutch citizens selected by the environmental and solidarity NGO NCDO. The Third Chamber argues for a green-card system to import labour as needed – for example cheap IT workers from India and other sector-workers from the South. The group even argues for special immigrant import-zones within the EU, where workers will have fewer rights. According to the Third Chamber, it is a perfect means for Europe to profit from cheap labour around the world. They point to the special export-zones in the Third World as 'engines of growth' (ignoring the fact that these zones have done little for development and much for the enriching and empowering of multinational corporations).

The politics of integration

Until now, these alternatives gained little attention but they are likely to enter the public debate when the current non-discussion on integration ends. The populist focus of debate is about perceived differences between so-called Dutch and Islamic values. A more serious debate concerns connecting the perceived failure of integration with the socio-economic positions of immigrants. Although there are many second- and third-generation 'immigrants' who have higher education and have well-paid jobs, there is still a striking correlation between those in poverty and those of 'non-Dutch origin'. But because young people, Moroccan and Antillean youth specifically, are associated with crime and the feelings of insecurity within the general population, the debate is more about culture and values than about social structure.

This comes out in the areas of housing and schooling. Instead of focussing on the eradication of poverty in general, the main thrust is on mixing rich and poor in the same neighbourhoods, so to avoid ghettos of poor 'foreigners'. In addition, a parliamentary majority is in favour of extra control over Islamic schools. (In the Netherlands, all religious groups have the right to form their own schools and still receive subsidies.) The scrutiny of Islamic schools should be tougher and 'liberal-democratic' values should be taught in these schools, say several parties from both left and right. Yet a school-inspection organisation has concluded that there is hardly anything wrong with Islamic schools. And if there is one type of school where 'liberal-democratic' values are not taught, then it must be the old-Dutch 'Christian fundamentalist' schools.

For the 'immigrants' themselves, many questions remain unanswered. When is an immigrant 'integrated'? How long does he or she need to live in the country? One immigrant, who lives in Rotterdam,

made this point to the Parliamentary Commission on Integration in the three minutes allotted to speakers from the floor: 'I have one important problem: I do not know if I am integrated yet. Please, Commission Integration, stop me from my suffering. Tell me, if I have a job, am I integrated? If I wear a beard, am I integrated? Going to school, is that enough? Could you please clarify that for me? If I do not get an answer, I will get ill and end up on Occupational Disability Insurance. So tell me: Am I integrated yet?'. After a weighty silence in the overheated community centre in the poor Rotterdam neighbourhood, the President of the Commission answered curtly: 'We have not come here to give answers. Next please.'

Related links

- Article originally published on 2 December 2003 at <<http://www.irr.org.uk/2003/december/ak000005.html>>
- Report from *Expatica* on Piet Hein Donner's proposal to sentence foreigners differently from Dutch nationals <http://www.expatica.com/source/site_article.asp?subchannel_id=1&story_id=2695>
- Report from *De Telegraaf* on local NGOs in Friesland <<http://www2.telegraaf.nl/nieuwslink/article4512001.ece>>
- IOM information on the REAN project <http://www.iom-nederland.nl/engels/frame2/afganistan_rean.html>
- Discussion of Jeroen Doomernik's proposals on Autonoom Centrum website <<http://www.xs4all.nl/~ac/english/discussie/discussie4.html>>
- Brief summary of The myth of restrictive immigration policy by Jeroen Doomernik <http://www.minjust.nl:8080/b_organ/wodc/jv/jv2001-8s.htm>

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The ERA is produced with the help of over twenty volunteers across Europe. Some of these volunteers help with translations, others send the IRR information from newspapers, tv reports, anti-racist magazines or alternative news sources in their countries. We are concerned that while some countries are well-covered in the Bulletin, racism in other countries may be going unreported. If you have any suggestions as to how to improve coverage in any particular country, please contact us.

Country round-ups

AUSTRIA

Race and electoral politics

Freedom Party suffers setback in provincial elections

In the Landtag (provincial parliament elections) in Upper Austria and the Tyrol, the Freedom Party was clearly defeated. The right-wingers lost more than half the votes they received in March 1999 (Tyrol) and October 1997 (Upper Austria). In the Tyrol the conservative People's Party won over 50% and in Upper Austria the Social Democrats increased their position by 10%, but could not displace the People's Party. There is speculation that the setback for the Freedom Party will lead to a power struggle and the possibility that Jörg Haider might wish to lead the party again. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 29.9.03)

Former Freedom Party councillor arrested for Holocaust denial

Wolfgang Fröhlich, a former Freedom Party (FPÖ) councillor in Vienna, has been arrested following the issue of an arrest warrant against him two years ago. Fröhlich was expelled from the FPÖ in 1995 after a xenophobic outburst about the 'bastardisation of Austria'. (*Searchlight*, August 2003)

The integration debate

Language integration requirement criticised

Ines Michalowski, a researcher at the Institute for Migration Research at the University of Onasbruck says that 'making language-learning mandatory creates a negative image of migrants among the public'. Other critics of the Austrian law that forces immigrants to learn basic German quickly or face expulsion believe that the law has nothing to do with integration; rather it reinforces the notion that Austria is hostile to outsiders. The Fund for the Integration of Refugees and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), however, defend the law. (*Associated Press* 28.5.03)

Racism and fascism

Controversy over EUMC anti-Semitism report

A furore has erupted over the fact that a study of European anti-Semitism commissioned by the Vienna-based European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) has not been published. The centre says that it decided in February 2002, not to publish the report because the methodology was flawed and its findings deemed to be biased. One problem with the study, carried out by the Centre for Research on Anti-Semitism at Berlin's Technical University, was that anti-Semitism was, incorrectly, being extended so as to include hostility towards Israel. There was also an emphasis on Muslim and pro-Palestinian perpetrators, which was judged by

the EUMC to be inflammatory and the criticism of left and anti-globalisation groups as anti-Semitic was also attacked by EUMC board members.

However, in November, when it became public knowledge that the report had been shelved, accusations were made of political correctness having forced a censorship of the report, in the face of worries about potential Muslim anger. One Jewish organisation in France decided to publish the report itself in full on its web-site, amidst claims by MEPs, Jewish organisations, and Ariel Sharon, Israel's prime minister, that Europeans were anti-Semitic and that Muslim immigration to Europe posed a threat to Jewry. (*Financial Times* 22.11.03, *Sunday Telegraph* 23.11.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 28.11.03)

Police and criminal justice

Vienna: questions raised after black death in custody

On 15 July, Cheibani Wague, a 33-year-old Mauritanian, died after police were called to a dispute at his workplace. A passer-by filmed police attacking Wague and the incidents that led to his death were screened on national television.

How did Cheibani Wague die?

Cheibani Wague, a former post-graduate physics student at the Technical University in Vienna, was employed at the 'Afrikadorf' African cultural project in Vienna's municipal park where he was in charge of children's workshops. On 15 July, there was a dispute between Mr Wague and his employer, who called the police. It is alleged that when the police arrived they beat Wague in the face and back and threw him to the ground and then sat on him in order to put him into foot shackles. Once subdued, a paramedic injected him with the tranquilliser Haldol.

Questions asked about paramedics role

Elizabeth Pittermann, socialist city councillor responsible for health, has suspended the paramedics involved after the footage broadcast on national television showed them standing on the deceased and looking on while his condition deteriorated. The paramedics failed to offer first aid when Wague became motionless and even dropped him on the floor when they finally transported him to the ambulance.

Are the police and paramedics to be prosecuted?

The regional court in Vienna has initiated a preliminary investigation against 'unknown perpetrators' on suspicion of negligent death. However, even before this preliminary investigation, as well as the post-mortem, were concluded the police and prosecution were claiming that death was due to heart failure. After Ms Pittermann called for the executive police officers responsible for Wague's treatment to be held to account, interior minister Ernst Strasser called on Pittermann to apologise for her 'politically motivated' comments.

Demonisation of victim

Official accounts of the death have emphasised the deceased's violence and the mainstream media described Wague as 'raging' with a violent temper. The character assassination of this African man was challenged by his friends who describe Wague as popular at work and in his student life, where he was elected to represent the Afro-Asian Institute.

Calls for official inquiry mount

Thousands of people joined vigils on 22 and 25 July to remember Cheibani Wague. The cultural project where he worked has suffered two arson attacks since his death. The city council has threatened to close down the project on the grounds of 'public security'. The anti-racist group GEMMI, which campaigns against institutional racism and violent police conduct against black people in Austria, and the Vienna based Advice Centre for Witnesses and Victims of Racism say that Wague's death is not an isolated incident. Amnesty International (AI) and the European Human Rights Commission have called for an official inquiry into the death. (*Statewatch*, vol. 13, no. 3/4, May-July 2003)

Romanian youth in adult prison claims rape

In 2002, the Austrian justice minister abolished the juvenile court. Now young prisoners are kept in a side wing of the Josefstadt adult prison. Among them is a 14-year-old Romanian boy who has been imprisoned for a minor theft for which an Austrian youth would never be imprisoned. It is alleged that he has been repeatedly raped in prison and the authorities have done nothing. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism <www.dir-info.de> September 2003)

BELGIUM

Race and electoral politics

Legislation could end subsidies to Vlaams Blok

The Vlaams Blok (VB) may soon lose the public subsidies payable to political parties with representatives in both houses of parliament. At a meeting of all democratic parties, the Flemish Liberal Party, which had been reluctant to move against the VB, agreed to support a new parliamentary bill which would make it easier (than through the 1999 law) to cut off funds from parties which clearly oppose human rights. On the other hand, the new bill will also extend subsidies to other parties and the first beneficiary is likely to be the right-wing New Flemish Alliance. (*The Bulletin* 30.10.03)

Racism and fascism

Equality chief resigns citing political interference

Johan Leman, director of the Centre for Equal Rights and the Fight Against Racism, had resigned, citing political interference. He had been refused permission by the interior minister to mediate in a hunger strike of Afghan refugees – despite the fact that the centre had recently been given new responsibilities in overseeing migration

and battling against racism. Apparently four recent appointments of co-ordinators had also weakened the power of the director. One of them had attacked the director for his lack of impartiality. The centre has also been attacked for its criticism of the VB and for campaigning for the vote for immigrants – something which the Prime Minister's party opposes. (*The Bulletin* 4.9.03)

Newspapers slated for Nazi death notice

Two papers, *La Libre Belgique* and *Le Soir* were forced to apologise to their readers after they were inundated with complaints for printing the death notice of a prominent Walloon Nazi, Jean-Robert Debbaudt, who fought with the SS on the Russian front and remained an unapologetic fascist for the rest of his life. The notice in *La Libre* was published under a Nazi slogan. *Le Soir* said it was considering taking action against those who had submitted the notice. (*The Bulletin* 10.7.03)

Nationalists split on Flemish identity

Around 4,000 Flemish nationalists held a protest rally in West Flanders in August, causing a schism in the nationalist camp. They were mainly members of the VB protesting that the traditional Flemish rally was a watered down version of the Flemish message. The official organisers, who plan a pilgrimage each year to a statute of the Van Raemdonck brothers killed in WWI, accused the Blok and their skinhead supporters of using Flemish symbols for party political ends. (*The Bulletin* 28.8.03)

The integration debate

Integration plan to be updated

The Flemish welfare minister Mieke Vogels has announced that the 1996 integration plan, which was aimed at the integration of Moroccans and Turks, will be updated by June 2004 to reflect the fact that immigrant communities, made up of 186 nationalities, are highly diverse. Vogels indicated that as many asylum seekers are highly educated they will find it easier to gain employment than third- or fourth-generation Moroccans. (*Radio Vlaanderen International* 28.10.03)

Laeken: headteacher bars Muslim girls from wearing headscarf

In September, at the start of the new school term, Muslim students and their parents staged a protest outside the Brussels II Athenaeum in Laeken after the headteacher announced that he would no longer allow pupils to wear the hijab. In Belgium, the decision whether to allow Muslim girls to wear the headscarf has largely been left to individual schools. Only a few have imposed a ban. (*The Bulletin* 11.9.03, *Economist* 25.10.03)

Police and criminal justice

Human rights groups warn of violence and racism in policing

In AI's latest Annual Report a number of groups voice concern about violence and racism in the Belgian police force. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination registered concern about 'racial incidents in police stations ... where the victims were immigrants

and asylum-seekers'. The Belgian Centre for Equal Opportunities received 'scores of complaints' about skin colour being a cause of discrimination. The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture reported allegations, supported by medical evidence, of violence by police officers. And the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) indicated 'the urgent need to address manifestations of racism on the part of some law enforcement officials'. AI identified two categories of abuse: that directed at people in the street and at the station during an arrest and that directed against asylum seekers during deportation. AI is particularly worried about the 12 hours of 'administrative detention' during which a suspect can be held without access to a lawyer, or doctor or able to inform family members of the arrest. Even Belgium's own Standing Police Monitoring Committee says that complaints against the police have tripled since 1999. (*The Bulletin* 26.6.03)

Semira Adamu deportation death: four police officers convicted

On 12 December 2003, a Brussels court found four Belgian police officers guilty of assault, battery and negligence in the case of Semira Adamu who died during a forced deportation in 1998. While the four police officers received suspended sentences, a fifth police officer was acquitted. The court also ordered the Belgian state to pay undisclosed damages to her family. Ms Adamu's family welcomed the court's ruling.

Semira Adamu died on 22 September 1998 within hours of an attempt to forcibly deport her from Brussels airport on a plane bound to Lagos in Nigeria. This 20-year-old asylum seeker's ordeal – a pillow was forced over her mouth, elbows shoved into her back and ankles shackled – was captured on police camera. She stopped breathing as the officers were still exchanging jokes.

New methods to restrain deportees

The cushion technique used was suspended after the death, but, according to AI, officers still use unacceptable levels of force. AI issued a statement prior to the judgement in which it alleges that it has received numerous complaints about the way in which other rejected asylum seekers have been treated by officers using force and intimidation, including threats of meeting the same fate as Semira Adamu. There have also been complaints about dangerous methods of restraint which have included using material and objects to cover the mouth to subdue deportees, thus blocking the airway, and restraining deportees via positions which could restrict breathing and lead to death from positional asphyxia. (*Guardian* 13.12.03, *Amnesty International News Service* No 280, 10.12.03)

Policing in Antwerp

Police officers suspended

Four Antwerp police officers have been suspended on suspicion of violence under the regime of 'zero tolerance' of police brutality ordered by the city's new Flemish Socialist burgomaster. Two officers are alleged to have taken part in the beating up of two Algerian suspects. Others were alleged to have used violence against a Turkish family. (*The Bulletin* 7.8.03)

Police clash with Muslim youth on anniversary of racist murder

Antwerp police clashed with 'immigrant' youth on the first anniversary of the racially-motivated killing of Mohammed Achrak, a teacher of Moroccan origin (see *Bulletin* no. 43) The mayor's office had refused a permit for a demonstration, because the death, a year ago, had led to rioting. Thirty-five youths were detained by police in street clashes this year in Antwerp where 10 per cent of the population is of North African origin. (*Expatica News* <www.expatica.com> 24.11.03)

BULGARIA

Race and electoral politics

Anti-Roma rhetoric in local elections causes concern

Because of the anti-Roma rhetoric in the run up to local elections in Bulgaria, a seminar of prominent Roma politicians, journalists and public figures, organised by Drom Dromendar, the Human Rights Project and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, was held on 12 November. In the election, Roma parties and coalitions had done well, 164 Roma are now on municipal councils, as compared with 100 in 1999. A number of Roma were also elected as mayors of villages which are predominantly inhabited by Roma. But, it was the first time that anti-Roma sentiments had been so openly used in electioneering – with leaflets being put out telling people not to vote for certain candidates because they 'love Roma'. Discussion took place about how Roma parties could best work to ensure success in future parliamentary elections. (Human Rights Project press release 24.11.03)

Racism and fascism

Silistra: protests follow murder of Roma man

On the evening of 2 August Gunal Taliat, a Muslim Turkish-speaking Roma, was killed in a brawl outside a disco in Silistra, in the north-east of the country on the Danube. His assailant, who has been taken into custody, is well known in the area for criminal activities and for his hatred of Roma. A demonstration took place on 5 August when hundreds of Roma protested outside the police station demanding proper justice. They were demanding that the killer, whom they were afraid would harass witnesses, should not be given bail. (Human Rights Project press release 15.8.03)

Police and criminal justice

Anti-Roma discrimination in criminal justice system alleged

The European Roma Rights Center and the Human Rights Project have sent letters to the Bulgarian National Assembly and to the Prime Minister to complain about the way in which Roma people are being discriminated against in the criminal justice system. Citing particularly brutal

recent cases, they show how law enforcement officers are physically abusing Roma, that Roma are being denied a fair trial, and that a particular law, the Decree on Petty Hooliganism is being disproportionately applied to Roma.

Disproportionate use of petty hooliganism decree

From January to November 2003, out of eleven decisions of the Pazardjik District Court, under the Decree, six relate to Roma. Out of twenty-four individuals convicted under the Decree, fourteen are Roma – which means that 60% of decisions in that court relate to Roma, who comprise around 6% of the population in that district. It appears that this new catch-all piece of legislation may well run counter to the European Convention on Human Rights. (*Roma Rights* 15.12.03)

CROATIA

Racism and fascism

Zagreb: racially motivated attacks on the rise

A recent victim of racially-motivated attacks in Zagreb was the 11-year-old son of an Egyptian diplomat. Two young men beat and injured the boy outside his house and racist skinheads are being sought for the crime. This was the fourth such attack in ten days – a Pakistani tourist and two foreign students had been beaten and injured in separate incidents and, so far, no perpetrators have been caught. (*Newsbote* 7.8.03)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Racism and fascism

Roma human rights victory prompts media vilification

The Roma family Cervenak from Usti nad Labem and their lawyer are now the object of vilification in the media because they won a case in the Human Rights Court in Strasbourg against the Czech Republic. The family brought a case originally in 1993 against their city which was acting unlawfully over their housing. After the Constitutional Court had twice found the courts handling of the case was unlawful, the case was sent to Strasbourg. There, in August 2002, the Court determined that Articles 3, 6, 8, 13 and 14 had all been breached. On 29 July 2003 a settlement was agreed between the Czech Republic and the family. Since then, the media has consistently attacked both the family and the lawyer, who had earlier been nominated as a possible judge in the Constitutional Court. The Dzeno Association in Prague is monitoring the case because it is worried about the safety of the family and the lawyer and the repercussions of the case for the treatment of Roma. It has pointed out how serious it is when even decisions of international courts are not respected. (*Roma Daily News* 2.8.03)

The integration debate

Government projects aims to stop Roma migration

The government has set up a monitoring system to prevent mass migration of Roma from Slovakia. Since June 2002, 20,000 Roma are estimated to have emigrated to the Czech Republic – most being residents of the former Czechoslovakia which was divided into two in 1992. However the Czech legislation was extremely strict and discriminatory in granting citizenship to anyone of Roma origin even if s/he had been part of the territory before. The Czech and Slovak governments had agreed to set up a joint commission to try to slow Roma migration, but the Czech government now seems to have decided to take matters into its own hands. (*RSK* 26.11.03)

DENMARK

Race and electoral politics

Danish People's Party: more influence, more controversy

Many political commentators now believe that the conservative/liberal coalition which governs Denmark is taking on the views of its junior coalition partner, the Danish People's Party (DPP). In 2003, DPP leader Pia Kjaersgaard was voted Denmark's most influential politician and an opinion poll published in the financial daily, *Borsen*, revealed that the DPP surged 3 per cent ahead over the summer and now holds 12.5 per cent of support. It was a summer where Kjaersgaard caused many controversies, much to the embarrassment of government politicians from other parties.

DPP demands government support for deportation plan

The DPP has threatened to pull the plug on its working agreement with the ruling Liberal/Conservative coalition unless the government is prepared to forcibly deport rejected asylum seekers who are refusing to leave voluntarily. With a threat that might force the Prime Minister into calling a general election, the DPP's parliamentary group chair declared that police figures of 2,750 rejected asylum seekers defying repatriation orders as 'completely unacceptable'. Unless the government started shipping them out, it could expect no backing for the 2004 finance bill.

The DPP has also threatened to hijack the Integration Minister's plan to ease strict reunification legislation unless he agrees to implement DPP demands over deportations and raise the bond for residency through family reunification.

Supreme Court rejects Kjaersgaard's libel action

Pia Kjaersgaard, leader of the DPP, has been causing disquiet among her partners in the Danish government. It began when she brought libel proceedings against MEP Karen Sunds, who had called her a racist. The Supreme Court, however, rejected the action, arguing that a politician who demanded that foreigners who committed a criminal offence should be expelled from the country

'together with three generations of their families' had to put up with being described in that way. The verdict was described by Kjaersgaard as 'completely wrong, completely unjust, completely political', adding that 'This is tyranny over people's opinions, like they used in East Germany.'

