

# It's your cause too!

## Tears and freedom songs as Muhammad wins right to stay

By ISOLDA McNEILL

FREEDOM songs echoed round the Strand in London yesterday as Muhammad Idrish won his four-year battle against deportation.

Trade unionists and supporters gathered outside the Immigration Appeal Tribunal at Thanet House embraced, sang and cheered when his victory was announced.

The victory was the climax of the first national campaign by a trade union against the immigration laws.

Muhammad Idrish, a social worker from Handsworth in Birmingham, was backed by a vigorous campaign mounted by his union the National Association of Local Government Officers.

NALGO held national demonstrations twice in Birmingham and in London in the battle to prevent the deportation.

Immigration Appeal Chairman Professor David Jackson said that Mr. Idrish's proven com-

mitment to the community in which he works outweighed any public interest which might be served by his deportation.

Sid Platt, Chair of the West Midlands TUC, hailed the victory as demonstrating the importance of campaigning through the trade union movement at all levels.

As Mr. Idrish and his supporters, including a coachload from Birmingham, celebrated at NALGO headquarters, NALGO general secretary John Daly commented: "We are delighted.

"We feel it is a vindication of the four-year campaign we have waged on his behalf. It is a blow against the racist bias in the immigration laws."

Mr. Daly pledged the union's continuing support to other NALGO members facing deportation.

Having won his appeal against deportation, Mr. Idrish is now taking legal advice through his union on his application to the Home Office for indefinite leave to stay in Britain.

*Morning Star 25 October 1985.*

Thus marking the turning point in a long campaign fighting the deportation of Muhammad Idrish.

Two members of the Campaign look at deportations in detail and explain why it is an issue that must be taken up by trade unionists and socialists.

They set out practical guidelines for those wishing to get involved in anti-deportation campaigns, and include a case study of the Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign.

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## How and why trade unionists should support Anti-Deportation Campaigns

£1



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INTRODUCTION

DEPORTATIONS

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WHY IS DEPORTATION A TRADE UNION ISSUE?

CAMPAIGN CHECKLISTS

Text: Nik James & Adeyemi  
Cover Photo: Guardian, 9 November 1984.  
Cartoons: Ken Olende

CASE STUDY: THE MUHAMMAD IDRISH DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

**Acknowledgements:** TURC would like to thank the many people who provided information for this booklet; in particular to the members of the Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign. We would also like to acknowledge the financial support of the West Midlands County Council Race Relations Committee.

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## INTRODUCTION

Britain is a racist society.

One of the effects of this has been the passing of immigration laws to exclude black people. Black immigration has therefore been almost halted. But tightening up of the law in recent years has put pressure on those already living in Britain, who are people under threat of deportation or removal from this country each year.

Our racist immigration laws allow the surveillance of black people to search out and expel "offenders" whose visas may merely have expired. This has led to passport raids on homes and workplaces, and checks by DHSS, Home Office officials—the vast majority being completely innocent of any offence. Those whose passport is not valid are deported, many of whom may have married and settled in Britain.

Others may have been convicted of minor offences and then deported.

The laws attack the rights of working people. Wealthy people are free to enter Britain.

The laws that allow such harassment of people must be opposed and repealed, and it is the united strength of the Labour movement that will succeed.

Growing opposition to our ferocious immigration laws has seen the emergence of many anti-deportation campaigns.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide a guide for trade unionists looking for a practical way of challenging the racism in our society by getting involved in anti-deportation campaigns.

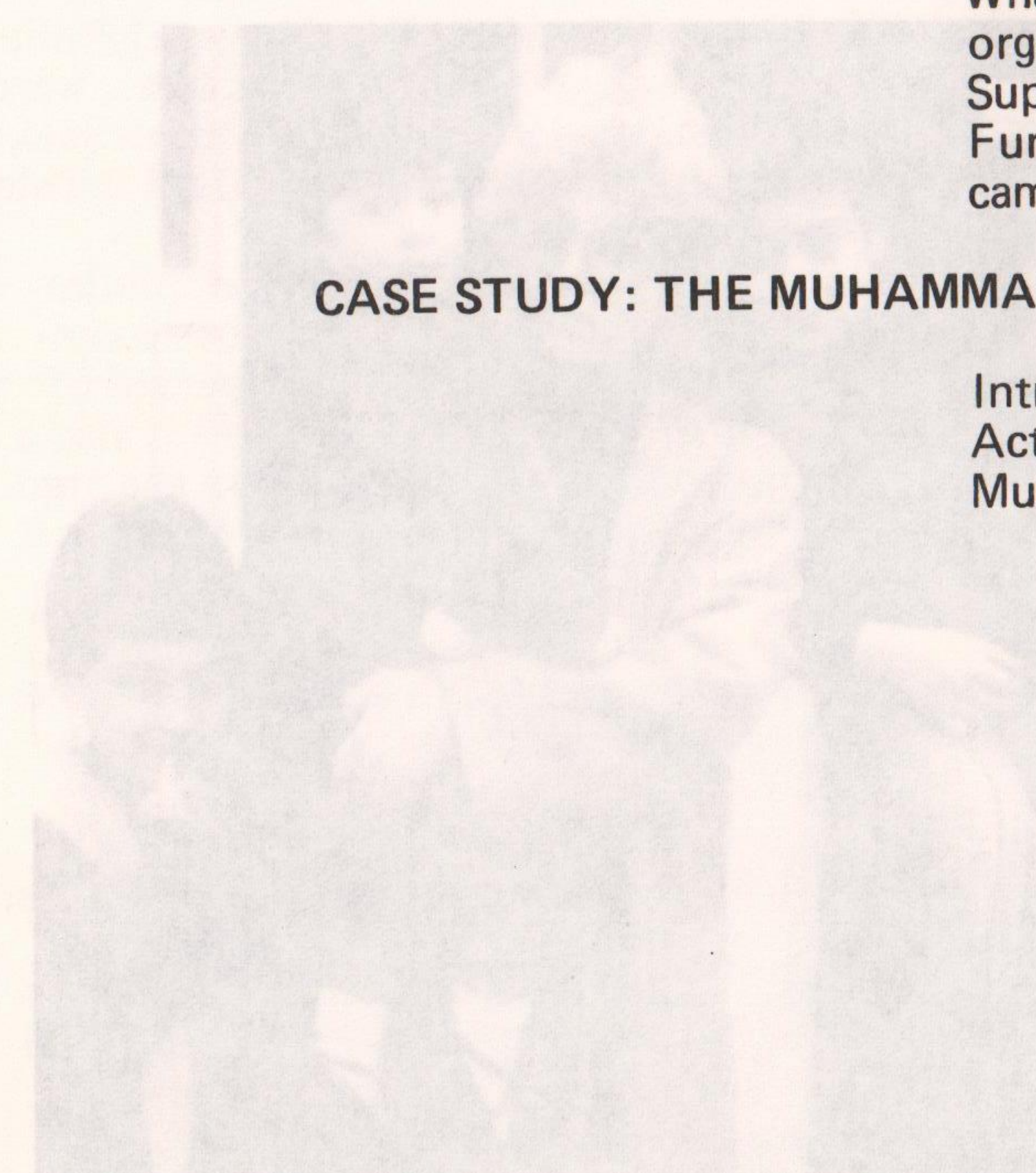
### INTRODUCTION

### DEPORTATIONS

### WHY IS DEPORTATION A TRADE UNION ISSUE ?

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## DEPORTATIONS



Ayşe Korkmaz with her family. Ayşe and her daughter have now been deported. Her two sons are British citizens and remain in Britain. (Guardian 17 February 1984)

### What is deportation ?

It is the expulsion of a person who has been living in Britain. It is conducted by the Home Office as part of its function of immigration control.

It applies only to those people who have entered this country lawfully. Those who have entered illegally are "removed", which amounts to the same as deportation except that there is no right of appeal until after the person has left this country.

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Also several hundred people have been recommended for deportation by a court but an order is not made.

There is also provision for young and first offenders to have a "supervised departure, with a prohibition on re-entry" as an alternative to deportation.

Using Home Office figures alone, over 20,000 people have been threatened with deportation in the last ten years. The vast majority of deportation orders have been issued since the Conservatives came to power, as the graph overleaf shows, despite Home Office assurances that there has been no substantial increase.

Widening of the scope of "illegal entrant" has also led to over 5000 people being "removed" from Britain in the last ten years. These are not included in the graph.



# INTRODUCTION

Britain is a racist society.

One of the effects of this has been the passing of immigration laws to exclude black people. Black immigration has therefore been almost halted. But tightening up of the law in recent years has put pressure on those already living in Britain, with 3,000 people under threat of deportation or removal from this country each year.

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## Who is deported ?

The Home Office has wide powers to deport many people. Those exempt are:-

- UK citizens
- Patrials i.e. those who have a parent or grandparent who was born in the United Kingdom.
- Commonwealth and Irish citizens who have been "ordinarily resident" in the UK since before 1973.

Because only non-patrial Commonwealth citizens can be deported, deportation law mainly affects black people.

Deportation figures of 1982 can show this:-

Nigeria	332
Ghana	291
Pakistan	149
India	138
Australia	9
Canada	7
South Africa	5

(Hansard, 29th November 1983)

## How many people are deported ?

The only figures available are those produced by the Home Office, which publish quarterly statistics of deportation orders made and orders actually enforced.

There is a big difference between the numbers of orders made and orders enforced, not because of successful campaigns (yet) nor because of the benevolence of the Home Office, but because of the large numbers who leave VOLUNTARILY under threat of deportation, harassed by the police and immigration officers, with little legal recourse—often deprived of a job, welfare benefits, accommodation and, even, their freedom.

Also several hundred people have been recommended for deportation by a court but an order is not made.

There is also provision for young and first offenders to have a "supervised departure, with a prohibition on re-entry" as an alternative to deportation.

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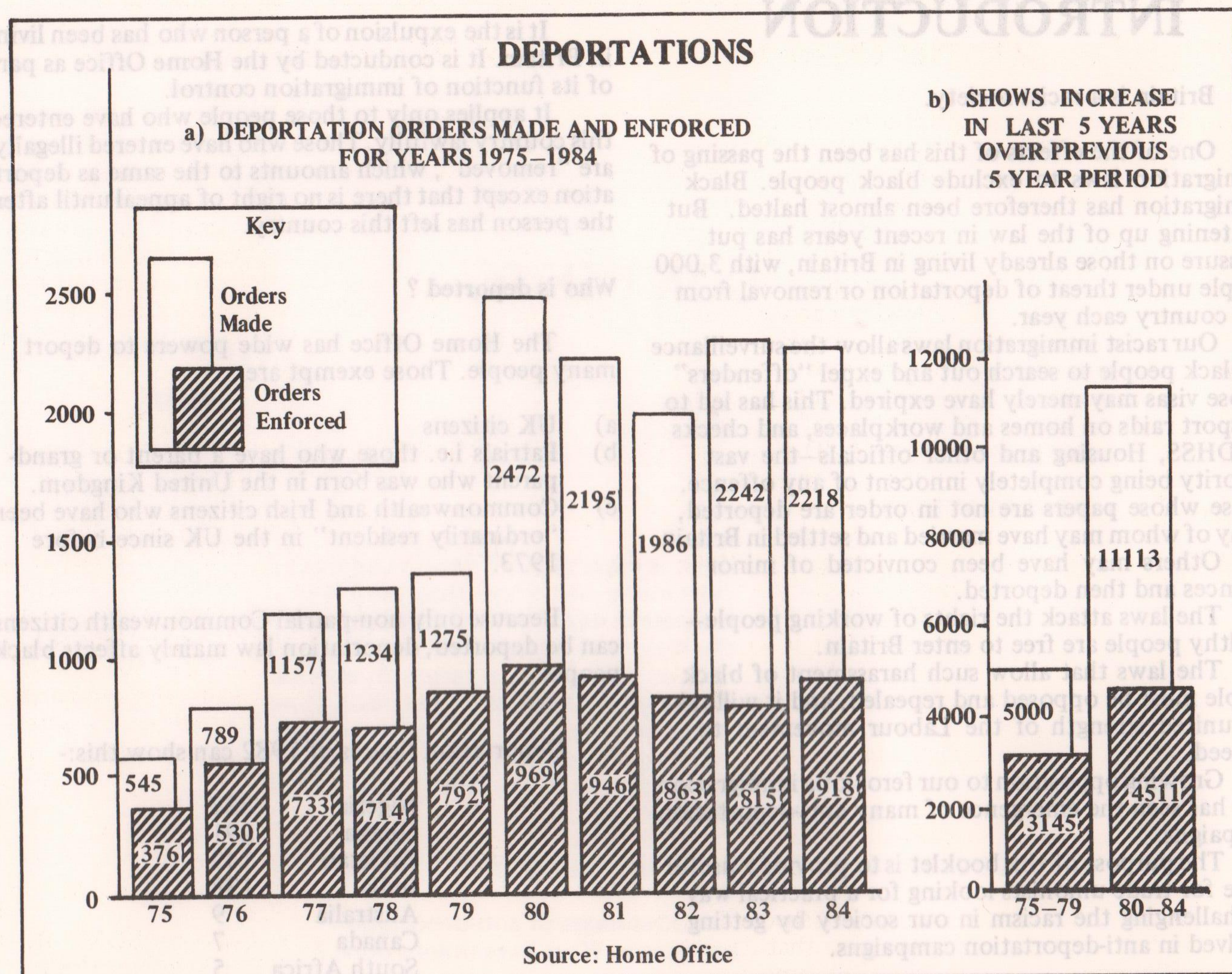
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# DEPORTATIONS



Ayse Korkunal with her family. Ayse and her daughter have now been deported. Her two sons are British citizens and remain in Britain. (Guardian 17 February 1984)





## Why is a person deported ?

There are 4 categories under which a person is deported:-

**a) Breach of conditions of entry.** This is usually overstaying after a visa expires or working without a work permit.

Deportation used to be prescribed only for persistent offenders but current immigration rules now state that deportation will "normally be the proper course"; partly explaining the nearly four-fold increase in the last 5 years. This is the main category used for deporting people and requires a large network of internal surveillance to detect "offenders".

**b) Deportation following a court recommendation when convicted of an imprisonable offence.** This may seem an acceptable way of dealing with criminals who have proved to be a detriment to this country, but is it right for a person to be given two sentences for the same offence? The convicted person serves the prison sentence and is deported afterwards.

Also in the absence of clear definitions, deportations have been carried out following trivial offences such as shoplifting. In 1976 and 1977 only one third of those recommended for deportation were given custodial sentences. (J.M. Evans 1983. "Immigration Law". Page 267).

**c) Where deportation is thought by the Home Secretary to be conducive to the public good.** In the absence of any stated criteria, this category can be used to silence those whose views the government finds unpalatable, and is a threat to civil liberty.

In 1977, 2 journalists, Mark Hosenball and Philip Agee, the authors of an expose of CIA activities, were deported. And in January 1984, Stokely Carmichael, the former Black Panther leader, was deported within hours of his arrival at Heathrow.

This category is also used to fill any loopholes e.g. to expel criminals where a court did not recommend deportation or to deport people suspected of entering "marriages of convenience". There is also a recent move to use "public good" to back up the argument to deport, for example, overstayers, claiming it is in the public interest to exercise firm immigration control.

**d) Deporting members of the family of a deportee.** Fortunately this power is rarely exercised although, obviously, deporting a parent will often lead to the rest of the his/her family leaving "voluntarily". The rule is designed to deport dependants under 18 years, and is sexually discriminatory as it assumes that women are incapable of supporting their children on their own, although a recent clause allows a wife and children to stay if they can maintain themselves "without recourse to public funds".

The four categories that decide whether a person can be deported are very controversial. Equally controversial is how successive laws have brought more and more people into the deportation "net".

## The Net Closes In. The History of Deportation Law

**1905 Aliens Act.**

Passed by the Tories, it was the first of modern immigration controls. It applied to all aliens (i.e. those not British subjects) and was designed to control Jewish immigration following a powerful anti-Jewish campaign. Deportations could only be carried out following a conviction of a criminal offence AND a court recommendation for deportation.

**1914 Aliens Restriction Act.**

Gave extra power to the Home Secretary who could deport aliens on grounds that it was conducive to the public good even without conviction or without a court recommendation. Although drawn up as a temporary wartime measure it was renewed annually for over fifty years.

**1919 Aliens Restriction Amendment Act.**

It was established following pressure that deportees required some right of appeal. When the Committee refused to endorse the Home Secretary's decisions in 33 cases, it was wound up.

