

EUROPEAN RACE BULLETIN

INSTITUTE OF
RACE
RELATIONS

AUSTRIA

Race and electoral politics

ÖVP leadership shows its anti-asylum colours

Herwig van Staa, a senior conservative (ÖVP) government minister in south Tyrol is demanding that 'sharper measures' be taken against refugees and proposes that immigrants be accommodated in 'an internment facility'. He has also spoken of the criminality of asylum seekers and is making every effort to avoid making any of the necessary refugee accommodation available. This follows a politician from the ÖVP in Upper Austria saying that refugees should be forbidden from leaving their homes. The interior minister (ÖVP), who was to have presided at a police v. asylum seekers football match has now cancelled. (*Boeses Osterreich* 28.6.04)

Freedom Party defeated in Vorarlberg

Haider's Freedom Party lost half of its support in regional elections in Vorarlberg held on 29 September. Schüssel's Conservatives regained their majority in the province. The Freedom Party, which had been governing in coalition with the Conservative People's Party, had campaigned on two themes: opposition to immigration and to heavy truck traffic. (*AFP* 16.9.04, *Guardian* 20.9.04)

Racism and fascism

Anti-racism law is too weak

Belatedly, Austria is implementing the EU 2000 anti-discrimination and anti-racism legislation, which should have been in place last year. A bill published in May 2004 has been criticised widely for its timidity and loopholes. It bans discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age or religion in the workplace. No longer can jobs or housing adverts specify openings for Austrians only. But the fine of 360 Euros has been criticised as far too low and the law does not do enough to ease the burden of proof that victims of discrimination face in Austrian courts. The bill has been held up because of bitter debate between the ruling conservative-rightwing coalition on the one hand and the Socialists

and Greens on the other. (*European Business News Online* <<http://www.EUBusiness.com/>> 28.5.04)

Quick to forget

A study by the Linz-based IMAS Institute has found that 10 per cent of Austrians do not know who Adolf Hitler was (an increase of five per cent since 1985). (*Jewish Chronicle* 17.9.04)

Anti-Semites disrupt theatre

In June, four people disrupted a play at Vienna's Rabenhof theatre which was dealing with the events of the 1934 civil war. Four men launched into anti-Semitic and extreme right tirades. They gave the Hitler salute and knocked down a theatre staff member. (*Boeses Osterreich* 28.6.04)

BELGIUM

Race and electoral politics

Vlaams Blok drops hotline plans

After ministers attacked the party for opening a hotline in Antwerp, inviting citizens to denounce suspected illegal immigrants, the Vlaams Blok (VB) dropped its plans. Questioned by MPs from the two Socialist parties, the Flemish Christian Democrats and Ecolo (francophone Greens), the interior minister said the presence of illegal immigrants was a matter for the police and not a political party. (*The Bulletin* 20.5.04)

Vlaams Blok in cosmetic make over following court case?

Despite, or perhaps because of, its success in the June polls (23 per cent in European elections, 24 per cent in the Flemish poll) the VB is apparently having to rethink some of its policies in order to enter into power-sharing with other parties. It is widely speculated that because of the conviction in April of three party associations for breaching anti-racist legislation, the VB could lose state funding and be banned from public media. In such a case the party would make some changes such as changing its

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name and its statutes. It is even rumoured that it might drop from its programme reference to all immigrants returning home.

The Ghent court found the party guilty of inciting racism, discrimination and segregation in a much-publicised case brought by the Human Rights League. The organisations involved in the case are the Nationalist Broadcasting Foundation, which produces the VB's programmes for radio and TV on the Flemish-speaking public network, the Nationalist Training Institute which organises education and training courses for activists and officials and the Flemish Concentration which administers grants from the state. (An appeal against the ruling has been made to the Cassation Court.)

Rethink on cordon sanitaire

Belgian politicians in Antwerp have been refusing to share power with the VB, though it represents the second political force in Flanders. Human rights groups accuse the VB of singling out immigrants and people of North African origin in its campaign material. The media has been caught in a dilemma. Though till recently it observed an unofficial blackout, with the recent successes, it says it is harder to ignore this major political force.

According to *The Bulletin* there is a rethink going on as to whether the *cordon sanitaire* should be maintained against the Blok. Some politicians think it is counter-productive and might deliver yet more protest votes to the VB, which could make it the strongest party in Flanders' local elections in 2006. Others argue that involving the VB in everyday politics might force it to become more reasonable and less extreme (as, it is argued, happened to Fini's National Alliance in the Berlusconi governments). Also involving it in government could, it is argued, show the electorate how impracticable its policies are.

A quarter of all burgomasters interviewed in Flanders agreed to dropping the *cordon sanitaire*. Though it might break down at communal level, experts believe it will be maintained as Belgium forms new regional governments. In Flanders the head of the Flemish Christian Democrats said the administration will be tripartite with Christian Socialists and Liberals: the Green party opting to go into opposition. (*BBC News* 12.7.04, *Expatica News* 23.6.04, *Searchlight* July 2004, *The Bulletin* 24.6., 9.9.04)

Racism and fascism

Antwerp: Jewish student stabbed

Up to a thousand people demanding zero tolerance of anti-Semitism gathered in Antwerp to protest at the near-fatal stabbing of a 16-year-old yeshivah student on 24 June. He and three friends had been chased by a gang of 10-15 North African youths armed with knives and other blunt instruments. The justice minister told demonstrators that the government would do everything to catch those responsible and Jewish leaders expressed the view that the Muslim community as a whole was not anti-Semitic in Belgium. Muslim groups joined the rally which was held in front of a memorial to Belgian-Jewish victims of Nazi crimes. Another four incidents of attacks against the Orthodox community in Antwerp were reported in the week following the stabbing. (*Jewish Chronicle* 2.7.04, *Expatica News* 28.7.04, *The Bulletin* 8.7.04)

Vlaams Blok councillor arrested for shooting

Wim Fellx, a VB councillor of Sint-Gills-Waas, near Antwerp has been arrested in connection with the shooting of two men in a café in Sint-Pauwels, in which one man was killed and another seriously wounded. Fellx had been ejected from the nightclub for drug use, but returned later with a gun. (*The Bulletin* 27.5.04)

Asylum centre attacked

A centre for asylum seekers was attacked on 3 July by three armed men wearing masks. In Dutch they asked who was Muslim and beat several men before fleeing the scene. (*The Bulletin* 8.7.04)

Wallonia does not welcome foreigners

According to an intercultural exchange body which organises for families across Europe to accept foreign students on study trips abroad, the French-speaking south of Belgium is one of the most inhospitable regions. (*Expatica News* 2.8.04)

Health system fails foreigners

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) reports that thousands of foreigners are going without medical care because they find the health system so confusing and forbidding. MSF says its doctors in drop-in centres treated around 10,000 people in 2003 and 96 per cent were foreigners. It was quite wrong, says MSF, for bureaucracy and red tape to shut out so many of the country's poorest and most disadvantaged inhabitants. (*Expatica News* 14.7.04)

The politics of assimilation

Forced name changes

Some employers in Flanders are forcing immigrant workers to adopt Belgian-sounding names. According to the Federation of Moroccan Unions, staff at large companies, such as mobile phone giant Base, are asking those with Muslim names to convert them into something more familiar: eg Fatima becomes Vicky, Allai becomes Allain. Base denied the allegation. (*The Bulletin* 2.9.04)

Police and criminal justice

Police find racism in their ranks

A report by the police's own internal investigation service has revealed shocking levels of racism, intimidating behaviour and abuse of power within the country's law enforcement officers. The internal committee, called Comité P found that complaints against the police rose by 25 per cent between 2002 and 2003. In four years, complaints have risen by over 70 per cent. The largest number of complaints against the police come from ordinary citizens in areas with large immigrant populations, including central Brussels, the commune of Schaerbeek and Antwerp. Comité P investigated 37 cases of threatening behaviour, 6 cases of racism, 19 of defamation, 538 of violence and 132 of arbitrary arrest and detention. (*Expatica News* 23.6.04)

Amnesty International concerned about police violence and other abuses

In its observations on Belgium's human rights record,

the Human Rights Committee has expressed dismay about the continuing reports of police brutality, often accompanied by acts of racial discrimination. It also criticises the ways in which investigations into such conduct are conducted and calls for the introduction of legislation guaranteeing people in custody the right to inform someone and have access to a lawyer and doctor. The report also criticises the treatment of foreigners during deportations and deplores the fact that allegations of excessive force from escorting officers, continues, despite there being new guidelines. It further criticised the way that rejected asylum seekers and unauthorised migrants were confined in the transit zone of Brussels national airport, sometimes for months. (*AI News Service* 2.8.04)

CYPRUS

The politics of assimilation

Bishop denies promising land to refugees

The bishop of Paphos has been forced to deny that he ever promised that the church would create a fund and donate property to refugees in case people voted 'no' in the referendum on uniting Cyprus. The newspaper *Politis* which had made the assertion, also published his home phone number and he was inundated with calls. (*Cyprus Mail* 4.5.04)

Dispute over granting citizenship to children of mixed marriages

Centre-Right EDEK and DIKO deputy Nicos Pittokopitis has been criticising the interior minister for the fact that children of mixed marriages were being granted citizenship. He suggested that Turkish settlers were being granted citizenship en masse. But the interior minister has said that the granting of citizenship to children with one parent from Turkey, had been agreed by all parties. Kyprianou, AKEL party spokesman (Communist) came to the interior minister's defence. DIKO deputy conceded that there had been a communications breakdown in his party. EDEK's leader warned that legalising the citizenship of children of mixed marriages would take away the Greek Cypriot side's arguments against the issue at a future stage. (*Cyprus Mail* 2.7.04)

Veto on Turkey threat

President Tassos Papadopoulos announced on TV on 11 October, that Cyprus reserved the right to vote against Turkey's EU membership when leaders meet in December. It has been pointed out that Cyprus is in a very difficult position since Turkey refuses to recognise the Republic of Cyprus (a member of the EU) as a state. It only recognises Turkish Northern Cyprus. The South recently voted against unifying the island. (*EUobserver* <<http://www.euobserver.com/>> 12.10.04)

Racism and fascism

Turkish Gypsy boy murdered

An 11-year-old Turkish boy, Salih Mehmet Ozhovarda,

was stabbed to death in Limassol on 13 July by a mentally disturbed man. The attacker, who was also a drug user, was later caught by coast guards. Fearing that the crime might be construed as being politically motivated, police increased patrols in Turkish Cypriot areas of Limassol. The interior minister expressed his shock and called for calm. (*Cyprus Mail* 15.7.04)

Left-wing youth attacked

Nine campers had to be treated in hospital after their EDON-AKEL youth camp in Larnaca was attacked by a group of right-wingers armed with metal pipes, clubs and spray paint. It was, according to EDON's chairman, a completely unprovoked attack. (*Cyprus Mail* 25.8.04)

Ombudswoman targets racism

During 2003 the Ombudswoman, Eliana Nicolaou dealt with 1,500 complaints, many of which were of racism. She said that she had told the President of the need to set up a Racism Authority and Equal rights in Labour authority in line with EU directives. (*Cyprus Mail* nd)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Racism and fascism

Foreigners allege massive discrimination

A survey of foreigners suggests that in many areas of life – from getting treatment in hospitals, opening bank accounts to extending a visa – massive difficulties are being presented. The frustrations at dealing with long queues and having difficulty with bureaucracy seems to extend to anyone who is not Czech – including Slovaks, who till 1993 were citizens of the same country. A New Yorker who was racially attacked and had a bottle smashed in her face, was then treated badly in hospital, where she was immediately presented with a bill. There are an estimated 250,000 foreigners with long-term permits in the CR. (*Prague Post* 22.7.04)

DENMARK

Race and electoral politics

DFP bargains for more deportations

In August, the Danish People's Party (DFP) told the government it would not support the annual budget bill and would withdraw its backing for troops in Iraq unless there was a programme to speed up the repatriation of failed Iraqi asylum seekers. For months the DFP had prioritised repatriations of immigrants from Denmark, calling on the responsible minister to offer voluntary repatriations to the majority of immigrants. According to DFP leader, Pia Kjaersgaard, refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants are a financial burden, which Danish citizens and primarily the elderly are being targeted for cutbacks. In attacking Iraqis generally, Kjaersgaard said that it was 'unreasonable that Danish soldiers jeopardise their lives while Iraqi men are smuggled up in Denmark,

refusing to go back'. Spokesman on integration for the Conservative Party replied that no party had the power to send back more Iraqis since Denmark already sent back the greatest number. (*Migration News Sheet* August, September 2004)

Haarder fights it out with the DPP

On integration minister Bertel Haarder being handed a broader cabinet role, to include development, the DFP saw it as a chance to pressure the government to accelerate the return of asylum seekers and to link immigration policy to Third World Aid. But within hours of his appointment, Haarder said he had no intention of bowing to DFP pressure. 'If you use development aid as an incentive for countries that won't take back their own citizens, then other countries will suddenly decide to stop taking in their refugees in order to wangle more western aid funds', he said. However the daily *Jyllands-Posten* believes that Haarder's appointment should rather be seen as the government's shield against the DFP and its increasingly aggressive calls for immigration restrictions. (*Copenhagen Post* <www.cphpost.dk> 3.8.04)

Union backs tougher refugee policy

A poll of members of SiD (the General Workers' Union) has revealed a majority in favour of a tougher refugee policy. The majority actually prefer the Liberal PM Anders Fogh Rasmussen's policy to that of the union-affiliated Social Democratic rival. And Bertel Haarder, the Liberal Party's integration minister actually got an increase of support from union members as compared with last year's poll. It was only on the issue of immigration that the Liberals scored over the Social Democrats. On other issues such as welfare, education and employment, trade unionists supported the current premier Lykketoft. (*Copenhagen Post* 23.8.04)

The politics of assimilation

Integration minister plans compulsory language classes

Integration Minister Bertel Haarder supports a plan to make language teaching obligatory for all asylum seekers and immigrants. Currently, classes are free and taken up by only half of the target group. According to Haarder, 'We have already made Danish language proficiency a requirement for permanent residency and Danish citizenship. By making language instruction obligatory, we're actually doing a service for foreigners brought to Denmark through family reunification'. (*Copenhagen Post* 1.6.04)

DFP's call to arms against 'Islamism'

Addressing the People's Party national caucus, Pia Kjaersgaard its leader, accused the government of turning a blind eye to fanatical Islamic groups operating in Copenhagen. She called for a further crackdown on immigration and linked the war on terror to a tougher stance on Islamism in Denmark. She compared Islamism with Nazism and Marxism and issued a call to arms against this new 'world revolutionary' movement which, she said wanted to impose Sharia law around the world. She cited an article which said that Danish immigrant

children had been sent on 'reconditioning trips' to Muslim schools, which she termed 'Koran prisons' and said 5,000 had attended. Kjaersgaard took credit at the caucus for the clampdown on immigration since the 2001 election and reiterated that the party would make its support for the national budget contingent on faster repatriation of asylum seekers (see above). (*Copenhagen Post* 20.9.04)

Racism and fascism

Immigrants living in ghetto areas

A government committee has been set up to investigate the problem of ghettoisation as more and more immigrants live in institutional housing projects. Immigrants and their children are now clustered in particular areas and the government has earmarked DKK 60 m (8m Euro) to combat ghettoisation, including homework help for children, job centres and volunteer initiatives. Nationwide, some 250,000 people live in social ghettos, loosely defined as areas where 30 per cent of residents are either welfare-dependent or unskilled single households. (*Copenhagen Post* 1.9.04)

One third of the homeless are immigrant

One in three residents in Copenhagen's homeless shelters is an immigrant or refugee, according to a new study by Copenhagen Council. They appear to be even more marginalised than Danish-born drug addicts, according to the findings. (*Copenhagen Post* 6.9.04)