Government distances itself from DPP on headscarf

The Liberal Party justice spokesperson Birthe Ronn Hornbech has rejected the DPP's call for a ban on headscarves and other 'culturally specific headwear' in the classroom. 'We do not interfere in religious dress. The Danish People's Party is veering quite close to totalitarianism' with this proposal, argued Hornbech. In October 2003, the DPP called for a ban on turbans, headscarves, yarmulkes and other religious headgear in public school classrooms. The DPP's plan was supported by Social Democrat MP Karen Jespersen who demanded that female Muslim schoolteachers should also be banned from wearing headscarves in public schools.

DPP's 'Christian Europe' arguments slated

DPP chief party ideologist, Sören Krarup has demanded that a clear distinction be drawn between 'Christian Europeans' and 'Muslim Asians', adding that if international agreements and the EU prevented the drawing of such distinctions then those agreements would have to be broken. Birte Rönn Hornbech, an expert on judicial affairs who is also a member of the governing liberal party has called on the prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen to make an unambiguous stand against such attitudes. Rasmussen, however, remained silent in the whole debate and, indeed, made no interventions throughout the summer of DPP-inspired controversies.

Human Rights Centre book must be withdrawn, argues DPP

An English language book by Cecile Stokholm Banke, employed by the Danish Centre for International Studies and Human Rights, has caused a stir for a quote it contains from a 17-year-old girl after visiting a concentration camp site in Germany. She said, 'people had faith in Adolf Hitler. He was able to provoke people into hating the Jews. That's why I believe Pia Kjaersgaard is mentally ill'. The human rights centre has already apologised for the book but the DPP is using it to extend its ongoing campaign against 'so-called experts' and 'arbiters of public taste'. Jesper Langballe, a DPP MP and priest, who has attacked the centre, now calls for the recalling of the book. He has also asked the government to cut its funds to the centre.

Calls for censorship of Danish radio

The DPP has called on Danish Radio to drop a number of commentators, whom it names, because the DPP finds their views irksome. (*Copenhagen Post* 9, 10.7, 8.8, 25.9, 23.10.03, *Frankfurter Rundschau* 10.7.03)

The integration debate

Intelligence services to vet citizenship applications

Denmark's new anti-terrorist law gives immigration authorities and the Police Intelligence Service (PET) a broader mandate to exchange information without the

consent of the individual foreigner involved. One clause gives PET authority to investigate all individuals applying for Danish citizenship. PET will have access to reports from the integration ministry on all immigrants applying for Danish citizenship and will be able to recommend that certain applications be rejected on national security grounds. The authorities will also have the right to withhold information from citizenship applicants who may be part of larger investigations focusing on other individuals deemed a threat to national security. (*Copenhagen Post* 10.7.03)

Government plans curbs on 'radical' religious leaders

As part of a package of strict new immigration regulations, the government plans to curb the activities of 'radical' religious leaders. The new rules oblige religious leaders to be financially self-sufficient, speak Danish and respect 'Western values'. There is little doubt that the rules are intended to target imams.

DPP influence on policy

Peter Skaarup, a spokesperson for the DPP, which proposed the rules, argued that 'In theory, these rules concern all clerics from all religions. But, in practice, they target the imams.' 'We proposed these new rules because we've had lots of problems with imams in Denmark who advocate circumcising girls, urge their followers to support al-Qaida and preach in their own language. How do you expect to integrate immigrants if their religious leaders don't even speak Danish?'

Cross-party support

Integration minister Bertel Haarder told the *Jyllands-Posten* that imams have 'negative influence' on Muslim youth and their parents. The minister said some imams would be forced to leave Denmark because they would not be able to comply with the new rules and would therefore be refused residence permits. The Social Democrat spokeswoman Anne-Marie Melgaard supports the government proposals, arguing that 'Immigrant Muslim girls change their behaviour and start wearing headscarves when a new imam from their (home) village comes and gives Friday prayers'. Only the Radical Party challenged the proposals. Party spokeswoman Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen said 'We oppose rules that target any special religious groups. (*Islam Online* <<http://www.islamonline.net/english/index.shtml>> 20.08.03)

National council for Muslims proposed

Muslim organisations have called on the government to provide state funding for a democratically-elected national council to represent Denmark's 180,000 Muslims. Muslim community leaders argue that if Muslims had a collective national voice then it would stop unrepresentative Muslims with extreme views being presented as the voice of the Muslim community as a whole. The Muslim leaders presumably had in mind the Copenhagen politician, Hamid El-Mousti who issued a fatwa against Muslims who declined to use their right to vote.

ECRI cites anti-Muslim racism

In April, the ECRI reported that 'People perceived to be Muslims, and especially Somalis, were particularly vulnerable to xenophobia and discrimination. (*Copenhagen Post* 17.7.03)

Cost of poor integration exposed

A research group, DREAM, has said that Denmark will be liable for DKK 33billion (4.45 billion euros) unless serious steps are taken to integrate immigrants better. DREAM's calculations are based on the high unemployment rates and dependency on welfare among immigrants and their descendants. 39 per cent of all cash welfare recipients are 'immigrants' and according to the research, if the trend continues, every second welfare recipient by 2010 would be 'immigrant', though the group comprises just 10 per cent of the population. (*Copenhagen Post* 4.9.03)

Racism and fascism

Race laws seldom used against politicians

The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Race Discrimination (DRC) claims that prosecutors often dismiss violations of the country's anti-racism paragraph, 266b, when the violations are attributed to politicians. The special prerogatives afforded politicians regarding freedom of speech means that politicians are given free licence to spout inflammatory views on racism. DRC, which cites evidence to prove that the courts take a different view to the prosecutors, noted that during the 2001 election year, 65 violations of the anti-racism paragraph were reported to the authorities – the highest level ever.

Case of Peter Neerup Buhl

The DRC stresses that while prosecutors have a lot of leeway in deciding whether a prosecution will be made, the Courts have, on two occasions, denied the right of politicians to hide under their expanded freedom of speech rights. In November, the Supreme Court ruled that the status of politician Peter Neerup Buhl did not give him carte blanche to make racially derogatory remarks. Buhl was sentenced to a suspended prison sentence for defamatory remarks about Muslims.

Case of Mogens Camre

Prosecutors in Denmark have called on the European Parliament in Strasbourg to lift immunity from Mogens Camre, so that he could be arraigned on racism charges, but the European Parliament voted to reject the request – 492 of the 626 members blankly rejected the request, with only 48 voting on 1 July to lift the immunity. (*Copenhagen Post* 3.7, 11.12.03)

Racism in broadcasting – action needed

Copenhagen station censored

The Local Radio Advisory Board ordered that Copenhagen-based Radio Holger be closed down for one month after it transmitted racist messages. Radio Holder is well-known as an anti-immigrant radio station and mouthpiece for the Action Against Immigration party. It was censored after a disc jockey said on air that killing Iraqi residents would be perfectly legal as long as Denmark is at war with Iraq.

State subsidies for neo-Nazi radio station criticised

After widespread condemnation for the government's support of 'Radio Oasis', the culture minister Brian Mikkelsen has confirmed that the government will no longer give

financial support to Denmark's neo-Nazi radio station. Radio Oasis, which is run by neo-Nazi Jonni Hansen, and is based at the Danish National Socialists' Party's heavily-fortified headquarters in the Copenhagen suburb of Greve, first began legal broadcasting in 1996. The ministry of culture had given the neo-Nazis DKK 78,000 under a state fund promoting diversity and freedom of speech amongst commercial broadcasters. Denmark is the only country in the world that has given government subsidies to a radio station which disseminates Nazi propaganda. (*Copenhagen Post* 6, 20.11.03)

Hizb-ut-Tahrir may be banned

The government will ban Hizb-ut-Tahrir following the conviction of its leader Fadi Ahmad Abdel Latif, on charges of incitement to racial hatred. Hizb-ut-Tahrir had distributed a leaflet urging people to 'kill them, kill the Jews wherever you find them'. (*Jewish Chronicle* 8.11.02)

Arhus university lecturer urges selective breeding programme

Helmuth Nyborg, a professor of psychology at Arhus university is seriously advocating that the time has come to 'abandon the politically correct' ideas and practice selection so as to 'improve future generations and avoid degeneration of the population'. The academic says he realises that such views are controversial and break a taboo, dating back to Hitler's race programme. Nonetheless he argues it is now important because the number of problem children in Denmark is such a concern. (*Copenhagen Post* 29.9.03)

Police and criminal justice

Crime and immigrant youth

Statistics suggest that immigrant youth are disproportionately involved in certain crimes. In an effort to make parents more responsible, the government's new guidelines require the police to personally visit the home of a youth the first time he is involved in crime; and local authorities have been granted far-reaching powers to remove youngsters to secure juvenile institutions.

Liberal Party steps in

In August, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen told a Liberal Party conference, 'We have been over-tolerant and soft [on immigrants, who] are lacking a fundamental respect and acceptance for the society we live in...I'm sick of hearing that society is to blame...Immigrants will no longer encounter a Danish society that shows that their actions have no consequences.'

An end to understanding

Following the murder of a young Italian tourist on the streets on Norrebro, politicians, police and social authorities were united in efforts to deal with the growing crime committed by young 'immigrants'. The Conservative Party leader, Bendt Bendtsen, suggested copying the successful British parent programme experiment. A Copenhagen police detective said that the 'softly-softly' approach was obviously not working and Rasbih Azad-Ahmad, head of the Multi-Cultural Association in Arhus said that gangs of immigrants youth who are fighting, robbing or throwing things at the police, should be punished swiftly and

firmly. Social commentators were divided. For some it was a sign that young immigrants were no longer being treated as victims of society rather, perpetrators of crime. But psychiatrists felt that there was a high degree of mental problems within juvenile offenders and that if they did not receive proper treatment they would become yet more psychotic.

Stop and search claim

Immigrants are claiming that they are victims of racial profiling after being subjected to stop and search by over-zealous officers. Turks, Pakistanis, Africans and other groups have claimed that they were pulled over while driving or stopped on the street just because they did not look Danish. In a recent incident, a young West Indian appealed to the national paper, *Jyllands-Posten*, for help after being wrestled to the ground, handcuffed and arrested by police for being in possession of drugs – which he was not.

According to the chief of police, the force is making efforts to counter charges of racism through liaison strategies with immigrant leaders and investigations into each accusation against officers. A leaflet called, 'Discrimination – not here' has gone out to all police officers. (*Copenhagen Post* 10.7, 14,21. 28.8.03)

FRANCE

The integration debate

Special commission approves ban on religious symbols in public buildings

Muslim headscarves and other religious symbols – including Jewish skullcaps and oversized crosses – are to be banned from French state schools and public buildings after a specially appointed commission told the government this was needed to protect the secular nature of the state. The report by the Stasi Commission (a cross-party group of parliamentarians headed by former minister Bernard Stasi) was compiled after six months of study and 120 hearings. A special commission on protecting and enforcing France's secular principles has also considered a range of questions including the wearing of the headscarf, separate hours for Muslim women in swimming pools and the question of religious holidays.

The secular state; the 'indivisible Republic'

The Stasi Commission's recommendations came after six months of intense debate among political parties and the press about secularity and sexual equality, the primary issue being the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim girls. Many leading politicians, such as the minister for social affairs, François Fillon had publicly supported the ban although the education minister, Luc Ferry, had been more cautious, pointing out that any ban could contradict article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights that guarantees 'freedom of conscience and of religion'. Political support for the ban came in the name of defending the secular state and the French ideal of the 'indivisible Republic'. For instance, Fillon commenced his address to the Stasi Commission with the words 'Secularism is

being ground into the dust'. The concept of French citizenship overrides all other affiliations, he argued. He criticised the 'guilty mentality which has led our country to doubt its own values' and called for a rethink of the government policy of 'Communitarisme' which takes into account the cultural needs of minority communities. Finally, Fillon called for a review of the procedure for acquiring French nationality. Prior to 2000, the Conseil d'Etat could consider the wearing of the headscarf as a factor for rejection of a citizenship application. Fillon wants a return to this situation.

In a statement on 17 December Chirac explained that legislation would be brought in to reinforce sexual equality in all areas: an indirect reference to Islamic opposition to feminism. New legislation will probably be introduced in February and the ban on schoolchildren wearing the headscarf would probably be enforced by the start of the new school year in September 2004. Among the practices Chirac wants banned is women's refusal to be treated by male doctors in public hospitals. He has also called for new laws to allow private businesses to ban religious symbols. According to political commentators, the ruling-UMP is obsessed with the issue of secularity. Alain Juppe and Francois Baroin have launched a campaign for a 'code of secularity' and the UMP campaigns against the reservations of times for women-only swimming in municipal swimming pools.

Background to the ban

The wearing of the headscarf has long been a vexed issue in France. In 1989, the Conseil d'Etat issued an opinion that headscarves should be permitted in schools. The government, however, effectively overruled the state advisory council. Following the so-called 'Creil affair', when two sisters were expelled from a school outside Paris for wearing headscarves, the government issued a policy memo to schools in 1994 which empowered them to bar 'ostentatious displays' of religious affiliation which might constitute 'an act of provocation, proselytism or propaganda'. Hundreds of expulsions followed. The education ministry created two new posts of 'headscarf mediators' to negotiate with schools, parents and pupils over any ban and attempt to negotiate a solution.

Interior minister gets hostile reception

Interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy was booed at a meeting of the Union of Islamic Organisations of France (UOIF) in April 2003 when he declared that Muslim women must be photographed bareheaded on national identity cards. Sarkozy later sought a clumsy compromise and suggested that French Muslims should wear a bandanna, an accessory more often seen on the heads of hip-hop artists. This would allow for the critical visible hairline, neck and earlobes.

More cases of expulsion

The Stasi Commission's findings will, no doubt, lead to more expulsions of Muslim pupils. Secondary education, a responsibility of central government, is meant also to have the job of forming French citizens, which is why schools are expected to apply the principle of secularism. In August, two schoolgirls, sisters Alma and Lila Lévy-Omari, were sent home from their state secondary school in Aubervilliers, an industrial suburb of Paris, for refusing to wear their headscarves. Their mother is Muslim and

their father an atheist Jew. The girls chose to wear a full headscarf, covering their ears, hairline and neck. The school considered this provocative, and banned them – since which the girls have rarely been out of the media.

Support for ban

Politicians, some religious leaders, teachers and the media gave a guarded welcome to the Stasi Commission recommendation. The conservative *Le Figaro* pronounced that 'it was not for the republic to adapt to Islam, but for Islam to adapt to the republic'.

Opposition to the ban

The president of the Reformed Church of France, Marcelo Manoël said that 'The debate focusing as it does on the question of the wearing of the headscarf at school has become a symbol of the compatibility or not of practising religion or respecting secularism. There are two ways of posing the question, in line with wanting to resolve the matter, or making it a major problem. I have a great fear that it is the latter which has often prevailed, and the juxtaposition of anti-Muslim racism – non-declared – and a sectarian and intolerant secularism has led us to fall into the trap held out by extremists: transforming something which should be dealt with by dialogue and consultation into a full-frontal ideological confrontation'. France's most-visited Islamic Internet site Oumma.com issued a blistering rejection of the new law. 'What is happening in France? The country that once elevated reason above all other forms of thought is now beating itself into a frenzy. How could the nation that forged the rights of man descend to such obscurantism? Our 200-year-old republic is shaken by a piece of clothing', it said. Editorial director Said Bgranine added that 'This is a law that targets Muslims... French Muslims are republicans, democrats, secularists. But we also have our Islamic identity transmitted from our parents. We are not going to give it up. To expect us to is a colonial frame of mind.' (*Guardian* 12.17.03, *Economist* 25.10.03, *Agence France Press* 12.12.03, *Washington Post* 22.12.03)

Interior minister threatens expulsions of clerics and closure of mosques

In September 2003, the French interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy threatened to expel Muslim 'radicals' and to close mosques preaching 'Islamic fundamentalism'. In an interview published by *Le Figaro*, Sarkozy said that 'Mosques where fundamentalism is preached will be shut down, imams who express radical views will, be expelled and speakers who do not guarantee respect for the Republic's rules will see their entrance visas refused. Sarkozy had made a similar statement in mid-April, after the Union of Islamic Organisations in France, which are linked to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, made a strong showing in elections to France's fledgling Muslim council (see below). (*Islam Online* 18.9.03)

French Council of the Muslim Faith established

France's 5m-strong Muslim population is the largest Muslim minority community in Europe, yet there are no Muslim parliamentarians, ambassadors or top civil servants. Chirac has appointed two junior ministers, who, as North African Muslims, are the first Muslims in government in more than forty years. And in April, the French Council of the Muslim Faith was launched to represent the

interests of the Muslim community with the state. The Union of Islamic Organisations in France (UOIF) unexpectedly won a strong voice on the French Council of the Muslim Faith in elections in April. (*Agence France Press* 15.4.03, *Washington Post* 16.4.03)

The new integration contract – a return to assimilation?

The government is advocating the introduction of an 'integration contract' for an estimated 100,000 immigrants each year. Upon arrival, new immigrants would be obliged to sign the integration contract, which obliges them to undergo language training and instruction of the 'values of French society'. On successful completion of classes, the immigrant would be entitled to a ten-year residence permit.

Other integration programmes slashed

In order to finance language training and instruction in French values, government funding of many cultural associations and integration projects will be slashed. Funds will be transferred to organisations that promote traditional French values and behaviour. This represents a move away from France's 'integrationist' policy whereby resources were given to organisations that encouraged immigrants to abide by the law while retaining their distinctive cultures and traditions. Many argue that the new approach marks a shift towards 'assimilationist' policies which are advocated today by the extreme-Right. (*Migration Policy Institute* 1.10.03)

Race and electoral politics

Jean-Marie le Pen to run in Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur

Jean-Marie Le Pen has announced his intention of running for the presidency of Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur in March 2004. There is a strong chance that the Front National (FN) can, in that region, beat the combined votes of the centre right and left. If Le Pen won, he would control the budget for economic development, education, transport and culture in the province. This was described by a southern conservative MP as 'a catastrophe: every regional decision would be politicised'. This is based on the experiences in Orange, Vitrolles, Marignane and Toulon where the FN won control of town halls and implemented policies of national preference for the French, withdrew subsidies from ethnic and gay groups, stopped special meals for Jewish and Muslim children, and banned left-wing publications from libraries. Vitrolles even offered an illegal £500 baby subsidy to white European parents. (*Guardian* 19.9.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 26.9.03)

Marine Le Pen to run in Ile-de-France

Marine the daughter of Jean-Marie le Pen is head of the FN list in Ile-de-France, the region around Paris. Appointed earlier this year as a party vice-president she, like her father, campaigns using a coarse nationalism and populist defiance. But she is also making much of the fact that she is an ordinary woman who does her own shopping and takes her kids to school. Her appointment appears to be an attempt to broaden the appeal of a traditionally macho party. Despite the 2002 shock, when a million people took to the streets to protest against the

FN's success in the presidential play-off, the FN is again rising in popularity and making the most of politicising hostility towards the government, and racial tensions – particularly around Muslims. 'They started with one mosque, now there are mosques everywhere', said Marine Le Pen. 'Now they want the veil; next separate swimming pools. Integration has totally failed.' (*Economist* 22.11.03)

Racism and fascism

Growth of anti-Arab extreme-Right websites

The anti-racist group, MRAP, published in July a report called 'The birth of a new extreme right on the Internet'. It exposed the anti-Arab nature of a network of some thirty web sites run by activists of the extreme right and extremists claiming to represent Judaism. All these racist and anti-Arab sites set up between January 2001 and January 2003 carry death threats, incitement to racial and religious hatred, defamation of particular journalists and politicians and attacks against Muslims. All the sites appear to be set up under false names and addresses. The sites appear to be hosted by a US based group called Liberty-web.net. One particular site called SOS-Racaille (SOS riff-raff) goes out of its way to attack the anti-racist organisation SOS-Racisme. In a few months, MRAP found that 300,000 pages of the racist web site had been viewed.

Sos.racaille.org – investigation and arrests

SOS-Racaille was set up in March 2001 as a central forum for Islamaphobes and neo-Nazis. The title of the site was a play on the arch enemy SOS-Racisme, the slogan of the racist site being 'Go on, beat up my mate'. In 'restricted areas' of the site people discussed ways of bringing France to a state of civil war. There were endless complaints by those on the left whose identities were being used by the site to frame them as paedophiles and who also received hate-mail. A police inquiry found that the site was rented in the US by the service Liberty-web net which accommodates a series of other addresses circulating anti-Arab texts. And under the same server were found sites of neo-Nazi influence, European nationalists as well as others close to the Israeli Right.