**1930 Aliens Deportation Advisory Committee.**

Right of appeal against deportation finally granted, following Britain's signing of the Council of Europe Convention of Establishment in 1955.

**1956**

**1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act.**

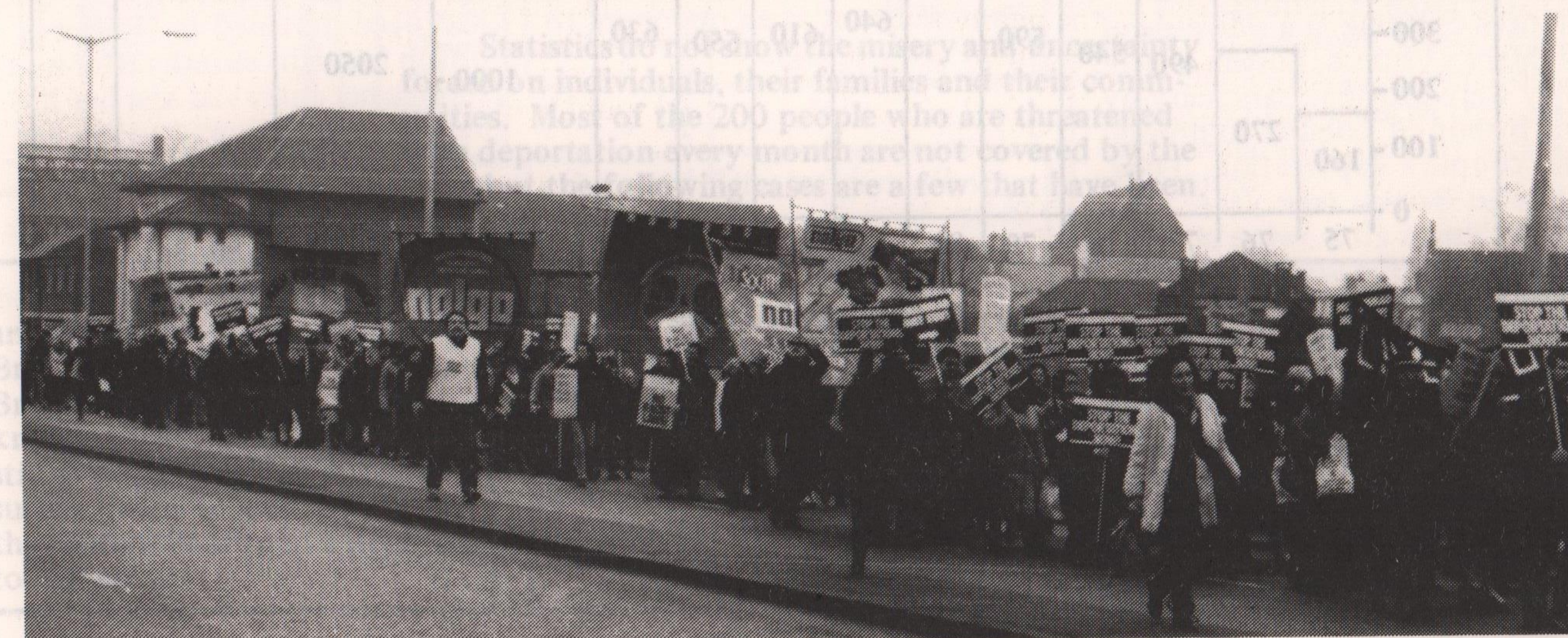
The first legislation to control Commonwealth immigration. It allowed for courts to recommend deportation of some adult commonwealth citizens who had lived in Britain for less than five years and had been convicted of a criminal offence.

**1971 Immigration Act**

The backbone of present day immigration policy. It allows the Home Secretary to deport anyone who is not a UK citizen if it is deemed "conducive to the public good". Only patrials, and Commonwealth and Irish citizens who had been ordinarily resident in the UK since 1973, remain beyond the reach of the deportation power.

**1981 British Nationality Act.**

This brings in even more people subject to deportation:-  
a) Children BORN IN THE UK after 1983 whose parents are illegal immigrants or who only have a limited leave to remain.  
b) "Patrials" born after 31st December 1982, unless a British citizen.  
c) British Overseas Citizens, even though have no other citizenship and no right of abode in any other territory.



National demonstration in Birmingham organised by the Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign and NALGO. (N. James 30 January 1985)



## What right of appeal does a person threatened with deportation have?

There are three stages in a deportation:-

- A notice of intent to deport (usually interpreted as a deportation order) is sent to the last known address of the deportee but does not necessarily have to be served on that person. An appeal is allowed if notified within fourteen days. This "independent" appeal will be heard by one adjudicator appointed by the Home Office, in cases of breach of conditions. If unsuccessful it may be possible to appeal to a three-person Immigration Appeals Tribunal. The success rate is only 6-7%. If still unsuccessful then it may be possible to appeal to the courts on a point of law, but the last word is always left to the Home Secretary. Appeals against court recommendations are heard by the courts. Cases of "conducive to the public good" have no right of appeal.
- If no appeal is made against the notice of intent, or the appeal is rejected, then the actual deportation order is made.
- This is quickly enforced by expulsion unless the deportee has already left the country.

A leaked confidential Home Office document recommends the "curtailment of rights of appeal of those admitted for short periods against refusal to extend their stay" and complains that "our system gives opportunity, perhaps too much opportunity, for intervention by MP's" but admits that this would be difficult to remove as "members are jealous of this privilege" (Quote from Home Office briefing: June 1983, as exposed in The Guardian 21st March 1985 Page 1).

In May 1985, the Home Secretary reduced MP's powers to appeal against the deportation of Tamil refugees from one month to just one day, WITHOUT prior reference to Parliament.

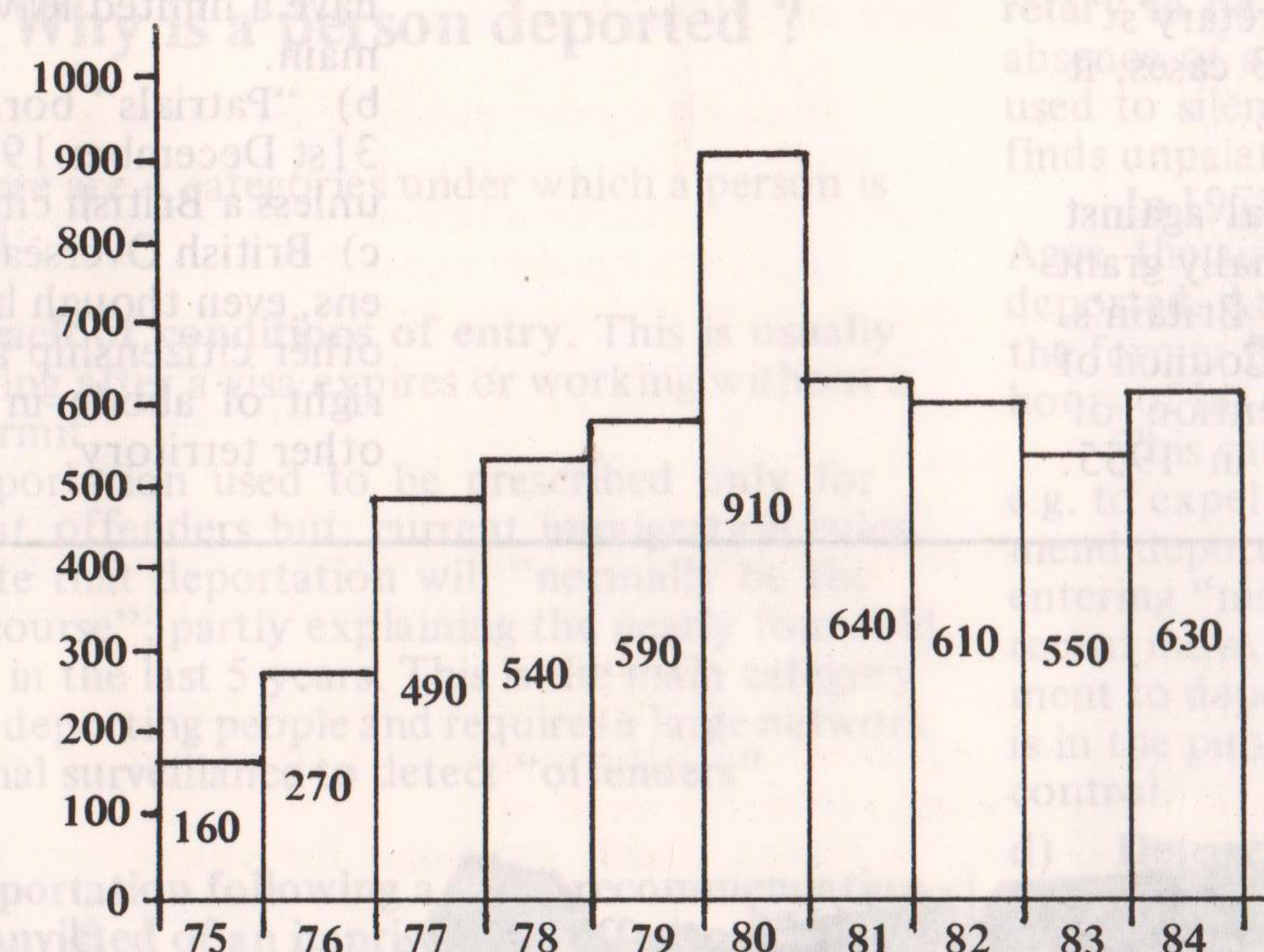
As can be seen there is no more than a veneer of justice in our appeal system with the Home Secretary retaining the last word. This is one reason why campaigns are so important, to put pressure on the Home Office, so that it knows it will have to publicly account for its actions.

### Removals.

Black people deemed "illegal entrants" are not deported but "removed". Any appeal is not heard until after the person has left Britain. These appeals have little chance of success. In 1980 and 1981, the immigration appellate authorities dismissed 223 appeals and upheld not one case.

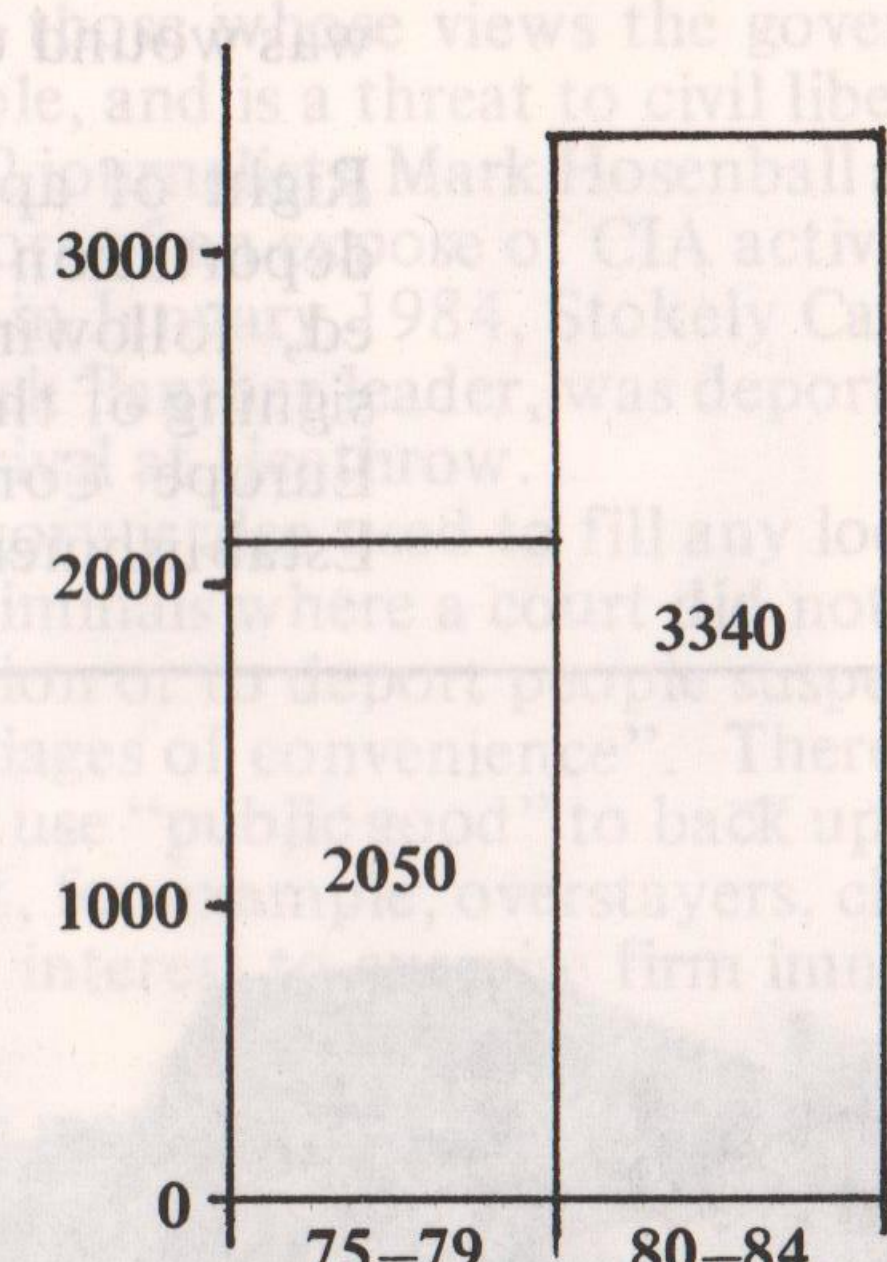
## ILLEGAL ENTRANTS REMOVED

a) EACH YEAR: 1975-1984



Source: Home Office

b) SHOWS INCREASE IN LAST 5 YEARS OVER PREVIOUS 5 YEAR PERIOD.



Over 5000 people have been removed in the ten years between 1975 and 1984. There has been a massive increase in the last five years. Not because more people have entered Britain clandestinely but because many black people have been accused of using deception to gain entry into Britain.

One large group affected by this rather arbitrary criterion of deception were migrant domestic workers, mainly women from the Philippines, who were told that they had entered by deception because they did not declare the existence of dependent children when they applied for work permits—even though these permit applications had been filled in by employment agencies. About 100 migrant workers were removed between 1979 and 1983 because of this technicality. 200 to 300 other women in similar circumstances won a reprieve following the work of the Resident Domestic Campaign which took up many cases both individually and collectively. The Home Office announced in late 1983 that the final group of those under threat would be allowed to stay.

In such cases, direct parallels can be made with anti-deportation campaigns and any changes in the immigration laws would have to take into account the plight of supposed "illegal" entrants as well as of lawful entrants under threat of deportation.

### How is a person deported?

This is described in a Union of Turkish Workers Report:-

"Actual deportation is carried out in a shameful way. The deportee is escorted to the airport by prison officers and transferred to the Immigration Officers with his/her belongings and documents. Then his/her passport is handed over to the captain of the plane. He in turn transfers these documents to the authorities of the country of arrival. This is another major problem because it can bring prosecution in the country of arrival.

