

IRR EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROGRAMME

INSTITUTE OF
RACE
RELATIONS

Supporters' Newsletter

An update for contributors and funders on the work of the IRR's European Research Programme

OVERVIEW

It doesn't seem possible – but it's a year since we sent out the last Supporters' Newsletter. In July 2011, we told you of our plans to bring out a series of briefing papers on the changing patterns of far-right activity and ideology, which would start with a briefing on 'Recognising the new Muslim conspiracy theory'. A lot has happened since then – most notably the murder of 77 mainly young Norwegians at Oslo and Utøya Island in July 2011, followed, in Germany, by the revelations about the murderous activities of the National Socialist Underground (NSU). In light of this, our proposal for a series of discrete briefings was abandoned in favour of a more coherent and larger analytical project. In the last year, we have produced two major new studies – one on 'The Muslim conspiracy theory and the Oslo massacre', and the other, which we have only just published, a pan-European study of the violent impact of the far Right.

It can give us no pleasure to say that work carried out by the European Research Programme (ERP), over the last eighteen months, on shifting patterns on the extreme Right, including the rise of ultra-patriotic defence leagues and counter-jihadist movements, ensured that we were in a position to respond with a clear analysis when Anders Behring Breivik struck in Norway.

Across Europe, the austerity measures are leading to poverty and polarisation. But while the neo-Nazi and extreme Right are making electoral breakthroughs, there is also an upsurge in anti-racist activity. The range of the activity can be seen in this Newsletter, in the number of new groups we are seeking to support.

But grassroots organisations are not only concerned with the growth of the far Right. Racist violence flourishes where police forces turn a blind eye, and the call for systemic change within criminal justice systems is growing. Anyone who is following the parliamentary investigation in Germany into police and intelligence services' failures to prevent at least seven murders between 2000 and 2007 carried out by the NSU will understand just how important it is to gather our forces to seek change. The IRR's report *Pedlars of Hate: the violent impact of the European*

far Right drew attention to police bias towards the far Right, inappropriate infiltration schemes, including the running of agents, and a general lack of democratic oversight. But the other side of the coin of the under-policing of far-right and other racist violence is the over-policing of BME, Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities, leading to increased brutality in day to day encounters. The kind of everyday racism that is currently being exposed at Southwark Coroner's Court during the inquest into the death of Sean Rigg. In June 2012, a Symposium organised by the IRR and the Power, Conflict and Justice Research Group at Edge Hill University, in conjunction with the Tottenham Defence Campaign, discussed the interplay between police priorities and operations and growing racism in the context of England and the North of Ireland. Over the next year, the ERP will work hard to bring a pan-European perspective to the debate we have already initiated amongst outcast and suspect communities in the UK.

NEWS FROM VOLUNTEERS

Over the last year, ERP's research has benefited greatly from the extra support provided by IRR vice-chair Frances Webber who spends at least one day a week working with Liz on European issues and also speaks at engagements on behalf of ERP. Sibille Merz, who translated from German to English and contributed countless articles to IRR News (as well as an article in the current issue of *Race & Class*) has now completed her studies in the UK and returned to Germany. We thank her wholeheartedly for her tremendous support. We also welcome Lotta Schwedler, who translates from German into English, to the ERP team.

Frances Webber writes:

As vice-chair of the IRR's council of management, and as someone who has been involved with the IRR for over forty years, I have contributed to the ERP since its inception, following in particular trends in European asylum and immigration policy. In 1994, I co-authored, with Liz, *Inside Racist Europe*. But following my retirement as an immigration/ human

rights lawyer in 2008, I have had more time to devote to the Europe work, researching, writing and developing contacts in Europe. Part of my work for the ERP involves reading articles in the French and Spanish media and websites such as CCIF and keeping abreast of developments in France, Belgium and Spain, and in the past few months I have also attended meetings in Brussels and Barcelona. Since I started volunteering at IRR following my retirement, I have co-authored with Liz an article on 'Foreign nationals, enemy penology and the criminal justice system' (*Race & Class* Vol. 51 no. 4, April 2010). We also worked together on the briefing paper on 'Accelerated removals: the human cost of EU deportation policies' and I regularly write on European issues for IRR News.

My work as a barrister used to give me very little time to read or think outside the strictly legal ideas and doctrines needed for fighting individual cases. It is tremendously satisfying to me to have more time to research, to analyse trends, to write and think more widely, which my work on the ERP allows me to do.

Lotta Schwedler writes:

I am a 26-year-old student, studying Migration and Diaspora Studies at SOAS. Currently I am working on my MA dissertation which explores the relationship between the State, asylum and immigration laws and the formation of queer families in Germany. Having lived most of my life in a country where racism is believed to have come to an end in 1945, and having been brought up in a country where Germanness is equated with whiteness, I felt an urgency to leave – at least for a while – to see how things work on the other side of the channel. The UK seems to be something a trend setter when it comes to questions of immigration, asylum and integration policies– whatever model is brought in here is likely to be adopted in mainland Europe, albeit with even more regressive modifications.