Following an independent investigation by ten IT enthusiasts, angry about being targeted by the neo-Nazi website SOS-Racaille, French and Russian police arrested Joel Michel Sambuis. At the end of 2001 a working group called V8 was updating the office responsible for IT and telecommunications crime about the activities of the extreme right. The police took little notice of these 'cyber investigators' until the assassination attempt by the neo-Nazi Maxime Brunerie on Jacques Chirac in July 2002. The first report based on the work of V8 was published by MRAP (see above).

The V8 group was able to trace exactly when the organiser of the site was logging on and, because he failed to use an intermediary to cover his trail, they were able to unmask his identity. The night before the publication of MRAP's report, Russian police, accompanied by a French police chief, made their arrest of 43-year-old Sambuis. He had already absconded from a Grenoble court over a fraud case.

Far-Right Jewish website founder charged

The founder of a far-right Jewish web site has been charged with incitement to racial hatred. Alexandre Attali, 29, the creator of amisraelhai.com is accused of publishing racist articles targeting France's Muslim community as well as Jewish members of a pro-Palestinian organisation. He had published an article in 2001 listing 150 people allegedly supporting a boycott of Israeli goods and had put a yellow star of David against the names of Jews. The site referred to Marseilles as the 'largest Arab city in France and therefore, the largest city of scum' as well as Kofi Annan having gone 'straight from his coconut tree to the UN'. MRAP's 180-page report (see above) had alleged links between Jewish groups and members of far-right organisations spreading anti-Muslim hate materials on the web. Mr Attali, if convicted could face six months imprisonment.

MRAP's concludes – 'Islamophobia is omnipresent'

MRAP condemned the authorities for their consistent failure to take concerted action against these web sites. According to MRAP, the impunity enjoyed by the authors of this propaganda showed that 'there are two standards in the fight against racism: racism is not tolerated but Islamophobia is omnipresent'. (*Le Monde* 17.7, 8.8.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 10.10.03)

Unprecedented rise in Islamophobia, but no action

French human rights experts have warned of an unprecedented escalation of Islamophobia and racism against the Islamic and Arab community in France during the past two years. Mawloud Eweniti, the head of an anti-racism movement has described receiving 600 racist messages since January 2001. Other forms of Islamophobia include molotov cocktails being thrown at mosques. Also speaking at the European Social Forum on the same issue was French academic Fanson Geseir, who showed how racist insults had developed into a fully fledged Islamophobia. This was being witnessed in the debate around the hijab. He found Christians to be more tolerant on this issue than secular people. The meeting called on Jacques Chirac to consider Islamophobia a new form of racism, punishable by law. (*Islam Online* 17.11.03)

Government action as anti-Semitic attacks cause concern

Saint-Denis, Paris: arsonists raze Jewish school

The French cabinet held an emergency meeting after the Merkaz Hatorah private school in the Saint-Denis suburb of Paris was burnt to the ground on 15 November. No one was injured in what appears to be a premeditated arson attack. Mr Chirac promised that the culprits would face harsh punishment. France's 600,000 strong Jewish population, the largest in western Europe, has seen a rise in racial attacks which have included firebombing of synagogues, chanting at football matches, and verbal abuse at school.

Government crackdown on anti-Semitism

On 17 November the government announced that security would be beefed up outside synagogues and community institutions and the full weight of the criminal justice system would be mobilised against those committing acts

against Jewish targets. A commission to investigate incidents classified as hate crime was established under new tough legislation.

According to interviews with Jews, carried out by the *New York Times*, this is not a revival of the old anti-Jewish hatred of the right, but a playing out of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the streets and salons of France, where there are ten times more people of Muslim/Arab origin than of Jewish origin. This view is supported by France's Education Minister, but not by Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. For him, anti-Semitism existed before the existence of Israel and he has called for a plan of affirmative action to integrate Muslims into French society. (*Guardian* 17.11.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 21.11.03, *New York Times* 3.12.03)

Ris-Orangis: rabbi attacked

Rabbi Michel Serfaty was abused by a group of four men driving by as he made his way to synagogue in Ris-Orangis on 17 October. They opened a car door so as to injure his head. The four were arrested and criminal investigations were opened against the driver and a passenger for a racially or religiously motivated crime. Nicolas Sarkozy, conducting a high profile law-and-order campaign welcomed the arrests and said he would visit the rabbi's synagogue. The head of Paris' main mosque condemned the attack as an 'repugnant example of racism and anti-Semitism'. (*Expatica News* October 2003)

Controversial rappers reject anti-Semitism claim

The rap band Sniper which has lyrics calling on fans to 'screw France' and 'exterminate ministers' and a track on its 'Carved in the Rock' album which attacks the Israeli treatment of Palestinians, has enraged the French government and Nicolas Sarkozy is threatening them with legal action. The band members, three of whom are Parisians of North African origin and a fourth is from Reunion, reject the accusation of racism and anti-Semitism and say they are on the side of all Israelis who want peace. They have threatened to counter-sue the minister for defamation. (*Guardian* 11.11.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 21.11.03, *Chicago Tribune* 19.11.03)

Police and criminal justice

New crime package targets youth

In the spring of 2003, the government introduced yet another new internal security act, pledging an extra £6 billion for the fight against crime and announcing that jobs for 13,500 more police officers would be created. New legislation penalises with jail sentences a variety of offences, such as street-walking, begging, loitering in public places and swearing at a policeman. The act also extended police powers to search vehicles and people, and to take DNA samples. Human rights organisations, as well as left parties opposed the new legislation.

New crime of loitering

One of the most controversial new offences is the crime of loitering in stairwells, or other communal areas of tower blocks, which can now be punished with a two-month jail sentence. Two teenagers from Roubaix in northern France have been the first to be jailed under this provision. In this first case, though the prosecutor sought a suspended sentence and community service, the magis-

trate insisted on a one-month jail sentence 'to set an example'. (*Guardian* 15.1.03, 29.7.03)

Algerian asylum-seeker dies in fall during police raid

Early in September, as police with a bailiff holding a court order carried out an early morning raid on thirteen rooms in Sartrouville's Sanacotra home, Abdennour, a 34-year-old Algerian, fell to his death as he fled in terror. The police were allegedly looking for illegally sublet properties in the block.

Abdennour was an asylum seeker who had had his application refused and who used a false residence card in order to stay in France. It appears that he was terrified as the police knocked on doors and, with a sniffer dog, forced their way into properties using a pass key. He tried to escape through a window and fell from the fourth floor on to the courtyard below. (*Libération* 6.9.03)

Moroccan death in custody case – police cleared

Magistrates conducting the preparatory inquiry at the Bordeaux Court of Appeal have ruled out responsibility of two policemen for the death of Pascal Taïs, a 30-year-old Moroccan found dead on 7 April 1993 at the Arcachon police station in Gironde. He had been discovered with an open wound at the back of the head, many bruises, two broken ribs, a perforated lung and a torn spleen. The family of the deceased have maintained for ten years that he died as a result of blows struck by two police officers. (Pascal, who had AIDS, had been interrogated, while drunk, several hours before his death.) The judgement includes a statement to the effect that Pascal died as a result of a fall on a sharp edge of the cement bench of the cell.

Family fights on for justice

The family's lawyer is appealing to the Court of Final Appeal and plans to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights. He denounced as 'unacceptable a decision that kills justice by removing it from all credible understanding'. He described the incident as 'nothing to do with reasons of state but all to do with the appalling environment of a police station well known for its "atrocious" reputation'. (*Le Monde* 22.8.03)

European Court criticises France for violating prisoner's human rights

The European Court of Human Rights has unanimously ruled that the handcuffing and chaining to his bed of a prisoner, Albert Hénaf, when he entered hospital in November 2000 for an operation, constituted inhuman or degrading treatment. He had been chained by his ankle to a bedpost and lodged a criminal complaint against officers who accompanied him. (*Miscarriages of Justice UK* <www.mojuk.org.uk/> 28.22.03)

GERMANY

The integration debate

States move to ban headscarf after Constitutional Court ruling

In September, the Constitutional Court ruled, in the case of Fereshta Ludin, that the wearing of the Muslim headscarf does not violate the current law on freedom of religion and religious neutrality of educators. But in declaring that individual states are free to ban or approve the wearing of headscarves or other religious symbols in the school system, the Constitutional Court opened the way for states to take punitive action against Muslim girls and Muslim teachers who opt to wear the hijab. Indeed, the day after the Constitutional Court's decision, a string of German states issued statements suggesting that they would ban Muslim teachers from wearing the headscarf in state-run schools and thereby preserve the state's neutral stance on religion. Other states, however, have indicated their opposition to any such ban.

The case of Fereshta Ludin

Fereshta Ludin, a 31-year-old Afghan-born naturalised German Muslim has lived in Germany since she was fourteen. In 1998, the state of Baden-Württemberg barred her, because of the headscarf, from teaching on the grounds that a civil servant must be neutral in religious matters and Ludin then took her case to three German courts.

Ms. Ludin, who now works in a private Islamic school in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin, contends that her headscarf is a personal preference and has no bearing on her ability to teach. The authorities in Baden-Württemberg had argued that the headscarf could have a negative religious influence on schoolchildren. According to Christian Democrat education minister, Annette Schaven, the headscarf violates 'the strict neutrality of public schools in religious issues'. Schaven has also made it clear that her primary concern in this matter is Islam, as the headscarf is 'understood as a symbol of the exclusion of women from civil and cultural society'.

Implications of Constitutional Court ruling

In the past, the Constitutional Court has placed limits on the use of religious symbols in schools. In a landmark case in 1995, the court forbade the display of crucifixes in classrooms. That ruling, however, related to the display of religious symbols in public buildings, and not on the personal attire of employees. The Constitutional Court ruling in the Ludin case stated that German state neutrality on religion should not be interpreted as a strict separation of church and state. If federal states do not want to employ teachers wearing a headscarf, they first have to create unambiguous laws that expressly forbid religious symbols in the classroom. The Constitutional Court added that in the case of Fereshta Ludin, the state of Baden-Württemberg had not put in place such a legal ban at the time it took action against Ludin. Finally, judges made it clear that it was up to legislators, not courts or unelected public authorities, to decide on the headscarf issue. The judges noted that whereas there may be compelling reasons for individual states to allow Muslim teachers to wear headscarves so as to 'make a

contribution to integration efforts', religious plurality could also be connected with conflicts. In such a situation, it might be legitimate for legislators to 'attach stricter importance to the neutrality requirement in schools'.

State education ministries announce individual action plans

In effect, the Constitutional Court had passed the issue back to the state-level and given the various Länder carte-blanche to make their own laws. The day after the Constitutional Court ruling, the state of Baden-Württemberg indicated that it would take action. Karin Wolff, education minister in the state of Hesse, also revealed that the state 'would begin to draw up legislation to ban headscarves in the classroom as soon as possible'. Wolff declared that 'our constitution is based on a Christian-Occidental tradition and portrays a value system which teachers have to follow'. Authorities in Bavaria, which fought a long battle to keep crucifixes in the classroom in the 1990s, declared that 'If necessary we will pass an appropriate state law. In any case, we want to make sure that teachers cannot wear headscarves in state schools'. In November, Klaus Wowereit, mayor of Berlin, supporting the ban in an interview with the *Berliner Kurier* said, 'I support keeping schools a place of neutrality. This also holds for all other public institutions.' Other states, including Saxony and Bremen have announced that they are considering legislation. Lower Saxony education minister Bernd Busemann stressed that 'the state's responsibility for religious neutrality, is an indispensable thing, that shouldn't be diluted'.

Education ministries divided

Following a meeting in October of education ministers from all Germany's sixteen states, a statement was made to the effect that the ministers could not agree on uniform rules for headscarves. The ministers of several states, including Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatine, said there was no need for a new law. Hamburg's minister noted that Muslim teachers in his state had been wearing the headscarf since 2000 without provoking problems. The states that want to ban the headscarf are Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg, Hesse, Bavaria, Berlin, Lower Saxony and Saarland.

Mixed reaction to the verdict

The press reported mixed reactions to the verdict. Mathias Rohe, a professor of law at the University of Erlangen and an expert on Islamic minorities in Europe said that 'The headscarf has become a symbol for the issue of what role Islam can have in Germany'. Prominent feminist, Alice Schwarzer, in *Der Spiegel*, argued that the decision in favour of Ms. Lubin could lead to 'parallel worlds' in which a small minority was allowed to practice Islamic law and establish a restrictive social system within Germany's borders. 'The woman's veil has become the flag of Islamic crusaders.' But supporters of Ms. Ludin, the daughter of a diplomat and a schoolteacher, point out that she makes an unlikely candidate as an 'Islamic crusader'. And as Ludin herself stresses, it has been school officials and not her faith that have limited her professional aspirations. Nadeem Elyas, chair of the Central Council of Muslim Organisations in Germany, called the decision 'a source of discontent for all parties' since the matter has not been

resolved once and for all. (*New York Times* 30.6.03, *Migration Information Source*, 11.03, *Expatica News* 13.11.03)

Bavaria: interior minister proposes expulsion of 'violently-inclined Islamists'

The CSU interior minister of Bavaria, Günter Beckstein, wants strict new laws to deal with 'violently-inclined Islamists' including the power to expel the potential perpetrators of acts of violence. A package of preventative measures against terrorists would include registering the religious affiliation of all foreigners. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 20.9.03)

Christian Democrat integration proposals could make language lessons compulsory

In July, the Christian Democrats introduced proposals for a new Integration Bill whereby new immigrants to Germany would have to finance and then pass a stiff language test and attend 900 hours of classes on the German legal system, culture and history or face cuts in welfare and unemployment benefits. Proposals for a new federal law, came after the state of Lower Saxony introduced similar legislation which it put forward as a model policy for the whole of Germany to follow.

Opposition to compulsion

According to Omid Nouripur, a member of the Green Party's national executive, 'If you apply sanctions, you target the rights of immigrants'. The other criticism is that the required level, so-called B1 German, is too high and will block immigration. Even many Germans, would not pass such a test. (*Times* 12.7.03)

Race and electoral politics

Hamburg: Schill party collapses, bringing down government

The centre-Right Christian Democrat-controlled coalition government of Hamburg has collapsed, following a period of bitter in-fighting within its junior partner, the Schill party. The Schill party is now set to expel its founder, the extreme-Right populist Ronald Schill. Until August 2003, he was Hamburg's interior minister. But Hamburg mayor Ole von Beust, a Christian Democrat, dismissed him after he allegedly threatened to disclose the mayor's homosexuality. The national leadership of the Schill party expelled its founder in December, but the Hamburg chapter of the party re-elected him as its leader. As a result, Schill threatened to depose national party leader Mario Mettbach, who also serves as Hamburg's deputy mayor. Mettbach, in turn, announced that the party leadership would start proceedings to revoke Schill's party membership. (*Deutsche Welle* 9.12.03)

Anti-Semitic MP expelled from CDU

The Christian Democrat Union (CDU) has expelled Martin Hohmann after he made remarks on German TV to the effect that Jewish people had a 'dark side'. He claimed that Jewish Bolsheviks were responsible for crimes against Russian civilians and then compared Russia in the early 1900s to the murder of Europe's Jews in the Third Reich. Though he was immediately denounced by the CDU leader who described the remarks as 'completely unac-

ceptable and intolerable', Hohmann refused to apologise. The Schill party's national chairman told the *Bild am Sonntag* that his party offered a place to Hohmann. If he accepted the offer, he would be the party's first MP.

The German defence minister has dismissed General Reinhard Günzel, head of the Special Forces Commando, for expressing his wholehearted support for Hohmann's remarks.

A poll by Forsa, commissioned by Stern, has found that one in five Germans hold latent anti-Semitic views: 23% held negative attitudes, 28% believed Jews had too much power in the world, 36% said they thought Jews used their history to their own advantage. On 12 December, as a response to the Hohmann controversy, the German parliament held a debate on anti-Semitism. (*Deutsche Welle* 10, 14, 17,19, 21.11.03, *Guardian* 1,11,15.11.03, Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, October 2003, *Jewish Chronicle* 12.12.03)

CDU members stigmatise Muslims

Two CDU Bundestag members are accused of making anti-Muslim remarks. Henry Nitzsche (Saxony CDU Bundestag) said a Muslim 'would rather his hand dropped off than vote for the CDU'; Axel Fischer made similar remarks on a website to the effect that followers of Islam 'don't' feel much in common with a Christian party'. He also went on to praise Hohmann.

Saxony's leader has called Nitzsche's statement intolerable and he and the Central Council of Muslims have asked for an apology. Nitzsche issued an apology but further anti-Islamic remarks of his about Turkish refugees being 'parasitic' were revealed. On 30 October he had told a student group in Cheruscia, Dresden, that it was clear that 'any old Ali from any old mosque can find refuge in our credit-financed social system'.

Dietzenbach: Muslim mosque plan refused

The CDU mayor of Dietzenbach has refused permission for the Muslim Ahmadiyya community, which has 300 members in the town, to buy a plot to build a mosque. The mayor says that a mosque may 'lure' further Ahmadiyya adherents to Dietzenbach. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 8, 10,11.03, *Junge Welt* 10.11.03)

Radical right wins votes in Bremerhaven

The German People's union (DVU), the Schill party and the Party of Biblical Christians all stood candidates in municipal elections in Bremerhaven in September. The DVU which polled 8.4% (an increase of 2.1%) will have four seats in the council assembly. The success of these extreme right-wing parties is being attributed to the way in which openly racist slogans were being used to capture votes. (*Junge Welt* 30.9.03)

Racism and fascism

Government commitment to anti-fascism falters

The state focus, post-September 11, on the so-called Islamic terror threat, has led centre-Right politicians from the CSU and the CDU to demand that the government scrap its programme against right-wing extremism and channel money earmarked for the Civitas and Entimon projects to fight neo-Nazism into the fight against 'Islamicism'. But while the government scaled down its

previous commitment to educational and other projects that counter the neo-Nazi menace in early 2003, the neo-Nazi plot to bomb the inauguration ceremony of the Munich synagogue on the anniversary of Kristallnacht (see below) forced it to reconsider its position. And members of the Green party, and other radical groupings, which have been speaking out in the Bundestag against the cutting of federal funds, are considering establishing an alternative foundation.

Funding slashed for anti-fascist and tolerance projects

Three years after chancellor Gerhard Schröder announced 'the revolt of the decent people', the initiatives opposing rightwing extremism lack financial support. The situation is particularly dire in Länder (federal states) controlled by the CDU and the CSU which had cut back on funding for multicultural and anti-fascist programmes, saying that once they were up and running they must seek their own funding. Now initiatives countering rightwing extremism, fear for their survival, as the federal government will only disburse funds from the Civitas and Entimon programmes to projects that can demonstrate they are being co-financed by the Länder. The Entimon programme promotes initiatives throughout the country. The Civitas programme is only for East Germany, and finances victim advice centres and mobile advisory teams in places where the rightwing threat is strongest. One of the first to suffer from the new dispensation is the Saxony-Anhalt association 'Together – Network for Democracy and Tolerance' which was forced to close down when the CDU drastically slashed its funding and the federal government failed to meet the short-fall.

The 'Mobile Advisory Teams' in eastern Germany have warned that 'the landscape of projects against rightwing extremism, which was laboriously built up and which, in view of everyday extreme rightwing violence, requires sustained support, seems to already be drying up after a short period'. Projects are now threatened with closure and teams in Mecklenburg-Pomerania, Thuringia and Saxony are pressing their states for support.

Red-Green alliance demand action

Green and SPD politicians are urging that the annual 20million euros for the two programmes be retained in the coming years. However, the government seems determined to cut down its financial commitment. A possibility being considered by the Bundestag's experts on rightwing extremism is to establish a foundation which could support the initiatives' work on a permanent basis.

Centre-Right highlights 'Islamist' threat

Volker Bouffier, Hesse's minister of the interior, said that neither leftwing nor rightwing extremists pose a threat to the democratic order. Introducing the annual report of the Hesse Office for the Defence of the Constitution (ODC), Bouffier said that militant Islamism constitutes an 'enduring threat to internal security'.