Far-right radio station requests double airtime

Radio Oasen, a far-right station that regularly broadcasts Nazi ideology, has applied for an extension in licensed air time from sixty-one to one-hundred-and-twenty hours per week. Over the last six years, the station received 400,000 Kroner from the Culture Ministry in subsidy. The Minister told Danmarks Radio that Radio Oasten will continue to receive its 78,000 Kroner subsidy, as in previous years and that the government is obliged to provide financial support even for stations which broadcast extremist views. The Radio Oasten's radio licence was revoked in September 1996 after it aired passages from *Mein Kampf*. (*Copenhagen Post* 1.6.04, Radio Netherlands)

Police and criminal justice

Rise in young 'immigrant' violent crime

Copenhagen city police have indicated that there is a rise in young 'immigrants' being over-represented in crime. Teenagers are said to be using knives, something which horrifies Inspector Larsen. He told a newspaper that there had been a number of brutal stabbings over the past year, including the killing of an Italian tourist, knifed last August, for which two young immigrants are to stand trial. Last month a 21-year-old bystander was inadvertently stabbed through the heart by a 19-year-old non-Dane, days later an American exchange student was stabbed and most recently a Norwegian was stabbed in the back by an immigrant gang. Since the murder last year, city laws prohibit the carrying of concealed knives and switchblades. (*Copenhagen Post* 25.8.04)

FINLAND

Racism and fascism

Prime minister's father speaks out of turn

The National Bureau of Investigation has decided that it will not pursue a criminal investigation of Professor Tatu Vanhanen, the father of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, for his recent racist remarks. The professor had shocked many when he said in an interview with a Finnish monthly that evolution had made Europeans and North Americans more intelligent than Africans. He had said the IQ of Finns was 97, whereas in Africa it is between 60 and 70. The Prime Minister had refused to debate in public with his father and had strongly condemned racism. It appeared from the tone of the interview and its heading that the intention of the piece was to provoke the prime minister into taking a stand on his father's views. (*STT* 12, 16.8.04, *Helsingin Sanomat* 12.8.04)

FRANCE

Racism and fascism

The issue of rising levels of anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim/anti-Arab racism has once again dominated French political life this summer. But the added ingredient, the intervention of Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, has neither helped to clarify the actual levels of violence against minorities, nor the issue of what constitutes anti-Semitism (as opposed to political anti-Zionism or anti-Israeli-ism). Also, because certain groups for political reasons overstate the involvement of Muslim, pro-Palestinian youth as perpetrators of violence against Jews, it actually masks the fact that in a number of attacks (most clearly in the Alsace area) Jews, Muslims and black people are being targeted, which, along with the use of swastikas, the letters HH and numbers 88, suggests the involvement of far-Right extremists in some areas, as principal perpetrators. In other areas, for example, Corsica, local, traditional nationalism appears to merge with a new anti-Arabism to create a very dangerous, politicised movement.

Without in any way wishing to play down the seriousness of all forms of racial violence, and the desecration of graves is especially abhorrent, from the news sources at our disposal it appears that Muslim people and institutions are probably undergoing a great number of attacks in the current French political climate.

PS demands that the government acts

The story began at the beginning of June when the Socialist Party (PS) demanded that interior minister de Villepin should assume his responsibilities and arrest those behind an anti-Semitic attack on a rabbi's son in Boulogne-Billancourt (Hauts-de-Seine) and racist graffiti scrawled on the house of a Strasbourg imam. (*AP* 1.6.04)

Chirac calls for end to 'odious' racial attacks

On 8 July Chirac made a national appeal for racial and religious tolerance as part of a campaign to tackle a surge in racist attacks. In a condemnation of the desecration of Muslim and Jewish cemeteries over the previous three months, he spoke of 'despicable and odious acts of hatred soiling our nation'. The President travelled to a small village in South-West France where the local population had sheltered Jews from the Nazis during the second world war, to make his speech.

Earlier in the same week as Chirac's speech, de Villepin had said that attacks were on the increase and the situation becoming serious. The interior ministry had registered 67 attacks on Jews or their property and 160 threats against Jews in the first quarter of the year, compared with 42 attacks and 191 threats in the last three months of 2003. (*Guardian* 9.7.04, *EUobserver* 9.7.04)

Anti-Semitism hoax

A mother, who claimed to be the victim of a very severe anti-Semitic attack on her and her baby on 11 July, later admitted in court to making up the whole story and was given a four-month suspended sentence and ordered to seek therapy. She had claimed, quite maliciously, that she had been attacked by six youths of Arab origin and assaulted on a train, where swastikas were drawn on her stomach and her hair cut off, while fellow passengers did nothing to help her. Unfortunately this case received widespread media coverage and caused political uproar when first reported. It was soon after this case was reported that Sharon urged French Jews to flee to the safety of Israel. (*Guardian* 27.7.04)

Sharon tells French Jews to emigrate

The French and Israeli governments were embroiled in a simmering row over anti-Semitism after Ariel Sharon on 18 July, in a speech to Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, urged French Jews to emigrate to Israel because France was the country of the 'wildest' anti-Semitism. 'I think it's a must and they have to move immediately', he said. Officials rapidly expressed their disquiet with the Israeli authorities and a proposed visit of Sharon to France was put on hold. Jewish groups have complained that some governments in Europe have been slow to respond to rising anti-Semitism of recent years. But French leaders were not impressed by Sharon's remarks and found them unhelpful. The honorary president of the umbrella group CRIF said that Mr Sharon should let the French Jewish community take care of its own problems. A deputy president of SOS-Racisme said that 'France in not an anti-semitic nation and Mr Sharon is simply settling scores with France through this question of anti-semitism.' (*Guardian* 19, 20 .7.04)

El Al charter takes 200 to Israel

On 28 July, a specially-chartered El Al jet left Paris taking 200 French Jews to a new life in Israel. But those on the flight have said that their decision was not influenced by Sharon's comments. Many said that they were not leaving France because they felt threatened. (*Guardian* 29.7.04)

Anti-Israel stance is encouraging anti-Semitism, says Sharon aide

Beneath the row over anti-Semitism was another agen-

da. As an anonymous Sharon aide praised Chirac's government for trying to tackle anti-Semitism, he also suggested that by adopting a systematically anti-Israeli stance, France could be encouraging extremist groups to carry out anti-Jewish attacks. These comments were made as the EU foreign policy chief went to discuss with the Sharon government the decision of the 25 EU states to condemn the West Bank barrier. (*Agence France Presse* 22.7.04)

Confusing anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism

The conflation of anti-Israeli-ism with anti-Semitism (or this redefinition of anti-Semitism) has led to two recent cases. Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala, a comedian who gave a Nazi salute while dressed as an orthodox Jew on a TV sketch show (see *European Race Bulletin* 48), was accused in court of anti-Semitism. He was cleared by a judge who said that this was not an attack against Jews in general but against a type of person 'distinguished by their political views'. Dieudonne demanded an apology from the Justice Minister, who had earlier called for a heavy fine to punish the comedian.

But just days after this ruling, Mohamed Latrèche, president of the Party of French Muslims, was indicted for inciting racial hatred. He had said that Zionism was an ideology like apartheid and that they would fight it like they fought Nazism. He had added, 'You said, Mr Chirac, that Jews have been in France for 2,000 years, do you think that we are going to wait 2,000 to open our mouths?' (*Nouvel Observateur* 30.6.04, *BBC News* 27.5.04)

Jewish man arrested in anti-Semitic incident

Much to the consternation of Jewish leaders who are concerned at the rise of anti-Semitic incidents, a French Jew, Raphael B., a former caretaker, was arrested for setting fire to a Jewish soup kitchen in the centre of Paris in the early hours of 22 August. The attack which had included the daubing of Nazi symbols on its walls, doors and furniture, led both the prime minister and President Chirac to express outrage. The case had been referred to criminal investigators and a formal enquiry launched. (*Guardian* 23.8.04, *Jewish Chronicle* 3.9.04)

Anti-Semitic attacks reported between June and September:

Paris

■ A Jewish child was knifed near Paris by a young man who called out, 'God is great'. The incident was denounced by the president of the French Muslim Council. (*Le Monde* 4.6.04)

Strasbourg

■ Neo-Nazi graffiti appeared on Jewish graves in villages around Strasbourg in weeks to 14 June (*Reuters AlertNet* 14.7.04)

Arquèves: the Somme

■ 4 July, a dozen swastikas were put up overnight within a small village and were immediately denounced as 'terrible and shameful acts'. (*La Croix* 4.7.04)

Paris

■ 14 August, a swastika and the words 'Death to Jews' were daubed on the front of Notre Dame cathedral. (*Jewish Chronicle* 3.9.04)

Lyon

■ Vandals smashed gravestones and scrawled swastikas and Celtic crosses on 56 tombs in the graveyard in Lyon on 10 August. A war memorial honouring Jewish members of the French resistance was covered in graffiti. Alongside anti-Semitic messages were anti-Muslim slogans calling for 'resistance to the Islamic invasion'. A 24-year-old man has admitted spraying swastikas on Jewish tombstones and attacking a north African man with an axe. (*Guardian* 11.,17.8.04)

Reported anti-Muslim/anti-Arab attacks between May and September:-

Escaudain (Nord)

■ 17 June the walls of Escaudain's mosque were covered in racist graffiti and suffered three gunshots. The letters GUD (which refer to a far-Right student group) were found in the graffiti. Ten people were taken in for questioning following the attack which was linked to other attacks in the region: against Lens's mosque and the synagogue in Valenciennes. (*20 minutes* <www.20minutes.fr> 21.6.04, *Ligue Internationale contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme* <www.licra.org> 23.6.04)

Nanterre (Hauts-de-Seine)

■ 26 June racist graffiti was daubed on the front of the Nanterre mosque. Slogans read 'Leave in the same way as we left Algeria'. The attack came after a meeting in the city of local Muslim representatives, the department's prefect and Nicolas Sarkozy to discuss ways of combating Islamist activity and community breakdown. (*Le Parisien* 28, 29. 6.04)

■ 1 September, attempted firing of a mosque at Annemasse in the Haute-Savoie. (*AFP* 1.9.04)

Strasbourg (Alsace)

■ 31 May, rubbish was burned in the garden of Aziz El Alouani, a member of the regional council of the Muslim religion in Alsace, and the words 'free Alsace' in the local dialect scrawled alongside swastikas. (*La Croix* 31.5.04)

■ 13 June, vandals painted neo-Nazi symbols on Muslim gravestones in a night-time attack on a Strasbourg cemetery. According to an official of the Regional council of the Muslim Faith the stones had been toppled or covered in graffiti with HH and 88 and swastikas. (*Reuters AlertNet* 14.6.04)

■ 20 July, Cronenbourg mosque, centre of worship for Strasbourg's Turkish community was targeted with racist graffiti, swastikas and the letters SS.

■ 6 August, Chirac condemned the desecration of about 15 headstones in the Muslim servicemen's military cemetery in Cronenbourg. (*Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace* 20.7.04, *AP* 7.8.04)

■ 22 August, the chairman of the Regional Council of the Muslim Faith in Alsace, Albdelhaq Nabaoui, was the

target of a death threat (the second in 2 months). Graffiti including a large swastika were drawn on his wife's medical practice on the outskirts of Strasbourg. (*L'Est Republicain* 24.8.04)

■ 9 September, racist graffiti daubed on mosque in Besancon, close to Strasbourg with the words 'We'd rather die than lose our identity' and 'Get out'. Vandals also desecrated a Christian cemetery by scrawling swastikas and 'SS' inscriptions in another town close to the German border. (*Reuters AlertNet* 9.9.04)

Alsace in context

It is in the region of Alsace, where so many of the above attacks took place, that it becomes most clear that there is a generalised increase in racial violence which is affecting all minority ethnic communities – not just Jews or Muslims. And there is evidence that neo-Nazi groups are organising in the region.

Breitenbach attack

In June in Breitenbach (Bas-Rhin) racist graffiti was scrawled all over the walls of a house where there were two adopted children of Congolese origin. The house, the base of an association 'Child of Congo-Bethanie', had the association's nameplate torn down and letter-box removed and then daubed with a 'France for the French' message. A silent protest march, which included families with children, was organised through the streets of Villé to denounce the racism of the attack. (*Derieres Nouvelles d'Alsace* 27.6.04)

History of violence

From July 30 to August 1, much to the anger of the mayors of the region, a two-day neo-Nazi rally of some hundreds of skinheads, many from the northern and eastern regions of Germany, took place at Hipsheim (Bas-Rhin) around 15 kilometres from Strasbourg. (Note that this display of strength took place when two more graveyards, one the Jewish cemetery of Saverne, one the Muslim military cemetery, see above, were attacked.)

Local mayor, Antoine Rudloff was seething that a local Alsace man had been able to book a hall and adjacent field saying it was for a football match and dinner. In fact the skinheads ended up singing songs in praise of the Third Reich and Sieg Heiling to the sound of a German rock group playing before a flag with the imperial eagle and the slogan 'Alsace for the Empire'. Four similar rallies of neo-Nazis, which draw right-wingers from France, Germany, Switzerland and Belgium, have been recorded in the Bas-Rhin department in the last two years.

The rise of the right in this particular area has been attributed to the strength of the FN's youth wing – the Department of Protection and Youth – which became an inspiration for neo-Nazi youth. Already in the late 1980s and early 1990s a neo-Nazi group called the Alsatian Patriotic Union (HVE) was banned after its members were linked to anti-Semitic attacks. The letters HVE have been found on two of the latest desecrations.

A report in the *New York Times* on the revival of neo-Nazism in Alsace reveals that the movement has been given a breathing space in France. It is more strictly repressed in Germany. According to the president of Alsace's regional government, one or two neo-Nazi rallies are now held each year. And it attributes the FN's

security force, the DPS as inspiration for neo-Nazi youth who wanted to echo Hitler's brown-shirts. Alsace, a protestant region, lacks the secular tradition of the rest of France and it also never underwent a de-Nazification after the war, since it was treated as a victim. (*Libération* 10.8.04, AP 13.8.04, *New York Times* 13.8.04)

FN leader loses appeal against racism verdict

The Colmar court of appeal has rejected the appeal of Patrick Linder, leader of the Front National in Alsace, against his conviction on 8 April for 'inciting racial hatred' and 'racial defamation'. The case had originated from the publication of *'The Little Mulhousien'* in which he wrote of Saracens and compared immigration to a colonisation of the town. A drawing, illustrating the issue of the Sans Papiers, showed a black man defecating in a church and calling out for paper. (*AFP* 5.10.04)

Corsica: extreme-right violent group emerges to attack North Africans

A group called The Clandestine Corsicans, which specialises in attacking North Africans and their property on Corsica, has claimed responsibility for at least seven attacks since March 22. The group which is taking the place of Resistanz Corsa, which in 2002/3 attacked North African families, says that it is against 'drug-trafficking communities' and 'those who are trying to impose themselves rather than integrate'. The group which appears to be close to the extreme right, has sent a series of notes to police making a series of threats, including one which states that 'They [North Africans] will not be left alone in their own homes and physical eliminations will be carried out against the most stubborn of them. Corsican land for the Corsican people', concludes the note, this time in the Corsican language. It has claimed responsibility for an attack on 18 March, the first attack in the street of Bastia, an attack on 1 July, an attack on a private bank owned by a North African in Biguglia, and an attack on an oriental grocery in Bastia and a pizzeria in Bastia. (*Libération* 7.7.04)

Bomb attack fails

An attempt to bomb a house under construction owned by a North African in Biguglia, in the suburbs of Bastia, failed when bottles of gas did not explode. The graffiti at the scene read, 'Corsican land, Arabs out' and was signed by the 'Mouvement Clandestin Anonyme'. The Ministry of Justice recently asked the general public prosecution office of Bastia to gather statistics on such attacks. (*Agence France Presse* 19.7.04)

Man shot dead

On 15 September, Mohammed El Gouy of Moroccan origin, a 39-year-old service station manager in the Castel-Vecchio area of Ajaccio, was shot down at lunchtime at his workplace. Two men arrived by motorbike. One fired six times, before getting off the bike to kill his victim with a bullet under the chin. The two then sped off.