It has always been important for me to be actively involved in anti-racist activism beyond academia. Having worked as a volunteer in various organisations in Germany and the UK, most of them concerned with migrants' rights and immigration and asylum laws, I have observed that, while things are not necessarily better in the UK, there is at least a vocabulary here through which you can name the problem and identify real issues such as institutional racism, racial profiling and Islamophobia. It would be hard to imagine an organisation such as the IRR existing within the German context! Working at the interface between academic research and community activism, and within a bottom-up approach, is what drew me to the IRR. I am very happy to get the opportunity to learn from the people working here who have all been involved in anti-racist struggle and the civil rights movement for so many years.

FUNDING NEWS

We wrote a short report about the ERP for Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust's Triennial Report. The

JRCT funds the IRR's European work, but there has always been a substantial shortfall which is met from IRR reserves. So there was good news when the Open Society Foundations met the shortfall for 2012-13 and made a further contribution to meet the publication and distribution costs of *Pedlars of Hate*.

NEW REPORT ON FAR RIGHT IN EUROPE



Pedlars of hate: the violent impact of the European far Right was published online on 12 June. A summary of the report published on IRR News was the most extensively shared (on facebook and twitter) IRR News story this year. We were also asked to write a blog about the report for the Open Society Foundations website, and two opinion

pieces on the report's findings were commissioned by the Open Security pages of Open Democracy. A report was also written for Sweden's anti-fascist publication Expo and the Fight Discrimination in Europe Newsletter and Facebook page of Amnesty International also flagged up the report. Hope Not Hate will soon publish a report on the counter-jihadi movement in Europe and we anticipate that a European Parliament hearing on the issues raised in both the IRR and Hope Not Hate's report will take place in September or October. A full assessment of the report's impact will be provided in the next newsletter.

BRIEFING PAPERS

In September 2011, we produced Briefing Paper No. 5 on *Brevik, the Conspiracy Theory and the Oslo Massacre*, an edited version of which also appeared in the January 2012 edition of *Race & Class*. Briefing Paper No. 5/*Race & Class* was cited in *Middle East Report* in its list of 'Editor's Picks', and was commented on or reproduced on various websites such as 'A different Opinion', ENGAGE, 'Urban Myths: sources against Islamophobia', Islamophobia Watch, Foreigners in the UK, Norway News and the website of the Somerset Racial Equality Council. Wikipedia entries on Eurabia and Dhimmitude cite the *Race & Class* article.

Older Briefing Papers continue to be circulated. Permission was sought by the Liberty Fund and the University of St Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis to use Briefing Paper No. 1 (on the *Swiss Minarets referendum*) in classroom discussions on Islam and Civil Liberties. Briefing Paper No 4 (on

accelerated removals) was circulated by the Observatory of the Penal System and Human Rights of the University of Barcelona and led to an invitation to make a presentation at their annual congress on the human cost of EU deportation policies.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

We have contributed a chapter on 'The growth of xeno-racism and Islamophobia' for a Policy Press book edited by Michael Lavalette and Laura Penketh entitled 'What happened to anti-racist social work'. The German victim support group ReachOut commissioned ERP to write a piece on 'why do we need independent anti-racist monitoring groups' for a pamphlet which was published in early 2012 to coincide with ReachOut's tenth anniversary.

SUPPORT FOR TRIBUNALS, AND OTHER INQUIRIES

Tribunal 12

We were delighted to accept an invitation to present expert witness testimony (on the subject of detention and deportation) at Tribunal 12, which was organised by Shahrazad and the Swedish Forum for Human Rights, and modelled on the Russell Tribunals. The Tribunal took place at the Kulturhuset in Stockholm in front of an audience of 1,500 people (a further 6,000 watched the digital streaming, and screenings and events also took place simultaneously in 20 European cities). It was almost like being within a piece of live theatre, or an artistic installation, with actors taking on the role of prosecutors and reading the testimony provided by refugees. An international jury, which included Henning Mankell, Nawal El Saadawi and Saskia Sassen followed the process, with deliberations moderated by the former editor-in-chief of *Dagens Nyheter*, Arne Ruth.

The final verdict condemning Europe for a violating fundamental norms and existing laws on refugee rights was sent to European governments, European parliament members and other policy-makers.