ODC deny extreme-Right/Islamist link

The Office for the Defence of the Constitution has said that it is sceptical about claims that Islamists and extremists from the Right are making common cause. The claims came after it emerged that an attack on the Dusseldorf synagogue in October 2000 was carried out by the extremist Muslim group, Al Tawhid. The ODC says that

while individual right-wing extremists have attempted to establish contact with 'radical Islamists', long-term intensive co-operation at an organisational level is unlikely. The Islamic Liberation Party, which has since been banned, did invite the NPD national chair, Udo Voigt and the NPD's legal representative, Horst Mahler, to attend its 2002 congress against the war in Iraq. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 11.2, 18,19,26.9, 7,8,11.03)

Federal government halts grant to Muslim group

Alarmed by press reports, the national ministry for families has halted financial support for the controversial group Muslim Youth, which is alleged to have links with radical Islamist organisations. The group will no longer get support and investigations are being made as to whether it should return funds for 2003. According to its former constitution (now changed), in the event of Muslim Youth being wound up, its funds would have gone to the Al-Aqsa Association – an organisation now banned by the ministry of the interior. Muslim Youth had been allowed and encouraged to carry out extracurricular activities, lectures and vocational guidance in schools. But now schools are being advised not to accept such offers of help. Although the group does appear to have acted correctly, the move by the federal government was sparked by press reports that the group's activities could be a camouflage for subtle missionary activities directed at young Arabs. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 7,8,11.03)

Munich: neo-Nazi Kristallnacht plot foiled

Munich police have arrested ten people who had planned to bomb attack the inauguration ceremony of a synagogue in Munich. The attack was due to take place on November 9, the anniversary of Kristallnacht. The police seized 1.7 kilos of TNT and 12 Kilos of explosive materials, two pistols, grenades, and a dagger and arrested suspects in Munich, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Pomerania. Among those arrested was Martin Wiese, the head of the Munich neo-Nazi group 'Southern Brotherhood' whose friends tried to kill a Greek passer-by during Wiese's birthday celebration in 2001.

The group had allegedly planned to blow up the synagogue during the ceremony which would have been attended by hundreds of dignitaries, including Germany's president. A hit list has also been found which indicated further targets including several mosques and a Greek school.

Over the past two years detectives involved in anti-terrorism have concentrated on Islamists. And Bavaria had been congratulating itself that incidents of rightwing crime had been falling. But this attempted plot has indicated the need for the authorities to rethink their strategies towards internal German political terrorism. (*Deutsche Welle* 11,12.9.03, *Guardian* 16.9.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 19.9.03)

Dresden: more lenient sentences for SSS

The Dresden regional court has imposed lenient sentences on eleven members of the banned neo-Nazi group Saxon Switzerland Skinheads (SSS) which had confessed to crimes of belonging to a criminal association, breach of the peace, grievous bodily harm and coercion. As in the previous trial of members of the SSS (see *Bulletin* no 43.), information as to whether any of the accused were informants for the SSS was withheld.

Who is the SSS?

The SSS, with an estimated membership of 120 skinheads, had carried out a campaign of intimidation against anyone with a different political outlook, or who merely looked different, throughout 'Saxon Switzerland', the mountainous region of the German state of Saxony. The SSS, which also provided security at NPD events, procured weapons and explosives, compiled a file of more than 50 individuals it disliked, and produced a newspaper.

Details of the trial

This, the second major trial of members of the SSS, ended with an outcome similar to the first, held in May 2003, in which the organisation's ringleaders similarly only received suspended sentences. The accused in the second trial comprised 'Members of SSS', who form the second level of the hierarchy within the organisation. The next level consisted of the constituent organisations Upper and Lower Elb Valley, candidates for which had to prove themselves over a period of six months. The trial lasted one week and the court and the defence had already agreed on the sentence prior to the verdict. Judge Tom Maciejewski held out the prospect of suspended sentences to the accused if they confessed. The state prosecutor's office agreed to this arrangement. When the accused submitted their confessions of guilt via their lawyers, only two of the eleven stated that they regretted their acts. Senior public prosecutor Schär stressed that most of the accused now led normal lives, even if there were some whose acts were based on conviction. The judge also followed this line of reasoning, saying that the acts in question took place a long time ago, five years in some cases, and that the accused were now socially integrated. Following the verdict, 20 out of 82 proceedings against members of the SSS remain open.

Court argument that accused are 'socially integrated' challenged

The Action Civic Courage in Pirna is extremely disappointed with the verdict and does not accept the argument that these SSS members are now socially integrated. One of the accused, André F is to stand trial in January 2004 for an attack in August on a group of Sinti and Roma in Gersdorf, near Pirna, in the course of which three men set fire to a car. During the case, the accused sat in court wearing the clothes typical of the extreme rightwing scene. And amongst the SSS's supporters in court, were Dresden neo-Nazi Sven Hagendorf and another convicted neo-Nazi Thomas R who today runs the 'independent information structure' www.elbsandstein.org. On this website, he has written 'Be prepared! Quietly! Because the fight for Germany continues!'

Violence continues

Attacks and rightwing activities continue to occur repeatedly in the region of the Elbsandstein mountains. At the beginning of September, on the 'day of the Saxons', two people were attacked by neo-Nazis in Sebnitz at an event organised by Action Civic Courage and the German Federation of Trade Unions. One of the victims suffered a broken jaw and the other had two teeth knocked out. The ODC also report that since the start of the year there has been an increase in the number of acts perpetrated by the SSS. (*Jungle World* 19.11.03)

Police target neo-Nazi groups

Schleswig-Holstein: action on Combat 18

In a series of dawn raids in Schleswig-Holstein on 28 October, 300 police raided more than 50 premises and arrested ten ringleaders of Combat 18. Combat 18 is a British-founded organisation which takes its name from the position in the alphabet of Adolf Hitler's initials. The group had been blamed for carrying out or motivating racist attacks. (*BBC News* <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>> 28.12.03, *Independent* 29.10.03)

Blood and Honour targeted

Despite the banning by the interior ministry of the neo-fascist network Blood and Honour, a section has continued to operate surreptitiously under different names. A major police operation searched fifty premises and found the group was continuing to distribute CDs. Weapons were revealed and a leading NPD politician found to be involved in weapons dealing. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, November 2003)

NPD official sentenced

A prominent former NPD official Maik Spiegelmacher and another man have been given prison terms for beating an 18-year-old youth, blindfolding him and tying him naked to a lamppost. He suffered a broken cheek and jaw bone. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, September 2003)

Armed forces can exclude members of extreme-right

The Supreme Administrative Court in Leipzig has ruled that the armed forces may exclude a member of the far-right Republican party from reserve duty training exercises on the basis that the Federal Army is a 'security-sensitive institution'. A lieutenant-colonel had been withheld from his duties in 1997 because of membership of the Republican party and he had taken legal action against the decision. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 18.9.03)

Questions asked about death of Jewish student following LaRouche meeting

The British family of Jeremiah Duggan, a 22-year-old student who was hit by a series of cars on a road outside Wiesbaden, are campaigning to have a fresh inquiry into the death. The German police tried to suggest that the young student committed suicide, an inquest in the UK has brought in a narrative verdict. Jeremiah had been at an 'anti-war' conference at the Schiller Institute (founded by Lyndon LaRouche, accused of holding neo-fascist views) in March 2003. He was completely unaware of the political background of the group. When he heard the meeting denouncing Jews he stood up and told the meeting he was a Jew. The family in the UK and his girlfriend then received phone calls just prior to his death in which he said he was very frightened and in trouble. (*Jewish Chronicle* 25.7.03, 14.11.03, *Guardian* 12.7.03, 7.11.03)

Murder of Marinus Schöberl: trial begins

Just three citizens of Potzlow (Brandenburg) were present at the trial of three neo-Nazi youths who, one year ago, tormented and humiliated a local youth, Marinus Schöberl (with a speech defect) for many hours, made him call

himself 'Jew' and then killed him with a 'kerb kick' derived from the film American History X. The crime only came to light because the youths had taken a number of acquaintances to view the remains of the victim in a pigsty. And someone then informed the police. (see *Bulletin* no.43)

A psychiatrist has given evidence that the 24-year-old main culprit had diminished responsibility because he is an alcoholic, is of low intelligence and was drunk at the time. He can therefore expect a less severe sentence. The lawyer for the youngest defendant has criticised the media coverage of the trial and asked for youth custody and educational measures such as community service for his client. He argued that the three accused had not received a fair trial. (*Junge Welt* 12.7.03, 24.9.03, Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, September 2003)

ODC employment of informers challenged again

The practice of the ODC of employing members of extreme right parties as informers has backfired again. A skinhead used as an informant of a particularly dangerous rightwing group, which had been responsible for attacks on foreigners and a Jewish cemetery hall, gave the extremist group prior warning of the impending raid. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, May 2003)

Braunschweig: Students' Committee taken over by the right

The General Students' Committee of Braunschweig Technical University has fallen into the hands of right-wingers who have been inviting extremist speakers and suppressing information about and criticism of rightwing student fellowships. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, May 2003)

Bavaria: neo-Nazis on the march

Around 2,600 neo-Nazis staged a memorial march in Wunsiedel, Bavaria on 16 August, in honour of the 16th anniversary of the death of Rudolf Hess. Police arrested 67 marchers for wearing Nazi symbols or for carrying weapons. In the Rhine-Neckar region neo-Nazis have set up an action office to promote extreme rightwing networking. (*Deutsche Welle* 19.8.03, Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, September 2003)

Freiburg honours former Nazi judge

90-year-old Hans Filbinger, a former Nazi judge and leader of the state of Baden-Württemberg, who founded a study centre which promulgated fascist ideology, is to be honoured on his birthday in an event initiated by Freiburg's Green Lord mayor and the CDU district party association. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, August 2003)

Nazi-row firm to work on Jewish memorial

Germany's national Holocaust memorial will continue to be built with the involvement of Degussa AG, a company that co-owned the maker of poison gas used in the Nazi extermination camps, because overhauling the much-delayed project would jeopardise its completion. (*Guardian* 14.11.03)

Asylum hostel arson and other attacks on refugees

Werdau: investigation launched

During the night of 24 June, an arson attack was carried out on an asylum seekers' hostel in Werdau (Saxony). Incendiary devices were thrown at the building but, fortunately, no one was hurt. The incident is being investigated by the Special Commission on Rightwing Extremism.

Chemnitz: police arrests

Six months after an arson attack on a refugee hostel in Chemnitz, police have arrested four teenagers on charges of attempted murder and aggravated arson. No one was hurt in another arson attack, this time in Freiberg (Saxony). The police took half an hour to arrive by which time the attackers had escaped.

Gera: nine men sentenced

In a trial in Gera eight out of nine people accused of attacking the asylum hostel in Greiz-Irchwitz with Molotov cocktails on 29 January 2003, have confessed. The two main attackers who were charged with attempted murder, attempted aggravated arson and grievous bodily harm received sentences of four and five years in a young offenders' institution.

Remshalden: neo-Nazis arrested

Five neo-Nazis were arrested for an attack on an asylum hostel in Remshalden on 10 September, in which they had threatened asylum seekers with a knife and broken bottles.

Sonneberg: arson attack

On 5 November a hostel in Sonneberg (Thuringia) was set ablaze and one man was taken to hospital suffering from smoke poisoning. (*Jungle World* 9.7.03, Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, July, August, September, October, November 2003)

Rottstock: Cameroonian asylum seeker attacked

An arrest warrant has been issued for the man accused of an attack on a Cameroonian asylum seeker in Rottstock (Brandenburg) on 28 June in which the victim was thrown into a lake and repeatedly pushed under the water, before managing to flee. A search of the suspect's flat found recordings of extremist right-wing music. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 1.7.03, *Jungle World* n.d)

Victims of racist crime to be deported

Despite appeals from the organisation Victims' Perspective, the Aliens Office in Rathenow has decided that a 40-year-old Togolese, who had been racially attacked in two separate incidents and is the principal witness in a forthcoming trial of a racist thug, has to be deported from Germany. On 29 July in Thuringia, a 43-year-old victim of racist violence was deported to Vietnam. (*Jungle World* 9.7.03, *Frankfurter Rundschau* 5.7.03, Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, August 2003)

Attacks soar in Backnang

According to the Baden-Württemberg regional Office of the Defence of the Constitution, there have been twenty-

five criminal offences with far-right motives in the area of Backnang in the Rems-Murr district in September. In one incident five skinheads, posing as police officers, carried out identity checks on asylum seekers and then threatened residents with a flick knife and broken bottle. (*Jungle World* 1.10.03)

Monitoring racist attacks across the country

The Documentation and Information Centre for Research on Racism reports the following attacks:

In August:

A Nigerian man attacked by drunken neo-Nazi had to spend three days in hospital because of his injuries, while his assailant was released without charge when he has sobered up.

A Vietnamese clothing store was set alight, the third attack on the same shop in Ilmenau (Thuringia). Two neo-Nazis with a sickle tried to attack a Sierra Leonean. Four Vietnamese in Berlin were attacked by rightwing extremists armed with billiard cues. An African woman in Potsdam was hit in the face by a neo-Nazi at a bus stop. Several violent right-wingers threatened an Indian man in Prenzlau (Brandenburg). Anti-Semitic posters (copies of papers from the Nazi era) were posted at the concentration camp memorial site at Langenstein-Zwieberge (Saxony-Anhalt). Six neo-Nazis attacked an Iraqi in Wittenberg. Three Molotov cocktails were thrown into a camp of Roma and Sinti in Torschenreuth (Bavaria). A young right-wing extremist attacked two dark-skinned men on a regional train in Baden-Württemberg. Two women of Asian and African origin were attacked by three rightwing extremists at the Berlin Alexanderplatz station. In Schwedt, a region where neo-Nazis have been active and increasingly influence the youth scene, three neo-Nazis attacked a 16-year-old boy they considered to be 'leftwing'. He was beaten, throttled, kicked in the genitals and his head held under water. The culprits have been arrested.

In September:

Four young neo-Nazis attacked an African engineer in the Bitterfeld (Saxony-Anhalt) station. Two extremists attacked and beat up an Armenian at a beer festival in Wismar (Mecklenburg-Pomerania). In Halle youths threw incendiary devices at a Turkish snack bar and sprayed rightwing symbols. Also in Halle, a woman, considered to be leftwing, was attacked by neo-Nazis armed with baseball bats as she walked home from a party. A Roma woman who had been abused in Gersdorf (Saxony) found that her car had been completely burnt in an attack. In Halberstadt, a gang of around 12 Nazis entered a youth club where leftwing students were having a concert, and attacked them with posts, cobble stones and roofing tiles. Police arrested four suspects in whose homes they found extremist CDs. In Rheinsberg, Nazis tried to set fire to a kebab stand. An Iranian man was hit and kicked until he lost consciousness in the Baumschulenweg railway station in Berlin and the state security is investigating. A Nazi, Karsten Giese, formerly chairman of the banned extreme rightwing Oberhavel Fellowship, carried out an arson attack on a Turkish snack bar in Henningsdorf.

In November:

Three drunken skinheads were arrested in Mannheim after severely injuring an Ethiopian. In Pritzwalk, attacks took place in one night on an Asian snack bar and Turkish premises. (The Vietnamese owners now face ruin as they were not insured, the premiums being demanded were too high.) A young man who remonstrated with a group shouting rightwing slogans in a bus, was attacked and beaten severely. In Jena, police arrested two skinheads for attacks on two South Korean female students. In Bützow (Mecklenburg-West Pomerania) a Turkish snack bar had its windows smashed for the umpteenth time by rightwing youth. A policewoman of Turkish origin was injured following an attack by skinheads shouting racist abuse. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*)

Police and criminal justice

Border guards assault student in the Ruhr

The University of the Ruhr's student union is helping one of its students bring a legal action against border guards who insulted this foreign-looking maths student, made racist remarks to him in the Oberhausen (North Rhine-Westphalia) station and then used violence to take him into custody. There appeared to be no reason as to why the guards decided to check him and then continued to abuse and ill-treat him when he was in custody. (*Jungle World* 21.5.03)

Cologne police undress and photograph Roma children

The Rom e. V. society in Cologne is protesting at the way that the Cologne police decided to deal with the spate of pick-pocketing by underage Roma children. Recently politicians and the media have been pressuring the police to deal with this long-seated problem. The police arrested the children, all below the age of prosecution. They were ID'ed and X-rayed to determine their age, undressed and photographed, were examined for smell and their underwear for dirt. Girls were made to ease their slippers down so that the inside could be photographed from above. All this was done without parents being informed. The idea behind this is, apparently, to bring proceedings against the children's parents. But no notice is being taken of the fact that in the refugee camps in which the children live there is malnutrition, over-crowding and bad hygiene. (*Roma Rights* 5.11.03)

Braunschweig: investigation into police beating of African

Five police officers are alleged to have severely mistreated a 31-year-old Nigerian at the end of August in Braunschweig. The Public Prosecutor's Office is investigating claims of bodily injury and deprivation of freedom. The authorities confirmed that the African had a number of unexplained bruises and grazes. He says that a car stopped him for speeding. He was searched for drugs and, though none found, he was taken to the station where he was told to undress in a dark room and then kicked by five officers and tied up. The police dispute this account. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 11.9.03)

Acquittal of staff at Berlin refugee centre

A Berlin local court has acquitted the director of the Berlin Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Torture and another staff member on charges of having obstructed the police by allegedly impeding the attempt of a police squad to arrest a Kurdish refugee in November 2000 (see *Bulletin* no.35). During the incident a refugee injured himself critically. (Documentation Centre for Research on Racism, *ibid*, September 2003)

Bremen policeman accused of sexual abuse

A police officer, now suspended, is alleged to have sexually abused women held in pre-deportation detention between 1998 and 1999. The case, which was originally kept secret, was exposed by the *Bild-Zeitung* which alleges that numerous people knew what was happening. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 14.11.03)

GREECE

Racism and fascism

Poll reveals high level of racism

A recent European Social Survey revealed that Greek people showed the highest levels of xenophobia in Europe. More than 79% said immigrants should be deported if caught committing crime and most thought immigrants (who comprise 10% of the population) caused unemployment. The Simon Wiesenthal Centre issued a travel advisory to warn Jews against travelling to Greece in the wake of a rise in anti-Semitic incidents. Amidst growing protests within the Pakistani community, the government has introduced legislation to outlaw discrimination against religious or ethnic groups. It is expected that the new law, which brings Greece into line with the rest of the EU, will come into force by the end of the year.