Anti-racist rally organised against racist attacks and assaults in Corsica

As a result of the murder, the culmination of a three-year violent racist campaign by underground groups, politicians and intellectuals met in Corte in September

to debate what must be done. According to organisers the public prosecutor's office in Bastia has recorded thirty racist acts since the beginning of the year. Andre Pacou of the Human Rights League in Corsica said that, 'this theme of the Corsican people becoming a minority in its own land is very dangerous: it forms a natural continuum with the traditional discourse of the far Right.' (*Libération* 18.9.04)

Involvement of far-right in racial violence

Extreme-right Zionist sentenced for racist attack

Joseph Ayache, a member of Betar, an extreme-right group, has been sentenced to four months in prison for racist aggression towards a Palestinian. (Collectif Bellacio <<http://bellacio.org/fr> 1.9.04>)

Vichy: North African student loses cornea in FN attack
Maâty Bouanane, a Maghrebian student was waiting with two friends in Vichy for the coach to return to their home in Thiers, when the FN electoral bus, sporting a picture of Le Pen, arrived. The FN members began to taunt the North Africans and one sprayed Maâty in the face with a teargas canister (as FN members applauded and took photos). Maâty's cornea was so burnt by the teargas that he had later to undergo a cornea transplant. He has lodged a complaint with civil action proceedings for 'grievous bodily harm with intent'. (*Libération* 3.7.04)

Official report on racism and anti-Semitism

A government-commissioned report published on 19 October which described racism and anti-Semitism as a threat to French democracy, departs somewhat from the trends suggested above. Its author, Jean-Christophe Rufin, who based the study on police data and interviews, believes that anti-Semitic acts are carried out not just by the far-right or north African youth, but by a diverse group of French people, who feel a lack of identity and rootedness. He appears to take the line that pronounced anti-Zionism is a form of anti-Semitism. Though he stresses the need to find ways to combat both growing racism and anti-Semitism, he does not seem, from newspaper reports, to have singled out anti-Muslim racism for particular focus.

Official figures

Greeting the report, interior minister de Villepin said the police had recorded 123 racist attacks and 294 threats in the first nine months of the year and 166 anti-Semitic attacks and 584 threats. These figures were higher than the whole of last year and 'utterly unacceptable in a country like ours'. (*Guardian* 20.10.04)

Rhône-Alpes: FN councillor reported for racism

Germaine Burgaz, a 72-year-old FN councillor for the Isère department, is being reported for racist comments during a committee meeting when in an attack on integration and community development she referred to 'Arab and Jewish races' and 'Negro-Maghrebi' as well as lambasting the idea of social mixing, throwing in 'underworld criminality' along the way. When her microphone was cut off and she was told to moderate her language or risk prosecution, she pretended not to understand the problem and then later tried to claim

immunity for comments made behind closed doors. Already in 1992 she had attacked the education of 'Mohammeds and Saids' who would then be 'well-trained for guerrilla warfare in the banlieues'. But this time, apparently, other FN councillors were, it appeared, too embarrassed to defend her. (*Libération* 26.7.04)

Orange FN mayor bars Libération and La Provence

Journalists from *Libération* and *La Provence* have been refused authorisation to cover the FN party conference to be held in Orange by the town's mayor. Out of solidarity the *Agence France Presse* decided not to cover debates at the conference. (*AFP* 26.8.04)

Saint-Claude (Jura): mayor sued by anti-racists

SOS Racisme in Saint-Claude is suing the local mayor for racism. A letter, written in October 2003 to Interior Minister Sarkozy and copied to the local authority, by Jean-Louis Millet, who belongs to the monarchist right-wing party of Philippe de Villiers, drew attention to 'the continuous and increasing arrival of newcomers of Turkish and Muslim origin'. He alleged that the Turkish community was running an underground economy based on drugs and that it was buying up the town because of interest-free loans from mosques. Now the letter has been circulated on the web and the Saint-Claude Franco-Turkish Association, among other groups, is insulted and demanding an explanation. The mayor was forced to explain himself to an audience at the mosque which included the Turkish consul.

The mayor is asserting that the letter was private and wants the police to investigate its public release. Now two petitions are circulating locally: one from citizens who 'refuse to be associated with racist ideas' and are aware of the hard work and long hours that Turkish and other immigrant groups have had to put in, to gain a foothold in the economy. The other petition from the mayor's supporters, includes 20 shop-keepers. (*Libération* 11.6.04)

Travellers disappointed by delay on sites

While the secretary of state for housing has explained away the fact that various municipalities have not yet applied the 2003 Bresson law to create authorised sites for Gypsies on the basis that the law was more complicated than expected and more time is needed, the associations of Gypsies say that more time is not needed but more political will. So far 5,000 new places have been created but some authorities are asking for more time, so as not to lose allocated funding. Gypsy groups are against extending the time for the law to be implemented, accusing the local authorities of 'institutional violence' against their community. (*Le Monde* 30.8.04)

The politics of assimilation

French Muslims prepare for headscarf show down

France's Muslim activists were considering a variety of avenues from court cases, school boycotts and advice hotlines, to deal with the ban on Islamic headscarves in state schools which began in September 2004. A convert, Thomas Abdallah Milcent urged strikes, the Union of French Islamic Organisations was taking advice from

legal experts and local activists, especially in the light of the European Court of Human Rights ruling in June backing a headscarf ban in Turkey's universities.

Bandanna compromise discussed

The conservative group, UOIF said it would defend schoolgirls who wore a bandanna covering their hair and tied at the back. Its president believes that the March law allows Muslim students to wear invisible hijabs like the bandanna. On 21 April the French education minister had suggested to the cabinet that Muslim girls be allowed to wear a bandanna. And at a meeting with The French Council of the Muslim Faith, the then Interior Minister, Sarkozy, had suggested that it could represent a 'middle ground'. (*Reuters* 1.7.04, *IslamOnline* 4.7.04)

Headscarf defiance played down to secure hostage release

According to the Education Minister, about one hundred Muslim girls were refusing to take off their headscarves when the ban which took effect as the new academic year started. The minister, on a radio programme, said he was confident that school administrators would convince nearly all the girls to remove their scarves in the coming days.

According to *IslamOnline*, in Alsace a bastion of French Muslims, some 200 students returned to school wearing a hijab. Almost half were still wearing it a week into the academic year. This adherence to the hijab was attributed by Strasbourg activist to the fact that the Turkish and Arab communities in Alsace refused to allow girls to remove the headscarf and that it was partly a response to school headmasters' strict stance. However the 15 March Committee for Freedoms said that no girl had been expelled for sticking to the hijab and urged people not to make public statements on the hijab until the two French reporters taken hostage in Iraq, were released. In August Muslim leaders participated in a large Parisian protest against the kidnapping. (*IslamOnline* 31.8., 9.9.04, *AFP* 8.9.04, *AP* 4.9.04, *Independent* 9.9.04)

Two girls expelled for headscarves

Two pupils aged 12 and 13 were expelled from a Mulhouse school in eastern France after refusing to remove their headscarves. Despite discussions with them and their parents, the school's disciplinary council, decided on exclusion. The mother of one child said she could not understand the ban as her daughter, who had been top of the class had done everything her class mates did, including gym class. (*Guardian* 20.10.04)

Sikh community in uproar

As state schools reopened this Autumn, the small Sikh community was in uproar after five boys were refused entry to state schools under the new law. Sikh leaders were negotiating with officials trying to convince them that Sikh boys should wear a small cloth to cover their uncut hair. Eighty boys were allowed into school wearing patkas, but five were left out. The Sikhs argue that the head covering is just a practical arrangement, not a religious symbol. The uncut hair is the religious symbol. Sikhs were not consulted before the new law banning conspicuous religious symbols was passed. (*Times* 9.8.04)

Veiled pupil educated in Belgium

A 12-year-old girl, Hilal, excluded from two public colleges in Thann (Bas-Rhin) last year because she refused to remove her scarf, is being educated this year in Belgium. (*L'Est Républicain* 9.9.04)

Referendum on Turkey draws anger

Following a poll by IPSOS for *Le Figaro* which showed that 36 per cent were in favour and 56 per cent against the mainly Muslim Turkey joining the EU, France has decided to allow its population to have a veto on Turkey joining. France's decision to hold a referendum on Turkey's entry, the first of its kind in Europe, has angered Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He said there was a clear procedure for countries to join the EU and if people wanted a referendum just for Turkey, there were double standards. President Chirac has called for a referendum on future enlargements of the EU, although he made clear that this did not refer to Bulgaria and Romania. He has been backed by incoming Commission President Barroso who said, 'The Turkish question is a very serious one. It is therefore very important that a decision is made only with the support of European citizens.' (*Guardian* 29.9. 2.10.04, *EUobserver* 7.10.04)

High Council on Integration establishes statistics centre

On 2 July, the minister for social cohesion, Jean-Louis Borloo officiated in the setting up of an observatory to clarify statistics on immigration and integration – as the office for international migration was axed. It will be under the aegis of the HCI and bring together data from many ministries, help orient the government towards new research and provide inputs for the annual report to parliament envisaged in the Sarkozy bill on immigration. It is urgent, according to Borloo, that there should be transparency over 'true' immigration figures. (*Le Monde* 3.7.04)

Fire and protest forces politicians to acknowledge social exclusion

'No Justice, No Peace' was one of the slogans on the 1,500-strong march of inhabitants from the Petit Bard high rise estate in Montpellier where a fire caused the death of one person and made 19 families homeless. It brought home to ministers the neglect of its urban ghettos and there was an immediate promise of funds for renovation. In Petit Bard, a 1960s-built estate which has never been renovated, 90 per cent of inhabitants are of Moroccan descent, unemployment is around six times the national average. Recently a simmering anger among younger second generation 'immigrants' who have found it impossible to escape, has forced the government to realise that its failure to promote integration has become a pressing problem. Now the government, humiliated by the left in local elections, launched in June a scheme to help 'the republic's forgotten citizens'. And a separate 5-year, £21bn plan aimed at improving the dilapidated urban cités was announced last year. (*Guardian* 6.8.04)

'Marshall aid' plan for Muslim ghettos

France has announced a £8.7 billion programme to tackle unemployment, disaffection and increasing religious

extremism in Muslim-dominated ghettos. The plan, announced by Jean-Louis Borloo, the labour minister, is to increase apprenticeships to 500,00 and to create a million jobs and 500,000 new homes. Although the programme is not specifically aimed at France's 5m citizens of North African Arab origin, Europe's largest concentration of Muslims, it is clearly on estates dominated by them that problems of poverty and social exclusion are most acute. (*Daily Telegraph* 18.9.04)

Police and criminal justice

Human Rights League condemns record of 2003

The Ligue des Droits de l'Homme has termed 2003 'the largest setback in human rights in France since the Algerian War'. It has said that the Perben and Sarkozy laws 'assign arbitrary rights to the forces of law and order, bring judges under control, disrupt the rules of criminal procedures to the benefit of the prosecution, and increase repression to the point of prisons becoming over crowded at unprecedented levels.' The League's president believes that the campaign against 'l'insécurité' is being politically inspired and fears over crime and security are being used to reduce individual rights in France and around the world. The report says that the situation in the Middle East is 'an affliction for all of us' and responsible for unacceptable community breakdown wherein the human rights of the most vulnerable – foreigners (asylum rights have been restricted), the poor (beggars and Gypsies) and young people from urban public housing. (*Libération* 25.5.04)

Independent commission denounces lawlessness of law enforcers

The Commission nationale de déontologie de la sécurité (national commission for security ethics) has delivered a damning report to the President about the growing incidents of 'unlawful acts of violence' committed by police officers, gendarmes and prison wardens. It asks for unannounced spot inspections to be made of stations, at night in troubled areas and the setting up of a parliamentary inquiry into urban police stations and gendarmeries in troubled areas. (SOS Racisme press release 8.5.04)

Administrative court overrules exclusion for anti-Semitic attack

The administrative appeal court ruled on 11 August that the exclusion of two pupils from school, one for physical violence and threatening behaviour, the second for complicity and anti-Semitic insults, constituted a disproportionate sanction. The two pupils, 11 at the time of the incident, had been excluded by their school's disciplinary board on 17 December 2003 for having beaten up a Jewish class mate. The pupils can now demand reinstatement in the school and their families will be paid their legal costs. The court ruled that violent behaviour warranted a sanction, but permanent exclusion was too severe. Both CRIF and SOS-Racisme have criticised the decision. (*Le Monde* 12.8.04)

March to remember African child killed by police bullet

On 26 June a trainee policeman accidentally fired his

gun and the bullet went through the wall into the adjoining apartment where it fatally wounded a 6-year-old. The boy died on 1 July and, though the officer was taken into custody, almost nothing more was heard about the case. The reason is that the family is poor, of Gambian origin, unable to speak French and without permission to stay in the country. A Black self-defence organisation, the Kemite Party, organised a march because of the lack of information and to help the affected family. (*Libération* 7.8.04)

GERMANY

Race and party politics

Nazi past clouds presidential election

A decision by the Christian Democrats to include Hans Filbinger (90), a former state premier with a Nazi past, as a delegate in presidential elections was criticised by Jewish groups and left-wing politicians. Filbinger had been forced to resign in 1978 from the premiership of Baden-Wurttemberg when it emerged that he had shared responsibility for handing down death penalties during the Nazi period. (*Deutsche Welle* 21.5., 17.9.04)

Extremist parties make significant gains in regional elections in the East

The far Right made significant gains in regional parliamentary elections on 19 September as the country reacted to Schröder's attempts to cut unemployment benefits and end high unemployment. The two main far-right parties, made a pact not to stand against each other in the elections.

Saxony

The neo-Nazis of the National Democratic Party (which the state failed to get banned last year for its extremism) took 9 per cent of the vote in Saxony, gaining 12 seats in Dresden, one short of Schröder's party. Standing on a campaign to cut welfare benefits and against foreigners and immigrants, it won representation for the first time since 1968.

Brandenburg

In Brandenburg, the German People's Union (DVU) increased its share of the vote to six per cent, taking six seats in the Potsdam parliament. It is the first time in German politics that a far-Right party has increased its vote in two consecutive elections.

The overall winner however was the left Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) the successor of the East German Communist Party, which gained 28 per cent of the Brandenburg vote and 23 per cent in Saxony. While unemployment nationally is 10 per cent, it is running at around 20 per cent in the east.

Reasons for the far-right success

Analysts believe that the far-right has been helped immensely by hitching itself to the campaign around proposed government reforms affecting the labour market and welfare.

In addition, it has been pointed out that the social

experiment of merging west and east Germany, a capitalist state with a post-communist society has largely failed. (Because of a lack of development and investment a huge migration has taken place from east to west and half a million east Germans commute to the West each week in search of work.) And the political response to that failure in the East has been the gains made by the far-right in the elections. There is evident resentment in the East, especially within the young, against those who are perceived as foreigners, who are regarded as getting better treatment in the West than themselves, Germans. Political scientists are warning that the miserable economic climate and the anger in the East could spark a worrying trend – with up to 15 per cent of the vote across Germany going to the far-right.