Independent inquiry into the National Socialist Underground

On 2 June, various victim support groups in Germany, sceptical about the ability of the official parliament inquiry to recommend root and branch reform, hosted an independent inquiry into the State's failure to clampdown on the terrorist network, the National Socialist Underground. We were pleased to advise the organisers on issues pertaining to the framework of the event, and brief them on the lessons gleaned from the Macpherson inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. The parliamentary inquiry into the failure of the police and the security services is currently ongoing, and ERP is monitoring proceedings as we are very concerned about the growing evi-

dence of state collusion with the far Right. We already know that the German intelligence services were running dozens of paid informants within the National Democratic Party of Germany and that a state security agent was present at the scene of the murder of one of the young Turkish men killed by the NSU. Important documents that could have thrown light on the security services infiltration scheme have been shredded and, to date, three high-ranking members of the Office for the Defence of the Constitution have resigned, as the scandal grows.

Swedish government investigation into racism and xenophobia

Bengt Westerberg, the former deputy prime minister of Sweden, commissioned by the Swedish government to produce a report on the rise of racism and xenophobia requested a consultation with Liz during the Stockholm Human Rights Festival.

European Network Against Racism

We are working closely with the European Network Against Racism, which was one of the groups funded within the EPIM Network. We are assisting with preparations for a Symposium (also supported by the Open Society Foundations) on variations of European racism which will take place in Brussels on 27-28 September. On the publication of ENAR's annual report, we also briefed Jeremy Corbyn MP who was invited to be part of an Al Jazeera panel discussion alongside ENAR Director Michel Privat.

Human Rights Monitoring

The treatment of Muslim terror suspects within alternative structures that legitimise human rights abuses is central to our concerns, as is the growing use of secret evidence. One European case we been involved in is that of Ali Aarrass, who received a 15-year sentence on terrorism charges after being extradited to Morocco from Spain despite an instruction from the UN Human Rights Committee to stay his extradition. We have worked to assist the London Committee to Support the Friends and Family of Ali Aarrass in galvanising the support of the human rights community in this country. Ali's case raises vital principles for the security of European citizens with dual nationality. Despite his Belgian citizenship (he is a dual Belgian-Moroccan national), MPs and people of influence in Belgium were slow to take up the case, and there is a real sense that Belgian-Moroccan citizens, including parliamentarians, may fear that, by so doing, members of their own families in Morocco could be penalised. This is why it was important that Jeremy Corbyn MP tabled Early Day Motion 2552 calling on the British government to follow the lead of the Bar Human Rights Committee and make representations to the Moroccan government. The EDM, supported by 18 MPs, enjoyed cross-party support. This seems to have encouraged MPs in Belgium to present a similar motion to their parliament, which was subsequently supported by 16 parliamentarians. IRR vice-chair Frances Webber attended a preliminary hearing of Ali's appeal against conviction in the Rabat-Salé appeal court on 7 May, and we are assisting the London Committee in its attempts to send a bigger delegation to Rabat on 24 September.

IMPACT

On organisations working against racism, fascism and Islamophobia

We have worked to promote the work of new anti-fascist initiatives in Germany such as Acting Together - Against Racism and Social Exclusion (Berlin), the Silence Against Silence protest (in twelve German cities, to commemorate the victims of the NSU) and have offered research guidance to the Centre for the Prevention of Right-wing Extremism and Xenophobia at the German Youth Institute which is looking at policies to deal with far-right parents. We continue to work with groups such as EuropeRoma, the National Federation of Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Groups, ReachOut in Berlin, KISA in Cyprus, and the Collective Against Islamophobia in France (we have translated some of CCIF's most important press releases into English and published them on IRR News). As a signatory to a joint NGO statement condemning the prosecution of KISA's Director Doros Polycarpou for events at the Rainbow Festival in Larnaca in 2010, we were delighted to hear that the charges of 'rioting' were dropped on 5 June 2012. We helped Soul of Europe get closer to its vision of a Twelve Cities conference against Islamophobia to be held at the Haus Villigst Conference Centre in Dortmund, and encouraged a partnership to develop between it. Young Muslim Voices and Jawaab TV. We believe that strengthening inter-cultural and inter-faith responses to Islamophobia is vital if we are to stop the spread of far-right sub-cultures, and routine religious discrimination, in many towns and cities across Europe.

On refugee, asylum and migrants rights

We were pleased to assist pan-European initiatives such as the Tribunal 12 and to publicise the activities of the coalition Boats 4 People which this Summer undertook a journey across the Mediterranean, in order to mobilise support for its campaign to expose the policies that cause migrant deaths at sea. We continue to respond to requests for assistance from members of the EPIM Network, such as PICUM and Migreurop.

The work of ERP on asylum issues is particularly appreciated in Sweden where we gave two keynote addresses on human rights issues in the last year and developed good links with Karin Johansson Blight at the Network for Asylum Rights (*Etikkommissionen i Sverige*) and Professor Henry Ascher, founder of the Rosengenska Clinic.