The xenophobic attitudes in Greece have been blamed on the lack of civil society and the lack of anti-racist education in a country which prides itself on 'ethnic purity'. 'Greece is at the point where most democratic European countries were before the second world war', explained Panayote Dimitras of the Greek Helsinki Monitor. (*Guardian* 11.11.03)

Albanian pupil denied right to carry Greek national flag

An Albanian schoolboy, whose outstanding marks earned him the distinction of carrying the Greek flag on a holiday parade, has surrendered the honour, after a hate campaign led by his classmates and their parents who were angry at an immigrant bearing the national colours. The local mayor has congratulated the teenager for respecting the 'majority view', a spokesman for the parents said 'this flag is stained with the blood of our national heroes who fought to liberate Greece and must not be raised by the hands of a foreigner'. The Education Minister attacked the campaign as divisive and a former foreign minister had urged the interior ministry to grant the boy Greek citizenship within 24 hours so as to show up the 'racism and xenophobia and fascist ideas'. (*Independent* 26.10.03)

Athens Orthodox Church backs campaign to stop the building of a mosque

The Greek Orthodox Church is backing a campaign by the mayor of Peania, a suburb of Athens close to the international airport, to halt the erection of the first mosque in Athens since the end of the Ottoman empire. Athens is the sole EU capital without a proper Muslim place of worship. While there are mosques in northern Greece, across the capital, Greek Muslims are forced to cram into makeshift mosques in homes, shops and garages. The government had given planning permission for the new mosque in Peania, twelve miles from Athens' centre, but Peania's mayor Paraskevas Papacostopoulos opposed the plan. The Greek Orthodox Church has urged the government to alter the proposed mosque site, claiming that it would give visitors the wrong impression about predominantly Christian Greece. Archbishop Christodoulos has called on the government to construct, instead, a church in a 'very visible' location near the airport to convey the 'Greek Orthodox stamp of the nation'. (*Guardian* 16.9.03)

European Court finds Greece guilty of violating religious freedom

The European Court of Human Rights has found that Greece violated the right to religious freedom by imposing in 1999 a four month prison sentence on Mehmet Emi Aga, an ethnic Turkish Muslim. Aga was convicted of sending religious messages to Muslims in Xanthi signed 'Mufti of Xanthi'. (*AI, Report*, 2003)

Composer accused of anti-Semitism

Mikis Theodorakis, a well-respected composer famous for film scores such as 'Zorba the Greek', made comments on 4 November at a news conference to promote his book, which have been attacked by Israel as anti-Semitic. 'We are two nations without brothers in the world, us and the Jews, but they have fanaticism and are forceful ... Today we can say that this small nation is the root of evil, not of good, which means that too much self-importance and too much stubbornness is evil... They only had Abraham and Jacob, shadows ... We had the great Pericles here.' Theodorakis termed the criticism of anti-Semitism a slander since he had visited Israel and shown his support for its people. The Greek government moved to disassociate itself from Theodorakis' views of Jews. (*Kathimerini* 13, 14.11.03)

Ioannina: Jewish cemetery desecration

A Foreign Ministry spokesman condemned the desecration of a Holocaust memorial in the Jewish cemetery of the northwestern town of Ioannina, the previous week. 'It is an isolated and marginal act which does not in any way reflect the sentiment of the Greek people toward their Jewish fellow citizens', he explained. (*Kathimerini* 16.10.03)

Piraeus: Pakistanis attacked

Two Pakistanis were injured during a racist rampage by a motorcycle gang in Piraeus, according to police. The first attack was on a video rental shop which a group of 20 youths attacked, abusing the owner, punching him and smashing up property. The gang then drove off, pulling up at a bus stop where they attacked another Pakistani national. (*Kathimerini* 5.11.03)

HUNGARY

Racism and fascism

Budapest: Roma leaders gather to demand a better deal

Roma leaders gathered in Budapest in July to demand an end to persecution and for a general mobilisation in Europe to reverse their entrenched poverty and isolation. (A UN report in January stated that five million Roma in central and eastern Europe had living standards closer to those of sub-Saharan Africa. One in six is starving; at least a third of children fail to complete primary school.) The biggest meeting of Roma activists from central Europe and the Balkans took place a year before five million Gypsies will become citizens of the European Union. Countries like Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which will be joining the EU have been under pressure to devise policies to integrate their Roma minorities. But the situation for the Roma is actually getting worse, delegates told the conference. The World Bank, a sponsor of the conference, released a three-year study on the disastrous living conditions endured by seven million Roma in eastern Europe. The Czech Republic consistently undercounts its Roma; Bulgaria, which has strong policies on paper, fails to implement them; Hungarians, a delegate said, know more about Mongolian history than about their Roma neighbours; in Romania, where Roma have endured 500 years of slavery and mass murder in the Holocaust, the state had never voiced regret. George Soros, another sponsor of the conference, suggested that the ten years from 2005 be declared Europe's Roma decade. (*Guardian* 17.1, 1.7.03)

Welcome for OSCE action plan

The European Roma Rights Centre, based in Hungary, has welcomed the action plan for improving the situation of Roma and Sinti in the Ministerial Council of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. It aims to ensure that Roma and Sinti play a full and equal part in society as well as eradicating discrimination against them. The plan relates to education, housing, health care, police, media, employment and public and political participation. (*Roma Rights* 5.12.03)

First conviction under incitement law

The Appeals Court has overturned the conviction of a Calvinist pastor on charges of incitement to hatred after he wrote an article stating that Hungary had been weakened by 'hordes of flotsam and jetsam from Galicia'. He exhorted readers to 'exclude them. If you do not, they will do the same to you'. He was the first Hungarian to be convicted under the hate law. The Appeals Court said that opinions could be freely expressed until they turned into incitement. Foreign Minister Kovacs said the ruling should compel democrats to define clearly what constituted anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and hate speech. He had already been angered when football fans were not charged for incitement for chanting anti-Semitic slogans earlier in 2003. (*Jewish Chronicle* 28.11.03)

Right-wing opposes Holocaust film

Levente Szorenyi, a rightwing composer, has denounced plans to stage a Holocaust film in Hungary, based on the

book, 'Fateless' by 2002 Nobel laureate Imre Kertesz. Despite the fact that the Prime Minister has offered over £2m for the film, ultra-nationalists are opposed to the film and the recognition of Kertesz, who is a camp survivor himself. The far-right MIEP, which, earlier this year hosted Le Pen at a rally, strongly opposes Kertesz, who is accused by the party of damaging Budapest's reputation. (*Jewish Chronicle* 7.11.03)

Police and criminal justice

Roma burnt to death in Zalaegerszeg prison

A Roma man burnt to death on 27 November at a prison in Zalaegerszeg. It appears that the prisoner, who was wounded on admission, had been placed in a separate, rubber-lined cell. The authorities tried to claim he had set the fire going with a lighter. This is denied by his lawyer. The victim's relatives have held mourning protests outside the prison every evening. The National Roma Self-government has set up an emergency committee to investigate the case and the Public Prosecutor of Zala County is also investigating. (*RSK* 5.12.03)

IRELAND

Racism and fascism

Call to remove Nazi collaborator's statue

Moves to dismantle the statue of IRA Chief of Staff, Sean Russell, who was complicit in Nazi plans to exterminate Irish Jews and who died aboard a German U-boat off Galway in 1940 as he returned from meeting Hitler, are growing. Former Fine Gael minister Alan Shatter said the statue was 'totally inappropriate' after a Sinn Fein Euro-hopeful and a Republican hard-liner had paid homage to Russell at a commemoration ceremony. (*Irish Independent* 8.9.03)

South African minister appalled at racism and intolerance

Addressing the SIPTU conference in Galway, Kadar Ismal, South Africa's Education Minister drew attention to the rising levels of racism in Ireland. He said the country was no longer the safe place he had known and pointed to 'the tendency to demonise those who come to Ireland in search of a better life'. He pointed out how many Irish ancestors had been forced to move in exactly the same way, and called on the government to treat asylum seekers and displaced people less harshly. In particular he urged Irish people to act in defence of the world's disadvantaged, as workers of Dunnes Stores had done 20 years ago when they boycotted South African goods in protest at apartheid. (*Irish Examiner* 1.9.03)

Gardai says racist incidents are down

According to Garda authorities offences against non-nationals have dropped significantly in the past year. They say that there has been more reporting of incidents because of greater awareness among members of racism issues. Incidents that are motivated by racism, sectarianism, homophobia, xenophobia and anti-Semitism are recorded on the Garda computer system and monitored by

the Garda racial and intercultural office. These can then be investigated further under the Public Order Act 1994 or the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. (*Irish Independent* 16.10.03)

Police and criminal justice

Police need training in civil rights

A former Justice Department psychologist, Dr Paul O'Mahony, has claimed that the growing list of scandals relating to Garda misconduct suggests a systematic problem in policing culture. He suggested to the Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights, which is reviewing the criminal justice system, that civil right training and education should be strengthened. (*Irish Independent* 2.3.03)

ITALY

The integration debate

Interior minister stigmatises mosques as sites of terrorism

Following the events of September 11, members of the Northern League demanded that many mosques be closed and criticised the interior minister for a lack of action. In June 2003, interior minister Giuseppe Pisanu made a series of statements directed at Italy's Muslim leaders warning them that 'Italian mosques must be totally free of those who preach violence' adding that the ministry would keep a close eye of mosques for 'wagers of Holy War and agents of foreign interests'. He wanted to see 'an Italian Islam, that is, one that is integrated into the reality of our country, that abides by the laws, and that speaks Italian'. In September 2003, Pisanu gave interviews to the BBC and *Corriere della Sera* in which he reiterated his concerns. He announced plans to follow France's example of setting up a council of moderate Muslims to communicate with state authorities, adding that 'We will not permit Italian mosques to transform into centres of secret financing and recruitment of Islamic fighters'.

Pressure from Simon Wiesenthal Centre

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre had written to the prime minister asking for the Rome imam, Abdel Samie Mahmoud Ibrahim Moussa to be expelled immediately to his native Egypt after he was quoted in a newspaper praising Palestinian suicide bombers and calling on Allah to 'annihilate the enemies of Islam'.

Pisanu's logic challenged

In response to Pisanu's statements, a spokesman for the Islamic Cultural Centre in Milan, which had been accused by the US of harbouring terrorists, said that 'Mosques are places of worship and if you close them because someone who committed a crime happened to enter the mosque then by the same logic we would have to shut down churches frequented by members of the Italian mafia'. (*Italy Weekly* 13,18.6.03, *Islam Online* 27.9.03)

Court ruling against crucifix opens religious pandora's box

A court ruling in October that the Navelli kindergarten and elementary school in Ofena must remove the crucifix was prompted by a case brought by Adel Smith, a convert to Islam, against this school in a small central Italian town, northeast of Rome. The result has been widespread anger against the decision, particularly within the ruling Forza Italia party, and the Catholic Church.

Who is Adel Smith?

Adel Smith, well-known for his controversial views over the years, has little support among Italian Muslims. He converted to Islam in 1974 and publicly called the crucifix a 'small body on two wooden sticks'. He had previously lobbied to have a 15th century Giovanni di Modena fresco removed from Bologna cathedral and Dante's Divine Comedy deleted from the school syllabus for showing the prophet Mohammed cast into hell. In January 2003, Smith was physically attacked twice on Italian TV.

Smith's two children attended a state primary school in Ofena, and he had originally asked for the Koran to be displayed alongside the cross. When the school refused, he took the case to court.

Ruling stresses secular education in multi-faith society

The case was heard at the tribunal in L'Aquila in the traditionally conservative region of Abruzzo. In his ruling, Judge Mario Montanoro stated that 'The presence of the symbol of the cross shows the will of the state to put Catholicism at the centre of the universe as the absolute truth'. (A concordat with the Vatican confirmed in 1984 that Catholicism was no longer the state religion. This has resulted in the relaxing of laws introduced in 1920s fascist Italy, making crucifixes mandatory in classrooms. Crucially, though, the laws have not been revoked and the cross is still a permanent fixture in many government offices and hospitals.) The judge ruled that the 1920s norms were now out of date and that the crucifix culture in schools showed that the state had 'not the slightest respect' for the role of other religions, adding that 'in a scholastic environment the presence of the symbol of the Cross induces a pupil to a profoundly incorrect understanding of the cultural dimension of the expression of faith'. Following the ruling, the school was given thirty days to remove the crucifix.

Pope and government oppose ruling

There was outrage in government and the Roman Catholic Church at the judge's order, the dominant view being that Italy's national culture was under threat. Pope John Paul II, who has been lobbying EU countries to pay homage to Europe's Christian roots in the new EU Constitution, raised the issue several times with government officials and even at a meeting of EU interior ministers. In Ofena, parents held a 'hands off our crucifix' vigil outside the primary school. The ruling Forza Italia party said that the court's decision was an affront to 'the fundamental values of Italian history and culture'. Prior to the ruling, education minister Letizia Moratti had supported the crucifix in class as a way of valuing 'Christian roots'. Interior minister Giuseppe Pisanu said 'I am offended as both a Christian and an Italian citizen'. Northern League employment minister Roberto Maroni said 'This is outrageous. It is unacceptable that one judge should cancel out millen-

nia of history'.

Religious discrimination against Muslims

Many Muslims, who say that the case has raised unwelcome hostility towards them, are critical of Smith for his comments about Christianity.

The mainstream Union of Italian Muslim Organisations said that by making 'offensive public statements against the Christian tradition' Smith was acting in stark contrast to the teachings of the Koran. Islam is now Italy's second largest religion, with the number of Muslims estimated at between 700,000 and 1 million in a total population of 57 million. Only 30,000 Muslims have Italian citizenship. But unlike other religious communities, Italy's Muslims have yet to be recognised by the state. Even religions like the Seventh Day Adventists and the Assemblies of God have signed agreements with the government, giving them official recognition and a chance to benefit from a national 'religion tax'. 'There is a kind of resistance to formally recognising that we are here', says Khalid Chaouki, president of the Young Muslims of Italy. He adds that some right-wing mayors refuse to authorise plans to build mosques and cemeteries. 'It is very hard to make people realise we are people, not just Muslims', he said.

Catholic Italy or secular democracy?

Italian sociologist Franco Ferrarotti says, 'This is a profoundly a-religious country. Italians are both Catholic and atheist at the same time. But they get very angry if you take away their crucifix, not so much because it's a sign of religion but because it belongs to their culture and their tradition'. Many teachers welcomed the ruling as a sign that the education system should be made truly secular. Tullia Zevy, former head of the Jewish community in Rome said that 'Italians must realise that this is not about insulting the Catholic religion. If [one group] has their crucifixes, another group can have their burkas. No symbols for anybody, that's the only guarantee for freedom.'

Education ministry appeals verdict

The education ministry is set to appeal the verdict. Officially, Italy's constitution establishes separation of church and state, but the education ministry had declared in 2002 that it intended to continue to allow schools to display crosses in classrooms. (*Los Angeles Times* 2.11.03, *Guardian* 27.10.03, *Expatica News* 10.11.03, *Jewish Chronicle*, n.d)

Race and electoral politics

Bossi derides immigrants yet again

There were calls for the resignation of the Northern League minister Umberto Bossi after he referred to immigrants as 'bingo bongos' during a debate on the allocation of public housing. Italian news agencies quoted Bossi as telling Radio Padania Libera: 'In Milan there are people who have worked a lifetime without a home. You work your whole life and then we give a house to the first bingo bongo that arrives.' (*World News* 8.12.03)

Berlusconi – once again the focus of controversy

European parliament: 'Nazi' jibe leads to apology

Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi was at first unrepentant for making, in the Strasbourg European parliament, a jibe at German MEP Martin Schulz suggesting that he should play a guard in a forthcoming Italian film about Nazi concentration camps. But after an international uproar about the remark, and an obvious rift with European commission president Romano Prodi, he expressed regret for his comments. (*Guardian* 4,5,9.7.03)

Berlusconi in Mussolini gaff

Berlusconi, interviewed by the British *Spectator* magazine compared Mussolini's crimes positively with those of Saddam Hussein, alleging Mussolini never killed anyone and sent people on holiday to confine them. Given that Berlusconi relies for support on the 'post-fascist' National Alliance, his comments touched a raw nerve. There was anger from left parties and protests from Jewish groups. Berlusconi tried to justify his remarks by saying that he had spoken 'as a patriot, as a real Italian'. (*Guardian* 12.9.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 19.9.03)

More powers for prime minister

The Berlusconi government has announced plans to enhance the powers of the prime minister, including power to dissolve parliament and the ways in which candidates' names for the premiership are put to the voters. Plans included devolution of power which would reward Bossi's Northern League, one of Berlusconi's coalition partners. The Communist Party urged all opposition parties to oppose the plans. The parliamentary leader of the Democratic Left said the scheme had incongruities, omissions and contradictions, but he was ready to negotiate. (*Guardian* 18.9.03)

AN leader backs immigrant voting rights

National Alliance leader Fini, deputy prime minister, announced that the time was right to grant immigrants the right to vote in local elections. This view appalled Bossi who said 'No way', and even some AN members opposed the plan. Francesco Storace, the president of the regional government of Lazio, said that the plan would undermine Italy's cultural heritage. 'Do we want to give Adel Smith the vote?' he said. The following day Berlusconi ruled out Fini's idea, so he began to discuss it with the Left. (*Il manifesto* 8.10.03)

Alessandra Mussolini quits AN party

With Gianfranco Fini, leader of the National Alliance making a trip to Israel and denouncing fascism as 'utter evil' and Mussolini's 1938 anti-Jewish laws as 'disgraceful', Alessandra Mussolini has decided to quit the far-right party. Declaring that Fini was betraying her father's memory, Ms Mussolini, who challenged Fini for the party's leadership last year, decided to leave. She was congratulated on her decision by the widow of Giorgio Almirante, who founded the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement which was the forerunner of the National Alliance. (*Guardian* 28.11.03, *Financial Times* 22.11.03)

Verona: Northern League accused of inciting racial hatred

Six leading Verona NL members, including Flavio Tosi, a city and regional council member and former provincial secretary of the NL, are facing a trial for a campaign they ran in 2001 to 'kick gypsies out of Verona'. The Sinti community is one of the official plaintiffs. (*Il manifesto* 23. 10.03)

Racism and fascism

Oriani Fallaci pens another anti-Muslim diatribe

Italian author Oriani Fallaci has once again made anti-Muslim statements, this time in an article in the UK's *Sunday Times* which was reproduced in the *Wall Street Journal*. In the article, Fallaci writes that 'Europe is no longer Europe. It is a province of Islam, as Spain and Portugal were at the time of the Moors. It hosts almost 16m Muslim migrants... It teems with mullah, imams, mosques, burqas, chadors... It lodges thousands of Islamic terrorists whom governments don't know how to identify and control.' Fallaci praised the UK for being the only country that supports the US. 'But concludes that Mr. Blair, too, leads a country that is invaded by the Moors'. (*Sunday Times* 16.3.03)

Left-winger killed by extreme-Right but police turn on victim's friends

During the night of 16 March, Davide Cesare died after being knifed by three members of an extreme-right organisation, the youngest of whom was 17. That night, a number of Cesare's friends, who had gone to the San Paolo hospital to find out Cesare's condition, were attacked outside the hospital by carabinieri and police. Four of the victims who were left-wing activists were charged with resisting a public official. Later six Carabinieri officers were suspended and put under investigation because they had been caught on amateur video kicking one of the men on the ground. (*Il manifesto* 27.9.03)

Rome: far-Right Lazio 'Ultras' accused of attempted murder

A far-Right Lazio supporter, who has been accused of attempted murder of a 31-year-old Moroccan man, who has been in a coma since October 2002 after being hit in the head and body in Rome, has, because of plea-bargaining been sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment. The other accused were convicted in June and sentenced to between six and two years imprisonment. (*Il manifesto* 27. 9.03)

Non-Italians excluded from housing

In Treviglio, a town near Bergamo, the local authorities have decided to sell off twelve council houses, but only to Italians. Trade unions and left organisations are organising protest demonstrations. (*Il manifesto* 2.10.03)

Police and criminal justice

Rome: police travellers' unit established

A special unit of Rome's municipal police force has been created to police travellers' camps. The Roma community has nicknamed them the Texas Rangers. (*Il manifesto* 8.10.03)

MALTA

Racism and fascism

Siggiewi: Attempted murder of Libyan

A father, his two sons and a minor have been charged with seriously beating a Libyan; one son was also charged with Osama Shalabi's attempted murder. The accused, all from Qrendi, have pleaded not guilty to the offences which took place on 9 September in Siggiewi. The four were also charged with breaching the peace and two of the defendants were charged with detaining Shalabi. The father was charged with threatening Shalabi while being in possession of a sharp, pointed instrument. (*Malta Independent* 12.9.03)

NETHERLANDS

The integration debate

Controversial parliamentary inquiry into integration policies reports

In September 2002, a parliamentary inquiry was set up into the thirty years of integration policy in the Netherlands. The inquiry was, from the start, embroiled in controversy and intense media speculation. The institute which was responsible for drawing up the Commission's final report, was singled out for attack because it was seen as too close to the government's previous integration policies to objectively assess their impact.

Why was the inquiry set up?

The inquiry was set up after Jan Marijnissen, the leader of the Socialist Party raised questions about the integration policies of previous cabinets and clarification on successes and failures. Under the chairmanship of VVD parliamentarian Stef Blok, it was mandated to assess Dutch integration policies and former ministers, top civil servants, chairs of ethnic organisations and selected members of the public were asked to give evidence.

Controversy over role of policy institute

One member of the Commission, SP MP Ali Laqzarak, resigned after placing doubt on its independence because of the involvement of the Hilda Verwey-Jonker Institute. Even before the Commission reported, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the controversial Somali-born Liberal VVD MP, told a radio programme that she was not convinced that it's findings would be impartial, and arguing that a 'clique of policy researchers' at the Institute had investigated multiculturalism on request from the government.

Public testimony nights

The Commission met the public in Amsterdam, Tilburg, Rotterdam and Deventer, where, prior to the public forum, integration and immigration had been hotly-debated issues. In Rotterdam, the debate had focussed on the increase in the immigrant population while, in Amsterdam, education was a concern with a recent report warning that ethnic segregation in schools had gone too

far to reverse. Meanwhile, crime and immigrant youth had been an issue in Tilburg with the authorities singling out Antillean youth for a special law and order crackdown.

Amsterdam – issues raised

The meetings were described as ‘public testimony nights’. In Amsterdam, some 18 immigrants and other Amsterdam residents were each given three minutes to outline their personal experience, definitions of integration, disappointments and visions. Testimonies pinpointed Dutch language skills as a stumbling block towards integration. E. Schouten, in charge of organising language lessons in the Transvaal neighbourhood, complained about the long waiting lists and the pile of forms that needed to be completed for enrolment. A social worker complained about the incorrect spending of funds and ethnic groups spoke of the climate produced by the LPF.