But the Interior Minister blamed the Federal Constitutional Court for failing in 2003 to ban parties which were clearly anti-foreigner and anti-Semitic. (*Guardian* 20.9.04, *Deutsche Welle* 10, 18, 20.9.04, *Times* 21.9.04)

NPD fails to win seat in Saarland

The far-Right National Democratic Party won only four per cent of the vote in Saarland's parliamentary elections which did not allow it to pass the threshold needed for a seat in the state legislature. The CDU gained against the ruling Social Democrats (*Jewish Chronicle* 17.9.04)

NPD flourishes in 'Saxon Switzerland'

The *Frankfurter Rundschau* examines the situation in one village Reinhardtsdorf-Schöna where the astonished mayor cannot understand how his village returned the NPD a vote of 25.5 per cent, the highest nation-wide. The NPD has three seats on the town council and 'respectable' individuals' names are on the ballot paper. The area does not have high unemployment or any foreigners but there has been a neo-Nazi influence in youth clubs for some time. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 18.6.04)

NDP leader faces inquiry

Udo Voigt, head of the National Democratic Party, is under investigation by the Berlin state prosecutor for comments he made praising Hitler in an interview with *Junge Freiheit*, a radical weekly. He faces possible charges of denigrating the state and its symbols. (*Guardian* 29.9.04)

Racism and fascism

Munich Catholic radio station denounced

A decision to award Radio Horeb, a Catholic radio station, one of Munich's coveted FM frequencies has caused an outcry among critics who say the programming is fundamentalist and racist. A local priest who has been critical of its '19th century theology' has received angry threats from listeners. Bavaria's state minister in charge of media, Erwin Huber is a devout Catholic and supporter of the station. Others on the deciding committee have made it clear they found the station problematic in terms of its views on women and indications of racial discrimination. The manager of the station rejects criti-

cism, on the basis that it should not be blamed because 'a few listeners call in and talk nonsense'. (*Deutsche Welle* 5.6.04)

Right-wing spam hits Germany

In June a flood of extreme right-wing messages were released into email boxes. Many of the messages were linked to the extreme-Right German National Party. Though the messages are not new, what was, was the use of a 'spambot', a programme spammers use to collect email addresses and hide the real address, making it hard to trace the origin of the offending spam. (*Deutsche Welle* 10.6.04)

Nazi site searches redirected

All traffic to the former neo-Nazi website 'sieghel.de' has been redirected to 'shoa.de' a site providing information on the origins of anti-Semitism and a detailed account of the Nazis' murder of 6m Jews. Germany's central registration authority for web addresses, Denic, revoked the licence of the former operator of sieghel.de at the request of the German internet watchdog jugdenschutz.net. (*Reuters* website 26.7.04)

Cologne bomb injures 17

A bomb packed with nails ripped through a crowded shopping street in a Turkish quarter of Cologne on 9 June, injuring 17 people. Police said that it came without any warning. Some media reports suggested that the attack could have related to feuding between Kurdish and Turkish groups and implicated Muslim extremism, since Metin Kaplan has his home in Cologne. But this all appears to be speculation. In July a German man was detained in Hesse after a tip-off, but not remanded in custody. (*Independent* 10.6.04, *Agence France Press* 9.7.04)

Plans to ban demonstrations

Interior minister Schily is reported to be planning a law to make it easier to ban extremist demonstrations, according to *Spiegel Online*. He wants to prevent demonstrations in front of Holocaust memorials as well as hinder those in solidarity with terrorists. (*Deutsche Welle* 21.6.04)

Top court allows Nazis to hold anti-Semitic march in Bochum

Two hundred Nazis, mainly from the National Democratic Party of Germany and the Free Nationalists marched through Bochum on 26 June to protest against the building of a synagogue. The demonstration had originally been banned but appeals were made and eventually the Federal Constitutional Court gave permission. The slogans and speeches were rabidly anti-Jewish. Many police were in evidence to protect the march from anti-fascist protestors. (*Searchlight* August 2004)

Bavarians try to stop annual Hess remembrance

Residents of Wunsiedel, the site of Rudolf Hesse's grave, are angry that their town attracts thousands of neo-Nazis each August, who come 'to pay respects'. When some 4,000 neo-Nazis turned up this year the citizens sent a message to their visitors telling them they were unwanted. Youth, clergy, farmers and teachers were part of the protest which was also supported by the Berlin-

based Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance. Volunteer firemen filled balloons with helium and local farmers used giant vats of manure to block a field that the Nazis tried to use for parking.

Wunsiedel is the only city in Germany with a Nazi leader's grave; all the others were burned. (*Jewish Chronicle* 27.8.04)

Rightwing conspiracy behind triple murder in Overath

Thomas A., accused of the murder of Hartmut Nickel and his wife and daughter, on 7 October 2003, had been described by his lawyer in a Cologne court as a 'perpetrator of political conviction'. The accused described himself in notes from prison as 'leader of the 99th SS division in Twilight of the Gods, which is assigned the task of liberating the territory of the German Reich'. He admitted to luring young people from techno discos and indoctrinating them with neo-Nazi ideas during the course of night paramilitary exercises. This was admitted in court by former associates of the accused. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 5.6., 7.7.04)

Neo-Nazis charged for Munich plot

Eight months after the foiled explosives attack on the new Jewish centre in Munich, charges have been brought against neo-Nazi Martin Wiese as the ringleader. Three others from the rightwing 'South Fellowship' group are also charged with membership of a terrorist organisation. The plans for the attack were leaked via an informant from the Bavarian Office for the Defence of the Constitution. The trial of five neo-Nazis opened in October, to be resumed in the New Year. Three women aged 18-22 and two men aged 18 and 37, all members of 'Kameradschaft Sud' were charged. The Bavarian Interior Minister said on radio that he felt that evidence would bring a conviction and he hoped for a tough sentence. (*Frankfurter Rundschau* 7.7.04, *Deutsche Welle* 6.10.04)

Uekermünde (Mecklenburg-West Pomerania) Neo-Nazis organise against hostel

Under the guise of a citizens' initiative called 'Living more pleasantly and safely', right-wingers are inciting racism against the building of a refugee hostel. 250 people, many supporters of the NPD, had travelled from Berlin and many parts of north Germany to take part. A public petition against the hostel already attracted 2,000 signatures but the town council has rejected the petition on formal grounds, saying that the responsibility lies with the administrative district.

Meanwhile, the extreme right is gaining ground locally. The NPD received 1.7 per cent of the vote in the European election without having put forward any candidates. In the municipal elections they got ten seats. 'Fellowships' and NPD district associations are spreading xenophobic propaganda throughout the region on the issue of new hostels. A decision of the Mecklenburg West Pomerania state parliament states that isolated hostels should be closed and asylum seekers accommodated in new facilities linked to the towns. (*Junge Welt* 7.7.04)

Youth sentenced to nine years for deliberate murder of Russians

The district court in Ellwangen (Baden Württemberg) sentenced an 18-year-old youth, Leonhard S. (a minor when the crime was committed) to nine years in prison for the deliberate killing on 19 December 2003 of three young Russians of German extraction in front of a Heidenheim disco. Leonard S. had a history of violence and activity within the rightwing scene. But the accused had vehemently denied any racial motive for the crime. (*Junge Welt* 13.7.04, *Jungle World* 21.7.04)

Deportation of race hate victims

A row has broken out between senior politicians because of the decision to deport two men who had earlier been victims of racial attacks. One, an Egyptian, had had his pizzeria burned down in Elsterwerda in 1998, the other, an Algerian, had watched as a friend was lynched in 1999 by a mob in Guben, near the Polish border. Their cases have been taken up by the speaker in the federal parliament who believes that the deportations show covert backing for the far-right. Mr el-Nemr, the Egyptian, left Germany voluntarily, so as not to have a deportation order stamped on his passport, especially important since he has a German fiancée and hopes to be allowed back to marry. (*Guardian* 21.9.04)

A round-up of reports from the press on racial incidents between April and July:-

Halberstadt (Saxony-Anhalt) asylum seeker attacked

On 30 March, four men attacked a 34-year-old Eritrean asylum seeker, who suffered cuts and bruises requiring outpatient treatment in hospital. Police were able to arrest one attacker, who was a known rightwing extremist. (*Jungle World* 7.4.04)

Görlitz (Saxony) hostel plan rejected

Because the presence of asylum seekers would frighten away potential investors, the administrative committee of the municipality has rejected plans for the construction of a hostel. (*Jungle World* 7.4.04)

Neuruppin (Brandenburg)

Right-wingers go free

Because of a wall of silence from witnesses who 'couldn't remember' acts of violence, only four of nine accused young right-wingers were convicted at the regional court in Neuruppin. The incident arose when police intervened at a right-wing gathering in a youth club at which banned music was being played very loudly. The youths then barricaded themselves in the building and threw missiles at the police and one of them gave the Hitler salute. (*Junge Welt* 13.4.04)

Attackers convicted

On 5 May the trial began in Neuruppin of three men and a woman charged with attempted murder, arson and attempted aggravated arson for attacks on 7 November 2003 on a Vietnamese snack stall and Turkish bar and residence. Three men and a woman were sentenced to terms of imprisonment, some suspended. (*Jungle World* 12.5.04, 2.6.04)

Frankfurt on Oder (Brandenburg) beating

A 24-year-old from Sierra Leone was badly beaten outside a disco and was taken to hospital with serious injuries. (*Jungle World* 28.4.04)

Trebbin (Brandenburg)

Police are not ruling out a racist motive for an arson attack on a Turkish snack bar in Trebbin on 14 July. The police at first blamed a technical fault but have had to retract and say they do not rule out racism. (*Jungle World* 28.7.04)

Wriezen (Brandenburg)

On 2 June a 15-year-old girl attacked an Arab boy with a razor, inflicting a life-threatening wound to his neck. This was part of a clear racially-motivated attack by a gang. (*Jungle World* 23.6.04)

Brandenburg police identify racist gang

Brandenburg's interior minister announced that the police have identified seven young men aged 16-20 who are suspected of carrying out a series of nine racially-motivated arson attacks on Asian and kebab snack bars in Havelland. (*Jungle World* 7.7.04)

Brandenburg-on-the-Havel

A German soldier is facing a charge of attempted murder after attacking, with another man, two Kenyan asylum seekers with a broken bottle and inflicting cuts to the neck as they verbally abused them for 'getting too much benefit'. (The attackers fled as two women came the victims' aid, but the main suspect was found in a Lower Saxony barracks. (*Jungle World* 28.7.04)

Berlin – crimes increase

The number of right-wing crimes, especially racist crimes of violence have reportedly increased, from 28 in 2002 to 43 in 2003. (*Jungle World* 23.6.04)

Berlin-Köpenick attack

On 5 April, three extreme right youths attacked the owner of a Vietnamese snack bar, kicking him until he collapsed. (*Berliner Zeitung* nd)

Berlin – Prenzlauer Berg district murder attempt

Two men attacked a 38-year-old man from Guinea at the entrance to the station and continued to beat him as he lay bleeding on the ground. He was taken to hospital with head injuries. The assailants, 21- and 23-years old, appeared in court in September charged with attempted murder. As they stamped on the victim's head with their steel-capped boots, they had chanted racist slogans and threatened to kill him. (*Jungle World* 28.4.04, *Reuters* 17.9.04)

Gelsenkirchen/Bochum train attack

Eight people on a train between Gelsenkirchen and Bochum shouted rightwing slogans and insulted four Africans. Witnesses who told them to stop were then followed and beaten. The attackers were arrested and charged. (*Jungle World* 14.4.04)

Düsseldorf (North Rhine-Westphalia)

The *Taz* has reported that on 2 July a group of right-

wingers, shouting 'Jews Out' tried to kick in the front door of a house of two PDS candidates for the local council election – the second such attack that one of the candidates had experienced. Only safety glass and other security devices prevented the neo-Nazis from forcing their way in. (*Jungle World* 14.7.04).

Stuttgart (Baden-Württemberg) Neo-Nazi juveniles sentenced

On 27 April, four juveniles were sentenced to several years on charges of arson, bodily injury, threatening behaviour etc after carrying out an arson attack on an asylum seekers' hostel in Recklinghausen and attacking Turkish premises in Murrhardt and Backnang. (*Jungle World* 12.5.04)

The politics of assimilation

Catholic funding to curb spread of Islam

According to a report in the *Welt am Sonntag* (May 30) the Vatican is pumping huge amounts of funds into the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, a reportedly secret organisation, as a way of stemming the spread of Islam. The organisation is getting much support ostensibly to study the relation between Islam and Christianity but is in fact promoting Christianity, proselytising and carrying out statistical comparative studies. (*IslamOnline* 31.5.04)

Berlin to ban religious symbols

The Interior Minister of Berlin has introduced a bill to ban the display of any religious symbols – Muslim headscarves, Jewish skullcaps, Christian crosses – from the public sector workplace. Unlike the states of Saarland, Lower Saxony and Baden Württemberg, Berlin plans to discriminate against all religions not just Islam. Pieces of jewellery, such as a cross on a chain will be allowed and city-run kindergartens, adult education institutions and vocational schools will be exempt. But the government's aim of drawing up 'unbiased' draft legislation has drawn criticism from the Christian church. The Arch Diocese of Berlin has said that the conflict over the headscarf should not be used to generally restrict freedom of worship. The regional Protestant church added that in some circumstances the headscarf also had a political meaning and expressed cultural separation.

The introduction of the bill followed a decision of the Federal Constitutional court last September that the refusal to hire a Muslim woman based on her insistence to wear the headscarf while teaching was illegal because the jurisdiction lay with the state legislature and not local officials. The new bill will be deliberated in Autumn 2004 and is expected to become law in 2005. (*F.A.Z. Weekly* 23.7.04)

Schily bans Islamic conference

Interior Minister Schily was working with Berlin city officials to prevent an Islamic conference scheduled for three days in October. The planned conference had outraged Jewish leaders and others who said the group's web site calls for violent uprisings against Israel and the US. The authorities in Germany were particularly sensitive because several of the men involved in the September 11 attacks had lived in Hamburg. Organisers

of the conference denied that they are Islamic extremists. (*Deutsche Welle* 16.9.04)

Police and criminal justice

Arnstadt: victims treated as aggressors

Three African asylum seekers, who were attacked on 21 October 2000 by Germans in Arnstadt, now face charges of grievous bodily harm. The police whom the three had called to rescue them, arrested the victims, who had been forced to defend themselves, and not those who had provoked the incident. The asylum seekers were arrested on the spot by police who even asked the aggressors for help during the arrests. The three have accused the police of complicity with the racist aggressors and bodily harm at the station. (Noborder 31.5.04)

Suspended sentences in Aamir Ageeb case

Three German border guards received suspended sentences of nine months in jail for their involvement in the death of Sudanese refugee Aamir Ageeb who died while being deported from Germany in 1999. (See *European Race Bulletin* 43 and 48.) They had been charged with 'careless homicide' (manslaughter), which carries a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment. Ageeb had been deported with his ankles and wrists bound and a motorbike helmet over his head and face. His head was forced down towards his knees when he tried to call out and he suffocated to death. (*Deutsche Welle* 18.10.04, *Times* 19.10.04)

GREECE

Racism and fascism

Olympic 'clean-up' violates rights of the vulnerable

Workers' organisations and human rights groups have been concerned about the treatment of the most vulnerable groups in Greece, in the run-up to the Olympic Games.