"If the deportee has had cash when he was arrested, the flight fee is deducted from his money. Even if a deportee has a car and wishes to go by car, he/she is not allowed to do so. Due to baggage limitation on planes, he/she cannot take most of his/her belongings". (Union of Turkish Workers. February 1984. "Report on Anti-Deportation Campaign." Unpublished. Page 5)

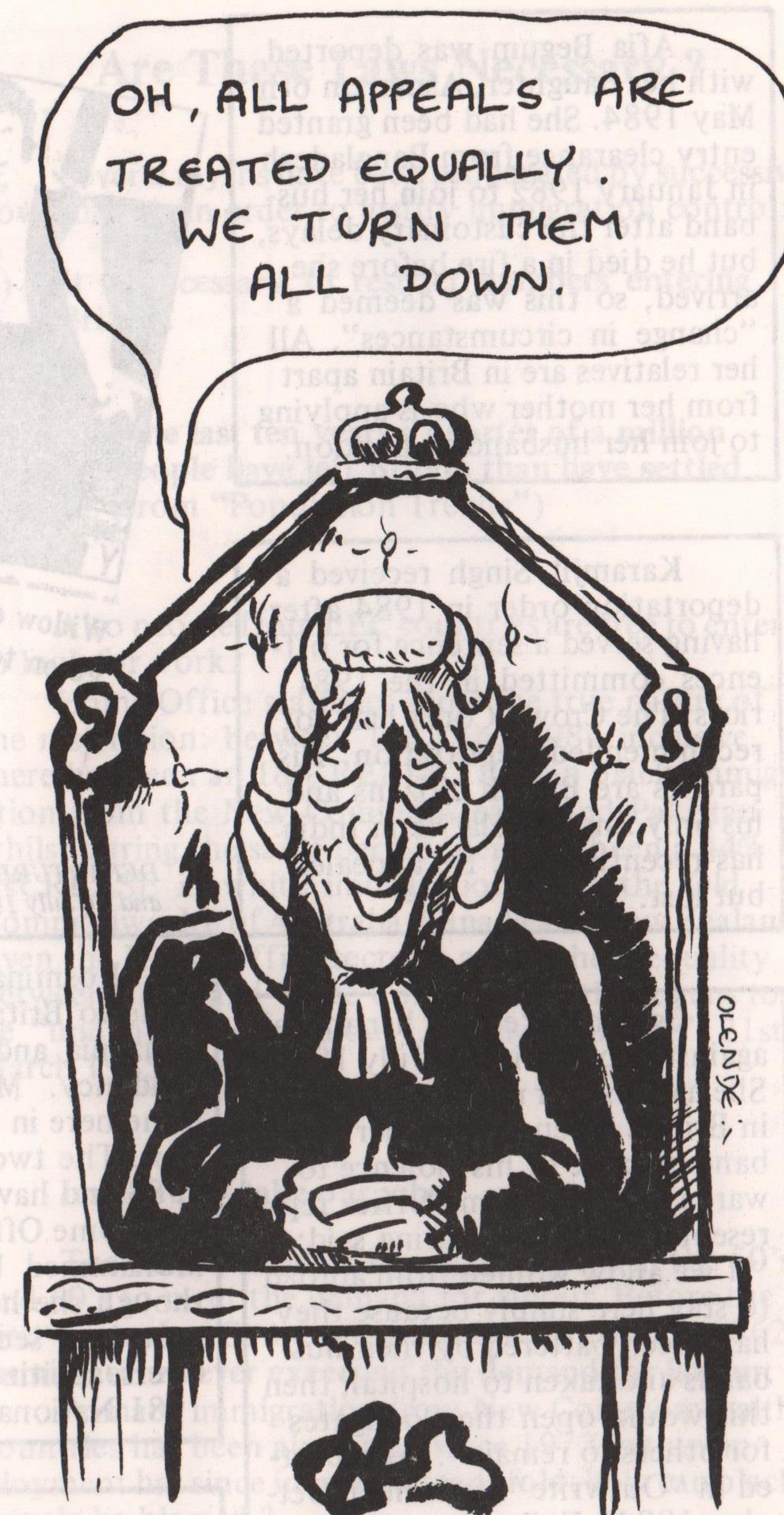
### Some Cases

Statistics do not show the misery and uncertainty forced on individuals, their families and their communities. Most of the 200 people who are threatened with deportation every month are not covered by the press but the following cases are a few that have been.

In April 1985, Shahid Syed, an accountant for six years at British Gas, was told to leave Britain by the Home Office, knowing that a court appeal was still pending and that his wife suffers from a heart condition that cannot be treated if deported to Pakistan.

Ayse Halil Korkunal was deported with her three year old daughter, on 3rd January 1985, due to a technicality because her British parents did not register her before she was 18. Her brother and two sons are British citizens and remain in Britain.

Tareb Naym has been told by the Home Office that he will have to apply for entry from Morocco, if he wants to live in Britain with his British wife. They were married earlier in 1984 when he was given temporary admission but he has no automatic right to live with his wife here.





Afia Begum was deported with her daughter, Asma, on 6th May 1984. She had been granted entry clearance from Bangladesh in January 1982 to join her husband after the customary delays, but he died in a fire before she arrived, so this was deemed a "change in circumstances". All her relatives are in Britain apart from her mother who is applying to join her husband in London.

Karamjit Singh received a deportation order in 1984 after having served a sentence for offences committed in the 1981 riots. The Crown Court had not recommended deportation. His parents are British citizens and his only known relative in India has recently died. He appealed but lost.

Esther Ankeli lost her appeal against deportation in July 1984. She had lost her right to residency in Britain when she left her husband because of his violence towards her. The Home Office representative at her hearing said: "If we allow women from abroad to stay here simply because they have been battered by their husbands and taken to hospital, then this would open the floodgates for others to remain". (as reported in "Outwrite" September/October 1984). Following continued pressure by her Campaign, the Home Office later backed down and allowed Esther to stay.

Mr Vassilis Nicola and his wife Katerina, spent several bleak months camping in a side aisle of St. Mary's Church, Euston, where they were provided sanctuary by the Bishop of London to prevent the couple's deportation. They came to Britain nine years ago from Cyprus after living in a refugee camp following the Turkish invasion of the island. The Home Office decided that they were not refugees as, in international law, Cyprus was still one united country. In July 1985, the couple left Britain "voluntarily" after being refused leave to take their case to the High Court.



Widow deported but campaign will go on to let her live in Britain



DEPARTURES: Vassilis Nicola and his wife Katerina at Heathrow airport, London, yesterday before leaving for Cyprus after losing their fight against deportation. They had spent 135 days in a London church, seeking sanctuary from a Home Office order.

DEPARTURES: Afia Begum; and Vassilis and Katerina Nicola. (Guardian 7 May 1984 and 16 July 1985)

Rosmina Banu Randera came to Britain in 1982 from Tanzania and she was granted residency. Mohammed Azhar came here in the same year on a visit. The two met, married in 1983 and have had a child. Now the Home Office want to deport Mohammed because Rosmina, though she holds a British passport, is a "second-class" British Overseas citizen as a result of the 1981 Nationality Act.

Pedro Galleguillos is opposing deportation to Chile following the breakdown of his marriage to a British woman. Early in 1985, he was being held in Manchester's Strangways Prison but has since been released. If deported to Chile he faces further imprisonment as an opponent to the Pinochet regime.

Rose Alaso and her son, Brian, have applied for political asylum but the Home Office want to deport them to Uganda. Rose's family were active in the Democratic Party and her father, brother and other relatives have been murdered by government troops in Uganda. Leeds City Council is supporting the campaign and an appeal will be heard in the High Court.

Baba Bakhtaura Singh, a singer and preacher at Sikh temples, won his appeal to be allowed to stay in Britain where his parents and other relatives live. The Home Office appealed and won—the judge said that Bakhtaura's value to his community cannot be taken into account.

Mansour Naghizadeh married Anna in 1979 and the couple have two children. In 1983 Mansour was arrested on his way to work, held in detention and deported to Iran. Anna's Campaign is still fighting for the return of her husband.

Florizel Ricketts was deported on 1st August 1984 despite an appeal by Harry Cohen, M.P. She had been detained in Holloway prison for eight months after overstaying her entry visa and her husband was not allowed to see her.

John Ossuniyi came to the UK in 1979 as a student from Nigeria. He has since married and the couple have had a child. The Home Office want to deport him as they claim that his marriage is one of convenience. John was held in detention for three weeks in Strangways Prison after being stopped by traffic police to inspect his driving documents.

## How Did We Get Into This State ?

The Tories are often seen as being responsible for our racist immigration laws. Unfortunately, the Labour movement is far from blameless.

In 1901, the TUC agreed that the question of control be put in a list of questions to be asked of all Parliamentary candidates, thus helping to introduce the first of our modern immigration laws.

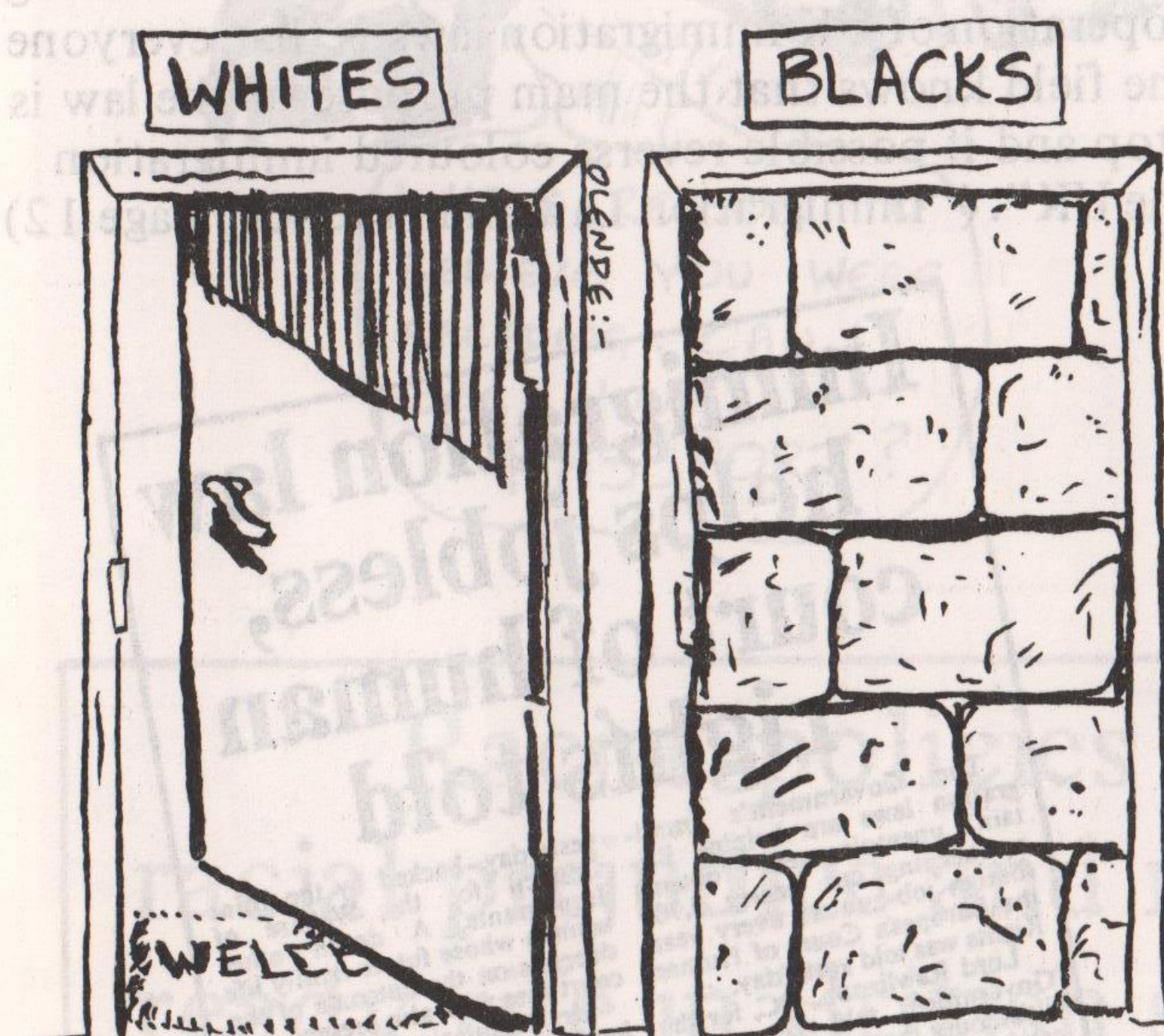
In 1950, the Labour Cabinet, even during a period of labour shortage and small scale immigration, expressed concern "that serious difficulties would arise if this immigration of coloured people from British Colonial possessions were to continue or increase". (as quoted: Commission for Racial Equality Report. February 1985. "Immigration Control Procedures" Page 13).

In 1968 the Labour Government introduced the blatantly racist Commonwealth Immigrants Act to keep out Asians holding UK passports living in East Africa. This was internationally condemned.

The Labour Party strongly opposed the 1971 Immigration Act and made a Conference decision to repeal it, but did no such thing, and the Conservative's 1981 Nationality Act was based on a 1976 Labour Green Paper.

The Labour Party has stated that it will repeal both the 1971 and 1981 Acts. Another purpose of anti-deportation campaigns is to maintain the pressure on the Labour Party, otherwise it will again backpedal.

## IMMIGRATION



ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO MAKE THE SYSTEM AS STRAIGHTFORWARD AS POSSIBLE.

## Are These Laws Necessary ?

Several myths have been propagated by successive governments in order to justify immigration control:-

- 1) It is necessary to restrict numbers entering Britain.

Yet in the last ten years a quarter of a million more people have left Britain than have settled here. (from "Population Trends")

Also people from EEC countries are free to enter to look for work.

Home Office statistics show the true nature of the restriction: between 1982 and 1984 inclusive, there has been an 18% REDUCTION in black immigration from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan whilst during the same period there has been a 44% INCREASE in white immigration from the Old Commonwealth of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Even the Home Office secretly admit the inequality between black and white Commonwealth citizens to be "undeniably anomalous". ("The Guardian" 21st March 1985. Page 1).

2. Immigrants take our jobs

The main period of immigration was in the 50's and 60's to meet the demand for labour. Before the first control of Commonwealth immigration in 1962 immigration never exceeded the demand for labour.

Primary immigration from New Commonwealth countries has been almost nil since 1973 yet unemployment has since increased manifold; how can black people be blamed ?

Unemployment is due to economic and political factors and not to some finite number of jobs.

3. Blacks come here to sponge off the State.

Black people have contributed far more than they have received. The NHS, for example, would have crumbled without black employees in all occupations. Many black people do not get the benefits they are already entitled to, and immigrants' right of access to welfare services is very limited.

4. Immigration control is not racist in its procedure.

Despite David Waddington's (Minister of State at the Home Office responsible for Immigration) assurances that "Immigration control should be firm and fair, and that requires fairness between individuals as well as fairness towards individuals", it quite clearly discriminates against black people. (From letter by David Waddington to 'The Guardian' 14th May 1984)



Statistics in the following table show the racial disparity:-

# THE CHANCES OF BEING REFUSED ENTRY INTO BRITAIN

for a Canadian	: 1 in 7,800
for an American	: 1 in 4,000
for a South African	: 1 in 1,800
for an Indian	: 1 in 157
for a Nigerian	: 1 in 109
for a Pakistani	: 1 in 86
for a Bangladeshi	: 1 in 76
for an Algerian	: 1 in 40
for a Moroccan	: 1 in 37
for a Ghanaian	: 1 in 30

(As reported in "Race and Immigration" Runnymede Trust. September 1984. Page 10)

This cannot be blamed solely on the racism of the immigration officers, as one ex-officer states: "officers would be delighted to refuse a white American, because it is so much more challenging than refusing a Nigerian". Officers are told to be stringent on black people as they have a greater 'pressure to emigrate' although there are no facts to support this as no record is kept of white people who overstay their visas nor are they hunted down through passport raids once in Britain.