Findings announced early

The Hilda Verwey-Jonker Institute report was published early because of intense media speculation about the Commission. It concluded that the integration of immigrants was on track and distanced itself from the parliamentary debate which had focused on the ‘unsatisfactory progress of integration’ and argued that there was evidence that the integration of migrants into Dutch society had been relatively successful. (*Expatica News* 22,24,26.9.03)

Immigration and integration policies linked to fighting terrorism

In May 2003, the Aliens Advisory Committee issued a report which focused on immigration and integration policy in the context of combating terrorism. There is now greater co-operation between the Immigration and Naturalisation Department (IND) and the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD). AIVD had warned in its 2002 annual report that networks of radical Islamists were active in the Netherlands and IND has set up a unit to trace war criminals and terrorists among asylum seekers. AIVD argues that within the Muslim community there are two trends – one working for integration and another emphasising Muslims’ separate identity. The Arab European League is singled out by IND as a possible security risk if it continues to appeal directly to ethnic and religious sentiments. (*Migration News Sheet* June 2003, *Expatica News* 22,24,26.9.03)

Immigration minister defends integration vision

In October 2003, the immigration minister Rita Verdonk defended her plans for compulsory language courses for immigrants and indicated that financial assistance might be offered to migrants who could not afford the fees. This would take the form of a credit from the municipal authority to help them finish a course, or a receipt system of study bursaries. Verdonk reiterated that those who failed to complete the course could find social security payments reduced, although the matter still requires legal clarification. Also under consideration is a plan, to force new immigrants to complete a basic exam in their country of origin, thought to be aimed especially at Moroccan and Turkish nationals wishing to enter for marriage or family reunification purposes.

Verdonk rejects Islamic schools supervision proposal

Minister Verdonk however has reacted negatively to a proposal from VVD MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali to sharpen the supervision of Islamic schools in order to scrap funding if schools are found guilty of inciting intolerance. Verdonk said that the nation’s 43 Islamic schools’ ability to disseminate their own opinions was already linked to the promotion of respect and mutual tolerance. Other parliamentarians pointed to a recent report from the education inspectorate which stated that education at Islamic schools does not breach the basic ethics of Dutch society. (*Expatica News* 28.10.03)

Schools dress code focuses on headscarf only

The Christian Democrat minister of education, Maria van der Hoeven, has introduced guidelines for schools, ostensibly to help them regulate the clothes worn by pupils, but it seems aimed solely at Muslim girls who wear the headscarf. The magazine *Searchlight* has attacked the proposals as displaying an unhealthy double standard. *Searchlight* points out that while guidelines for headscarves are being drawn up, clothes associated with racism and the extreme-Right are generally permitted on the grounds of freedom of speech.

Background: the Islam debate

The background to new clothes guidelines lies in the national debate about Islam, and particularly, Islamic schools. Many commentators now want restrictions on freedom of religion and the abolition of denominational education. The PvdA leader Wouter Bos has suggested that separate religious schools could hinder women’s emancipation and Gerrit Zalm, leader of the liberal party has declared that Islamic schools do not contribute to integration. The CDA argues that denominational schools must be compelled to propagate the standards of Dutch society.

Not surprisingly, as in so many other European countries, the debate has focussed on the right of Muslim girls to wear the headscarf. Some schools in the country, especially those with a strong Christian identity, do not allow Muslim girls to wear headscarves.

The double standard

In many schools in small towns there have also been clashes between Moroccan youngsters and pupils who identify with the far-Right. According to *Searchlight*, many rightwing youths are developing a whole system of coded communication through their outfits. Lonsdale clothes are also a brand much favoured by Nazi youth, as the initials spell out in Dutch ‘Let us Dutch together slowly execute the foreigner’. (*Searchlight*, August 2003, *Trouw* 7.12.02)

Rotterdam Council wants mosque construction around integration concept

Rotterdam Council has waged a drawn out battle against the Moroccan community’s plan to build one of the largest mosques in Europe in Rotterdam South. It has drawn out discussions around planning and construction and has now asked the mosque’s administration to modernise the architectural plan to incorporate a ‘concept of integration’. The hostility generated has led to claims from the Muslim community that they are being stigmatised by the Council whose plan to limit the increase in

large mosques is being led by representatives of Liveable Rotterdam (LR).

LR oppose mosques

LR leader Ronald Sørensen claims that the Moroccan Essalam mosque is being built in too close a proximity to Rotterdam's suburbs where many LR voters live and this risked polarising the community. Prior to this, the Christian Democrats had ruled in November 2002 that the design of the mosque was not a matter for government as the constitution clearly spells out the separation of church and state. The Liberal VVD, which had initially failed to raise any objections to the mosque construction plan, now says it is willing to discuss a new policy to prevent the 'wild growth' of mosques. Meanwhile, the Labour PvdA has raised objections to continued delays to final Council approval for the mosque and criticised the Council for contributing to continued polarisation in the city.

'The integration concept'

The mayor of Rotterdam had backed the mosque saying it would enrich the city and make Rotterdam an 'exotic attraction'. But he also backs the Council's integration construction modification proposal, stating that 'We think that the dissemination of faith is sometimes expressed more by reserved, rather than explicit dissemination'. The mayor said that the mosque's administration and religious leaders should teach Muslims what Dutch society expected from them, namely integration. The mosque administrators had already planned courses and discussion groups at the mosque to stimulate integration. But as Aaron Gray-Block, writing in *Expatica News* points out, 'whether the mosque's efforts will appease tempers in the harbour city remains to be seen'. (*Expatica News* 24.10.03)

Rotterdam: controversial council housing plan to keep out poor migrants

Rotterdam City Council, composed of Christian Democrats, Liberal VVD and the populist Liveable Rotterdam (LR) hopes to prevent underprivileged migrants from moving to the city by refusing housing to anyone who does not earn at least 20% above the minimum wage. It also plans to seek a temporary exemption from accepting asylum-seeker residents. The term 'underprivileged' is a code word for poor migrants and research has indicated that almost half of all Rotterdam's immigrants originate from other municipalities. The mayor has argued that the plans are needed to ensure the city is 'in balance'. The city is considering an 'adult migration policy' to restrict the arrival of the 'underprivileged' and the departure of wealthier residents from city suburbs.

A victory for Liveable Rotterdam

The right-wing LR, which won seats in the March 2002 council election, when Pim Fortuyn was still at the helm, applauded the council's action plan. In August 2003, it had proposed a limit on the number of migrants allowed to settle in the harbour city and an Intomart survey conducted on behalf of RTL news claimed that 61 per cent of Rotterdam residents supported the LR proposal. In its submission to Rotterdam Council, LR had claimed that Rotterdam is developing too many weak groups and that a limitation on the number of immigrants would solve this problem. Another proposal, which Intomart claims is backed by Rotterdam residents, is to spread immigrants

out more evenly across the country. The LR says that while immigrants make up 50 per cent of Rotterdam's population, there are some villages in the Netherlands that are 'immigrant free'.

Cabinet divided over policy

The Dutch prime minister has backed the controversial Rotterdam stand on the basis that the city is facing enormous difficulties but the immigration minister has criticised the proposals on the basis that it is not possible only to allow integrated immigrants to move to a city, nor could one refuse entry to recognised refugees. The interior minister said the cabinet recognised Rotterdam had specific problems and would seriously assess the proposals. The Christian Democrat and Democrat D66 leaders reacted positively to the plans, but the SP and Groenlinks, and also the main opposition party, Labour PvdA, were critical. (*Expatica News* 26, 8, 1,2.12.03)

Racism and fascism

MP investigated for incitement after denouncing Prophet Mohammed

An umbrella organisation representing mosques throughout the Netherlands has called for Ayaan Hirsi Ali MP to be barred from office after she described the Prophet Mohammed as a 'perverse tyrant'. Following complaints from the Muslim community, the Amsterdam public prosecutor's office initiated an official investigation into whether Ali's comments amounted to incitement against Muslims.

Who is Ayaan Hirsi Ali?

Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi is a former Muslim and self-styled champion of women's rights. In the past, she has received death threats and even fled the country after making outspoken criticisms of Islam. Ali was recently elected an MP for the VVD Liberal party. In response to her latest comments, VVD leader Gerrit Zalm said they were her personal views and did not represent party policy which takes no stand on any religious icon.

What did she say?

In an article in the *Trouw* newspaper, Ali wrote that by western standards, Mohammed was a perverse man and a tyrant and that he reminded her of 'all those megalomaniac leaders in the Middle East: Bin Laden, Khomeini and Saddam'. Mohammed's attitude, she wrote, had been 'do it my way or there will be trouble' and modern Muslim politicians were no different. She criticised Saudi Arabia for funding male chauvinist policies based on the Prophet's teaching. (*Guardian* 29.1.03)

Eindhoven: a climate against Muslims

In June, an organisation describing itself as the Committee of Concerned Citizens damaged the locks on the gate of the Eindhoven mosque and sought to bar Muslims from entering it through erecting a massive chain. The organisation then sent a statement to the local press and threatened the mayor with action unless he closed down the mosque. Two weeks later, a petrol bomb was thrown at an Eindhoven Islamic school. Five young men were later arrested. They claimed they attacked the school because they 'just hate foreigners

and the multicultural society'. The Nationalist Youth Brabant, a section of the Nazi National Movement, has also been active and anti-Islamic posters have appeared. (*Searchlight*, August 2003)

Police and criminal justice

Police chief demands harsher laws for immigrants

A police chief in The Hague has suggested that the treatment of immigrants requires a different approach from that used with the native Dutch. They require different penalties because they have different morals, according to Jan Wiarda. His views were rejected by the mayor of The Hague and the public prosecution management council. (*Expatica News* 30.6.03)

NORWAY

Race and electoral politics

Some gains for Progress Party in local elections

Regional and municipal elections were held on 14 September with the lowest turnout since the War. Despite dramatic predictions, the political terrain remains much the same. The biggest losers were the Conservatives and Christian Democrats, while both the left camp and the right wing Progress Party (FrP) emerged as winners. The Labour Party, the biggest in Norway took 27.5% of the vote, while the Socialist Left increased their share to 13%. The FrP took 17.9%, somewhat less than predicted by pollsters in the run-up to the election. The party, which had been campaigning on a stricter immigration policy, called on the coalition government to give more powers to the FrP.

Worries had been expressed about the low turn out of voters within the 111,200 eligible immigrant population. The largest groups of immigrants are from Pakistan and Vietnam with 38% of ethnic minorities living in Oslo. And, in Oslo, parties campaigned quite vigorously for the immigrant vote. (*Antirasistisk Senter* 16,13.9.03, *Norway Post* 15,29.8,2.9.03)

The integration debate

Language requirement for citizenship introduced

As part of a revised integration policy, the government is proposing that all adult immigrants in Norway must complete a course in basic Norwegian in order to qualify for a permanent residence permit and, later, citizenship. (*Norway Post* 10.7.03)

Municipal minister calls for modernised Islam

In an interview in November with *Aftenposten*, municipal minister Erna Solberg said that Norwegian Muslims must modernise their faith, in order to become better integrated into Norwegian society. 'We must make the Muslim societies realise that they are living in Europe, that they are a minority group, and that they have to contribute something. There is no other way than to modernise Islam in Europe'. Solberg, who also called for higher stan-

dards for those who hold the office of imam, has also proposed the expulsion of immigrants if they commit a crime which would qualify for a six months jail sentence. (*Norway Post* 8.7,4.11.03)

How lack of citizenship rights affect young people

Call to extend citizenship

The Commission for Contact between Immigrants and Authorities has asked that all young people of immigrant background, who are born and raised in Norway, should automatically receive Norwegian citizenship. But Municipal Minister Erna Solberg is not willing to do this, but is open to lowering the age limit for choosing citizenship. (*Norway Post* 17.10.03)

Young immigrants denied education support

The Centre for Combating Ethnic Discrimination has pointed out how young people who do not have citizenship, and many of them are refugees, are being prevented from studying abroad because they do not qualify for support from the State Educational Loan Fund. Almost 20,000 Norwegian students received support in 2001/2 to study abroad because it is difficult to find places for chosen subjects in Norway. According to the Centre, the lack of support hits young non-citizens particularly hard because they already come from families with little chance of funding education themselves. (*Norway Post* 22.7.03)

Racism and fascism

Petition against acquittal of neo-Nazi

The Antiracist Centre and Jewish people in Oslo and Trondheim have filed a petition with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination after the Supreme Court's decision to acquit a leading Bootboy, Terje Sjolie, for making racist statements in public. He had been accused of disseminating anti-Semitic and racist views as well as incitement to racial hatred against Jews and immigrants on 19 August 2000 during a commemoration demonstration for Rudolf Hess in Askim. At the rally he had said, 'everyday immigrants rob, rape and kill Norwegians ... our people and country are being plundered and destroyed by Jews, who such our country empty of wealth and replace it with immoral and un-Norwegian values'. (*Antirasistisk Senter* 18.6.03)

Police warn against neo-Nazi Vigrid organisation

The Security Police, which fears that the neo-Nazi organisation Vigrid will turn to violence, has started a nationwide offensive to try to wean its members away from the organisation. Vigrid, which is led by 60-year-old Tore W. Tvedt has, over the past six months, seen an increase in its membership, particularly among young people. The Security Police has been keeping the organisation and all its members under surveillance. (*Norway Post* 28.10.03)

Skien: two held for church arson attack

The police in Skien have charged two people, one said to have neo-Nazi links, with breaking and entering and setting fire to the 850-year-old Gjerpen church, regarded as one of Norway's most beautiful historic buildings. (*Norway Post* 14.11.03)

POLAND

Racism and fascism

Warsaw: Jewish community protests dissemination of anti-Semitic materials

The Jewish community in Warsaw is taking a case to the European Court of Human Rights to protest against the Polish judiciary's refusal to prosecute organisations disseminating anti-Semitic material.

Investigation into Antyk publishing house discontinued

The Jewish community's complaints centre around the activities of the Antyk publishing house, whose range includes reprints from the 1930s and titles such as 'The Anti-Polishness of the Polish Jews'. In October, the public prosecutor's office halted an investigation for incitement to hatred, citing a lack of evidence. In view of the impending suit in Strasbourg, Karol Napierski, Poland's chief public prosecutor has said that he did not rule out a resumption of the investigation into Antyk –but only, if it turns out that the Warsaw public prosecutor's office 'wrongly assessed' available evidence. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 21.11.03)

RUSSIA

Race and electoral politics

Anti-Romani racism in local elections

The Roma Rights Centre has complained to the Commissioner on Human Rights of the Sverdlovsk county about the intense anti-Romani racism in the local election campaign in Jekaterinburg. One of the mayoral candidates campaigned on the basis of demolishing the local Romani settlement. Local papers have also incited anti-Romani racism, attacking them as 'drug dealers' and 'thieves'. (*Roma Rights* 8.12.03)

Racism and fascism

Moscow: anti-immigration group formed

The Union Against Illegal Immigration has been formed in Moscow to lobby the government to implement tougher laws to prevent immigration and punish or deport those who come to Russia illegally. According to Alexander Belov, who heads the organisation, Russians will soon be out-numbered by immigrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus who tend to have more children.

Racism against immigrants from southern Republics

Many new immigrants are from the southern Republics and are Muslims and groups like the Union Against Illegal Immigration associate Muslims with the ongoing war in Chechnya. According to journalist Rebeccah Santana, this 'issue is tinged with racism'. Many Russians only refer to immigrants from the Caucasus as 'chernoy', or black, because of their darker skin tone. Along with people from Central Asia, they have become the object of attack by groups of young Russian men, sometimes resulting in death.

Foreign students injured

Six foreign students living in Moscow were injured when a gang attacked them near the people's Friendship University on 29 November. Some of the victims had to be taken to hospital. The attack underlines the claim that foreign students are being poorly protected from neo-Nazi groups who frequently pick on black students from Third world countries, who are attracted to Russia because of low tuition fees. At the same university in November, thirty-eight people died in a fire. However, the authorities have ruled out any suggestion of arson and say it was caused by faulty wiring. (*Chicago Tribune* 29.8.03, *Guardian* 1.12.03)

Rostov: skinheads on trial for migrant murders

Twelve skinheads have gone on trial in Rostov accused of beating to death in unprovoked racist attacks three men from the Central Asian republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Volgograd in October 2002. The trial was held behind closed doors. It is now estimated that Russia has some 15,000 skinheads. Neo-Nazi groups have been targeting people from Central Asia and the Caucasus as well as immigrants from Africa and Southeast Asia. In 2001 three people died and others were injured as skinheads rampaged through street markets. Attacks have increased since Russian troops went back into Chechnya in 1999. (*BBC News* 30.7.03)

Arson attacks on mosques

A number of mosques have been set on fire since the beginning of Ramadan. And on 13 November two mosques were set ablaze in western Russia. A number of people were seen throwing explosive devices at one mosque in Irkutsk. Muslim leaders are reported as saying that not enough is being done to protect them. (*Islam Online* 20.11.03)

SPAIN

Race and electoral politics

Government mired in controversy over treatment of Spain's dictatorship legacy

Ruling PP refuses to honour Franco victims

The main opposition parties have united to condemn the fact that the ruling Popular Party (PP) has refused to attend a homage in parliament to the victims of General Franco. Eleven parties, plus figures who had been victimised by the regime during its 36 years, were honoured by those present. The PP, founded by a former Franco minister, has blocked several attempts in recent years for parliament to explicitly condemn the Franco rebellion and his totalitarian rule. But two years ago it did support a parliamentary motion to recognise victims of 'repression of the Francoist dictatorship'. But it has gone on to accuse those who still refer to the Franco era, as seeking to turn the clock back. The PP's stance is interpreted as a concern about losing votes from those who might still be Franco supporters. (*Guardian* 1.12.03, *El País* 2.12.03)

Dispute over Franco Foundation's funding

Using its majority, the PP rejected a slew of motions demanding the end of public financing of the Franco Foundation and the integration of the late Spanish dictator's personal documents into the national archive. This means that the foundation will get a grant of 29,000 euros this year and remain in control of extremely valuable historic documents. (*El País* 24.9.03)

PP stresses Catholic mono-faith society

The PP government wants to accord Catholicism paramount status in public schools to the consternation of many Socialist commentators. Writing in *El País*, Jordi Solé Tura, a Socialist senator, warns that the PP, in attempting to portray itself as the party of Catholicism, is 'introducing into politics a hard-line confessional element' which threatens the boundaries between church and state. (*El País* 3.7.03)

Marbella: GIL is dissolved

Former Marbella Mayor, Jesús Gil, has asked the political parties registry to dissolve his Independent Liberal Group (GIL) because of the rebellion in Marbella city hall during a no-confidence motion against his successor, Julian Munoz. Both Gil and Munoz stand accused of corruption, much of it linked to construction and services firms. In August, after Munoz lost a no-confidence motion, a former GIL councillor, Marisol Yagüe, became mayor of Marbella. She promised to bring in a new era of government based on 'transparency and diversity'. (*El País* 7, 14.8.03)

Anti-immigration platform in Catalonia

Two neo-Nazi groups, the Platform for Catalonia and the Republican Social Movement stood in the November regional election in Catalonia, deploying slogans like, 'For better control of immigration' and 'It is enough'. The Platform for Catalonia now controls the councils in Vic, Manlleu (Osana), Cervera (Segarra) and El Vendrell (Baix Penedes). (Popular Worker Collective communications 13, 20.11.03)

The integration debate

Melilla and Ceuta: Muslims attack discrimination in residence laws

Abderramàn Benyahya, secretary general of the Muslim Association of Melilla, wants to bring a test case against the government to prove that the Spanish Document of National Identity has been consistently denied to Muslims from both Ceuta and Melilla because they are not Christians. 'Muslims are treated like foreigners and Spanish laws are used to deny residence in the city to people who have distinct roots in Melilla.'

Roots of discrimination

As far back as 1986, Muslims were staging protests in Melilla against nationality laws, arguing that the government practised a quota system to control the numbers of Melilla Muslims allowed to gain the national identity card. From 1995, the Spanish government made promises to grant nationality, but according to the Muslim Association of Melilla the promises were not realised. This means that Muslims who are only in possession of identi-

ty and residence cards (TIR) constantly face the threat of expulsion.