In June and July Amnesty International warned that as Athens worked hard to present its best face to the expected visitors, it came at a price in terms of human rights. First, it cited the number of workers (usually from eastern Europe or South Asia, often non-documented) who had lost lives in construction and second, the pressures being put on asylum seekers to produce papers they did not have. The media were reporting round-ups and detentions, without proper screening, much to the concern of the UNHCR. Third, Romani families (numbering 137 people) which had been persuaded to move from an Athens suburb to accommodate the Games in 2002 had not received the subsidies promised for new accommodation. (AI press releases 8.6.04, 12.7.04)

By August the *Guardian* reported how, in the run-up to the Games, the Athens authorities had been forcibly cleaning the streets of Athens of its beggars, drug addicts and asylum seekers. It was feared that many

asylum seekers, especially those from Iraq have been removed. The group Ta Nea reports that of the 13,766 immigrants arrested in the first six months of the year 6,623 had been forced to leave Greece. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees had urged the Greek government to ensure international standards are maintained. Lawyers suspect that many asylum seekers had been banished under fast-track procedures which gave no possibility of appeal. (*Guardian* 11.8.04)

On 10 August, just days before the Olympics opened, activists positioned 13 white crosses on the asphalt before the Greek parliament and chanted loudly about the deaths of construction workers killed while building the massive infrastructure for the Games. In addition to 13 men killed in the last two years (six Greeks, seven Albanians), at least 200 workers have been seriously injured. The official death rate is much higher than in other Olympic cities in the past. Other activists were garment workers protesting against the exploitation by the sportswear industry of garment workers in Indonesia, Turkey and elsewhere who worked in slave-labour conditions. (*Los Angeles Times* 11.8.04)

Far-right targets minority political meeting

Police in Thessaloniki clashed with 150 right-wingers who tried to force their way into a meeting of a party representing Greece's northern Slav-speaking minority. The right-wingers who were yelling nationalist slogans, were dispersed with tear-gas. The Rainbow Party, part of an EU-wide grouping of small parties which seek some local devolution of power, was holding a meeting in advance of the June European parliamentary election. (*Kathimerini* 1.6.04)

Demonstration against anti-Albanian racial violence

Around 3,000 anti-racists and immigrants took to the streets of Athens on 9 September to protest at violent clashes involving right-wing groups which followed Greece's football defeat by Albania on the previous Saturday. An Albanian was killed after the match and several others were injured. Police sources say that there is a group calling itself 'Blue Army' which has a website portraying itself as the Greek official fan club, which has links to the neo-Nazi organisation Chryssi Avgi. It is estimated to have 150 members and some distributed leaflets at a match with Turkey. (*Kathimerini* 10.9.04)

The politics of assimilation

Athens mosque still under debate

Greece's minority Muslim community called on Muslims around the world to boycott the Olympics because of the refusal by the authorities to provide a mosque or cemetery in the host city.

Money has been provided by Saudi Arabia to build a mosque and approval has been granted to build one in an Athens suburb but now local residents and the Orthodox Church have begun legal action to stop it, even erecting a huge cross on the site against what they consider to be a new Muslim invasion. The president of Greece's Muslim Federation estimates that there are about half a million Muslims in Athens.

According to the government (quoted in a Greek

paper) plans for the mosque are finalised and will go ahead despite opposition. The government had earlier pledged to construct a mosque before the Games, realising that thousands of Muslims in the capital were having to worship in unofficial mosques and apartments. The mosque is planned for Pallini and has been criticised by the Orthodox Church on the grounds that because it will be near the airport, visitors will think they have arrived in an Islamic state. Pallini residents, mostly Christian, think the mosque will change the nature of their area. And for the Muslims of Athens, they are not entirely happy with the plans which mean they will have to travel from Athens centre, where most of them live, to a suburb, in order to worship. (AAP 13.7.04, *Kathimerini* 22.7.04)

HUNGARY

Racism and fascism

Extreme-right leader arrested

The National Investigations Office has arrested Diana Bacsfi, leader of the extreme-right Group for a Hungarian Future (Magyar Jovo Csoport) on a charge of incitement against the community. The group which came to prominence as it put posters up bearing a symbol resembling that of the World War II fascist Arrow Cross Party, has attracted opprobrium from all parliamentary parties. Bacsfi, a 26-year-old student, is being investigated for hate-speech during an interview. The group she heads appears to be small, but has now managed to attract media and political attention. (*Budapest Sun Online* 16.9.04)

Demonstration plans draws mass protest

Plans by the ultra-right wing neo-Nazi Group for a Hungarian Future to hail the 60th anniversary of the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross take over in front of Budapest's Terror House Museum on 15 October have been widely criticised. The Federation of Jewish Communities has pledged to don yellow stars to protest and at least 3,000 signatures have been collected as the daily paper *Nepszava* called on Hungarians to each lay a single flower at the museum in a moment of silent protest. The paper has criticised parliament for not passing a law to prevent such a fascist rally. The police have admitted that they have no power to prevent the rally, only to see that illegal insignia are not used. But on 11 October Diana Bacsfi was arrested and sentenced to ten days in jail, which means she would not be free on 15 October.

In the event, tens of thousands of anti-fascist Hungarians marched with civil rights groups to mark the 60th anniversary of the country's war-time pro-Nazi regime and the neo-Nazi protest event was cancelled. (*Budapest Sun Online* 16, 30.9, 14.10.04, *Jewish Chronicle* 22.10.04)

Race and electoral politics

Roma MEP urges Commission to act

The first ever Roma MEP, 29-year-old Hungarian, Livia

Jaroka, has told the *EUobserver* that she wants the Commission to take the Roma issue more seriously. She believes that the new EU countries have been good at adopting formal anti-discrimination legislation but that Roma people do not feel the effect of it. She is also urging special funds be made available for developing regions in which Roma live – particularly on border areas between Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and the Ukraine. (*EUobserver* 29.7.04)

Police and criminal justice

Roma dies during arrest

An investigation has been launched into the death in July of a 19-year-old Roma man during his arrest by a Kecskemét policeman, who forcibly pinned him to the ground, forcing his head into the sand. The authorities are saying that the autopsy shows the cause of death as cardiac failure but the family's lawyer says that a forensic expert has found sand in the dead man's larynx. A hundred people held a vigil outside the police station in July. (*Budapest Sun Online* 5.8.04)

IRELAND

Race and electoral politics

Justice minister upbraided for anti-refugee message

Sinn Fein equality spokesman Aengus O'Snodaigh has attacked the Irish justice minister, Michael McDowell, for conducting a war against refugees, during the general election period, and using them as scapegoats for a lack of public services. He suggested that McDowell's public statements had contributed to widespread misperceptions about the refugee community. Speaking on World Refugee Day the Dublin south central TD said that many educated and skilled refugees were being denied the right to make a contribution to Irish society. He added that there was no reason why temporary work permits should not be issued to asylum seekers while applications were processed. He challenged the minister to exercise his responsibility to dispel the myths about refugees and asylum seekers. (The electorate has just voted four to one to restrict the country's citizenship regulations. Non-national parents of Irish-born children will no longer have the right to claim citizenship.) (*PA* 20.6.04)

Racism and fascism

Race attacker jailed

A Glen of the Downs protestor who thrust a knife into a Somali's mouth after insulting him racially at a Dublin night club was jailed for three years by Dublin Circuit Criminal Court. (*online.ie* <www.online.ie> 16.6.04)

Neo-Nazi thugs stage and video incident in Longford

Two thugs in balaclavas hung a life-size doll with a bag

over its head and a sign 'nigers [sic] go home, you'll never be Irish' over a railway bridge on which they had scrawled three swastikas on the Dublin Road. The scene, reminiscent of a Ku Klux Klan lynching, attracted interest from passers-by, who then realised that the whole event was being recorded on video. The Garda said that it was taking the matter very seriously. (*Longford Leader* 10.6.04)

Man fighting for his life after attack

A 48-year-old Lithuanian man who had just arrived in Ireland, was fighting for his life in Mater hospital, Dublin at the beginning of October, after having been savagely beaten near the Binns Bridge at the Royal Canal in Drumcondra. Two 18-year olds have been charged at Mountjoy Garda station and others are being sought. (*Irish Independent* 3.10.04)

Asylum hostel opponents face huge legal bill

The Dublin Road Action Group, in Kilkenny, which led protests against the building of an asylum centre in their community, now faces a legal bill of up to e100,000 after successfully taking on the Department of Justice. A Fine Gael Deputy is trying to get the justice minister to settle the case in advance of a judicial review scheduled for 2 November. He argued that the government should pull out of the action so as to save taxpayers money. The residents had argued that the Justice Minister's claim that the site should be developed for refugees under emergency legislation was a false one: it was not an emergency situation. (*Kilkenny People* 1.9.04)

ITALY

Race and electoral politics

Bossi resigns

Ailing leader of the Northern League, Umberto Bossi, resigned on 19 July from Berlusconi's cabinet, leaving the coalition in a weakened position. Bossi had been suffering from ill health for some time. However the Northern League made it clear that it also reflected disenchantment with the government's direction. The League is demanding plans for greater devolution of power and is threatening to obstruct pension reform legislation unless this requirement is met. (*Guardian* 17, 20. 7.04)

Ruling coalition squabbles over immigrants

While the Northern League continues to campaign for tougher immigration laws, senior ministers in Berlusconi's party, backed by employers' organisations, are demanding that quotas for migrant workers be increased. Giuseppe Pisanu, interior minister, wants to modify the law so as to increase quotas for legal immigrants who 'have become an essential part of the Italian economy'. Employers' organisations say that Italy is crying out for cheap labour but cannot import it because the quotas have been used up.

But the Northern League is now demanding tougher laws to deal with illegal immigrants whom they claim

are choosing Italy because it represents the easiest route into Europe. The Northern League politician, Calderoli, minister of reform, caused consternation by declaring, just after 25 Africans died and others just escaped death, when a boat arrived in Sicily, that anyone 'good or bad' trying to enter or living illegally should be 'returned to sender'. Italian news agencies also quoted him linking illegal immigration with Islamist terrorism. He defended his posture as non-racist but one of legitimate defence in the face of threats (reportedly coming from the Abu Hafs brigades). But in another interview he called for greater efforts to hunt down illegal immigrants including those who snatch bags and kill people. (*Guardian* 10.8.04, *Independent* 24.8.04)

The politics of assimilation

Muslims marginalised

According to *IslamOnline* members of Italy's growing Muslim community feel marginalised, oppressed and frequently treated with suspicion. 'The problem is this monoculture of the Catholic church which sees others as heretics', said the head of the Viale Jenner mosque in Milan. The vice president of the Italian Islamic Community in Milan said that Italy had to understand that one could be a Muslim Italian. Unlike Judaism, Buddhism and some Protestant denominations, Islam is not officially recognised by the state. Muslim organisations, from schools to mosques, miss out on tax benefits and state subsidies. Though 50,000 Muslims have the right to vote, there are no national politicians known to be Muslims. Last September, interior minister Pisanu threatened, on the pretext of breaking laws, to close down some mosques. (*IslamOnline* 22.6.04)

Anti-Islamic book fuels racism

Human rights groups have been warning that racism was becoming tolerated in Italy after the *Corriere della Sera*, published a 126-page anti-Muslim tract by Oriana Fallaci, a veteran journalist and best-selling author. She wrote of an Arab invasion of Europe, of Europe being a colony of Islam in a stealthy process described as the 'burning of Troy'. This is the third volume she has written against Islam since September 11. The first book, *The Rage and the Pride* sold over a million, her second *The Force of Reason* sold over 800,000 in Italy. This third book attacks world leaders including Bush and Clinton, but is particularly venomous towards Islamist terrorists, anti-war protestors and the Left. (*Guardian* 7.8.04)

Muslims under pressure from Northern League burka ban

Mario Borghesio, a Northern League MEP created a national controversy when he called for the banning of the burka on the grounds that it was a 'symbol of death' and 'the most obscurantist type of Islamic fundamentalism'. He lashed out against the covering after a policeman had fined a woman for wearing the burka outside her home. The local policeman had served the woman with two penalty notices; once when she was waiting at the bus stop for her children and once in the municipal office. The woman's mother called the treatment of her daughter (a convert) worse than what fascists did 60

years ago. Borghesio praised the policeman noting that Italian law prohibits people from moving around with their faces covered. The mayor of Drezzo, near the Swiss border, a member of the Northern League, has strong views on such practices and had helped by finding the laws to justify the restriction.

This law, part of public security legislation passed under Mussolini and updated when Italy faced domestic terrorism, is being exploited by Northern League mayors. In August Angelo de Biasio, mayor of Biassono, near Milan, enforced a burka ban on the basis of this law, citing threats from terrorists in Iraq and 'attack from extreme Muslim people here'. The Northern League is now trying to extend its anti-burka campaign to Milan, where there is a Muslim community of 100,000. In parliament, the Minister for Parliamentary Relations told MPs that the ban would be enforced. And in the village of Treviso, in the Veneto region, a Bangladeshi woman, wearing a burka, was challenged by a policeman and taken to the station, where she removed it.

Spokespeople for Muslim organisations are angry about the way in which the ban associates veiled Muslim women with terrorists and is increasing tensions post-September 11. Some women now feel afraid to go out and are insulted for wearing a headscarf, according to the president of the association of Muslim Women in Italy. A mosque director commented that the community had joined in anti-terrorism demonstrations and yet are now quite unheard in Italy on the burka issue. The interior ministry appears worried about the polarisation and has announced a series of workshops to 'improve integration and understanding'. (*Daily Times* (Pakistan) 22.9.04, *BBC News* 28.9.04, *Independent* 26.9.04)

NETHERLANDS

Race and electoral politics

Pim Fortuyn's party files for bankruptcy

The Dutch Populist Party set up by Pim Fortuyn, who was murdered in 2002, has filed for bankruptcy. Apparently it hopes to then start afresh and get its financial affairs in order. Fortuyn, who was ejected from the LN, when he called for the total closure of Dutch borders and scrapping of anti-discrimination laws, went on to attract mass support for his policies. (*Expatica News* 12.8.04)

Extremist MP demands ban on Islamic immigration and more deportations

Geert Wilders, MP has called for a complete five-year ban on people from Turkey and Morocco immigrating to the Netherlands and this would include those who wanted to join their families. He also says that immigrants with Dutch passports who refuse to learn Dutch should be deprived of their citizenship and deported. The same should happen to those who commit crimes, disturb public order or, in the case of imams, who incite hatred or violence.

Wilders sits as an independent in the Lower House of Parliament and turned his back on the Liberal VVD which had tried to curtail his right-wing statements. According to opinion polls he is attracting much support: 81 per cent of respondents agreed that radical mosques be

banned and imams deported. (*Expatica News* 21.9.04)

The politics of assimilation

Controversial integration plans published

Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk seems determined to press ahead with controversial plans not only to visibly enforce integration in the Netherlands but to insist that would-be immigrants begin the integration process in their countries of origin.

Integration badge dropped

In June she made a concession of sorts and said that she would not be going ahead with her plans to introduce integration badges (which had been criticised as reminiscent of the Star of David Jews had been forced to wear), instead she would have a theoretical integration ladder, designed to judge the level of integration a person had reached. Immigrants would earn points based on language proficiency, employment, residence in an immigrant suburb, truancy of children etc.

Protest from municipalities

In July, twenty-six middle-sized municipalities grouped together to discuss with Verdonk her plans for compulsory language courses. They felt that her plans, which divorced language training from vocational training and which will force immigrants to pay for courses, and insist on examination only after five years, will actually slow down the process of newcomers learning Dutch.

Pre-arrival integration

On 3 August the ministry published legislative proposals outlining the regulations and conditions to be imposed on immigrants required to complete an integration exam. If passed, the legislation requires that future immigrants develop their knowledge of the Dutch language and culture in their home country and will be forced to sit an exam costing 350 Euros. The idea is to start the process of integration in the country of origin. The Netherlands is the first country to demand a pre-arrival integration process and it is also clear that such plans have a racial connotation. Immigrants from EU members states, Switzerland, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan will not need to complete such an exam before arrival. It is focused on Moroccans and Turks, many of whom already live in the country and seek to bring in partners. (*Expatica* 22.6, 30.7, 4.8.04)

Antillean MPs condemn integration policy

The Antillean parliament has condemned the integration proposals on the basis that they make a distinction between Dutch nationals born in the EU and born elsewhere. Antilleans have Dutch nationality, but the parliament in Willemstad fears they will become second-class citizens.