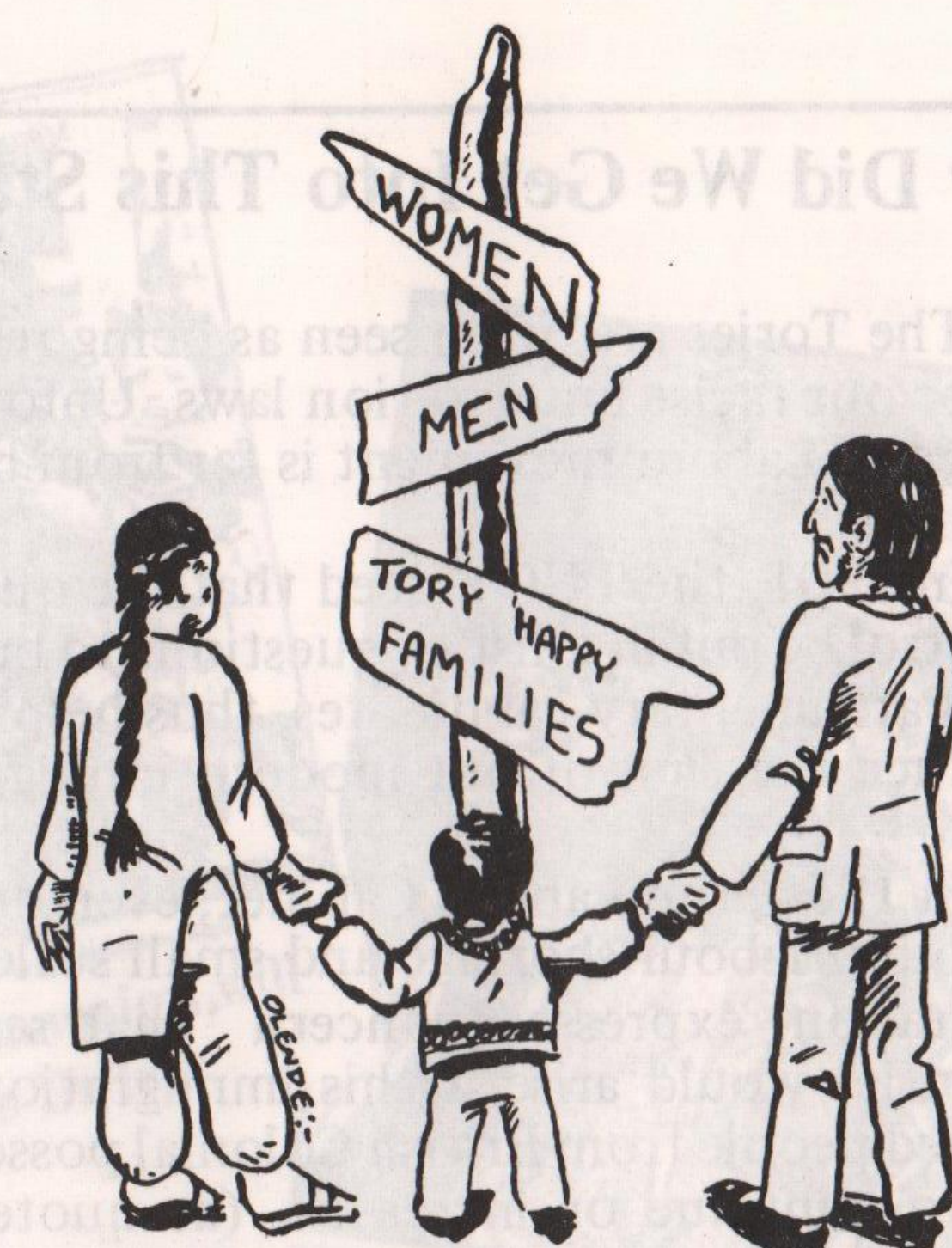
"Immigration officers see themselves as the frontline against the coloured hordes, who are hell-bent on trying to enter Britain, and who must be repelled with equal determination". (Jenkins J. 26th October 1984. "Keeping Britain Insular", an article in "The New Statesman" Page 12).

## 5. It is necessary to control numbers to reduce racial tensions

David Waddington stresses that "such control, far from damaging race relations is essential to them". This is a crucial myth and one that is being constantly propagated.

The whole argument assumes that black people are the cause of racial tension, rather than the victims. "Racial tension is caused by white people's prejudiced views and actions against black people and not vice versa". (MacDonald, I.A., MA, LLB, Barrister. 1983 "Immigration Law and Practice" Butterworths Page 17.)

Under Waddington's reasoning, the only way to effectively end racial tension would be to send away all non-white people from Britain. It also gives licence to more overtly racist groups, such as the Monday Club which, in October 1983, launched a campaign to repatriate black people. Right-wing Tory MP, Harvey Proctor stated "The threshold for such people in Britain should be below two million in order to avoid the risk of racial conflict". (Morning Star, 11th Oct. 1983). His idea "was decisively rejected" at the Conservative Party Conference later that month when speakers opposed to the motion stressed that black



"votes would be lost if the party conference passed the motion". ('The Guardian', 14th October 1983).

In April 1971, Tory Home Secretary Reginald Maudling wrote "I wholly reject the argument that this is a racial policy" but continues "I attach very great importance to recognising the special ties of blood and kinship" and "the number, who qualify under the patrial clause, will be large, and the vast majority will be of European extraction". (House of Commons, 1st April 1971. Official Report. Columns 233, 236 and 243 respectively).

Britain does not have an immigration policy but an exclusion policy, that is, keeping out black people. To criticise our present immigration laws in the context of a rational immigration control is to avoid the issue.

Ian McDonald, a leading barrister on Immigration Law, has written: "One of the difficulties of describing the operation of UK immigration laws is that everyone in the field knows that the main purpose of the law is to stop and if possible reverse coloured immigration to the UK". ("Immigration Law and Practice" Page 12)



The Times 26 September 1984

## The effects on the black communities

Once black people are identified as the problem then the effects are far-reaching.

Thousands of people, mainly women, living in the UK are unable to get permission for their spouses or fiancé(e)s to join them, or years of delays are deliberately imposed. Mrs Thatcher seems to condone this endeavour to break-up the family unit.

Because of this discrimination against women, the European Court of Human Rights have ruled that our Immigration Rules are ILLEGAL. The Home Office, normally a stickler for the rule of law, is planning to flout the judgement by tightening the restrictions on the immigration of female spouses wishing to join their husbands in Britain.

Cypriot, Iranian, African and Tamil refugees have been refused refugee status despite showing they have the well-founded fear of persecution required by the 1951 Convention.

Special quotas to bring foreign workers into the hotel and catering industries ceased in 1979, thus stranding and criminalising many migrant workers who are still very much in demand to fill the menial and low-paid jobs.



Police and immigration officers have carried out "fishing raids" on houses, restaurants, hotels, shops and factories in black communities, under the pretext of looking for an overstayer or illegal immigrant but checking everyone's papers.

Since all black people are seen as potential illegal immigrants, then any black person can expect to have to prove their immigration status and possibly be reported to the Home Office when applying for welfare benefits, or housing, or applying to marry, or seeking medical treatment.

A man who has lived in Britain for over 20 years and receiving a UK pension was required to produce his passport before being given a bus pass.

Reports of black people being stopped for traffic offences and asked for their passports, is reminiscent of apartheid, and has led to questions in Parliament.

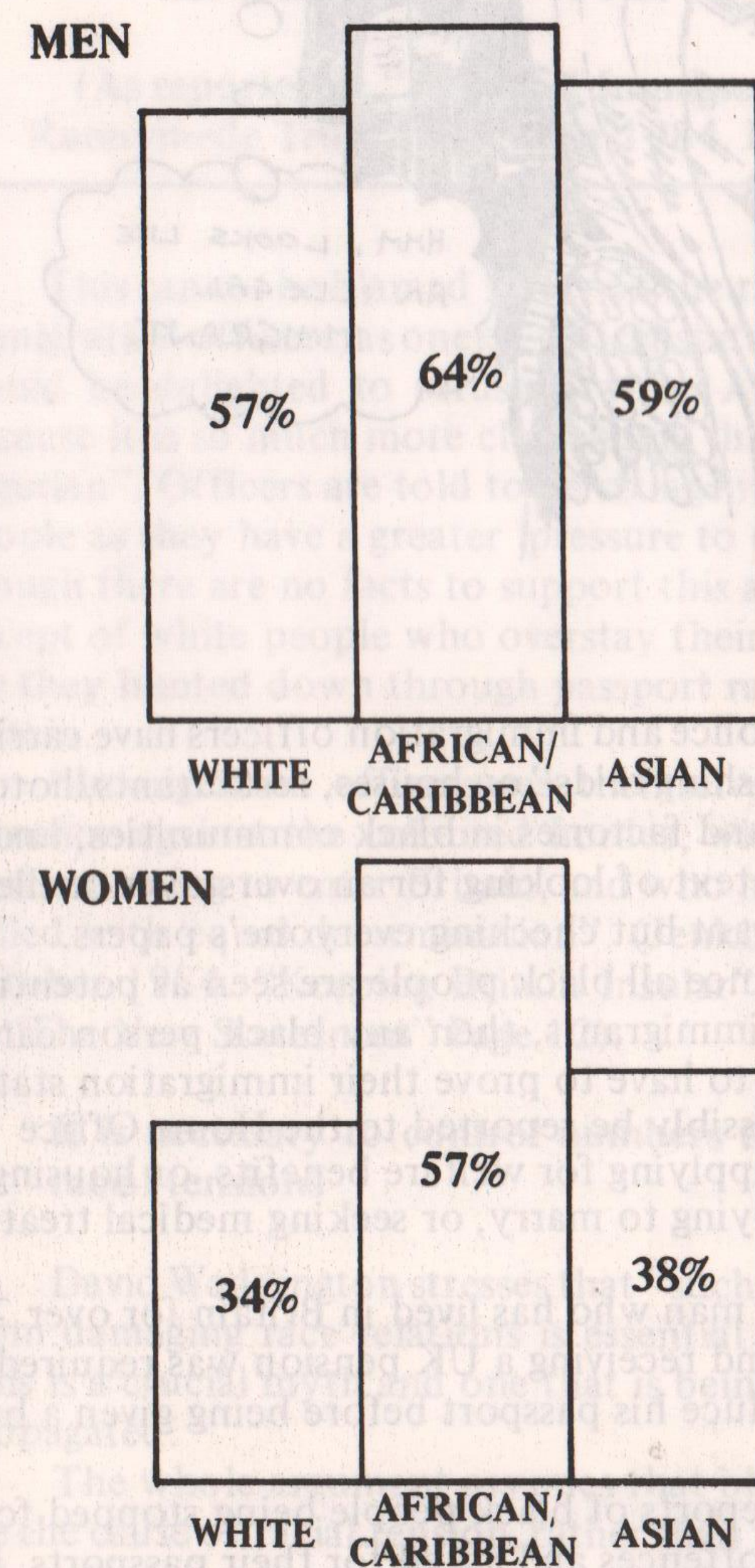
Racist policies justify and reinforce the racial prejudice and racial harassment that is already rife in British society.



# Why is Deportation a Trade Union Issue ?

The strength of trade unions depends upon our solidarity and that means fighting the divisions within our own ranks. Not just with face-saving statements of opposition to racism but by vigorously taking up the fight to defend workers and their families who are directly or indirectly, threatened by deportation.

BAR CHARTS : % TU MEMBERS - 1982



Source: 3rd Policy Studies Institute Survey 1984

Bar Charts above show that there are proportionally more black Trade Union members than white, and Trade Unions have an obligation to support all members.

Immigration Law is a prime example of divide and rule, being part of the machinery of the State designed to keep us isolated and divided and unable to unite with other people struggling for justice.

The message behind these laws is that nothing comes automatically and all gains working people have won can be taken away. For example, black people's limited access to the Welfare State is being followed by limitations for all working people.

Trade Unions are committed to fighting sexism. Britain's Immigration Rules have already been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for their discrimination against women.

With the threat of deportation and racial harassment, black people's right to organise is under attack and sets precedents for attacking other working class communities, for example, Irish people with the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Granting officials unlimited discretion to deport and to raid homes and workplaces of black people, establishes practices which are a potential threat to the liberty of us all.

To end the injustices of such internal controls requires the strength of the whole Trade Union movement to bring about change.



"No More Deportations!" Demonstration in London. (Union of Turkish Workers. 10 November 1984)

Our racist immigration laws are anti-working class and will help destroy the Trade Union movement if they are not opposed. By putting the blame for unemployment, welfare cuts, inner city decay and economic stagnation on black people, racism diverts workers away from the real causes.

## THE ADVANTAGES OF ANTI-DEPORTATION CAMPAIGNS

Involvement in campaigns by trade unionists can:-

- \* be one concrete way of putting anti-racist policy into practice
- \* help unite working people
- \* show black people that unions are prepared to support them
- \* act as a springboard to challenging racism within the movement
- \* provide the strength to force a government to change its racist laws—not only by political pressure but by members refusing to implement deportations and passport checks
- \* help involve people in activity who would otherwise leave decision-making to bureaucrats
- \* encourage more black people to join in the workers' struggles
- \* help us to build alliances in order to change a society that depends on injustice and inequality in order to justify and maintain a wealthy elite.

## What Have Unions Done ?

A survey carried out by GLC's Anti-Racist Trade Union Working Group in 1984 concludes that "there were strong words and rhetoric when it came to policy statements but that commitments took a low priority when it came to action".

However some trade unionists have started to put words into action.

NALGO is supporting Campaigns fighting the deportation of two of its members, Muhammed Idrish and Shahid Syed, and has been the only union so far to organise National demonstrations.

NUPE, COHSE, TGWU and GMBATU helped campaigns opposing the removal of hundreds of Filipino women.

The TGWU NEC supported Shaukhat Darr, a Leeds busdriver, facing deportation.

CPSA members in DHSS offices have refused to operate race checks.

NUT teachers in Nottingham have refused to operate race checks, and the Socialist Teachers Alliance is trying to bring NUT policy in line with the TUC policy for the repeal of racist laws, which would enable greater scope at a local level to win support for anti-deportation campaigns.



NALGO's Anti-Deportation Demonstration in Birmingham. (Birmingham Post 31 January 1985)



## CAMPAIGN CHECKLISTS

### Why a Campaign ?

- \* Home Office has the power to deport any non-British citizen with few legal remedies, so a campaign is necessary to exert outside pressure on it.
- \* It is important to let other workers and the wider public know more about the immigration laws and how they affect black people.
- \* It encourages more opposition by other black people facing deportation.
- \* The Home Secretary has the discretion to revoke a deportation order and has done so under public pressure.
- \* Campaign can bring large numbers of people together to put pressure on government to change the racist immigration laws and procedures.

### Why Autonomous Campaigns Supporting Individuals Facing Deportation?

- \* To build support in the black communities.
- \* Personal support for individuals facing institutional rejection and legal harassment.
- \* Democratic control by groups outside trade unions; maintaining pressure on the bureaucracy of trade unions.
- \* Shows the immigration laws cause real suffering and are not just further examples of our legal anomalies.

### Is a Campaign the Best Step ?

This has to be decided by the person facing deportation, bearing in mind:-

- \* It will involve a lot of publicity, personal anxiety and time.
- \* Chances of winning are small.
- \* If being held in custody and the campaign is unsuccessful, then the agony of detention will be longer than if there had been no campaign.

### What Type of Campaign ?

- \* Many campaigns concentrate on compassionate circumstances when pursuing the legal process which gives time for the campaign to build wider support opposing the racist laws as a whole.
- \* A local campaign may be more successful in gaining community support whilst a national campaign may achieve greater publicity.



The Aslam Family Defence Campaign and Gerald Kaufman outside the Home Office (Morning Star 21 February 1985)

## GUIDELINES TO ORGANISING A CAMPAIGN

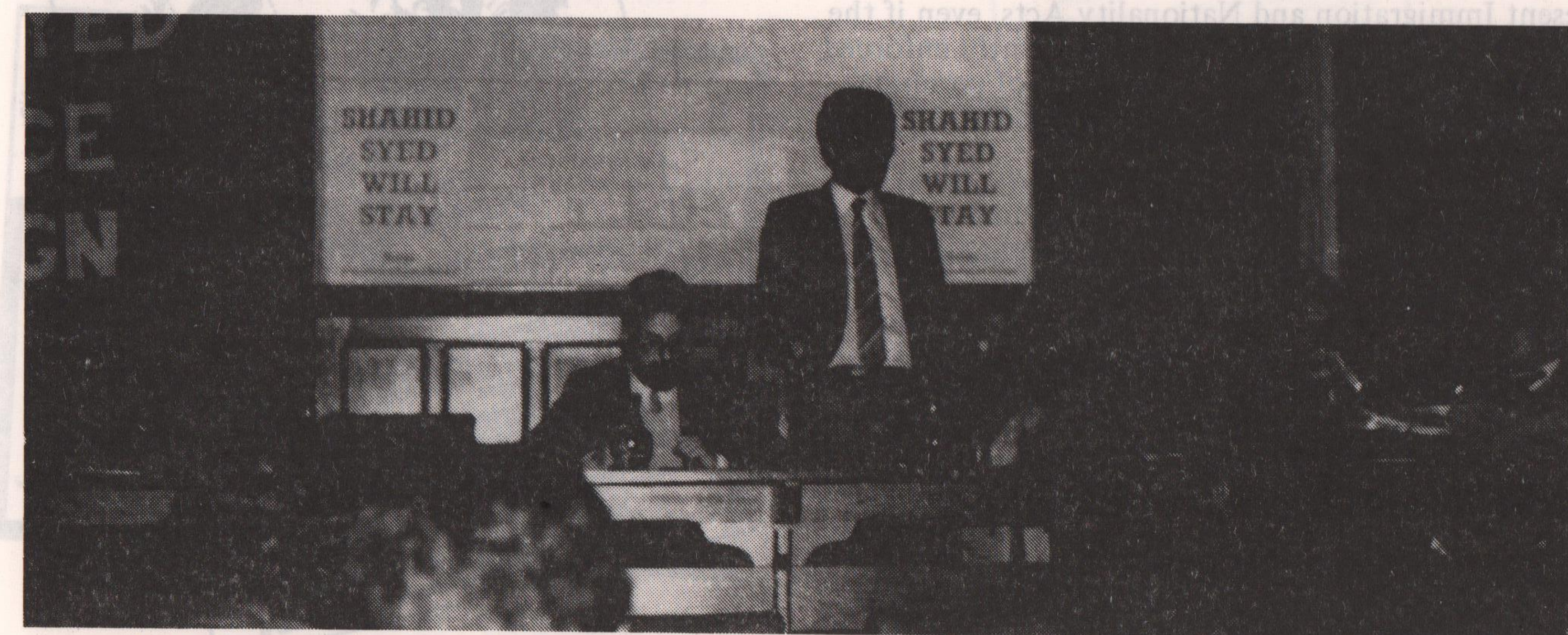
### Support

- \* Family, friends and fellow workers who want to help need to be actively involved in all aspects of the campaign.
- \* Leaflet prepared to send to trade union branches, political groups, religious groups etc. inviting active support.
- \* A smaller group needed to discuss tactics, prepare publicity and attend meetings of other organisations.
- \* A larger group is needed to gather signatures on petitions, lobby officials, demonstrate outside courts, help with fundraising, write to M.P.s etc.
- \* Contact people who have been, or are, involved in other campaigns.
- \* Share tasks. It helps spread the load and encourages continued support as people will only stay if they feel of use.
- \* It is important to get as many people as possible to write to the Home Office complaining of its actions. This at least shows the Home Office that it is not dealing with an isolated individual and is going to have to account for its actions.
- \* Contact local councillors for support. Could lead to wider support, for example as by GLC, Manchester City Council and Hackney Council.
- \* Local M.P. needs to be pressured into making a representation to the Home Secretary. Get others to write to their own M.P. or ask at their M.P.'s "Surgery".
- \* Encourage other organisations to affiliate to the Campaign and to invite members of the campaign to speak at their meetings.
- \* Get as much support as possible from black organisations.
- \* Contact women's groups for support. Our Immigration Laws discriminate particularly against black women.
- \* Contact organisations opposed to racism e.g. Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, Anti-Apartheid Movement, groups opposing abuse of Prevention of Terrorism Act, Campaign Against Racist Laws etc.
- \* Contact schools, particularly if children are involved. There is growing concern amongst teachers of the effect of deportation on children.