Anger over Muslim Guantanamo Bay detainees

Benyahya has also complained that the government has failed to provide protection to Spanish nationals of Muslim origin outside Spain. He cites the fact that there are four Muslims from Ceuta held at Guantanamo Bay – a fact not recognised by the government. (*Meliya.com* <www.meliya.com/> 11.3.03, *Diariosur* 20.2.03)

Racism and fascism

Barcelona: United Left councillor shot on Franco anniversary

On 20 November, the anniversary of Franco's death, a United Left councillor for the Sabadell area of Barcelona, Juan Guil, was shot with airgun pellets as his car pulled up outside his house. Police are investigating a possible link with an extreme-Right skinhead group, which has been responsible for other attacks in the area. Guil, for many years secretary of the Spanish trades union congress (CCOO) played down the attack, although he acknowledged the coincidence of the date and the presence of skinhead groups in the area. (*El Periódico d'Andorra* 22.11.03)

Asturia: Frente Espanol meeting defended by police

A meeting called by the 85-year-old ultra-right-wing Blas Piñar in Mieres, Asturia to introduce his new party Frente Espanol, ended with pitched battles between fascist and anti-fascist demonstrators and anti-fascists being charged by the police. The police protected the fascist demonstrators, which led to protests between anti-fascists and the police. Followers of Piñar sported the Spanish flag with a Franco emblem and shouted slogans against democracy, the monarchy and the government. (*El Periódico de Catalunya* 28.4.03)

Skinheads mount battle in Catalan town of Castellar del Vallés

At least 15 young skinheads were identified by the local police in Castellar before the cacerolada (banging of saucepans), an event staged for the purpose of protesting against violent incidents in the previous days and the 'indiscriminate charge' by the Civil Guard against local residents in the early hours of the previous Sunday. Five hundred people gathered under the slogan 'Castellar stands firm against fascism' to protest against the trouble on 11 September when over a hundred skinhead Nazis attacked a public concert in this Catalan village. Four Nazis were cornered by the Civil Guard but the concert had to be abandoned. Attacks against immigrants and homosexuals have been prevalent in the area. People were protesting against both the skinheads and the Civil Guard and also called for the resignation of the new government delegate in Catalonia and the commander of the Civil Guard whom they blamed for police repression in which residents had been injured. (*Canarias Ahora* 15.9.03, *El Periódico de Catalunya* 13, 18.9.03)

Anti-immigration march in L'Hospitalet

A demonstration organised by the Platform for Catalunya,

led by Josep Anglada, to protest against a lack of law and order in la Florida district, which it attributes to the increasing immigrant population, only got half way. Some marchers had refused to take the route of the march selected by police and marched down the main street, where they were met by a police charge. Anglada himself called off the event and summoned supporters to a new rally in la Florida. 'We have the right to hold it where the problem exists', he declared. The deputy mayor defended the police actions, citing the return of safety to the city after the autonomous government police force had been deployed. (*El Periódico* 27.10.03)

Gran Canaria: gang attack leads to death of Moroccan

Three Spaniards have been arrested for the killing of Mustafa Azizi, a 32-year-old Moroccan man in Vecindario in September 2003. The youths (aged 18 and 21) are from the Tirajana region of the island. Another Moroccan was also hurt in what appears to have been a fight between two groups.

Was this a racist murder?

The governing group at the town hall at Santa Lucía condemned the killing and said that it would do all in its power to counter racism and xenophobia. The town council sent its condolences to the victim's family. The town councillor for the police said that he did not think the killing was a racist act but just the consequence of the kind of fight that takes place outside discos. (*El Hierro* 16.9.03, *Canarias Ahora* 16.9.03)

El Ejido: three years on

Moroccan jailed for murder that triggered riots

The provincial court of Almería has sentenced a mentally-disturbed Moroccan immigrant to eleven years in prison for the February 2000 murder of a 26-year-old woman in El Ejido, a killing which was used as the basis for a revenge race riot which included burning down the shacks that immigrant workers lived in. Lesbir Fahim was found guilty on a count of murder. Race riots, considered the worst explosion of racist violence in Spain's recent history, resulted in dozens arrested and wounded.

Fear of racism stalks El Ejido

It is reported that three years after the incidents in El Ejido, racism dare not speak its name. Though a local girl was recently abducted and sexually assaulted, and three North African men arrested, it has not created much of a stir. Locals say that there is anxiety that the incidents of 2000 should not be repeated. There is also evidence that politicians are avoiding the issue of immigration. And, the composition of the migrant community has changed: there are now workers from eastern Europe as well as family members joining their North African heads of households. Immigrant workers are also made more invisible by the fact that their make-shift shanty town was burnt down. Nonetheless, the immigrants themselves say that they still walk the area in fear and in the province of Almería, where 44,000 immigrants are registered, there is the potential for Ejido to blow up at any moment.

Rabat condemns anti-Moroccan racism

Days after the Agricultural Workers Union condemned the

fact that eleven Moroccans had been attacked in El Ejido, the Moroccan minister of foreign affairs has vigorously condemned 'the serious attacks of a racist and xenophobic nature' against members of its community in Spain and stressed its 'disquiet at the outbreak confirmed in the last few days'. (*El País* 22.4, 22.10.03)

Mosque petrol bombed in Girona

The Mossos d'Esquadra (autonomous police force of Catalonia) and local police officers arrested a man for throwing a petrol bomb at the mosque near the station after making derogatory remarks about the Muslim community in a local bar. The 34-year-old was a local Girona man, who had been witnessed carrying out the attack. This appeared to be the fourth time that the mosque had been attacked since 2000. (4.9.03)

After two decades of objections, new Alhambra mosque built

It took twenty-two years to overcome the objections of neighbours in Granada, but finally a mosque has been built, financed by the United Arab Emirates, at the highest point of the Albaicin. For the first time since Ferdinand and Isabella hounded out the Muslims of the Moorish civilisation, 500 years ago, Muslims can once again worship in Granada's Moorish district. (*Guardian* 6.12.03)

Barcelona football supporter in racist assault

The Barcelona football club is having to decide what to do with one of its supporters, David Ventura, a member of the Boixos Nois, who was arrested for assaulting two Moroccans during the Juan Gamper Cup. Ventura, who had already served eight years in prison for the murder in 1991, with four other Boixos, of a follower of a rival club. It is alleged that the Barcelona president did not take appropriate disciplinary actions against Ventura after the murder. Barcelona is now having to decide how it will deal with violence in its supporters and the whole of the group Boix Nois. (*El Periódico* 6.9.03)

Court rules no racist motive in murder of Wilson Pacheco

A security guard, who had later attempted suicide, and two other men, have been found guilty of the murder of Ecuadorian Wilson Pacheco in January 2002. However, in sentencing the three men, the judge ruled out a racist motive. Pacheco, and a group of Ecuadorian friends, had been refused entry into a nightclub and then pursued by the bouncer at the club, and two security guards from a neighbouring club. Pacheco had been severely beaten and then thrown into the Barcelona harbour where he drowned (see *Bulletin* nos 41 & 42).

Denial of racial motive challenged

The denial of a racist motive was hotly disputed by the Association of Ecuadorians in Catalonia and by Wilson Pacheco's family. During the trial, a couple who witnessed Pacheco being beaten, told the court how one of the assailants commented, 'If this rat knows how to run, he will know how to swim, if not leave him to drown'. The couple say that, on witnessing the attack, they had approached a police car and asked officers to intervene. They had refused, saying that it was not their business, but that of the harbour police to intervene in the case of

a 'Sudaca' (a derogatory term for a South American). A video of the incident showed that not one of the defendants did anything to help Pacheco once he was pushed into the water. One of the bouncers told the police officer that for a 'Sudaca, I don't get my mobile wet'.

No work permit for death victim's family

The Co-ordinator of the Association of Ecuadorians has criticised the fact that the parents of Wilson Pacheco have been refused work permits and are forced into finding irregular work. The Co-ordinator has also drawn attention to the fact that Ecuadorians are being criticised by locals for congregating outside the Fort Pienc football ground, and is asking the town council to provide a proper place for them to meet. (*El Periódico* 16.7, 29.9, 3.10.03, *El País* 22.10.03, *El Periòdic d'Andorra* 4, 10, 20, 29.10.03)

Spaniards claim no racist intent for murder of Algerians

Despite the fact that a racist motive for the killing of two Algerians – Ali Sisaou and Abbas Naimi – in October 2001 in Russafa de Valencia, was ruled out by the presiding judge, a severe sentence of 25 years in jail was imposed on Richard PM because of the superior strength, the weapons he was carrying, the drunkenness of the victims and the presence of other harassers. Three other accused men were found not guilty of the murders.

The Algerians were followed out of a bar by the group of four Spaniards, following an argument. The group attacked the Algerians, Richard stabbed Ali twice with his knife and then used a hammer, a club and the edge of a brick, and then used his knife again on Abbas. The Spaniards claimed that there had been no racist element. (*Levante Digital* 4.6, 16.6.03)

Gypsy group evicted in Catalonia

The head of a group representing the Gypsy community has called for the resignation of the socialist mayor of L'Amettla de Mar after he defended a local campsite's decision to evict eight Gypsy families. Other local politicians had taken exception to the eviction and branded it as racist. (*El País* 16.8.03)

Police and criminal justice

Spain accused of torture of 'terror' detainees

The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture has issued a report based on the findings of a fact-finding mission in 2001 detailing allegations of torture by the security forces of those detained under suspicion of committing acts of terrorism. Accusations against the security services include beatings, the use of electric shocks, and the placing of plastic bags over the head of the detainee. The CPT concluded that there was ample evidence, including medical reports, to back the accusation.

Basque newspaper editor claims torture

In March, the anti-terrorist police were accused of torturing the editor of the Basque newspaper *Egunkaria*. Martxelo Otamendi had been held incommunicado under terrorism laws for five days, after a magistrate had accused the newspaper of collaboration with ETA. Otamendi's claims, that members of the anti-terrorist unit

had attempted to asphyxiate him by placing a plastic bag over his head, are backed up by Pascual Maragall, the head of the Socialist party's branch in Catalonia. Other treatment Otamendi says he suffered was continual verbal abuse, death threats and the use of sleep deprivation. In one incident a pistol was held to his temple. A former editor of *Egunkaria*, held at the same time as Otamendi, committed suicide. (*Guardian* 7.3.03, *El País* 14.3.03)

Barcelona police accused of beating immigrants

Doctors of the World has accused Barcelona police of beating up six foreigners in the St Andrew barracks. In a report to the Catalan ombudsman they report on 'the violent and gratuitous stance of members of the National Police Force, and, in some cases, from the Guardia Urbana [local police force] with the aim of frightening the occupants of the barracks'. The doctors' organisation has also criticised the way that local groups overseeing the immigrants had failed to deal with, and isolate, those with TB and that those with severe symptoms were being released from hospital. (*Europe Press*, Barcelona 24.10.03)

SWEDEN

Racism and fascism

Säpo warns of extreme-Right offensive

Four years ago, the extreme-Right was the focus of the security services' attention after the murder of a left-wing trade unionist, the killing, during a bank raid, of two police officers and a bomb attack on two journalists who were investigating the extreme-Right scene. Since then, the Nazi groups toned down their activities, but now Säpo sees indications of a new offensive. In the opinion of Torbjörn Ekblom, head of defence of the constitution at Säpo, this is occurring on two fronts: groups like the National Socialist Front (NSF) and the Swedish Resistance Movement (SMR) are more visible again, with leaflets and demonstrations, such as a recent one against the construction of a mosque. At the same time, they are active underground recruiting members and carrying out combat exercises. Sweden's neo-Nazis are considered to be well-organised and extremely ready for violence. They number 500 activists and 2,000 sympathisers. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 28.11.03)

Police investigate formation of neo-Nazi paramilitary unit

In Sweden's forests, neo-Nazis are preparing for 'race war'. Now police have set up an investigation against leading figures in the extreme rightwing scene suspected of setting up an illegal paramilitary unit. According to public prosecutor Ronnie Jacobsson, relevant internet sites contain references to field manoeuvres in which participants were to appear in military outfit.

Police raid homes of prominent neo-Nazis

The homes of seven leading neo-Nazis have been raided with police and the security service of Säpo seizing computers, records and leaflets, firearms, truncheons, teargas and crossbars. At around the same time, the public prosecutor issued a warrant for the arrest of Klas Lund, one of

Sweden's most notorious neo-Nazis. He used to lead the White Aryan Resistance, from which most of the neo-Nazi groups emerged, and is now head of SMR.

Preparing for 'race war' in Sweden's forests

According to Stieg Larsson, whose periodical *Expo* scrutinises the scene, the 'SMR is dreaming of a holy race war'. In secret forest camps, members are training in weapons techniques and self-defence. In the most recent issue of SMR's propaganda magazine *National Resistance*, a uniformed man in a helmet poses in front of a swastika flag, submachine gun at the ready. A core squad on the neo-Nazi scene is grouped around Hamburg rightwing extremist Jürgen Rieger, who in 1995, acquired an old property near the west Swedish town of Skövde. Many of the Front's leading figures have been seen there recently, and some of them have moved in, according to local police detective Peter Jansson. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 28.11.03)

SWITZERLAND

Race and electoral politics

General election sees SVP breakthrough

The anti-immigrant Swiss People's Party (SVP) won the largest share of the vote in the October 2003 general election. And on December 10, for the first time, the Swiss parliament elected two members of the SVP to the seven-seat cabinet, with the anti-immigrant populist Christoph Blocher joining his colleague Samuel Schmid. Blocher's success alters an informal power-sharing arrangement among the four main parties, known as the Magic Formula, which has been in place since 1959. His election to the cabinet marks a clear shift to the Right in Switzerland's consensus government in which the Christian Democrats, radicals and SVP share power. Switzerland is now ruled by the most right-wing government in post-war history.

House of Representatives – results

The SVP now has 63 seats (up 11) in the 200-member House of Representatives. Its share of the popular vote increased to 26.6 per cent, up 5.2 per cent from 1999.

Results of Senate elections

The SVP now has two seats in the Senate. In the October 2003 general election, when elections were also held in 22 of the 26 cantons for the Senate, the SVP gained one seat. In run-off elections held in six cantons in November (because candidates did not receive an absolute majority in the first round) the SVP gained a seat in Schwyz.

What did the SVP campaign on?

The People's Party campaigned strongly for less taxes and tougher asylum rules and against closer ties with the EU. The *Guardian* described the run up to the election as 'the most explicitly foreigner-bashing in Switzerland's history'. In the last weeks of the campaign, the SVP launched an aggressive poster campaign. One carried a caricatured black face and a slogan reading 'The Swiss are increasingly becoming the Negros'. Following widespread criti-

cism the poster was withdrawn. But the SVP also put up posters showing mug shots of criminals next to the words 'Our Dear Foreigners'. Ads blamed problems on 'shameless asylum seekers', implicitly linking them to increases in murders, rapes and other violence. The UNHCR called them 'nakedly anti-asylum' and 'atrocious'.

Voters cite immigration as major concern

In the last week of the election, opinion polls showed that a key concern was immigration. Previously, a government survey published in August showed nearly half of young adults polled were anti-immigration and in favour of keeping Switzerland free from foreign influences.

Where were gains made?

The SVP has traditionally done well in Switzerland's rural German-speaking east with its power base being with farmers and craftsmen. Now, the SVP have made inroads in lower and middle-income classes in rural areas. But, for the first time, it made big gains in French-speaking western Switzerland, even winning two seats in the centre-left stronghold of Geneva, and boosting its share of the vote by ten per cent in Vaud, Fribourg and Geneva. It even won seats in cantons where it did not traditionally have a presence, such as Neuchâtel. However, it failed to make similar gains in Italian-speaking Switzerland. A survey by GfS showed the SVP was the only party to benefit from increased voter interest. Its share of the vote increased in cantons that saw a rise in turnout.

Centre-Right lose while SVP gains

The two main centre-right parties, the Radicals and Christian Democrats, suffered most from the SVP gains. Another big winner, in relative terms, was the Green Party with media commentators suggesting that Swiss politics has now been polarised into Left and Right.

Consensus system threatened

The SVP's success sounds the death knell for the current consensus system of government, say the country's media. Immediately after the results were announced, the party called it a 'historic victory' and party chair Ueli Maurer demanded a second seat in the Cabinet, putting forward the German-speaking billionaire and owner of the chemical company Ems Chemie Christoph Blocher as its candidate. On 10 December the SVP achieved the previously unthinkable – a second seat in the ruling council – when Blocher polled 121 votes, unseating Ruth Metzler, the incumbent Christian People's Party justice minister. For the first time in 131 years a sitting member of the country's cabinet was kicked out.

The 'Magic Formula'

Threatening to go into political opposition if its request for a second parliament seat was denied, the People's Party launched a direct challenge to the so-called 'Magic Formula', the power sharing arrangement dating back to 1959 that gives the Social Democrats, the Radicals and the Christian Democrats two seats each, and one for the People's Party. Under the Swiss system, all parties vote on the composition of government. This means that the People's Party do not have a demand to 'dictate' whether or not they gain a seat. In the run-up to the December 10 decision, the SVP launched an attempt to oust an existing cabinet minister, as cabinet ministers can only

be unseated when they stand for re-election every four years at the beginning of a new legislature. Attempts to unseat ministers are very rare.

SVP denies racism

In an interview with the *Neue Zürcher* newspaper soon after the election result was announced, Blocher denied that he was xenophobic, adding that foreigners were still welcome in Switzerland, as long as they were not illegal immigrants. SVP spokesman Yves Bichel also denied that the party was racist, adding that 90 per cent of all of Switzerland's asylum seekers were bogus. However, critics describe Blocher as a covert anti-Semite, recalling his campaign against foreign pressure, which he called blackmail, on Swiss banks to pay compensation to descendants of Holocaust victims.

Unique among extreme-Right parties

French National Front leader Jean Marie Le Pen immediately congratulated Blocher on his victory. Oscar Mazzoleni, author of a recent study on the People's Party, says that the SVP is unique among extreme-Right parties in Europe in that 'it has been a force in government for decades. Its recent radicalisation has occurred even though it holds a post at the heart of the power-sharing government'.

Implication of elections for EU

According to *Swiss Info*, the electoral success of the SVP could jeopardise EU integration. The SVP wants a nationwide referendum on the question of membership of the Schengen-Dublin accords which they say would undermine Switzerland's sovereignty, as border controls would cease to exist under the accord. The People's Party has also called for a referendum on the free movement of people to the ten new countries that will join the EU in 2004. (*Swiss Info* <www.swissinfo.org/sen/swissinfo.html?siteSect=100> 14, 20, 22, 23. 10, 28.11, 1.12.03, *Guardian* 21.10.03, *Jewish Chronicle* 19.12.03)

The integration debate

Zurich: referendum says 'no' to multi-faith society

In November, voters in the canton of Zurich objected in a plebiscite to a new law that would have led to the official recognition of non-Christian faiths, including Islam. Some 64 per cent of voters said 'no' to recognising faiths other than the three official religions in the canton – Protestant, Roman Catholic and the Old Catholic Churches remain the only recognised religions.

The law for recognising religions

Officially-recognised religions receive a certain amount of state funding for services that are of use to society as a whole, and from which non-members might also benefit. The law for recognising religions sets out, among other things, that the religion must carry out charitable activities. It is not allowed to have any political or economic goals. The faith in question must also have been active in Switzerland for thirty years, be organised democratically, recognise the Swiss legal system and exercise religious tolerance.

SVP mount inflammatory campaign

The proposed legislation was strongly opposed by members of the Canton Zurich branch of the SVP, as well as the centre-right Radicals. The SVP claimed that cantonal contributions – which are given to all recognised religions – would be used by Muslims for fundamentalist religious teaching. Party literature even showed a montage of the Zurich Münster with its tower replicated as a minaret and the words 'It's a question of time'. The three recognised churches and the country's anti-racism commission have heavily criticised the campaign. In a joint statement, the three churches said that opponents' assertions were simply not true, because state funds were not given for religious lessons. René Zihmann, president of the Swiss Roman Catholic Commission accused the SVP of mounting an inflammatory campaign ahead of the poll, and creating a climate of fear and misunderstanding about religious practices. Gioia Weber from the Federal Commission Against Racism said that the campaign bordered on the racist. 'It's simply not advisable to publish false allegations like those which say that "Koran" schools would be financed by taxpayers money', she said.