The Antillean parliament has urged the Dutch parliament to oppose the legislative proposals. The Prime Minister claims they breach international equal opportunity rights and a ban on racial discrimination. (*Expatica News* 26.8.04)

Dual nationality muddle looms

The new legislation which may force many expatriates to

take out Dutch nationality when marrying native-born partners, could end up creating families with both dual national and single status children. (*Expatica News* 31.8.04)

Dutch restaurant refuses to lift headscarf ban

A restaurant in the Hague has refused to lift its ban on serving women in headscarves, despite being told to lift the ban by the commission for equality. The CGB's ruling is non-binding, though it does have the power to sue – though it never has in its ten years of existence. The restaurateur maintains that his ban on headscarves is to 'maintain a specific atmosphere'. (*Swissinfo* 8.9.04)

MP Hirsi Ali courts controversy

Hirsi Ali, a Somali asylum seeker, now a Dutch MP has caused offence within Holland's Muslim community by creating an 11-minute film which allegedly peddles stereotypes and hoary-old traditions which are not considered by the faithful to be true to Islam. The English-language film tells the story of a young Muslim woman forced into an arranged marriage with a man who beats her. The almost naked body of the actress is shown with verses from the Koran painted on it.

Hirsi Ali, 34, an MP for the free-market Liberals has emerged as the heir of Pim Fortuyn. Though shunning his party, she has pursued his message by denouncing multiculturalism, including the funding of Islamic clubs. She says that her ambition is the reformation of Islam and she has been popular among ordinary Dutch people who appear to worry about militant Islam. But the director of Holland's Institute for Multicultural Development has called her 'provocative' and the head of the Arabic European League accused her of doing damage to integration. (*Telegraph* 31.8.04, *IslamOnline* 31.8.04)

NORWAY

Race and electoral politics

Right-wing leader Hagen needs protection following anti-Islamic tirade

Progress Party Leader Carl I. Hagen has been issued with a mobile security alarm by police because they are worried he might become a target for terrorists because of anti-Islamic remarks he made last summer.

Hagen told a Christian organisation called Living Word that Muslims made too many inroads into Europe and he joked about Prophet Mohammed. 'The Islamic fundamentalists, along the same lines as Hitler made it clear a long time ago that their plan is to "Islamify" the world', Hagen claimed. 'they're well underway, they've come far in Africa and are on their way into Europe, and then we have to fight it.' Ambassadors from several Muslim nations later complained. (*Aftenposten* 31.8.04)

Hagen calls for unity on the right

The leader of Norway's most conservative party, which holds the second-largest bloc of voter support after Labor, has called for all those on the right to come

together. Hagen is often shunned by other political parties but clearly strikes a chord with voters for his stance on crime, less government regulation, immigration and Islam. With 20 per cent in a recent poll, other parties need to take the Progress Party seriously. The non-socialist parties currently holding government power now only have 28 per cent of the vote combined, while the two largest socialist parties (Labor and the Socialist Left) have 45 per cent. (*Aftenposten* 5.10.04)

Changes on citizenship, marriage and asylum policy

Tougher rules on citizenship announced

Erna Solberg, local government minister is planning to change citizenship laws so that those who do not fulfil a compulsory two years residency will lose their citizenship, new conditions will be imposed on those between 21 and 23 who are normally entitled to citizenship and a more formal ceremony will be introduced for those who gain citizenship. (*Aftenposten* 20.9.04)

Labor Party suggests following Danish lead on restricting marriages

A Labor party committee has proposed an age limit of 21 years for reuniting families. In practice it means that there would be an age limit for marriages between Norwegians and foreigners, or an ability to live together in Norway. Denmark's policy has resulted in many Danes being forced to relocate with foreign spouses, often to Sweden, where they are called 'love refugees'. Two years ago the Progress Party made a similar proposal and Labour opposed it. (*Aftenposten* 23.9.04)

Uproar over destitute asylum seekers

Norway's largest municipalities are protesting that asylum policies are creating a homeless population. Refugees, that are refused asylum but either cannot or will not return home, are turned out on the streets without any rights – a policy which is being decried as inhumane. Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger and Tromso local governments have voiced despair and disbelief at the government's apparent disinterest in dealing with the consequences of the asylum policy. Erna Solberg, local government minister, and other ministers who have been approached by Oslo city councillors, have not responded. (*Aftenposten* 20.9.04)

Racism and fascism

One third of dangerous mental patients are refugees

According to figures obtained by the public broadcaster NRK, 30 per cent of dangerous patients at regional mental hospitals at Dikemark in Akershus and Sandviken in Bergen came to Norway as refugees. Many of them appear to have gone through war and traumatic experiences in their homelands. Now very little is needed, according to officials, to 'push them over the edge'. (*Norway Post* 2.10.04)

Racist email angers bus drivers

One third of all bus drivers at Norgesbuss are of 'immigrant background' and they were not amused by an

email which managers sent out which was a 'math test for Pakistanis' with problems about 'Jamal' and 'Abdullah' and others who sell drugs, pimp, shoot and murder. The head manager has now regretted the incident and said the individual who sent it has apologised but he said that he did not think the message was an expression of the sender's racism. (*Aftenposten* 29.9.04)

The politics of assimilation

Scandinavia's biggest mosque to be built

Building work has begun in the Gronland district of Oslo, on Scandinavia's largest mosque, which, will have room for 2,500 people when it is completed next autumn. (*Aftenposten* nd)

Immigrants should be forced to learn Norwegian

A leading professor and psychiatrist, Berthold Grunfeldt, has told NRK radio that the country has incurred problems it cannot handle because it has been too soft-hearted on immigrants. He insists that immigrants should be forced to learn Norwegian, accept Norwegian values and conduct and generally make more of an effort.

Language classes are being removed

But, ironically, the largest section of Norway's immigrant group, those married to Norwegian citizens, are actually excluded from the country's main integration project. They are not able to apply for free Norwegian language classes. The parliament is considering proposed legislation to halt the right of immigrants with citizenship to free language classes and those arriving to work or reunite with families will, from 2005, no longer have free classes. (*Aftenposten* 9,10.9.04)

Christian fundamentalist groups come under criticism

A Pentecostal Church in the greater Oslo area has created a controversial revival movement among Muslim asylum seekers and some asylum centre leaders say the church is tricking its many visitors. The church provides coffee, cakes, Iranian pop music, a special bus for transport. However, the Hvalstad centre for underage asylum seekers believes the church is undertaking an unpleasant and underhand form of proselytising and that young people need to be protected. Because of boredom, any entertainment appeals to young asylum seekers. The problem is that, according to one Iranian, a switch to Christianity could mean 'liquidation' when one was returned to Iran.

The Oslo Bishop is worried about the way that a change in the law on religious schooling is leading to the blossoming of institutions which have a fundamentalist/ separatist creed. He has said that it is important for schools to 'preserve fellowship' and not 'institutionalise differences in the local community'. He is concerned that closed environments allow for indoctrination and abuse of authority. In particular a Pentecostalist school has come under scrutiny for its extreme views and the fact that it will not employ unmarried partners or homosexuals and states that its teachers must speak in tongues. (*Aftenposten* 1, 13, 9.04)

Police and criminal justice

Police accused of racism to asylum seekers

The Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers has accused the Police Immigration Unit in Oslo of systematic harassment of asylum seekers. The unit stands accused of stripping applicants naked and mistreating those attempting to register at the immigration unit in Oslo. (*Aftenposten* 3.8.04)

POLAND

Racism and fascism

Neo-Nazis raid Chechen camp

A camp of Chechen refugees twenty miles from Warsaw was attacked by neo-Nazis on 22 September. They attacked with broken bottles, gas pistols and fired Molotov cocktails on to balconies to try to set the camp ablaze. The camp housed more than one hundred refugees, including children and parents who are now too frightened to send their children to school. (noborder 24.8.04)

ROMANIA

Racism and fascism

Reports reveal continued discrimination and prejudice against Roma

A report by the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Programme and the Open Society Institute says that many of Romania's efforts to improve conditions for its Roma minority lack the necessary resources and authority. Romania is currently close to concluding its negotiations on EU membership and the situation of its Roma have been repeatedly criticised by the European parliament and human rights groups. Though the report does recognise a few advances it shows there is much more to do: 'the legalisation of property, low education levels, and high unemployment will require much more sustained and far-reaching efforts'.

On 1 October UNICEF published the results of a Romanian poll on attitudes towards the Roma. 93 per cent of people would not accept a Roma as a family member, 45 per cent did not want them in their cities or villages and 36 per cent thought they should live separately. 50 per cent agreed with measures, including sterilisation, to prevent the growth of the Roma population. (*EUobserver* 27.9.04, European Roma Information Office <<http://www.erionet.org/RomaniaAG.htm>> 7.10.04)

RUSSIA

Racism and fascism

Levels of attacks cause concern

According to a two-year study by the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, there are about 50,000 skinheads in Russia, with 1,500 in both Moscow and St Petersburg. 20 to 30 people die each year in racist attacks and the figure is increasing by 30 per cent year-on-year. Extremism stems from economic problems, high unemployment and the collapse of the Soviet Union which sent hundreds of thousands of migrants from poorer former Soviet republics to Russia seeking jobs. Ethnic tensions are also being fuelled by the decade-long conflict in Chechnya. The blasts and bombings in Russian cities being blamed on Chechen terrorist rebels. (AP 9.6.04)

Two diplomats' sons killed

Two young men, sons of diplomats, were knifed to death within weeks of one another. In St Petersburg, a medical student son of a Libyan diplomat was knifed to death on 21 May. The killing, completely unprovoked, followed a request for a cigarette from a man passing Al-Hammali and his brother as they headed home before midnight. On 8 June, the son of a Mongolian diplomat was knifed to death in Irkutsk. His body was found in a stairwell with three knife wounds. (Moscow Times 3, 9.6.04)

Synagogue burned

On 27 July in Irkutsk, fire gutted a building housing a synagogue and Jewish cultural centre. (Moscow Times 28.7.04)

Racist attacks rise after Beslan

Racist attacks on dark-skinned people from the Caucasus and elsewhere have risen in seriousness since the Beslan school siege and the downing of two planes, allegedly in terrorist actions.

Murders reported in the news media

■ In the Urals a group of youngsters hurled Molotov cocktails into an Azeri Kaspıy café in Yekaterinburg on 9 September, and a 52-year-old relative of the owner, burned to death.

■ In Vladivostok, the weekend after the school siege, a North Korean man was beaten to death.

■ On 16 September a Muslim woman in the eastern city of Asbest was raped and tortured to death. The 45-year-old mother of three had the words 'death to terrorists' written on the back of her naked body.

■ On 22 September an Indian businessman was shot dead near his office building in Moscow.

■ On 13 October a Vietnamese student was found dead with multiple stab wounds outside the dormitory of his medical institute.

Other serious attacks

■ Twenty people armed with sticks and chains broke into Oasis Plus, an Armenian café, wounding two people who were hospitalised with skull and brain injuries.

■ On 9 September another Armenian café in Verkhnyaya was set alight. (Police who detained two suspects, dismissed a racial motive, calling its hooliganism.)

■ A mosque was attacked on 15 September in the city of Noyaborsk in northern Russia and racist slogans daubed on the walls.

■ In Sterlitamak, Bashkiria Republic an imam was battered and in a critical condition with head injuries.

■ On 18 September four men of Caucasian descent were attacked by a gang of 20-50 skinheads in a Moscow metro train and left with fractures and knife wounds.

■ In late September three open-air cafes owned by Azeris were burned down in northern Moscow.

■ On 26 September a Syrian family was attacked in their Moscow home by assailants wielding a gun.

■ A Kenyan student was attacked on 10 October in the city of Voronezh (where Amaro Limo had been killed, see below)

■ An Uzbek migrant worker was knifed to death on 14 October in a Dolgoprudny street.

Police accused of attack

To make matters worse, the authorities often, as in the cases cited above, discount a racial motive to attacks. And to compound the problem, the police themselves are accused of racial violence. On 9 September two Moscow policeman beat up a famous former Russian cosmonaut because he had a Chechen surname. Colonel Magomed Tolboyev was stopped at a metro station for a routine document check. When the officers saw his name, which suggests he is of Caucasian Muslim descent, they started to beat him up. This case, which has received much press coverage, has prompted the Moscow interior security directorate to launch an inquiry. (Courier Times 9.6.04, Moscow Times 3,9.6, 28.7, 13.9.04, IslamOnline 18.9.04, MosNews.com <<http://www.Mosnews.com/news/>> 10, 20, 27,28.9, 11,15,10.04)

Human rights and anti-racist campaigners at risk

It appears from developments over the last few months that to oppose racism and fascism and to campaign for human rights are dangerous pursuits which can bring retribution from both neo-Nazis and state authorities.

Anti-racist academic murdered

Dr Nikolai Girenko, 64, a human rights scholar who devoted himself to eliminating racism, was shot dead in St Petersburg, most probably by neo-Nazis. He had worked as an ethnic expert in many criminal cases and had travelled extensively to speak on human rights and against fascism. He was shot at point blank range as he went to answer the doorbell at his apartment on 19 June. (Guardian 22.6.04, AI Statement 22.6.04)

Arrest of anti-fascist journalist

On 19 May, unknown people broke into the home of Aleksei Cherepanov and Oksana Muzykina and began a search. This followed the arrest of Cherepanov on 12 May for possession of drugs (which he denies ever using). Cherepanov is an anti-fascist journalist who has

written about the persecution of illegal immigrants in Krasnodar. (noborder mailing 20.9.04)

Rights group opposes police control

The Interior Ministry announced plans, in June, to assign police representatives to all rights associations. According to ministers it is to enable officers to react immediately to complaints, but Human Rights Watch denounced the initiative as smelling 'of old Soviet times'. (*Moscow Times* 21.6.04)

Police raid rights office

Moscow police in July and again on 18 August raided the offices of Moya Pravo (My Right) set up to protect people from police harassment after the brutal attack on German Galdetsky, a student campaigning against police abuse. The group's chairman said, 'People are scared; they feel the need to protect themselves from the police instead of the police protecting them.' (*Independent* 20.8.04)

Muslim soldiers escape harassment

Eight Russian Muslim soldiers escaped their special forces unit based in south Moscow after being beaten by their colleagues following the Beslan school tragedy. (*IslamOnline* 21.9.04)

Convictions and arrests

Voronezh court convicts racist murderers

Three Russian teenagers have been convicted of the racially-motivated killing of Guinean student Amaro Lima in February 2004. Two of the killers were members of the neo-Nazi Russian National Party and were sentenced to 10 and 17 years imprisonment; the third, a student of 16, was sentenced to 9 years. During preliminary hearings, one of the neo-Nazi assailants tried to argue he killed out of 'personal dislike' and denied the murder was racially motivated. However, all three were found guilty of murder and fomenting racial hatred. (*Reuters AlertNet* 30.9.04, *MosNews.com* 30.9.04)

Police make arrests in Tajik girl murder case

Police, who still maintain that the fatal stabbing of Khursheda Sultanova, a young Tajik girl in St Petersburg in February, was an act of hooliganism and not racially-motivated, have arrested five people. According to police, 12 people were identified as gathering in the Yusupov Gardens where the 9-year-old was stabbed to death and her father and cousin savagely beaten by a group of teenagers armed with chains, bats and knives. (*MosNews.com* 28.5.04)

SERBIA

Racism and fascism

Ethnic Hungarians under attack

In Vojvodina a number of attacks on ethnic Hungarians have taken place. On 18 September a young man of 18 years was badly beaten on a bus by teenagers because he had smiled as he took his seat. 'No Hungarian has

smiled at me and not one will', said one attacker. Other passengers allegedly started kicking and stamping on the man as he lay on the floor and those who went to his aid were threatened and beaten, too. The Chair of the Kishegyes Executive Committee said it was obvious that the attack had been purely because the youth was a minority Hungarian.