- \* Get a lawyer to help. Preferably someone who has experience of Immigration Law and Rules, as they are complex and involved.

### Union Support

- \* The support of individual trade unionists is very important but the aim must be to get the Trade Unions to fight as well.
- \* Publicise the Campaign in all union branches represented at your workforce.
- \* Get local union branches to invite speakers from the Campaign, to affiliate and to make a donation.
- \* Encourage other organisations to get involved e.g. Trades Council, local Authority's Race Relations Committee.
- \* Investigate the wider issues of Immigration Laws and racism. Also the sexist and anti-working class nature of deportations.
- \* Use union mailings to publicise these issues and to encourage wider support for the Campaign's activities.
- \* Find a committed and reliable contact in each affiliated union branch who can pass on information about developments and activities of the campaign.
- \* Find out union procedure for submitting resolutions, emergency resolutions and TUC motions, both locally and nationally.
- \* Try to get your union to provide other services, for example legal advice, production of leaflets and banners, research department.
- \* Plan well ahead whenever possible. Decisions may have to be made at several different meetings before any wide support can be given.
- \* Find out if other unions or branches have a policy opposing the Immigration Laws, particularly those whose members operate the system of internal controls e.g. ASTMS, COHSE, CPSA, NALGO, NGTWU, NUPE & NUT.
- \* Also support non-union members facing deportation. Black people who are single parents, unemployed or prevented from joining a trade union are often in greater need of support.



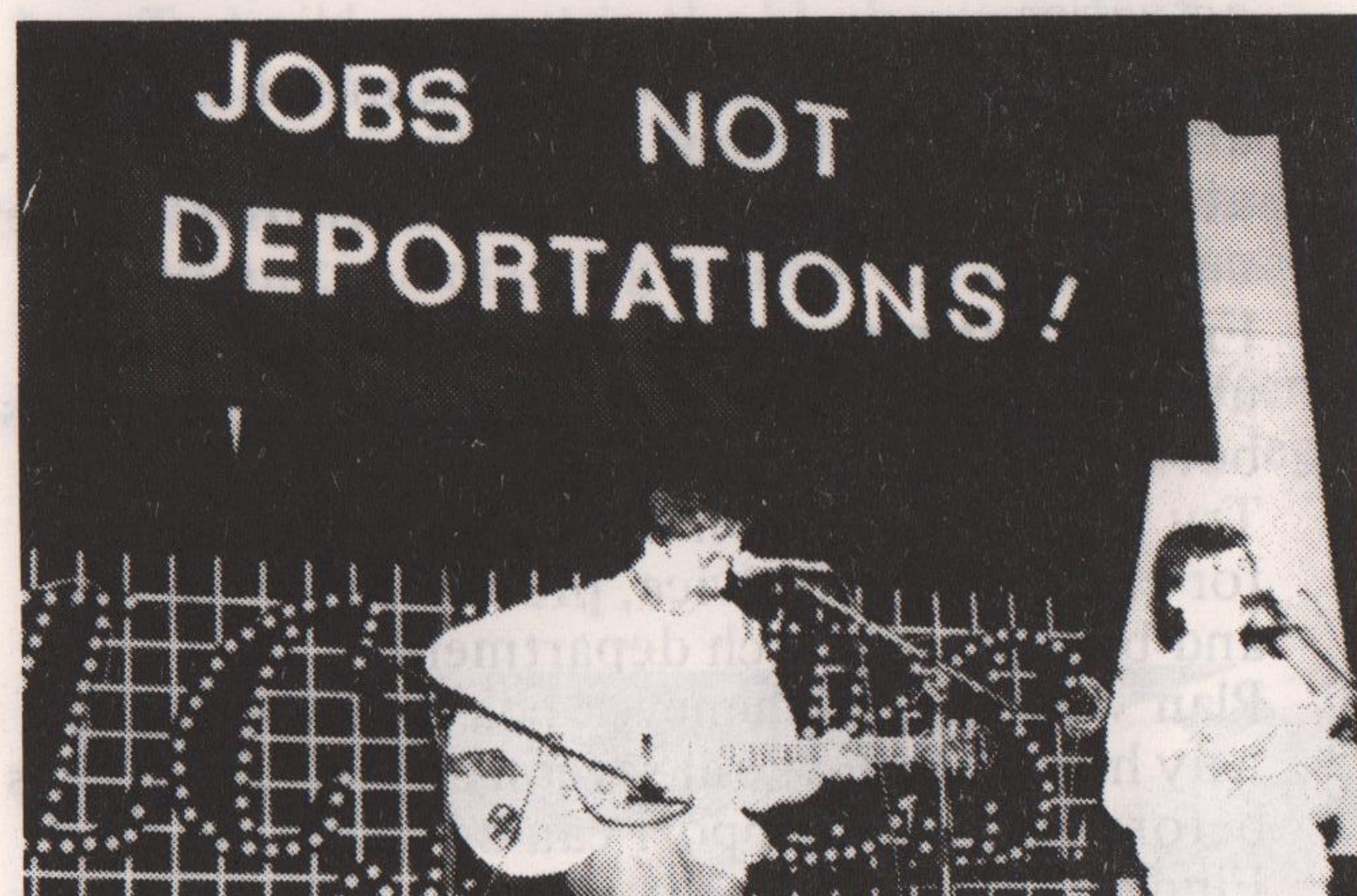
Shahid Syed speaks at a House of Commons meeting on deportations organised by NALGO. (N. James 11 February 1985)



## Resolutions

Resolutions can stimulate action. They must never be a substitute for action. Could include some of the following:-

- \* We condemn current government policy on immigration and nationality which discriminates against black people.
- \* We declare our opposition to the system of internal controls, deportations and removals of black people.
- \* We call for the repeal of the 1981 Nationality Act and the 1971 Immigration Act.
- \* We call for an immediate moratorium on all deportations, removals and internal passport checks.
- \* We urge trade unionists to refuse to process work connected with such checks and removals.
- \* We agree to affiliate to/sponsor.....campaign and to invite speakers.
- \* We agree to contact our MP/national HQ to seek support.
- \* We agree to contact the Home Secretary expressing our concern and calling for a reprieve.



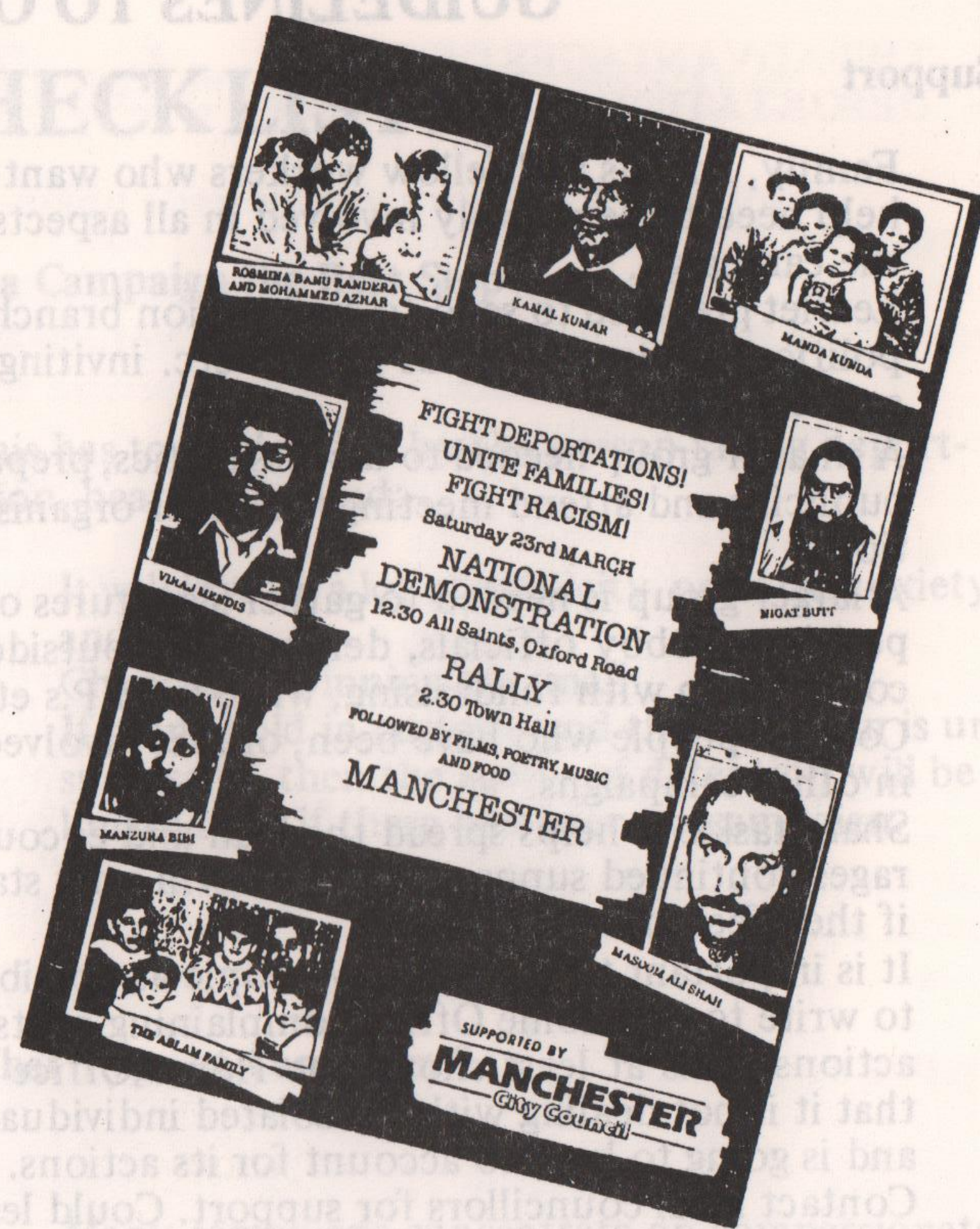
One Day Event organised by the Union of Turkish Workers and the GLC. (N. James 10 February 1985)

The following Resolution was passed at the 1985 NALGO Conference:-

This Conference welcomes the support given by the NEC in supporting Muhammad Idrish and Shahid Syed. It believes that further cases of deportations of NALGO members will continue to rise under the present Immigration and Nationality Acts, even if the extreme rigour with which they are presently enforced was relaxed to the customary standards of common law, which the present statutes breach.

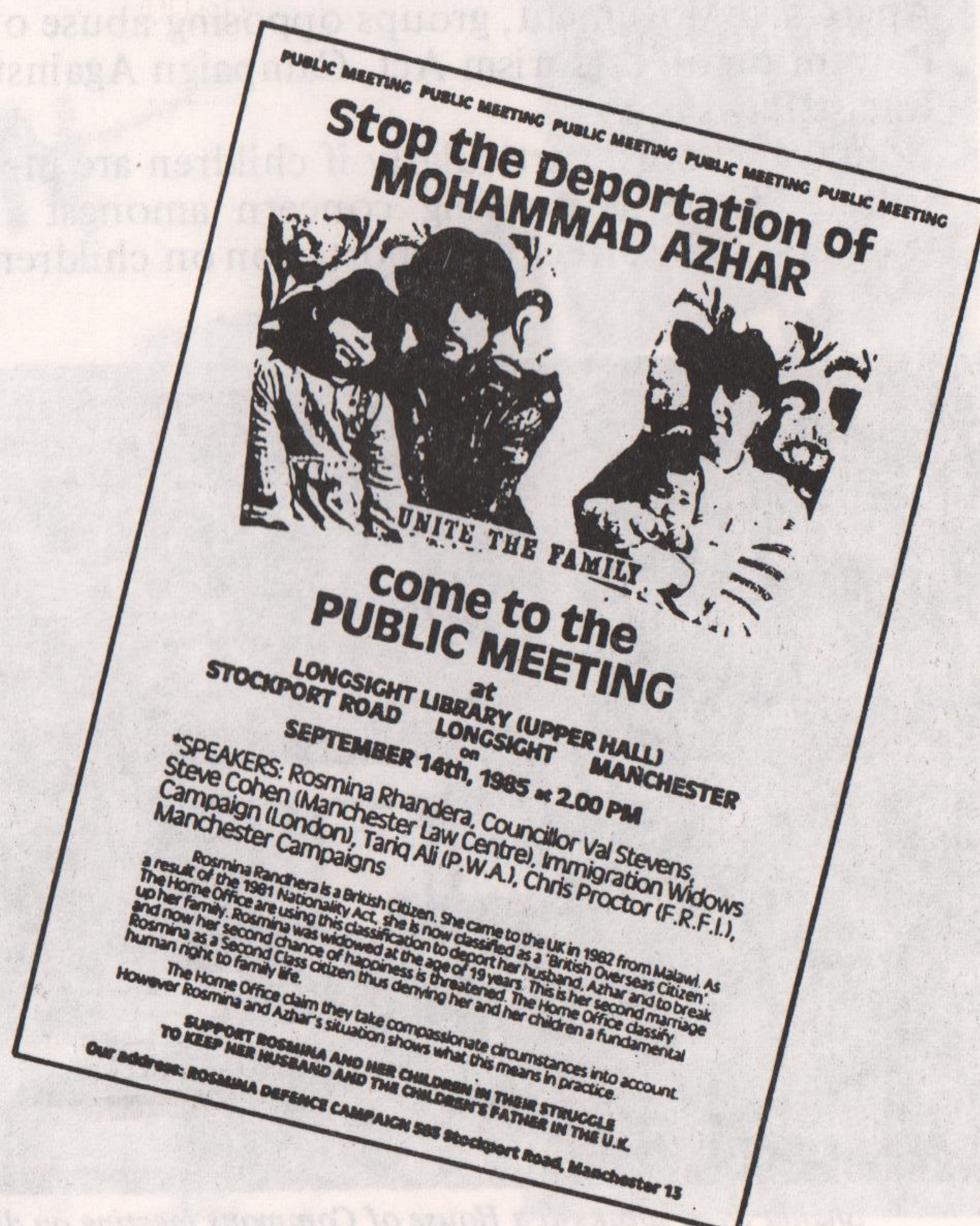
Conference calls upon the NEC:

- 1) to continue vigorously to defend members threatened with deportation;
- 2) to pursue vigorously a campaign for the repeal of immigration and nationality laws which result directly or indirectly in racial and/or sexual discrimination;
- 3) to pursue these matters with the TUC and with all Unions with which NALGO has regular contact by submitting a motion or amendment on deportation to the 1985 TUC.
- 4) to extend the legal assistance scheme so as to cover participation with prior approval of the Council, in any anti-deportation campaign.