No uniform national practice

A study by the anti-racism commission has shown that the country's 26 cantons differ greatly in their recognition of religions. Some, such as Bern, Basel City, St Gallen and Fribourg, have already recognised the Jewish religion. Others only recognise Christian churches. Only in cantons Geneva and Neuchâtel are all religions treated the same. (*Swiss Info* 24, 11.1.12.03)

Racism and fascism

Youth drawn to extremist politics

A Geneva sociologist has concluded that Swiss youth are being attracted to the extremes of politics. On the Left, to anti-capitalist, anti-globalisation movements, on the Right to Nazi groups. Extremists have their local power bases. Skinheads recruit in country areas and rural villages. The Left recruits in big towns. But, according to the academic, it is the populist People's Party which is adopting the xenophobic views of the extreme right, which will draw youth support away from the skinhead scene. (*Swiss Info* 21.7.03)

Survey reveals xenophobia

A significant minority of Swiss want immigration to be limited and foreigners to adapt quickly, according to a new survey. Two out of three people interviewed expected foreigners to integrate swiftly; 44% voted to restrict immigration to 10% of the population. These attitudes are most prevalent in German-speaking areas; in others, young people are concerned more about unemployment. The survey was based on a sample of 20,000 men and carried out in 2000. (*Swiss Info* 19.8.03)

Africans counter negative stereotypes

The Swiss African Forum, backed by the South African and Nigerian ambassadors has launched an integration forum to defend the 35,000 African community in Switzerland and to counter their negative image. (*Swiss Info* 19.8.03)

Report on Swiss wartime past to be adapted for schools

A controversial report by historian Jean-Francois Bergier, into major failings in national policy during the war – particularly Switzerland's treatment of refugees, its co-operation with the Nazi regime and its lacklustre attempts at restitution – is being summarised for use in schools by 14-18 year-olds in Zurich. Largely praised by the Swiss government and media when the report was published in 2002, it is strongly criticised by the Swiss People's Party. Bergier denies that the report is anti-Swiss and says he hopes that the publication of the school text will prove this. His words were echoed by the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities. (*Swiss Info* 1.10.03)

Police and criminal justice

Zurich police cleared of brutality

The parliamentary commission, set up in June 2002 to examine alleged Zurich police misconduct in ten separate incidents, has dismissed the notion of a 'Rambo' mentality in the force but was critical of five cases where police used excessive violence on arrest. (*Swiss Info* 11.7.03)

Glarus: Complaint about police raid

AI and the Swiss human rights group, Augenauf, has complained that a police special unit abused its power when it carried out simultaneous raids on Rain transit centre for asylum seekers and the accommodation of undocumented workers in the town of Ennenda and two houses for asylum seekers in the town of Linthal, Canton of Glarus. It is alleged that armed police stormed buildings, bound residents' hands and feet and made them wait for hours before photographing them naked. Black hoods were placed over the heads of detainees so that they could not see. The trousers and underpants of some male detainees were pulled down by police officers who stuck numbers onto their backs with adhesive tape and photographed them from behind 'in sexually degrading positions'. A 16-year-old boy, an asylum seeker, apparently fleeing civil war in his home country and frightened by the raid on the Rain transit centre, jumped from a third-floor window, suffering serious back injuries. AI and the Red Cross have called for an investigation but police have dismissed the accusations as distorted. (*Swiss Info* 5.8.03, AI press release 4.8.03)

UK

Race and electoral politics

BNP ups and downs

John Tyndall, the founder of the British National Party (BNP) which he led for seventeen years, has been expelled from the party at its annual festival. He is said to be launching legal action against the current chairman, Nick Griffin. Griffin has been very anxious to give the party a more respectable image and take it into mainstream politics. At the same annual festival in August a BNP Burnley councillor, Luke Smith was suspended and told to resign his seat after a drunken brawl at an earlier 'Red, White and Blue' festival to celebrate the BNP win-

ning its 17th council seat. Another BNP councillor, Robin Evans, who won a seat in Blackburn in November 2002, has resigned from the BNP for 'organisational' reasons.

On 4 September, the BNP won its 18th council seat in Thurrock, Essex. The by-election was caused by the death of a Labour councillor. This is an area which has not been traditionally associated with the far-right. A local black Liberal Democrat commented, 'There is no racial problem in this area and the BNP have nothing to offer the people of Thurrock.' According to the newly elected BNP councillor voter concerns over asylum, NHS problems and crime accounted for his surprise victory.

In two council by-elections in November the BNP was roundly defeated. In Oldham, which is a target area for the party, the BNP candidate won a mere 539 votes. In Birmingham's Stockland Green ward, the BNP candidate won 503 votes, taking fourth place. (*Morning Star* 25.8.22.11.03, *Guardian* 5.9.03)

BNP exploits asylum hysteria

According to a report prepared by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) the BNP has successfully exploited hysteria around asylum and the disillusionment with mainstream politics. Intelligence suggests that the BNP has become more sophisticated in the way it campaigns, the seats it chooses to fight and the candidates it selects to fight them. The BNP gets support from people who do not normally vote, many supporters are aged 18-35 and most are male. It is now getting support from lower-middle class voters and 20-30% of people say they would consider voting for the party. (*Guardian* 16.9.03)

West Yorkshire Conservative councillor joins BNP

For the first time, a serving Conservative councillor has defected to the BNP. Geoffrey Wallace a councillor in West Yorkshire has moved over to the BNP saying that this was the only party to stand up for British culture. (*Jewish Chronicle* 12.12.03)

The integration debate

Citizenship test introduced

Prospective British citizens will be required to show a basic knowledge of the country's history and sit a short written test before they can swear the oath of allegiance to the Queen and pledge loyalty to the country. The historical dimension had been inserted (after an advisory panel had explicitly ruled it out) at the request of David Blunkett, home secretary. He felt that some communities had become estranged from the mainstream culture and denounced 'trendy liberal multi-culturalism' which could be to the detriment of integration. (*Daily Telegraph* 4.9.03)

ID cards on the table

David Blunkett has announced that millions of people will be issued with ID cards within three years. The first groups of people to have them will be 4.6 million foreign nationals. The cards will contain biometric information such as fingerprint information and iris scans. The Home Office estimates that by 2013 almost 80 per cent of the population would possess either a passport or driving licence containing biometric details on a microchip. (*Times* 12.11.03)

Government minister insults Muslims

The Foreign Office minister Denis MacShane faced a grassroots revolt in his constituency after advance text of a speech indicated he was to tell Muslims that they had to choose between British values and the way of terrorists. Muslim organisations called the speech outrageous and disgraceful. (*Guardian* 28.11.03)

Racism and fascism

Media coverage of asylum is distorted

Research commissioned by Article 19, which campaigns for free expression, has found that the British media's coverage of asylum seekers and refugees is characterised by stereotyping, exaggeration and inaccurate language. (*IRR News* 19.11.03)

Concern over racism in Northern Ireland

Anti-racist guidelines after Craigavon attacks

Following racist attacks in Craigavon which forced a Muslim family to leave their home and a leafleting campaign by the White Nationalist Party (WNP), which opposes the building of a mosque near Portadown, Sinn Fein has proposed a charter for the borough council to ensure that all debate on race is conducted in a responsible manner and no campaign materials incite hatred on the ground of colour. But this proposal is already being leafleted against, with Ulster Unionist councillor Fred Crowe, who has opposed the mosque, being praised as a 'unionist gladiator'. John O'Dowd, the proposer of the motion, who is being attacked by racists, explained that there had been 'some questionable language used by councillors in relation to the mosque issue and we would ask them to keep racism out of Craigavon'. (*Belfast Digital* 29.8.03)

Ulster Unionists told to expel racist

The Anti-racist Network in Belfast, supported by a number of other groups, has told the Ulster Unionist Party to expel Fred Crowe who has made serious, insulting racist remarks which are increasing the suffering of ethnic minority people in Craigavon and across the whole of Northern Ireland. He was shown on a BBC report trying to persuade young people that Muslims were bombers and killed their daughters for marrying Christians. The statement, which called the remarks a 'chilling example of incitement to racial hatred', called on churches and political parties to condemn Crowe's remarks. (*Anti-racist Network* 17.10.03)

Ballymena attack linked to white nationalists

An African man, who had lived in Northern Ireland for 13 years was attacked as he watched a Royal Black Institution parade through Ballymena. A man came up to him and told him to 'go back to the jungle' and then head-butted him. A fight ensued as Mr Hassan Ibrahim defended himself and the parade of 40,000 marchers and spectators watched as the two rolled in the road. Police arrived and Mr Ibrahim went to the station to make a complaint. The attack is being linked to a rise in White Nationalist Party (WNP) activity in the town. (*ic Northern Ireland* <<http://icnorthernireland.icnetwork.co.uk/>> 4.9.03)

BNP warns against WNP

Members of the BNP in Northern Ireland have been warned against attending meetings of the WNP which is attempting to recruit in Antrim and Londonderry. The BNP has denied that the two organisations are linked and told the group to disband because it was heightening sectarian and racial tensions. During a day of action, flyers from the WNP had been handed out opposing non-white immigration and enforced multi-racialism. The phone number on the leaflets was believed to be that of someone with loyalist terrorist links. (*ic Northern Ireland* 23.8.03)

Families flee racist attacks

Three families fled their south Belfast homes on 21 December after suspected racist attacks. In one incident bricks were hurled through the window of an African family's home. In the other, two pregnant Chinese women were assaulted. Local anti-racists did not see these as the work of local sectarian organisations but thought that individuals might be receiving help from mainland-based extremists such as the BNP or Combat 18. (*Guardian* 22,23.12.03)

East Sussex: Gypsy effigies burnt on bonfire

The police are to investigate the burning of a fake Gypsy caravan, with the offensive word 'Pikey' affixed as the number plate, in the village of Firle in East Sussex. The incident has led to a number of complaints of racism from residents against the bonfire society. The organiser tried to justify the burning by saying it was in protest at the authorities for failing to move on a group of travellers who parked 15 caravans in Firle during the summer. The CRE hopes the police investigation will help to highlight the appalling racism against Gypsies and travellers. (*Times* 3.11.03, *BBC News* 28.10.03)

More on racial violence

Levels of racial violence across the whole of the UK appear to be on the rise. Below we provide a selection of local reports in four weeks during August and September:

Attempted murder in Hull

Iraqi asylum seekers in Hull during July were systematically assaulted and harassed on the streets. Thirteen attacks were reported to the police in one week. Victims alleged that they had been attacked by individuals wielding Stanley knives and cricket bats. In other incidents Iraqis walking along Hull's streets were rammed by cars. In one such attack, two men were followed by three cars, one of which mounted the pavement, colliding with one man and throwing him into the air. The victim suffered severe leg injuries and a dislocated ankle. In September a 23-year-old man was charged with the attempted murder of Salar Hamid, an asylum seeker, and committed to Hull Crown Court. (*IRR News* 30.7.03, *Hull Daily Mail* 15.9.03)

Walsall, Midlands

Dozens of people, including a group of asylum seekers, were trapped in a block of flats at Walsall for two hours as fire raged outside their front doors. Police are exploring the possibility of arson. (*Walsall Express and Star* 22.8.03)

Surrey

Race equality groups have urged the public to support their pledge to stamp out racism after a spate of attacks in which families have been besieged by racist mobs who shout abuse and smash property. Children as young as four have been targeted, as have black staff in the local leisure centre. (*Evening Standard* n.d)

Welshpool

A crown court judge has described a racist who insulted a Bangladeshi by branding him a terrorist and telling him to leave the country, as 'pathetic' and called such insults 'contemptible'. A Welshpool man was charged with racially aggravated public order and assault after a verbal and physical attack on the assistant manager of a restaurant in January. The attacker was ordered to carry out 200 hours community service and pay £360 in compensation. (*ic Wales* <<http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/>> 4.9.03)

London

An Asian man was hospitalised following an attack in Plumstead, south-east London. A gang of youths, armed with a scaffold pole and a wooden club covered with nails, attacked four Asian men leaving a community centre and approaching their car. The driver sustained facial injuries and the police are treating the incident as a 'vicious and unprovoked' racial attack. (*This is local London* <www.thisislocallondon.co.uk> 11.9.03)

Racial violence and the courts

Increased sentences for racial and religious crimes

As from 13 October the power of the Attorney General to challenge unduly lenient sentences will be extended to cover certain racially and religiously aggravated offences, which can now be referred to the Court of Appeal for review where it is felt that a tougher sentence is merited. The Attorney general, Lord Goldsmith, QC, commented, 'I have pushed for this extension because race and religious crimes are hate crimes, which strike at the heart of people's right to feel safe and protected by the law. A racially or religiously motivated attack is an attack on the whole community.' (Home Office press release 11.9.03)

Ellesmere: two youths found guilty of killing Gypsy boy

Two 16-year olds have been found guilty of killing a Gypsy boy in Ellesmere port in May 2003. Johnny Delaney, 14, was found in a field with serious head injuries and died in hospital. The two youths, who, during the trial, blamed one another for the attack, were found guilty of manslaughter and not murder. The judge told the court that he did not believe the attack was racially motivated, though the police said, after the verdict, that they believed the attack, which was accompanied by racist language, had been racially motivated. According to a witness who tried to stop the attack, he was told by one of the accused, 'He deserves it. He's a fucking Gypsy'. (*Guardian* 18.11.03, *IRR News* 3.12.03)

Sheffield: staff jailed for racial harassment

A Sheffield factory boss and three staff were jailed after a five-year campaign of brutal racism against a black employee who had learning difficulties. He had not only been verbally abused but physically hurt by being punched, kicked, lashed to a forklift, tied to a digger

bucket and hoisted in the air, wrapped in Clingfilm and photographed with a blow-up sex doll. The ordeal, which the accused described as horseplay, though they pleaded guilty to racially aggravated harassment, had left the black man with post-traumatic stress disorder. (*Mirror* 15.9.03)

London: vandals of Jewish Cemetery sentenced

Two 16-year-olds who caused almost £60,000 worth of damage to gravestones at the Jewish Plashet Grove cemetery in East Ham, escaped a custodial sentence. They were given a referral order to the youth offending team. (*Jewish Chronicle* 12.9.03)

Guernsey moves against incitement to racial hatred

Douzenier Brian Sheriff, the Tourist Board vice-president in Guernsey has cited verbal abuse and even one racist attack against Madeiran workers, in his attempts to get the authorities to act against racism. Evidence suggests that Madeirans are regularly called 'Porko bastard' by racists. According to Portuguese on Guernsey, the police rarely sort out incidents. They hope that a new law on incitement will help to get prosecutions against racial abuse. (*This is Guernsey* <www.thisisguernsey.co.uk> 29.9.03)

Police and criminal justice

Black police organise recruitment boycott

Following the complete collapse of a case against a senior black police officer, which included allegations of endangering national security, abusing drugs, and using prostitutes, all of which proved baseless after a £7million investigation, the Metropolitan Black Police Association decided to tell potential ethnic minority recruits not to join the Metropolitan police. (*Evening Standard* 16.9.03)

Undercover journalist reveals police racism

A BBC reporter enrolled as a police cadet and served as a policeman for six months in a Greater Manchester force while secretly filming the extreme racist views of some of the police officers. The shocking film, called 'The Secret Policeman', which showed officers saying they were in sympathy with the BNP, that Stephen Lawrence deserved to be murdered, that they had stopped Asian people on numerous occasions for minor traffic infringements because they wanted to harass 'Pakis', was broadcast of national television in October. Seven policemen were forced to resign as a consequence of the film and a number of forces are now looking into their recruitment policies, so as to try to weed out potential hard-line racists. And the Commission for Racial Equality is to launch an investigation into racism in the police service. (*Guardian* 25.10.03, *Sun* 6.11.03, CRE News Release 30.10.03)

Home Secretary to stop BNP serving as police

Following the declaration by the BNP's West Midlands organiser that up to twelve local police officers had joined the BNP and that this was part of a national trend in which groups from stations applied for membership, David Blunkett is proposing a ban. Backed by the Metropolitan Police, he has said that there should be a ban stopping BNP members from serving in the police service. He would discuss the matter with the Police

Federation. The Association of Chief Police Officers backed the home secretary's comments. (*Daily Express* 3.11.03, *Independent* 5.11.03)

Prosecution of detention centre detainees questioned

On 15 August, after a four-month trial, two men were convicted of violent disorder, four men had the charges against them dismissed, two men pleaded guilty to affray and violent disorder and three men were found not guilty. Twelve men, all asylum seekers, were on trial for incidents which took place on 14 February 2002 during which the privately-run Yarl's Wood Detention Centre in Bedfordshire burnt down, causing £40 million damage.

A number of disturbing features emerged during the trial: key witnesses had been deported, a specialist company had been hired by Group 4 to train its witnesses prior to the case, Group 4 staff were given counselling sessions despite the police request that they should not talk about the fire and one juror was excused during the case apparently because of ill-health induced by prejudiced comments about asylum seekers being made by other jury members. For those who were found not-guilty of charges arising from the fire incident, any celebration was short-lived; they were re-arrested under immigration powers and returned to detention. (*IRR News* 3.9.03)

Black death in custody – 'unlawful killing'

An inquest verdict of 'unlawful killing' was returned on 3 October 2003 into the death, in January 1999, of a mentally ill black man, Roger Sylvester.

The case of Roger Sylvester

Police had been called to a house where the young black man was outside, naked, acting in a bizarre way. The issue as to how he had been restrained by police officers as he was taken to a psychiatric unit of a hospital, was the subject of much debate at the inquest. It emerged that he had been restrained with too much force and for too long and, according to nurse witnesses, held face down. All the officers denied holding Roger on his front – a position which can lead to 'postural asphyxia' – which is warned against in police training. Roger Sylvester is the seventh black man since 1980 whose death in police custody has been found by an inquest to have been an 'unlawful killing'.

Although the CPS decided in 2000 there was not enough evidence to prosecute any officers involved in the death, this was challenged by the family and they hope to see officers facing charges. The police have now, four years after the death, suspended the officers involved from duty. The eight police officers have begun proceedings to have the inquest verdict overturned. (*IRR News* 9.10.03, *Guardian* 23.12.03)

Inquiry ordered into prison murder

On 16 October the Law Lords ruled that the home secretary must set up an independent public inquiry into the murder at Feltham Young Offenders' Institute in March 2000 of Zahid Mubarek by his racist cell mate. The Mubarek family has been fighting for a public inquiry since the murder but it had been refused. The High Court had ruled that this was a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights, but it was over-ruled by three court of appeal judges. The High Court's verdict that

the state was under a duty not only to ensure a prisoner's right to life was protected, but also to investigate publicly the death of an inmate due to failures of the prison system, has now been upheld.

Killer had history of racially-motivated crimes

The cellmate, who has been convicted of the murder, had a long history of offences, many apparently racially motivated, and was known by some officers to be a dangerous racist, yet he was placed in a cell with a young Asian. He battered Zahid to death with a table leg and then drew a swastika on the cell wall with the heel of his shoe and above it the words: 'just killed me padmate'. An inquiry was held into the incident by the CRE, largely in private and made a finding of racial discrimination against the prison service.

A report by the CRE into prison racism has found the service guilty of seventeen counts of unlawful racial discrimination. The director general of the service expressed his dismay at the report, which showed that there are now more young black men in prison than at university. (*Guardian* 17.10.03, 17.12.03)

Black man dies in custody at Heathrow airport

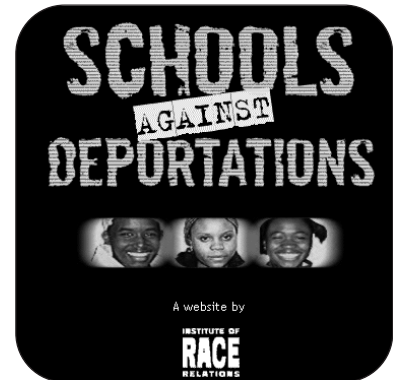
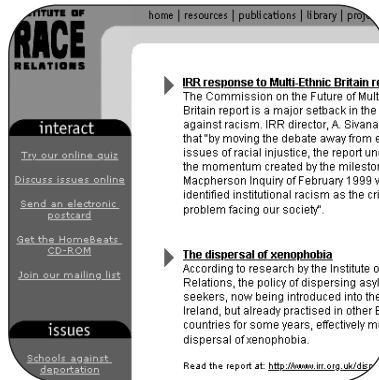
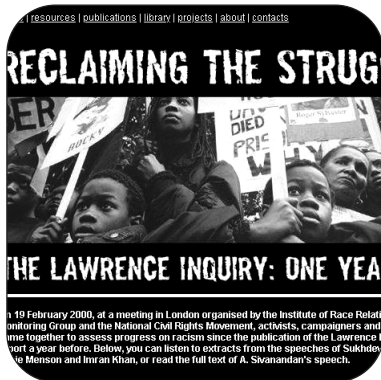
Paul Yorke, a black man, died after being arrested by police officers at Terminal 2 of Heathrow airport on 2 November. He was taken to Heathrow police station where he was charged with being a 'prohibited person' (he had earlier been banned from airport property) and detained in a cell. The following day an ambulance was called when he was found collapsed in the cell. At hospital he was pronounced dead. (*IRR News* 13.11.03)

Crown Prosecution Service criticised

An independent research project into the working of the Crown Prosecution Service has found that black defendants appear to be more harshly treated than their white counterparts – in terms of being charged inappropriately and being refused bail. The research also found that the police is still failing to acknowledge the racially-aggravated dimension to crimes, as is the CPS, and prosecutors are entering into plea-bargaining to lose racially-aggravated prosecutions so as to downgrade offences. The CPS has accepted that in 70% of the cases of racial crimes that were examined in depth, errors and faults had been committed. (*IRR News* 27.10.03)

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COMING VERY SOON IN THE ERA

A two-part investigation into the impact of anti-terrorist measures on Muslim and refugee communities across Europe. *'The Stigma of terrorism: race, refugees and religion in Europe'* provides an essential update to the ERA's 2002 report on *'Racism the hidden cost of September 11'*.

This Audit was edited by Liz Fekete and Jenny Bourne and compiled with the help of:

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