Hungary has registered with the UN the fact that it is very worried about attacks on Hungarians in Serbia. One family which fled recently Subotica to Hungary has been granted refugee status because of 'exceptional humanitarian considerations'. (*Budapest Sun Online* 7.10.04)

SLOVAKIA

Race and electoral politics

Slovak deputy accused of defamation

Representatives of Roma organisations in Slovakia have filed a complaint against parliamentary deputy Jozef Banas who jokingly suggested to a NATO parliamentary assembly lunch in Bratislava that the shortage of troops in Afghanistan could be solved by deploying divisions of Slovak Roma. A spokesman for the Roma Parliament accused him of defamation of a nation and a race. Banas' excuse was that he was merely trying to move a lengthy debate about the Roma over to the main topic, Afghanistan. (*Slovak Spectator* 22.6.04)

Racism and fascism

Contentious law to ban discrimination finally passed

1 July saw the introduction of a law to outlaw discrimination based on gender, race, religion, health, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The law was passed by 107 MPs in May and will also allow for positive discrimination for disadvantaged ethnic or national groups – a move welcomed by the Roma. The passing of the law came after years of hindrance from the ruling Christian Democrats (they opposed or abstained when the vote was taken). Even as the law was passed, the Justice Minister said he would initiate a motion in the Constitutional Court on the grounds that the positive discrimination clause will degrade human dignity and strengthen stereotyping. The cabinet's representative for Roma issues justified the clause as a necessary temporary move to create equal opportunities for Roma. The Roma Communities NGO Council welcomed the law as the 'first time in Slovakia's history that Roma will be able to live normal and standard lives'. (*Slovak Spectator* 31.5.04)

Setback on equality legislation for Roma

Although a clause which legislates equal opportunity for Roma people earned a resounding majority vote in parliament in May, it is now under attack from the Christian Democratic Movement which is asking the Constitutional Court to strike out the law as unconstitutional. At a press conference on 13 September, the Slovak Justice Minister told journalists that positive discrimination,

including quotas designed to help some groups gain greater access to jobs and education 'infringed on human dignity'. His legal argument centred on his assertion that the constitution denies racial or ethnic groups from gaining advantages or suffering disadvantages by stating that all people are equal. But the deputy PM for minorities and human rights believes the clause is a temporary measure to 'ensure unfairly disadvantaged groups have a chance to match the rest of society'. The head of the Slovak Roma Initiative Party says that the tool is an important tool to help improve the Roma situation. Roma representatives fear that if the top court decides affirmative action is illegal, then the gap between Roma and non-Roma people in Slovakia will widen. (*Slovak Spectator* 22.9.04)

Roma studies introduced

The Slovak-English bilingual high school in Bratislava, is now offering Roma studies as part of the curriculum. Although several schools teach the Roma language, this is the first secondary school to offer a five-year programme in Roma history and culture. Already 230 pupils applied for the course and it is filled to capacity (*Slovak Spectator* 7.9.04)

Loan sharks who prey on Roma to be punished

The Deputy PM for Minorities has promised to punish loan sharks following a special report which showed that Roma were being specifically targeted. The Roma, estimated at 350-500,000 live below the poverty line with very high rates of unemployment. They are now getting embroiled in higher and higher levels of debt, as unscrupulous usurers con them out of whatever social benefits the families are still getting. Victims of loan sharks dare not approach the police or other authorities to sort out their problems. The results are so stark that families are unable to clothe and feed children. (*Slovak Spectator* 6.10.04)

The politics of assimilation

Forced assimilation of Roma children controversy explodes

The EU ambassador to Slovakia caused dismay on 1 May, as he advocated, in an interview on Dutch television, the removal of Roma children from their home communities so that they could be educated in boarding schools and thereby assimilated into society. This would resolve the 'Roma problem' as in such schools they would be continuously exposed to 'the system of values which is dominant in our society'. Van der Linden thought that financial incentives to parents would break down resistance to the idea. And the result would be a new generation of Roma 'that will fit better into the dominant society'.

The European Roma Information Office (ERIO) protested that such statements ran contrary to international human rights conventions and the guidelines the EU had been pressing on accession states to 'safeguard and respect the rights of their minorities'. It called on the European Commission to remove Van der Linden from his post. The chief spokesman for the EC later described the comments as an 'unfortunate choice of words' and 'regrettable'.

Despite the anger of Roma activists, some groups have, according to the *Slovak Spectator*, welcomed the idea. The head of the Slovak Roma Council said the idea had come at the right time. The Slovak Roma Council also said that educational levels would benefit from such an initiative.

The ambassador, who had been asked by the EC not to comment further on the topic, has said that he had not meant enforcing separation of children from parents but 'active persuasion'. It appears unlikely anyway that his idea will be adopted since the Slovak government is already considering a plan for the integrated education of Roma children based on a White Paper which stresses their unequal position and the negative stereotyping, prejudice and intolerance they face from the majority. (*Slovak Spectator* 28.5.04, ERIO press release 19.5.04)

Police and criminal justice

Customs officers wound refugees

Two Asian migrants were wounded on 17 April by customs police, one was in a critical condition. The incident occurred near the Hungarian border, where a van failed to stop. Officers fired warning shots and then shot at the van, in which twenty-five men from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan were travelling. The driver escaped, but one of the wounded, shot in the head, was not expected to survive. (*RFE/RL Newline* 19.4.04)

SPAIN

Race and electoral politics

'Race-mixing' claim furore

The former president of Catalonia, Jordi Pujol, has spoken of the dangers of miscegenation for the future of the region. His successor, Maragall went out of his way to state that mixing was not a goal and that if one was to link up with a globalised world then separatism was no answer. He chose to make his speech at the same university in Prada where Pujol had harangued cultural mixing. From Barcelona the prime minister joined in the argument saying he could not defend a stance 'against mixing' because it could be taken as a call to isolationism. Groups of immigrants in Catalonia have accused Pujol of fomenting racism and xenophobia by spouting a 'fascist' and right-wing ideology. (*El Periódico* 26.8.04)

Racism and fascism

Brutal beating of Algerian in Madrid

Six youths brutally beat an Algerian, Karim T. (37) in Human Rights Street, Madrid, close to the M-30 mosque. The victim was found in a serious condition on the street with swelling to the brain. Locals told police of having seen skinheads armed with iron bars in the area. The president of the Movement Against Intolerance warned that internet messages between Nazi groups had been inciting supporters to attack mosques and North Africans. (*El Periódico* 5.6.04)

Neo-Nazis beat up the homeless

Two soldiers, who are members of the Social Republican Movement, which puts on neo-Nazi gigs, have been arrested for beating up and stabbing a homeless man in Madrid in August. The suspects carried key chains and belt buckles which displayed Nazi symbols. They were arrested after someone admitted to the police that the group had gone out looking for homeless people to beat up. (*El Pais* 25.8.04)

Lessen penalties on undocumented workers call

An academic study for the Jaume Bofill Foundation has suggested that penalties for hiring undocumented workers should be lessened. This was partly because of the clear deceleration in the growth of the Meghrebian population and the increase in migration from South and Central America, much of which is clandestine, and partly because the Aliens Act was regarded as discriminatory. (*El Periódico* 1.7.04)

New Gypsy platform in Catalonia

Gypsy associations in Catalonia have decided for the first time to create a common front to defend their historic claims more vigorously and have regrouped around the new 'Democratic Platform of the Gypsy People of Catalonia'. The new organisation is born out of contacts activists have made with the Generalitat (the Catalan autonomous government). The members of the new platform are working with Generalitat to actively prepare a future 'Integral Plan for the Gypsy people' and negotiated for official recognition of that group in the body of the new Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia now under discussion. (*El Periódico* 25.7.04)

The politics of assimilation

Archbishop accuses government over Islamification

According to Spain's leading archbishop, Cardinal Antonio Maria Rouco, the government having decided to cancel compulsory religious classes (first introduced by Franco) and to find ways of financing other faiths, including Islam from public money, is taking Spain back to Moorish times. He said that the policies took the country back to medieval times when Muslim invaders swept across the Straits of Gibraltar.

The dispute between the socialist government and the Catholic church is also expected to come to the fore in the debate of the constitution, the right of the church to appoint religious teachers in state schools, the issue of gay marriage, abortion rights, and around stem-cell research. For the first time, Jewish, Muslim and Protestant leaders will meet government officials to discuss how their religions might be financed. At present only the Catholic church benefits from tax breaks. Islam and Protestantism are both increasing their followers in Spain while only 18 per cent of Spaniards declare themselves Roman Catholic, as compared to 98 per cent, fifty years ago. (*Guardian* 7.7.04)

Popular Party slams funding of multi-faith education

The leader of the Popular Party (PP) has blasted a Justice Ministry proposal to finance state education in

other religions besides Catholicism, arguing that public money should not be spent on teaching faiths 'which are not part of our culture'. The Socialist government is drafting reforms which would make religion a non-obligatory subject in schools and would not be exclusively Catholic. The Justice Ministry had indicated that study in public schools would cover multiple faiths, including Islam, of which there were a growing number of followers in Spain. Ministry officials, replying to Mariano Rajoy, PP leader, said that religious diversity is protected by the Constitution and that a 1994 law allows for teaching of religions other than Catholicism. (*El Pais* 25.8.04)

Madrid victims granted residence

The Spanish government has given residence permits to nearly 700 immigrants who were either victims or related to victims of the Madrid bombs on 11 March. Police said that 2,000 other immigrants had made residence applications on grounds that they had been directly affected by the attacks. A large number of Latin Americans were among the victims of the bombings. (*BBC News* 12.8.04)

Police and criminal justice

Santa Coloma: man shot dead by police

On 23 June, around 150 Moroccan immigrants gathered in the central square of Santa Coloma de Gramenet to protest at the death on 17 June of Farid Bendaoued, who was shot by a police officer from the Catalan force during a drugs raid on a house. The protest coincided with an emergency meeting of the Plan for Peaceful Coexistence (a body formed by the Council of Cardinals, immigrant groups, residence and social groups) with the aim of defusing the situation. The demonstrators demanded justice for the death, which they regard as a murder and not an accident during a struggle (as the police alleged), to be investigated. The Commissioner for the Plan for Peace said the reason for the meeting was to demand clarification of facts and he did not want to prejudge the police while investigations were under way. The committee will assist the cost of repatriating the dead man's body and provide support for the family. (*El Periódico d'Andorra* 1.6.04)

Derisory fine for mosque arson attack

A councillor from Cervera and member of the Platform for Catalonia was fined a mere €25 for having attempted to burn down the mosque in the capital of Segarra in March 2002. The councillor had not only admitted to the incendiary attack on the doors to the mosque, but had also hung up a sign with the word 'Moros'. The prosecutor, who had initially tried to fine the man €6,480 allowed a lesser charge to be brought. The defence was that the assailant was drunk and was acting to avenge a family matter. The racial motive for the crime was never mentioned in the trial. According to the leader of the main Muslim group in the surrounding areas of Lleira, the punishment was shameful. (*El Periódico* 18.5.04)

SWEDEN

Racism and fascism

Conference to expose anti-Muslim racism since September 11

Swedish Muslim leaders organised a meeting on 12 September to expose the extent of documented racism against the community, especially after September 11. The conference screened videos showing attacks such as throwing pigs heads at mosques, the destruction of the Malmo Islamic Center by arsonists and the organising of anti-Islam demonstrations. The conference was organised by the office of discrimination against Muslims established in April upon the initiative of the Islamic Council and leading Islamic unions. (*IslamOnline* 11.9.04)

Muslims change names to get jobs

A report in the *Dagens Nyheter* on September 6/7 stated that many Muslims and immigrants feeling the racist pinch since September 11 have changed their names in order to make a living in Sweden. The paper also did a job search and found that job applicants with Swedish names got jobs instantly while those with Arabic names did not. The civil affairs department estimates that dozens of Arabs and Muslims have applied to change their names in the second half of 2003 in order to find employment. (*IslamOnline* 9.9.04)

SWITZERLAND

Race and electoral politics

People's Party tries to control immigration and asylum agenda

The Swiss People's Party (SVP) is trying, via the appointment of Christoph Blocher as Minister for Justice and Police, to control the agenda on immigration. The SVP threatens to challenge the immigration law in a nationwide poll if the Senate does not tighten the law and in the run-up to the Senate debate, Blocher released a study he had commissioned into illegal immigration. It showed that more illegal immigrants were living in the country than previously thought and that 90,000 were working. The report alleged that criminal acts by foreigners posed a threat to Swiss security and that harsher penalties should be imposed for illegal entry and overstaying. Temporary detention was advocated for those awaiting deportation.

Blocher has also advocated, in a newspaper interview with *SonntagsZeitung* (29 August) that aid and troops should be sent to run camps in conflict zones as a means of curbing asylum seeking in Switzerland. (*Swissinfo* 5.5.04, *NZZ Online* 22.8.04, *UPI* 29.6.04, *Migration News Sheet* September 2004).

New immigration law supposed to also promote integration

The House of Representatives voted by 64 to 48 to amend the foreigners law (of 1931) but the SVP

denounced the new legislation as too lax, while the Left say it is too harsh. Ultimately it was supported by the centre-left Social Democrats and centre-right Christian Democrats. Under proposals families of immigrants should find it easier to be reunited in Switzerland and the issuing of residency permits may be accompanied by state-funded language courses. But other measures, such as a two-tier immigration policy are aimed at giving priority to EU and EFTA nationals on the labour market. Illegal immigrants can be detained for up to six months prior to deportation, carriers fines will be up to SFr 5,000 (£3,000) and local authorities can refuse to marry couples if they suspect a marriage of convenience. The law has yet to be ratified by the Senate. (*Swissinfo* 12.6.04)

Referendum rejects loosening rules on nationality

The referendum held on 26 September rejected government proposals to ease naturalisation rules for foreigners raised and schooled in the country and to give citizenship to Swiss-born grandchildren of migrants. The citizenship votes were split along linguistic lines, with nearly all the French-speaking cantons accepting the changes, while German-speaking regions rejected them. (*Guardian* 27.9.04, *Swissinfo* 27.9.04)

Far-Right ad campaign on citizenship denounced

An advertising campaign in various national papers, orchestrated by Goal, an agency owned by a controversial psychologist Alexander Segrette, who supports the SVP, has been warning against voting in favour of amendments to the citizenship laws which could make Muslims into a majority community. A lawyer has filed a lawsuit against the campaign which he claims is orchestrated by right-wing MP Ulrich Schleuer, whom he accuses of inciting racial hatred. A Swiss Muslim organisation, the Islamic Cultural Foundation has launched a counter campaign, a sign-in against bids by the far-Right to block citizenship to long-time residents. (*IslamOnline* 9.9.04)

Press blames People's Party

The Geneva-based *Le Temps* paper said that the SVP, which had published the controversial campaign posters showing dark-skinned hands grabbing Swiss passports, had succeeded in scaring the electorate into voting against the plans. 'The main lesson and the biggest concern', it wrote, 'are the role and methods adopted by [the People's] party.' The Zurich based *Tages-Anzeiger* said the outcome was 'no victory for Switzerland' and that the three main parties should have done more to counter the 'no' campaign. (*Swissinfo* 27.9.04)

SVP to carry on with high-profile campaigning

After its highly effective and rabidly xenophobic poster campaign (which included a much-criticised poster featuring Osama bin Laden on a Swiss identity card) the SVP has announced its next campaign, against Switzerland joining the EU's Schengen accord on cross-border crime.