## Meetings

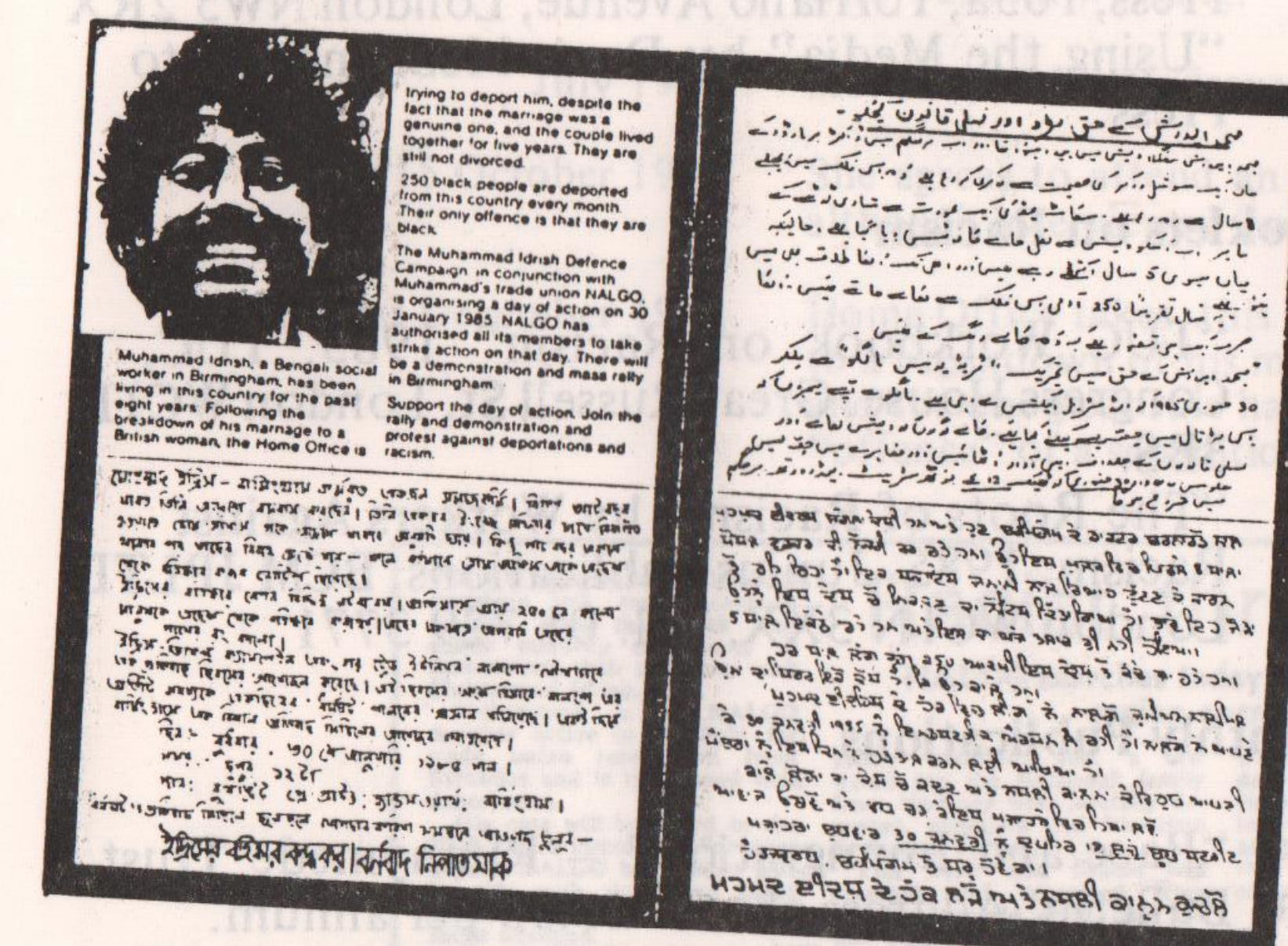
- \* To discuss progress and tactics, and allocate tasks.
- \* Encourage participation of any new members.
- \* Meeting place should be easily accessible and suitably informal.
- \* Possibly weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Weekly meetings are easy to remember and enable developments to be discussed quickly without the necessity to take decisions outside meetings.
- \* Take turns being chairperson and minute secretary.
- \* Invite representatives from other relevant groups.



## Publicity

Public awareness of an individual case is essential; it is also important to educate people about the issues involved in implementing our immigration laws through:-

- \* Public meetings, demonstrations, pickets, lobbying, and petitions, particularly to coincide with some development, e.g. date of appeal.
- \* Press releases around such events with follow-up phone calls.
- \* Local radio and television.
- \* Articles and letters for local press and magazines.
- \* All campaign material must be accurate.
- \* Be prepared to counter any information put out by the Home Office, e.g. in the press or in letters to M.P.s who have made representations on your behalf. The Home Office is not above using incorrect information to strengthen its case.
- \* Use leaflets, posters, badges and stickers (badges can also be sold to raise funds).
- \* Access to cheap or free printing and photocopying is obviously a great asset.
- \* Very important to inform in other relevant languages. An example of a leaflet is shown below.



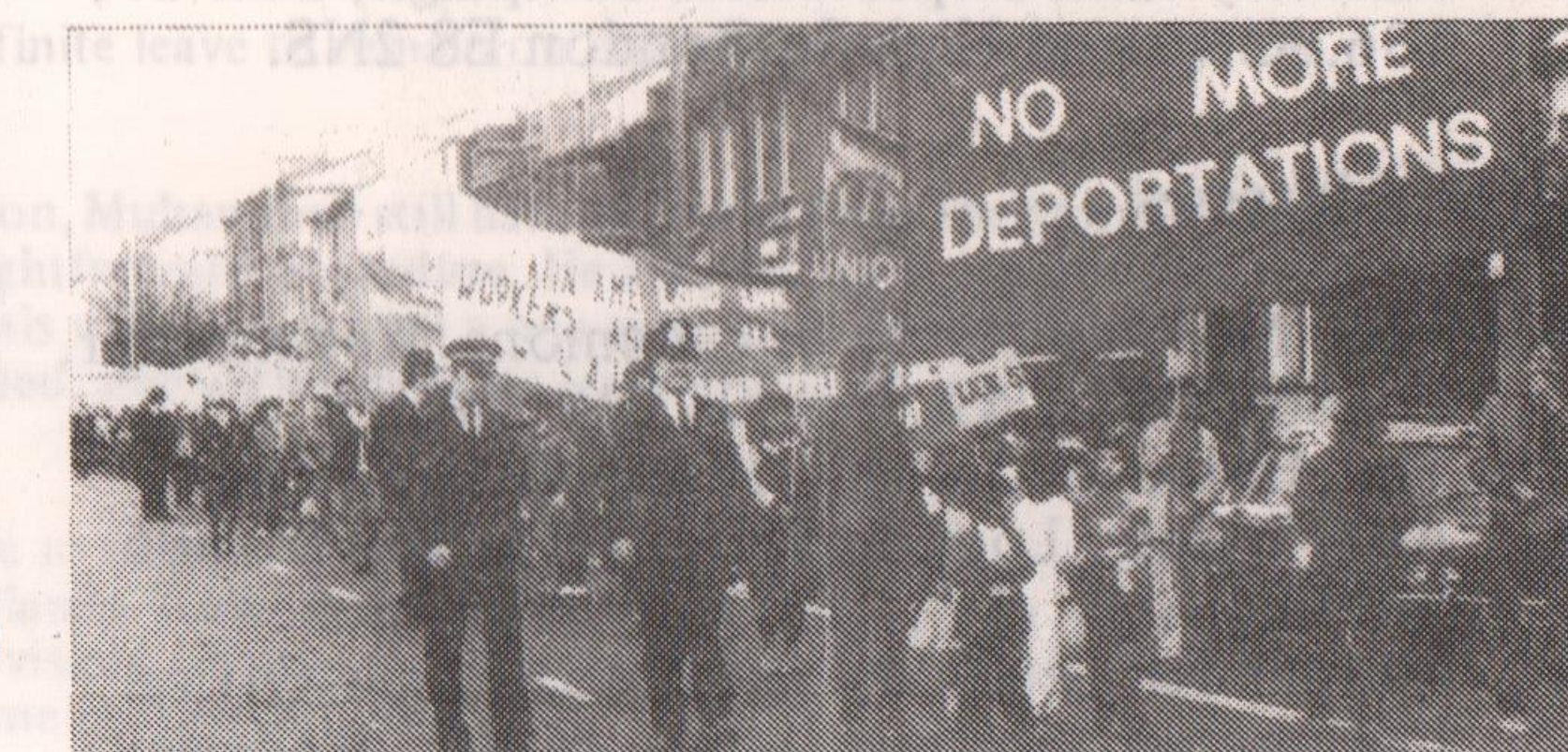
## Fundraising

- \* You will need a treasurer and a bank account usually requiring two signatures from campaign group. (Barclays Bank has a bad reputation for its treatment of black employees in South Africa)
- \* Ask local organisations, churches, etc, to contribute either through affiliation fees, speaker's expenses or, of course, donations.
- \* Usual fundraising events, for example, socials, jumble sales and a stall at local events. Can also include an exhibition of material to inform, request support and collect signatures.

## Contacts

- \* Vital to have central address for all communications.
- \* Draw up address and phone lists of individuals, affiliated groups, and media contacts, and have one person responsible for keeping master list and to update as necessary.
- \* Keep individuals and groups informed; sometimes this has to be done at short notice so a communication "tree" can be worked out to share this task.
- \* Personal contact, at least by telephone, is an important follow-up to letters.

## "SINIRDIŞI ETMEYE SON"



"No More Deportations" Demonstration. (Union of Turkish Workers 10 November 1984)

## Widening the Campaign

- \* Link up with other Anti-Deportation Campaigns, for example as in Manchester, Hackney and Walthamstow.
- \* Link up with Campaigns nationwide to organise a national demonstration, as in Manchester in March 1985, or a national petition.
- \* Link up with other organisations to hold events, for example as organised by the Union of Turkish Workers and the GLC in February 1985.
- \* Organise a Lobby of the House of Commons.
- \* Arrange a meeting at the House of Commons, for example as organised by NALGO in February 1985.
- \* Build alliances with other groups fighting racism and other attacks on the working class.



## Further Information

- \* Information is power. Build up your knowledge of deportations, Immigration Law, divided families, racial harassment.
- \* Keep up to date. The Immigration Rules are being regularly tightened up as more of the anomalies are exposed, or as pressure by right-wing groups continues.
- \* Information on other campaigns can help your own.

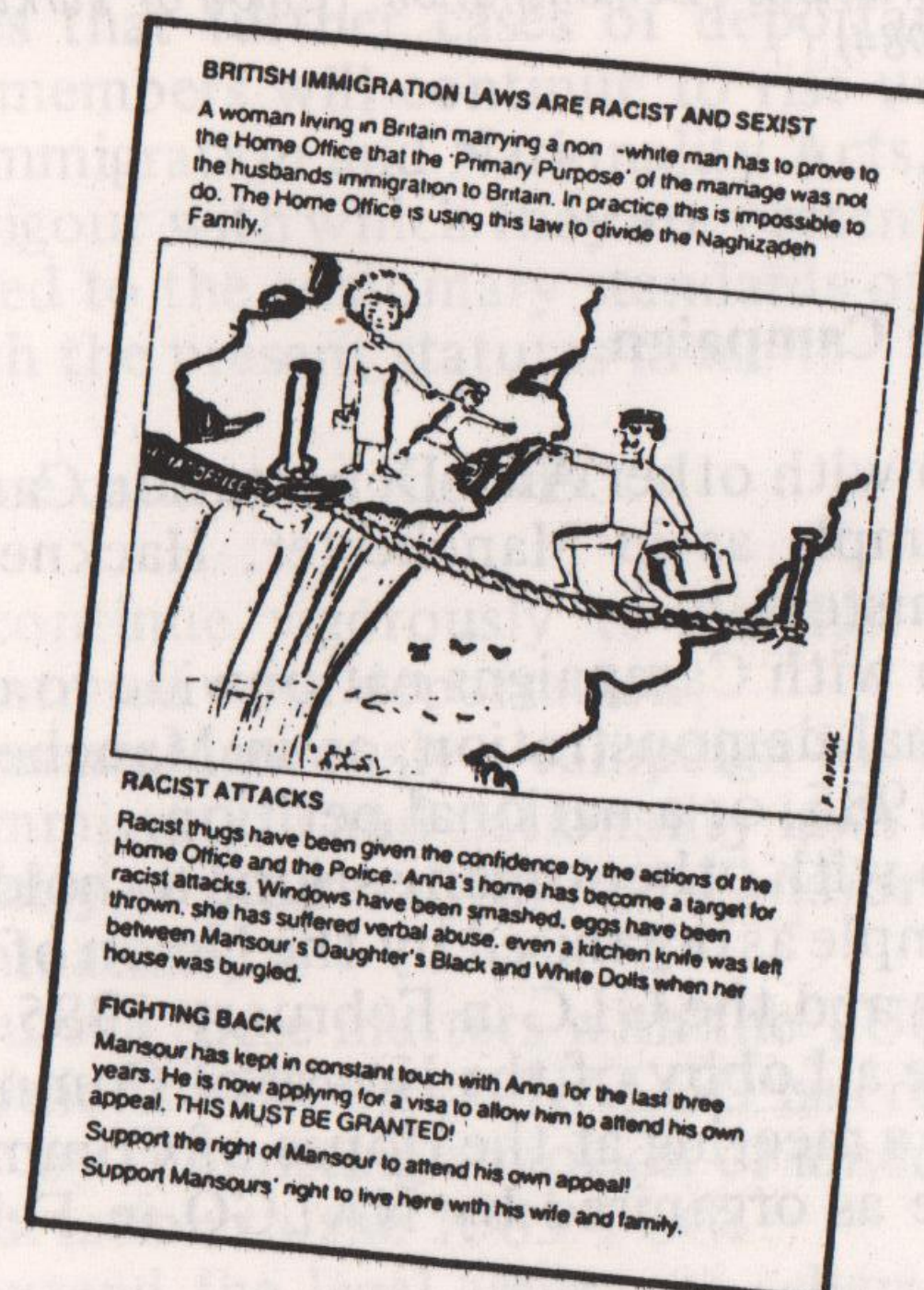
There is a growing network of support but the lists below have been kept to a minimum. Obviously once a Campaign gets underway then contacts will be built up.

### Organisations

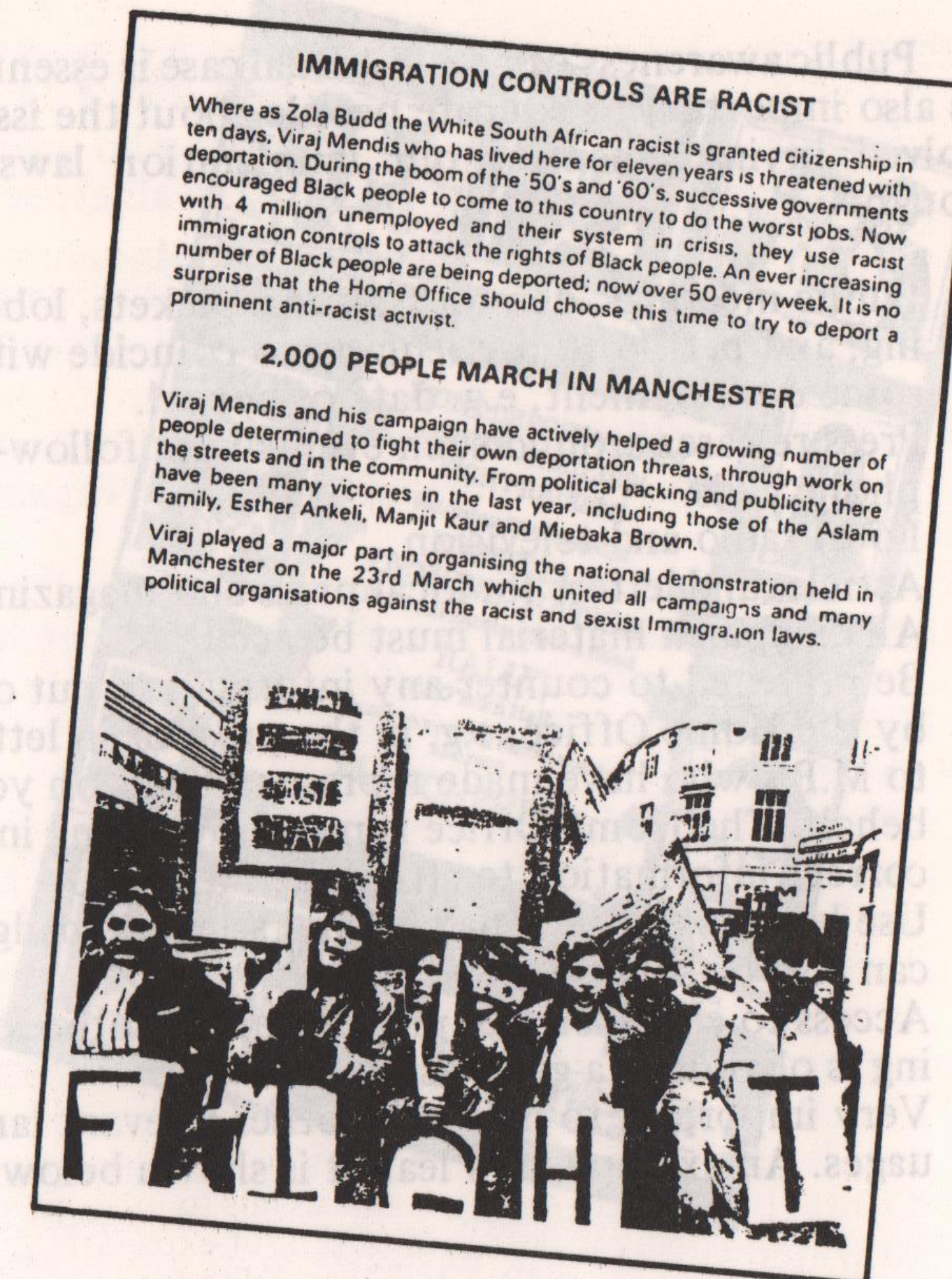
1. Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign, c/o Ingrid Widdows, 22 Station Road, Harborne, Birmingham. Tel. Dudley (0384) 238367 - day.
2. Anti Deportations Working Group, Ethnic Minorities Unit, GLC, County Hall, London. Tel: 01-633 4263.
3. Union of Turkish Workers, 129 Newington Green Road, London N1. Tel: 01-226 7544 (London Anti-Deportation Committee—same address)
4. Manchester Anti Deportation Campaign. c/o 595 Stockport Road, Manchester 12.
5. Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and Action Group on Immigration and Nationality (AGIN), 115 Old Street, London EC1V 9JR. Tel: 01-251 8706.
6. Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign, Box 39, 136, Kingsland High St. London E8 2NS.

### Other Addresses

1. Your M.P. c/o House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1 1AA. Tel: 01 219 3000.
2. The Home Secretary, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT. Tel: 01-686 0688.
3. The Under Secretary of State, Home Office Immigration Section, Lunar House, Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR9 2BY.



Campaign Leaflet



Campaign Leaflet

### Booklets on Deportations

1. "Deportations and Removals" by Paul Gordon, 1984. £1.50 from The Runnymede Trust, 37A, Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8PP. Tel: 01 404 5266.
2. "You Don't Have To Be A Lawyer To Help Someone Being Threatened With Immediate Arrest, Detention Or Expulsion Under The Immigration Act". by Steve Cohen, 1980. £1.00 from Manchester Law Centre, 595 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester. Tel: 061-225 5111.

### Booklets on Campaigning

1. "Organise!" by Mark Smith, 1981. NAYC Publication, 70 St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester. LE1 5NY
2. "Organising Things" by Sue Ward. 1984. Pluto Press, 105a, Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2RX
3. "Using the Media" by Denis McShane. Pluto Press.

### Booklets on Racism

1. "TUC Workbook on Racism" 1983. TUC, Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1L 3BS.
2. "The Roots of Racism" by Workers Against Racism, 1985. Junius Publications, BCM JPLTD London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 01 729 3771

### Monthly Publications

1. "Race and Immigration" — Runnymede Trust Bulletin. Address above. £6.00 per annum.
2. "Searchlight" — The Anti-Fascist Monthly incorporating the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism.

## CASE STUDY

# THE MUHAMMAD IDRISH DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

### Introduction

The Home Office want to deport Muhammad Idrish because he has separated from his wife, although he is still legally married. The Home Office accept that it was not a marriage of convenience.

Idrish is a community worker in Handsworth, Birmingham, providing a vital service to the Bengali speaking community. The Home Office believe that Idrish's value to his community cannot be taken into account.

The Defence Campaign has won national support including his union, NALGO — the first trade union to nationally fight against the deportation of one of its members.

### Background

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| May 1976          | Muhammad Idrish, aged 26, came to this country from Bangladesh with a British Council award to study on a one year optical technology course at Bristol Polytechnic.  |
| April 1977        | Successfully completes the course and although he had originally intended to return to Bangladesh as is expected by the British Council, he has by this time been going out with a British woman for eight months (whom he later marries).  |
| May 1977          | Applies for leave to remain as a visitor which is granted until 31st August. They had decided to marry but, although she was separated from her first husband, they had to wait until a divorce was granted.  |
| April 1979        | The divorce is finalised and Muhammad immediately informs the Home Office that he intends to marry. The previous twenty months he had technically been an over-stayer but explained to the Home Office that he did not apply for an extension of leave earlier for fear of being returned.  |
| 21 May 1979       | Marries.  |
| November 1979     | Muhammad and his wife are interviewed by immigration officials.   |
| 6 February 1980   | Muhammad, having satisfied the officers that his was not a "marriage of convenience", is granted leave to remain exceptionally until 21 May 1980, to satisfy the Home Office "one year" criteria for judging a marriage as genuine.   |
| April 1980        | Muhammad applies for indefinite leave to remain on completion of the required one year.   |
| 25 July 1980      | Three months after application, Muhammad still has not heard from the Home Office although it should be a straightforward procedure. He asks for his passport as he wished to go to Libya with his wife to work on a one-year contract starting in September. His passport is returned, not with indefinite leave but with leave to remain until 14 September 1980. |
| 11 September 1980 | Reapplies for indefinite leave to remain, having decided not to go to Libya but to take up a job in the West Midlands. Muhammad had been recruited by a Dr. Barnardo's director in Bristol, who had visited six cities looking for a suitable Bengali worker to work in a new children's home in West Bromwich.   |
| June 1981         | Muhammad is interviewed at Birmingham Airport's Immigration Office but still no decision is made, 14 months after the original application. The interim period he lived in the West Midlands during the week and returned to Bristol at weekends where his wife was still working.  |
| July 1981         | Muhammad's wife leaves him.   |
| 15 October 1981   | She agrees to attend an interview by immigration officers but does not attend although interviewed two weeks later.   |
| 13 December 1981  | Home Office takes, this time, just six weeks to decide to refuse indefinite leave due to a breakdown of his marriage although no divorce proceedings have been started and the one-year rule had been satisfied over 18 months earlier: thus making an "offence" of a separation. Muhammad appeals against the decision.  |

## Racist threat angers union

NALGO marches today in defence of Muhammad Idrish. London region secretary IVAN BEAVIS explains.

TODAY thousands of NALGO members will march through London with the black and ethnic minority community to demonstrate their solidarity with Muhammad Idrish. Muhammad is a NALGO member active in the fight for trade union recognition from Barbados and is threatened with deportation. His case will be heard in the High Court tomorrow. For over a year NALGO has fought side by side with the broad based defence campaign to prevent this racist injustice. The organised labour movement is using its power and resources to try and force the state to back away from racism. Never has it been more apparent that such power is urgently required. Just a few weeks ago the Hasudak family from Hackney were brutally deported, penniless and friendless to fascist Turkey. Last week Aifa Begum was arrested and separated from her two-year-old child. She too has been deported. Every month over 250 black working people have to endure this humiliation courtesy of the racist immigration laws. Until Muhammad Idrish was successful in galvanising his

trade union into action these daily violations of basic human rights attracted very little interest. That must change if we are to maintain credibility with the black and minority ethnic communities. We have rightly condemned the unlawful activity of the police in preventing the free movement of miners, and in their wanton use of violence and intimidation against pickets. Such tactics are also commonplace when the authorities are dealing with black immigrants. Interviews with Muhammad by immigration officers always took place in the very early hours of the morning when he was least able to protect his rights, with questions of a personal and unnecessary nature being asked of him. The Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign provides a focus for a united fightback. Whatever the legal outcome of his case, NALGO is determined that Muhammad will not be unjustly deported. If necessary trade unionists in the Civil Service and at the airports and seaports will be called on to refuse outright to assist in this deportation. We will call for action by all NALGO members to demonstrate their determination to prevent this victimisation of one of its members just because he is black. We will win not just for his sake but to give heart to those thousands of other ordinary black people who face similar injustices. We will also show the authorities that, like the anti-union laws, racist immigration legislation can and will be overcome through united working class solidarity.

Morning Star 9 May 1984.



## THE MUHAMMAD IDRISH DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

### LEGAL PROCESS

### ACTION BY THE CAMPAIGN

10 and 20 December 1982	Appeal against Idrish's refusal for indefinite leave is heard by an adjudicator appointed by the Home Office in Clay Lane, Birmingham.	50 people from Bristol and Birmingham picket outside the Government Buildings. Well publicised in the press and on television.
21 January 1983	Appeal is dismissed so Idrish applies for leave to appeal to the Immigration Appeals Tribunal.	Rally held in St. Werburgh's Community Centre, Bristol, with speakers from community groups and trade union branches.
15 February 1983	Leave to appeal is refused. Application is made for a judicial review by the High Court on a point of law that the Secretary of State should have made his decision after the required 12 months of marriage.	Press release from the Campaign that this is "only the start of the fight". NALGO branch now behind the Campaign. M.P.'s Peter Snape and Arthur Palmer make representations to David Waddington, Secretary of State, who rejects MP's protests.
May 1983	Leave for a Judicial Review is granted but it fails in the High Court of Justice.	Picket outside the High Court.
June 1983		Wins support of national NALGO which agrees to help organise a demonstration. Campaign members start attending NALGO branch meetings for support.
September 1983		Public meetings held in Sheffield and Bristol.
October 1983	Appeal against High Court decision is made to the Court of Appeal.	Demonstration takes place in Birmingham with over 1000 people taking part. Speakers include Clare Short MP and John Daly, General Secretary of NALGO.
May 1984	Date of Court of Appeal hearing in London but postponed until July.	Demonstration in London on the day before the hearing. 1500 people take part. An all night vigil is planned but called off when the hearing is postponed.
June 1984		NALGO strengthens support of Campaign at Annual Conference. NALGO produces leaflets to publicise the Campaign and a national day of action is planned should Idrish receive a Deportation Order.
4 & 5 July 1984	Court of Appeal hearing fails. A petition is made for leave to appeal to the House of Lords.	Picket outside the court. Rally held in the Friends' Meeting House, London.
8 November 1984	Law Lords refuse leave to appeal to House of Lords. The very same day Idrish is sent a notice of "Decision to make a deportation order". Appeal is made to adjudicator against the decision to deport.	Campaign members lobby MP's outside Houses of Parliament, receiving national press coverage. By now the Campaign has won the support of 86 MP's.

### LEGAL PROCESS

### ACTION BY THE CAMPAIGN

30 January 1985

National demonstration in Birmingham. The day of action is authorised by NALGO for all its members. A rally is held with speakers including Jeff Rooker MP. 2000 people attend from all over the country, with wide press, T.V., and radio coverage.

11 March and  
3 April 1985

Appeal is heard by an adjudicator appointed by the Home Office, at Thanet House, The Strand, London. Witnesses for Idrish include Jeff Rooker MP, a Barnardo's Director, and a branch secretary of NALGO.

Campaign members picket outside Thanet House and fills the court to hear the proceedings.

17 April 1985

Idrish's solicitor receives the adjudicator's written decision: the appeal has lost. The Campaign realises that it could have asked for a verbal decision in court which would have helped widen publicity.

The following day 150 people demonstrate in Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, handing out leaflets and collecting signatures of support.

May 1985

Idrish applies for leave to appeal to the Immigration Appeals Tribunal.

Campaign discusses how to widen support. Possibility of Idrish standing for a vacant seat on the West Midlands County Council (shortly to be abolished) following the death of the Labour councillor.

June 1985

Leave to appeal to the Tribunal is granted.

After considerable debate, the Campaign decides to stand Idrish as an Independent candidate for Sparkbrook ward after failing to get Labour support.

11 July 1985

Labour win by-election but Idrish is second, polling more votes than the Alliance and Conservative candidates.

11 August 1985

Public meeting and social event held in Sparkbrook to build on the community support.

13 September 1985

Appeal is heard by the Tribunal at Thanet House, London. This is Idrish's last opportunity under the appeals procedure of the Immigration Act. Idrish's barrister asks for the Tribunal's decision to be given at an open hearing.

Picket by campaign members outside the court and fills public area in court to follow proceedings.

24 October 1985

Tribunal gives result of the appeal at an open hearing. The deportation order is quashed! It rules that the Home Office was wrong to ignore Idrish's strong connection with the UK, and the Campaign is acknowledged as proof of his high regard in the community and of the open way he had conducted his appeal. The Tribunal, however, does not give Idrish permission to remain in the UK. This is still in the hands of the Home Office.

Campaign members from London and Birmingham picket outside the court. Celebrations begin on hearing the result of the appeal, marking the turning point in the Campaign's fight. It is hoped that this victory will encourage more people to support those facing deportation. Good press and T.V. coverage. Future action will be determined by the response of the Home Office.



## INTERVIEW WITH MUHAMMAD IDRISH

**Q.** How was the Campaign set up?

**IDRISH:** When I received the letter from the Home Office refusing my leave to stay in December 1981, I went to Bristol Commission for Racial Equality, Handsworth Law Centre, Asian Resource Centre, Saltley Action Centre and almost all the advice centres in Birmingham and they all said that I didn't have a chance within the law. I asked people at Handsworth Law Centre about the possibility of setting up a campaign but they thought it would be pointless as up to that time only women with dependent children had campaigned successfully and I didn't have enough compassionate circumstances, neither to gain support nor to actually win. I spoke to activists involved in anti-racism in Bristol, for example CARL (Campaign Against Racist Laws) and people at my work in West Bromwich and they decided to set up a campaign. In Birmingham we wrote to 200 possible supporters inviting them to a planning meeting but only six turned up and that included me and my friend, but we decided to print and distribute leaflets and start a petition. At the same time in Bristol, a similar meeting was attended by over thirty including a reporter from the Bristol Evening Post who also distributed information to her media friends. Setting-up of the campaign was publicised in the local papers and on local radio in October 1982. By then I knew my appeal was to be heard in December, so the first action was to mobilise people for a picket on the day outside the adjudicator's court in Birmingham. This was attended by thirty people from Birmingham and twenty from Bristol, and all the local media including television reported it. It was then that the Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign was finally set up with weekly meetings.

**Q.** How did you get your NALGO branch involved in the Campaign?

**IDRISH:** You have to realise that Dr Barnardo's Branch NALGO is a peculiar branch. It has got members all over the country and the Branch meets usually once every two months, at a different place each time. At the start, when it became known that I was disallowed leave to stay in this country; I had discussions with the members of the Branch from Birmingham but I did not get any encouraging reply. As a result I did not feel that I would be able to get much support from the Branch as a whole. Much of the work was done by me in the form of lobbying the local reps for support. Fortunately three of the local reps came from the same project of Dr Barnardo's where I myself worked. In December 1982, when I went for the hearing at the Immigration Adjudicator's in Clay Lane, Birmingham, the Defence Campaign organised the picket of fifty people which was widely publicised. This event convinced the local members of my branch and they all went to the following Branch meeting, which was luckily held in Birmingham. Our local rep proposed a resolution which had been drafted in the Defence Campaign meeting. The resolution was unanimously passed and the Branch donated £100 to the Campaign, wrote to the Home Office, wrote to NALGO legal officer to pay all the legal costs, and agreed to put a resolution to the NALGO Annual Conference. That was the beginning of the involvement of my branch.