It also announced that its leaders want parliament to repeal the 1992 law on dual citizenship, which allows citizens to keep their old passports. (*Independent* 29.9.04, *Swissinfo* 27.9. 6.10.04)

Racism and fascism

Far-Right recruits at sporting events

Swiss authorities fear that sporting events, especially in football and ice-hockey, are being used by far-Right groups as recruiting grounds. More and more right-wing extremist attitudes are spreading among young hooligans according to the Federal Police Office which reports on internal security. A spokeswoman confirmed that there had been increased numbers of attacks by skin-heads and hooligans on sports supporters and security forces. Skinheads are deemed to be acting on political motives (and often linked to rightwing groups) whereas hooligans are regarded as being racist but non-political. Over the past few months police have documented a number of incidents in sports stadiums involving extremist right-wing elements. Observers are particularly alarmed because Euro 2008 European football championships are jointly being organised by Austria and Switzerland. (*Swissinfo* 23.7.04)

Hooligans, not extreme-right pose problem says government

According to a government report, neither the extreme right nor the extreme left pose a threat to safety in Switzerland and the climate surrounding foreign, political or religious extremist groups is 'calm but tense'. However, the report criticises the Swiss law for its inability to fight hooliganism and propaganda that incites violence. Critics are worried about trouble that extremists could cause at Euro 2008. (*NZZ Online* 26.8.04)

The politics of assimilation

President calls for integration of refugees

On the eve of Refugee Day, Swiss President Joseph Deiss said that more should be done to help refugees integrate. He urged the Swiss to respect refugees and called on refugees to learn one of the nation's languages. Amnesty International used Refugee Day to call on cantonal authorities not to crack down on those whose asylum claims had been rejected. On 1 April the federal authorities stopped providing welfare benefits to rejected asylum seekers and the cantons are now responsible for emergency aid. (*Swissinfo* 20.6.04)

Muslims launch campaign against stereotyping

On 24 June, Muslims in Switzerland launched a ten-day campaign to reach out to non-Muslims and challenge media misinformation. Organised by the Islamic Cultural Foundation in Geneva, the 'Dialogue Tent' campaign seeks to clear stereotypes about Islam and convey correct images and answer queries that non-Muslims have about Islam. The dialogue covered culture, art and civilisation. Islam is the second biggest religion in Switzerland and 43 per cent of the Muslim community are of Turkish origin. Already the Bishop of Thun had called for the recognising of Islam as one of the country's main religions (over 350,000 Muslims live in the country). The League of Muslims is to set up a press office to monitor media coverage. According to a recent study *Blick Neue Zurcher Zeitung*, *Facts*, *Le Matin*, *Le Temps* and *Welt Woche* have all frequently attacked Islam. (*IslamOnline* 16.6.04)

Zurich refuses to ban hijab

Swiss Muslims have welcomed the fact that the Zurich cantonal government has refused to support the proposal by the SVP to ban the hijab in schools. It maintained that there was no need for legislation. It believed that the supreme federal court's verdict upholding a decision by the Geneva government to expel a school teacher for insisting on wearing a hijab, was not applicable to students. (*IslamOnline* 22.7.04)

Basle proposes compulsory language tests for residence right

Basle is discussing plans to force foreigners to attend German classes or an integration course in order to receive or extend a temporary residence permit. The courses will be at the individual's expense, though help may be given in hardship cases. The two local governments involved say that it is proposed in order to improve the position of immigrants. And, according to the Pegoraro and Basle City police director it will better integrate foreigners and lead to a decrease in violence between different groups. 'Integration is not a one-way street', he told the *Blick* paper. 'Whoever lives in our country must play by our rules.' The Federal Office of Immigration, Integration and Emigration welcomed the move, saying it was in line with a new federal law on foreigners under discussion. A similar law is likely to be introduced in Neuchatel, where foreigners were usually prepared to learn French. (*Swissinfo* 13.8.04)

Police and criminal justice

AI criticises police brutality

In its 2004 report AI has condemned the police for using excessive force against foreigners and asylum seekers. It highlighted a handful of cases against non-Swiss, black Africans and Muslims in particular in which force was used. It also drew attention to a police raid on a hostel in Glarus in which asylum seekers were stripped naked, bound hand and foot, blindfolded and photographed. One 16-year-old was so frightened he jumped from a third-storey window and was seriously injured. AI also criticised Switzerland for introducing tougher asylum restrictions and xenophobic statements during last autumn's parliamentary elections. (*Swissinfo* 26.5.04)

Swiss NGO accuses police of racism

A report by a Swiss anti-racism platform called CRAN, based on eye witness accounts, accuses the police of violence and brutality against black people, especially foreigners. A spokesman said that the police failed to distinguish between real criminals and the innocent, picking on anyone by virtue of their skin colour. Geneva's police chief admitted that the introduction of an anti drugs trafficking programme had seen 75 per cent of those detained to be asylum seekers. But he said attempts were being made to deal with racism in the ranks. However, this was somewhat undermined by the fact that on 13 August three Geneva officers carried out a racist stunt (as part of a stag night) where they disguised a colleague as a dark-skinned Brazilian and tied him to the back of a police car, forcing him to run. (*Swissinfo* 25.8.04)

Crime statistics misleading

The Federal Police Office has been forced to admit that statistics showing that foreigners are responsible for more than half of crimes are misleading because they refer to suspects and not convictions. Foreigners were accused of 55.3 per cent of crimes in 2003 but the office admits that it does not distinguish between foreigners living in the country and non-nationals who might have entered to commit crimes. Switzerland does have a large foreigner population of 20 per cent which, according to a criminologist, will go some way to explaining the figures. (*Swissinfo* 2.6.04)

Unrest growing in jails

The justice ministry is warning of a possible crisis in crowded jails after Geneva's prison guards threatened to work to rule unless something was done. Tension is running high with up to seven prisoners being held in cells designed for four people. One of the reasons that the prison population has swollen is because of the high foreigner population in prison (60 per cent) and because of prison closures between 2000-02. (*Swissinfo* 15.7.04)

UK

Further and more up to date information on the UK can be accessed online at the IRR's Race and Refugee News Service at www.irr.org.uk

Racism and fascism

Race-hate crime increases

According to the organisation, Victim Support, which has helped 33,374 people who think they were targeted by racists in the last 12 months, this contrasts with 3,072 seeking their help for similar complaints ten years ago. The group says incidents include arson attacks on homes and places of worship, wounding and assault, verbal abuse, racist letters and leaflets through the post, harassment and bullying at work and school.

The Community Security Trust, which monitors anti-Semitic incidents in the UK, says that figures for the first half of 2004, show 375 incidents, the second highest figure since 1984 when records began. (*Independent* 12.10.04, *Jewish Chronicle* 13.8.04)

Racist murders in England and Wales

On 6 May, Bapishankar Kathirgamathan, (24), a Sri Lankan-born restaurant worker died two weeks after being racially attacked in Ashford, Kent. Two men were charged with the murder and remanded into custody.

On 6 September, a disabled Iraqi asylum seeker, Kalan, who had lost a leg below the knee after being tortured, died after being punched in the head in a racist attack in Swansea. A man has been charged with his murder.

Three other men – an Afghan refugee (on 8 September in north London), an African asylum seeker (on 10 September in Handsworth) and a Pakistani student (on 13 September in Reading) – have lost their lives in street attacks, which may have had a racial ele-

ment. (*BBC News* 17.9.04, *Highbury & Islington Express* 13.9.04, *IRR News* 4.10.04, *Sunday Mercury* 12.9.04)

Asylum seeker run over by racists, forced to leave Hull

Salar Mohammed, whose body was tossed into the air 'like a rag doll' as he was deliberately run into by a car as racists chased him through Hull, in July 2003 and who suffered three fractures to his legs, is now too afraid to go out alone and has been forced to leave the city. Two of his assailants have been convicted of causing him grievous bodily harm. (*thisishull* 5.6.04)

Scotland records large increase in attacks

Positive Action in Housing, a charity on housing and human rights issues, has reported an increase in racist attacks in Scotland of 81 per cent. In the year to August 2004, 194 people who used its services, had suffered attacks as compared with 107 for the previous year. A study by Glasgow university in June had also said that up to 80 per cent of violent racist incidents are not being reported. (*The Herald* 15.9.04)

Racism termed 'the new terrorism' in Northern Ireland

Community leaders in Northern Ireland have warned that racism is threatening to replace terrorism in a rising tide of attacks and incidents on immigrant workers and asylum seekers. With the decline of sectarianism and political violence, more immigrants arrived and the minority ethnic population stands at 30,000. But as the Lord Mayor of Belfast put it in early October, 'the upsurge in serious racist attacks motivated by prejudice and hatred... is an issue we need to get to grips with quickly.'

In south Belfast, around the anniversary of September 11, ethnic minorities were under police protection after intelligence warnings that far-right sympathisers were planning attacks. Between April 1 and July 23, 149 attacks had been reported, leading campaigners to label the province 'the race hate capital of Europe.'

Recent incidents:-

■ A Bangladeshi man and his family escaped with their lives when two petrol bombs were thrown at their house in Fane Street, south Belfast in July. The man said it was the twentieth time he or his family had been attacked.

■ A Portuguese youth was abused and threatened with a knife as he walked home in Londonderry in late July.

■ Two homes, which housed a South African family and an Indian family, were attacked in Tobar Park, Cullybackey in Co Antrim at the beginning of August.

■ A Lithuanian in Alexander Park, Armagh was attacked twice. First the house was patrol bombed, then he was attacked by seven people who beat him and broke his ribs.

■ Portuguese workers in Dungannon, Co Tyrone, were petrol bombed and police, in August, had to set up special patrols to protect them from being systematically victimised.

■ A home of Lithuanians in Armagh on 5 October was petrol bombed.

■ Cars were smashed and graffiti daubed on homes and business of Indian and Turkish people in Comber Co. Down in October. (*BBC News* 22, 29.7, 3, 16, 17, 19.8, 6, 18.10.04, *The Herald* 16.8.04, *Times* 9.9.04, *Guardian* 11.9.04, *Independent* 16.10.04)

BNP leader forced to climb down on non-white members

Nick Griffin, the British National Party (BNP) leader has been forced, because of outrage in his membership, to make a hasty turnabout on his plans to include non-white members. Following the failure of the BNP to win a European parliamentary seat, Griffin proposed, citing the threat of legal action from the Commission for Racial Equality, that the BNP should alter its constitution to allow non-whites to join. (Griffin also appeared to try to justify his position on the basis of the experience of the Vlaams Blok being prosecuted for discrimination. See section on Belgium in this Bulletin.) The party's rank and file were furious, evidenced in letters and articles in BNP literature. So Griffin has turned tail. (*Searchlight* September 2004)

Eight BNP members arrested following TV exposé

Leading figures in the BNP were revealed in a BBC documentary shown on 15 July admitting violence and racism towards Asians and inciting racial hatred. The programme, *The Secret Agent*, was based on film shot by an undercover reporter with the co-operation of a former BNP organiser in Bradford. In the film, John Tyndall, the party's founder accuses Michael Howard of being a 'son of immigrants' and Africa of giving the world 'cannibalism and Aids'. Eight members of the BNP were arrested between 21 July and 22 September on charges of suspicion to commit criminal damage, racially aggravated and threatening behaviour, public order and firearms offences. (*Times* 15, 21.7.04, *Independent* 15.7.04, *Guardian* 21.7.04, *BBC News* 22.7, 22.9.04)

BNP council gains

Roger Roberts, a Conservative councillor in Mirfield defected to the BNP in August. And on 16 September the BNP won a seat in the Goresbrook ward of Barking and Dagenham Council – the first council win in London since Derek Beacon's success in Tower Hamlets 1993. David Kelley won the seat from Labour with a majority of 470. The BNP, in June, already won three seats on nearby Epping Forest district council (Essex). (*ic Huddersfield* 19.8.04, *Guardian* 17.9.04)

BNP ban at work?

The Home office is considering barring members of the BNP from being employed as civil servants, though David Blunkett is reported as having worries about the civil liberty implications. Under plans being considered, civil servants and applicants to the service would have to disclose membership of the BNP and members would be refused employment or asked to leave the service.

Meanwhile an employment tribunal ruled in October that ASLEF was wrong to ban a member, who had stood for the BNP in Bexley elections, and awarded him £5,000. The expelled member said that his reputation had been damaged and he had suffered 'considerable injury to his feelings'. He intends to sue two journalists who had called him a racist. At last year's Labour conference the trade

secretary had promised that unions could deal with those 'who try to use trade unionism to peddle their racism'. ASLEF is to appeal. (*Guardian* 20.7, 8.10.04)

Police and criminal justice

Disproportionate stops and searches cause concern

Figures show that the police nationally are eight times more likely to stop Blacks and five time more likely to stop Asians than Whites. In London where a quarter of all stops take place the rate is getting worse: by 30 per cent for black people and 41 per cent for Asians and 8 per cent for whites between 2000/01 and 2001/2. This can, in part, be attributed to the stop and search powers in the Terrorism Act. The Home Office is reported to be concerned at the level of disproportionality and a community panel is to produce a plan to be sent to all forces, which would include 'reasonable grounds for suspicion to carry out a stop'. (*Guardian* 2.7.04)

Foreign-sounding passengers stopped on underground

It has emerged that Immigration officials are questioning London underground passengers who have been stopped by staff or the British Transport police for not having correct tickets. Officials are also stopping people who they believe sound foreign and asking them to produce papers proving their right to British residence. The Home Office defended its attempts to clamp down on illegal immigrants as 'intelligence-led' and part of a much larger programme to find and detain illegal immigrants, in which the British Transport police were in the lead. (*Guardian* 10.8.04)

Immigrants kept too long in police cells

The Metropolitan Police authority figures show that detainees are being held in police cells for longer than the normal maximum five days. There was also a shortage of trained custody sergeants at a time when the Immigration Service was increasing its activity. (*BBC News* 27.7.04)

Discrimination alleged in use of anti-terror law

According to research from the Institute of Race Relations, hundreds of Muslims have been arrested under the 2000 and 2001 Terrorism Acts and yet no convictions in open court have been of Muslims. Fifteen convictions have been secured out of 609 arrests; and six of the convictions related to Loyalist organisations. The IRR also alleges that the discriminatory use of terrorist powers can follow involvement in routine criminal offences such as credit card fraud or forgery. And terrorism powers are often used, in effect, as an alternative was of policing immigration. (*IRR News* 2.9.04)

Terror suspects sues the Met

The wife and brother of Lofti Raissi, the man arrested on 21 September 2001 and falsely accused by the US of training the September 11 hijackers, are suing the Met. Raissi was held for five months in Belmarsh with the threat of extradition to the USA, where he could have faced the death penalty, hanging over him. Mrs Raissi was taken, virtually naked and held for five days in

Paddington Green police station, her brother-in-law was forced to strip and held for two days. (*Guardian* 25.10.04)

Anger at lack of retribution in Menson murder case

The family of Michael Menson, set alight by a racist gang in north London in 1997, are furious that the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has merely informally rebuked the two officers who were responsible for bungling the inquiry into his murder. The officers had decided it was a case of self-harm and it was not treated as a racist attack for two months. Four men were eventually convicted, only after a fresh inquiry had been launched. The Menson family are angry that a further seven officers, including two senior ones, have evaded accountability because they have now retired. (*Guardian* 10.6.04)

Police officers face tribunal in Abatan murder case

Three senior police officers have been ordered by the IPCC to face disciplinary action for bungling the racist

murder case of Jay Abatan who died in October 1999. Abatan died after being attacked outside a Brighton night-club and hitting his head on the pavement. Manslaughter charges against two men were dropped for lack of evidence and the men were acquitted of affray and causing actual bodily harm. The family has campaigned over the case and the IPCC decision followed a report by Avon and Somerset police which accused the Sussex officers of ignoring key witnesses and not taking the death seriously enough. (*Times* 10.9.04)

Another death in custody involving restraint

On 28 May 24-year-old Azrar Ayub, a patient at the secure Edenfield Unit of Prestwich hospital, was found dead after being sedated and restrained by staff. A diagnosed schizophrenic, Ayub had been placed in an isolation room after his restraint, and was later found to be dead. The nature of his restraint will be a focus of any inquiry, especially following the recommendation in the David Bennett report that no patient should be restrained in a prone position for longer than three minutes. (*IRR News* 16.6.04)

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