**Q.** How did you get wider union support?

**IDRISH:** When Dr Barnardo's branch of NALGO asked NALGO Headquarters to pass a motion of support at NALGO's Annual Conference in June 1983, I was made our branch delegate to the Conference. This was of no use as my branch was disenfranchised as it had not submitted accounts etc. in time. But I went to the Conference as an observer instead. The resolution wasn't accepted either as it hadn't had time to be passed by our district NALGO first. So when I went to the Isle of Man Conference I went to every fringe meeting I could, relevant or not relevant, to try to get support for an emergency resolution, basically asking for NALGO's support, to organise a demonstration, asking other unions not to handle my deportation, and to organise a day of industrial action if all else fails. I eventually got support from about fifty delegates and the motion was accepted for debate on the last day of the Conference, and it was overwhelmingly passed. Although not a delegate I was, exceptionally, allowed to speak and I called for the resolution to be transformed into action. That was the real breakthrough that got NALGO's national support.

## Man fights to stay in UK

SOCIAL worker Muhammad Idrish has won the backing of immigrant groups in Bristol for his fight to stay in Britain. He met and later married an English woman. But last year after 21 years marriage, the relationship broke up. Now the Home Office has told Mr Idrish to leave, because he is separated from his wife. Mr Idrish, who recently moved to Birmingham, said: "I applied for indefinite leave to stay here in 1979, but the Home Office delayed giving me an answer for two years. Then as soon as I separated from my wife they told me to go. They assumed the marriage had broken down for good, yet in English law a couple have to be separated for two years before they can apply for a divorce." Mr Idrish has support from colleagues in Birmingham and from national social workers' and probation officers' associations.

Bristol Evening Post 20 November 1982.



Rally in Birmingham during NALGO's National Day of Action. (N. James 30 January 1985)

# Union will fight on to save Muhammad

**NALGO IS TO continue its campaign to stop the deportation of social worker Muhammad Idrish despite a legal setback in the courts last week.**

Master of the Rolls Sir John Donaldson and two other judges dismissed the case in the Court of Appeal in London and refused leave

to appeal to the House of Lords.

They said the Home Secretary had applied the immigration rules correctly when Mr. Idrish was refused leave to stay in Britain indefinitely after his marriage had broken up.

But NALGO's "Muhammad must Stay" campaign will continue with further publicity and industrial action, in line with a resolu-

tion carried at the union's recent annual conference.

Muhammad Idrish came to Britain in 1976 from Bangladesh and is now working for Dr. Barnardos in Birmingham as a social worker. He married a Scottish woman in 1979 and would normally have been given leave to stay in this country permanently, but by the time the Home Office considered his application, his marriage

had broken up and leave was refused.

The Appeal Court hearing turned on the question of whether the Home Secretary should have made his decision in the light of Muhammad's circumstances at the time he made the application, when he was still happily married, or the situation when the application was considered, when the marriage had ended.

A NALGO spokesperson said:

"This is a disappointing setback but it will not affect our determination to stop Muhammad's deportation. Muhammad is a highly respected social worker who has made a valuable contribution to society. The immigration laws should not be used to force him out of the country he has made his home."

NALGO News 13 July 1984.

## Unions must join fight against racialism

**MUHAMMAD IDRISH** believes turning to the trade union movement for support against his deportation and the Tory racist immigration laws is crucial.

Idrish came to Britain from Bangladesh in May 1976. He had been a teacher and while living in Bristol became involved with immigrant young people, helping to found an Asian youth club.

Idrish has worked in the Druid Heath Centre run by Dr Barnardos since September 1980. He has now successfully won a place at Birmingham Polytechnic to study for a Certificate in Social Work.

"I have found work I am committed to and want to carry on with. I feel I can

continue to be of some use as a social worker, especially working with Asian families," he explains in a brochure.

Idrish told News Line yesterday: "When we started the campaign the first philosophy was, we will build it up in the labour and trade union movement, so I took it to my branch of NALGO, who passed a resolution of support."

The resolution then went to the district and in front of last year's NALGO annual conference, where it was overwhelmingly supported.

Explaining why it was important to bring the issue to the unions, Idrish said: "I feel very strongly that black people in this country are working people."

"They come over here

not for fun, or just to live in a different country. People stay here, find work, and I think the trade union and labour movement should play a role."

"People have been here for 20 years and then all of a sudden they find out that under some rule change they become illegal immigrants in this country," he said.

Last year the Home Office had deported 2,284 people, an increase by around 60 per cent over the previous year.

Idrish said he felt he had been treated very badly.

"When things are good and in your favour they cannot make up their minds," he said. "Once things go wrong, they make up their mind quickly."

## Law lords reject plea on deportation

**A PETITION for leave to appeal against deportation by an Asian social worker who has lived in Britain for more than eight years was rejected yesterday by the law lords, writes Aileen Ballantyne.**

In 1979 Mr Muhammad Idrish, aged 34, who

has worked at a Dr Barnardo's home near Birmingham for the past four years, married a Scottish woman and applied for indefinite leave to stay. When Mr Idrish separated from his wife the Home Office ordered him to leave within six weeks.

Guardian 9 November 1984.



Picket outside Thanet House during Appeal Hearing. (N. James 11 March 1985)

The News Line 30 August 1984.



Q. How were the Campaign branches in Sheffield and London formed ?

IDRISH: The first thing NALGO did was to organise a national demonstration in October 1983 and this meant that I was travelling all over the country explaining my situation at branch meetings. An open NALGO meeting in Sheffield was attended by people who had just won a campaign and they offered to form a branch to mobilise support in the north of the country. The London branch was formed in the same way, later in mid '84. So there were four branches including Bristol and Birmingham.

Q. What about fundraising ?

IDRISH: Initially, in Bristol, CARL covered costs of leaflets, but in Birmingham, it was really difficult, and for six months I paid out of my own pocket. The first big money came from the British Council of Churches who donated £300. Other than that it was £5 affiliation fees. By that time I started going to NALGO branches who donated £50, £60, £70. National NALGO have absorbed a lot of the costs of leaflet production and legal fees.

Q. Have you had outside organisations trying to take over ?

IDRISH: I know what you mean. There was never really any sign of this. Many supporters are already active in other organisations so they come with different ideologies, and this caused many arguments about strategy. But everything is developed at our weekly meetings in an open and free way, thus defusing any such difficulties. Everyone was agreed on one thing: to oppose my deportation in the context of opposing the racist immigration law. We also concentrate on activities rather than theoretical talk. Having active people is a vital asset, whatever their political persuasion. Also we have all got to know each other over the past two years which has defused the hard political argument.

Q. Are there any other strengths of the campaign ?

IDRISH: Apart from the major strength of the commitment of activists building up into the trade union labour movement, the other main strength is that I myself have put a lot of work into it. It is easier to gain support if the person actually being deported comes face-to-face with people at meetings etc.

Q. Weaknesses ?

IDRISH: Greatest weakness is lack of black community support. Many activists by nature of their work lack a consistent relationship with the community and they haven't worked hard enough to build support. I have to accept some of the blame also, especially as I am black and speak their language, but I haven't had the time. Also, to build up community support takes time, and I haven't been in Birmingham that long. However community support in Bristol, where I lived for a long time, is very good. The second thing is that right from when black people enter the country with the type of questions asked on entry and constantly within the UK, has made them feel that they are in some way guilty. This makes black people afraid of going out to demonstrate in case they are threatened with deportation, so they think it is safer to stay in without making too much noise.

Q. Is there anything else that you would like to say that will be of use to other campaigns ?

IDRISH: Firstly, the person facing deportation has to be convinced that they are not guilty, but it is the laws that discriminate against black people that are wrong. Talk to everyone and don't be beaten by know-all advisers. Support is there but it has to be publicly sought for, without fear. Secondly, activists must spend time supporting the emotional side of the person facing deportation. It is absolutely vital and, fortunately, has been very good in my campaign. If a deportee opts out, then the campaign falls through. Knowing this also puts a lot of pressure on that person.

Footnote: Since this interview in April 1985, the Campaign has concentrated on building black community support with great success!

# VICTORY!

## Tears as 4 year battle to stay ends

by CLAIRE WOLFE

BIRMINGHAM social worker Muhammad Idrish yesterday won his four year fight against deportation.

Mr Idrish, 34, of Hall Road, Handsworth, wept with relief when the immigration appeals tribunal in London quashed the deportation order.

The decision was hailed a victory for hundreds of other immigrants fighting to stay in Britain by Mr Idrish and the union which backed him.

But the legal battle could continue if the Home Office refuses to give him permission to stay in Britain indefinitely.

And a Home Office spokesman said they could also appeal to the High Court against yesterday's decision or issue a new deportation order on different grounds.

He said: "We will consider the judgement very carefully before making a decision." Bangladesh-born Mr Idrish, who works at the city's Asian Resource Centre, was confident last night as he celebrated with friends at his home.

More than 150 supporters, many from Birmingham, went to London with him. The Daily News has highlighted his fight during the past year.

### Blow

"I don't see how they can deport me after this. The fight has been worthwhile and an encouragement to hundreds of others in similar circumstances," he said.

The National and Local Government Officers union, which campaigned



Jubilant picket outside Thanet House (John Twinning/Social Work Today)

## Community will suffer, appeal told

The deportation of a Birmingham social worker would be a very serious loss to the city's Bangladeshi community, an Immigration Appeals adjudicator heard yesterday.

Mr Jeffrey Bright, director of the Dr Barnardo's centre, at Druids Heath, Birmingham, said Mr. Muhammed Idrish was the only Bengali speaking social worker he had found in six towns.

"There are young people who are now at home with their families who would have been in custody if it was not for Mr Idrish," he told the hearing in London.

Mr Idrish, aged 35, of Radnor Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, is appealing against a deportation order served on him by the Home Office last November. It is his last chance to stay in this country after a two-year fight against expulsion that has taken him through the High Court to the House of Lords.

He was one of a string of witnesses who testified to Mr Idrish's value to the community. A



Mr Muhammed Idrish: impressive record.

coachload of supporters from Birmingham also staged a peaceful protest outside the appeals office in The Strand.

Mr Idrish came to England in 1976 to study at Bristol for 12 months but stayed on, married a Scottish woman in 1979 and applied for permission to stay.

When the marriage had finally broken down, Mr Idrish was ordered to leave.

The hearing was adjourned until Wednesday, April 3.

Birmingham Daily News 25 October 1985.

## Widening the Campaign

The Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign has built up links with other campaigns both locally and nationally.

Locally, Campaign members have joined with two other campaigns to initiate a West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign.

Nationally, the Campaign works closely with the Shahid Syed Defence Campaign: another NALGO member threatened with deportation.

Birmingham Post 12 March 1985.



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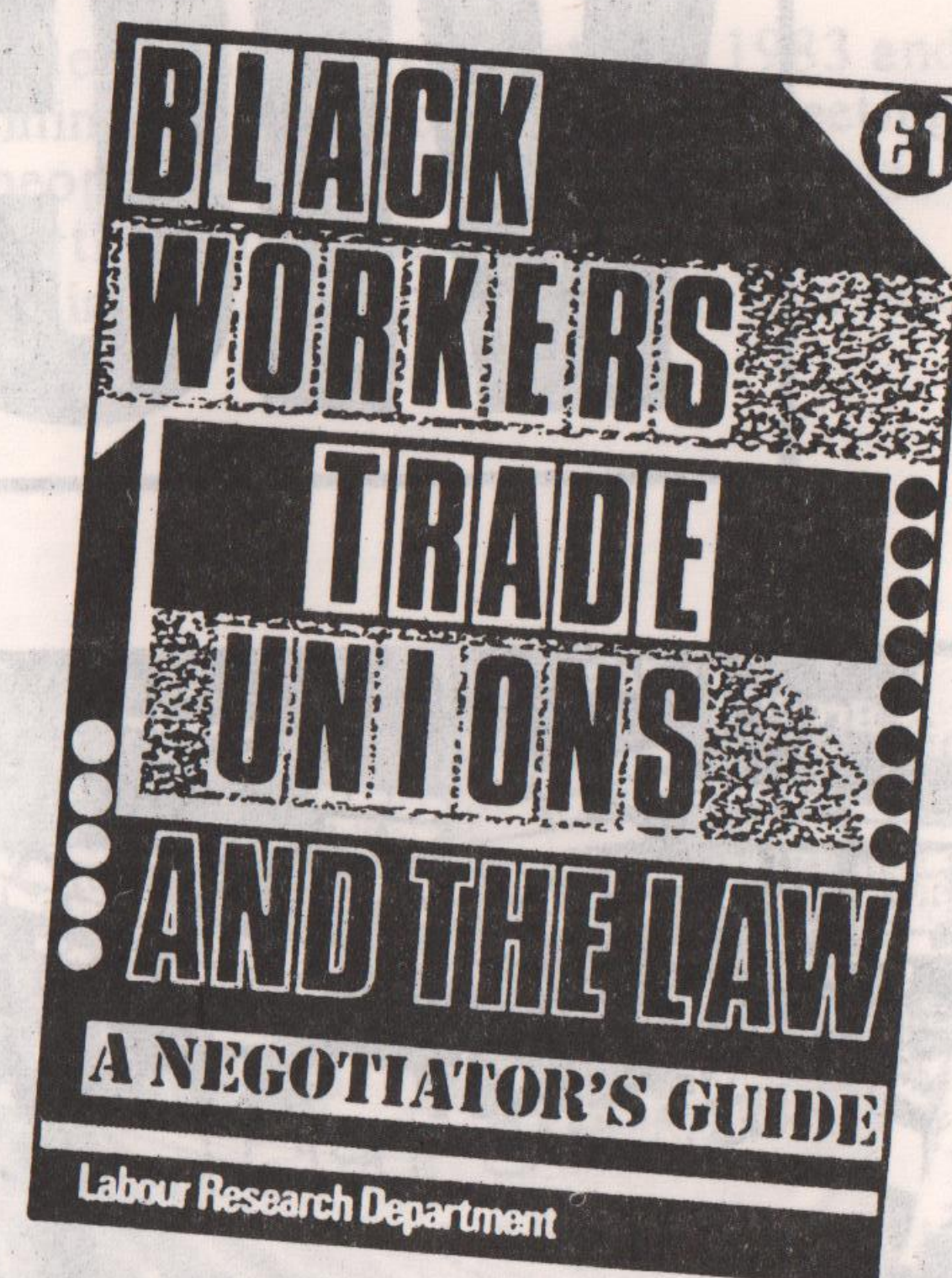
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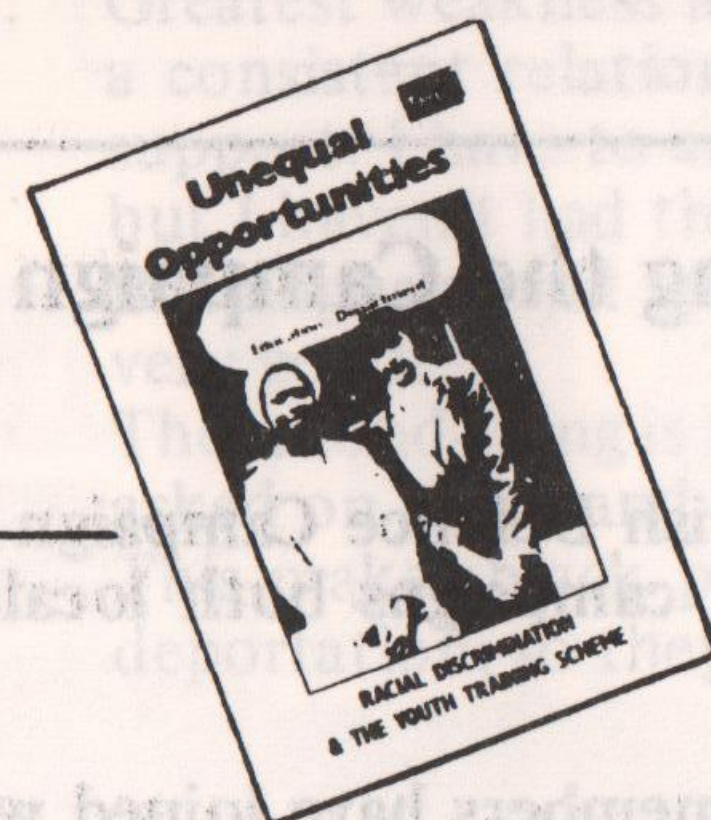
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