On organisations working on civil liberties, criminal justice and counter-extremism policies

We are working with writers Eddie Bruce-Jones and Joanna Tegneorowiz who have been attempting to expose the failure to bring police officers to account following deaths in custody in Germany and Poland. In the UK an inquest following any unexplained death in a State institution is automatic, but this not the case in Germany where the Oury Jalloh International Investigative Commission was set up to

investigate the circumstances in which a refugee from Sierra Leone came to die in a police cell in Dessau in 2005. Eddie Bruce-Jones, a lecturer at the School of Law at Birkbeck, is a member of the independent commission to into the death of Oury Jalloh. In response to an article written by Eddie on IRR News, we were contacted both by the Concerned Nigerians Foundation (seeking to expose the death in custody in Germany of Christy Schwindeck) and by a British family whose son died in France in 2010, following repeated encounters with the police, in circumstances which to this day remain unexplained.

The ERP has also tried to take some of the lessons gleaned from Arun Kundnani's 2009 research into the government's counter-extremism programme PREVENT to a European audience. We are now beginning to see the impact of government counter-extremism programmes in the skewing of anti-racist concerns, and we have worked with ReachOut in Berlin to expose the attempts by the German government to impose the government's counter-extremism agenda on anti-racist victim support groups. At the IRR/Edge Hill Symposium on Policing Communities, delegates from the Pat Finucane Centre and the Committee on the Administration of Justice shared valuable insights into the growth of the PREVENT agenda in Northern Ireland. The militarisation of policing, stop and search, the use of the criminal law against the Gypsy and Traveller communities, secret justice, closed material procedures, covert policing methods, and the lack of redress offered by mechanisms like the Independent Police Complaints Commission in England and the Police Ombudsman in the north of Ireland, were also discussed.

MEDIA

In addition to press interviews related to our briefing papers we have also given interviews to European newspapers *Morgenbladet* and *EU Observer* (on the counter-jihadi movement), *Der Tagesspiegel* (on Breivik), *Neus Deutschland* (about the EDL), *Publico* (on the riots), *The National* (on the European far Right) Swedish radio (on asylum rights) and to the editors of the website of the Civic Institute in Warsaw (on the riots).

SUPPORTING AUTHORS AND INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS

We helped in the promotion of Leanne Webber and Sharon Pickering's excellent new book on *Globalisation and Borders* (which draws heavily on IRR research both on Europe and the UK) and acted as a reader for two forthcoming Pluto Press books (on asylum rights, and the impact of the anti-terrorist laws on Muslim women). We supported two independent film projects seeking to capture the devastating impact of far-right and racist violence. The Italian film company Telemaco srl interviewed us for

an investigatory documentary into the growth of the far Right in Europe. We were also contacted by the Unity Media Company in Norway making a documentary on the events following the Oslo bombing and their effect on the immigrant community and publicised the film project on IRR News, also drawing attention to the little-known case of Anzor Djoukaev, a 17-year-old refugee from Chechnya, and survivor of the Utøya island massacre who was treated by the police not as a victim but as a potential suspect.

WORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS

As a result of the Breivik briefing paper, we have established a good working relationship with a number of key academics in Scandinavia, including the Norwegian cultural anthropologist Sindre Bangstad, and the Danish cultural anthropologist Peter Hervik whose book *The Annoying Difference: the emergence of Danish neonationalism, neoracism and populism in the post-1989 world* was reviewed by Liz in the July edition of *Race & Class*. We are pleased that both Sindre (who is an expert on the application of the anti-discrimination clauses of the penal code and an Open Democracy columnist) and Peter (an expert on the media treatment of the Danish 'cartoons crisis') have found time to make important contributions to IRR News.

We continue to get a lot of requests from students and advised MA students researching asylum seeking suicide, racism against migrants, and the growth of the far-Right and Islamophobia in Europe. Sometimes these relationships turn into long-term collaborations and during the last year we have provided recommendations for three PhD students who ended up volunteering with IRR and are now seeking places at the University of Warwick, Goldsmiths and Bath University.

SPEAKING AND OTHER ENGAGEMENTS

30 September 2011

Chair of Educational Shakespeare Company discussion on 'Can Prisoners become positive educational role models for youth at risk', following screening of Mickey B, The Playhouse, Derry.

4 October

Speaker at Tower Hamlets Council celebration of the '75th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street: Reflections on the past visions for the future', St George's Town Hall, Wapping.

6 October

Chair of panel debate on children's access to education and welfare at PICUM conference on Children in an Irregular Migration Situation in the United Kingdom, London.

28 October

Panelist at OSCE-ODIHR roundtable on 'Confronting Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in Public Discourse', Hofburg Congress Centre, Vienna.

4 November

Lecture at School of Law, King's College London on 'European asylum policies and state crime'.

11 November

Lecture at School of Law, King's College, London on 'Counter-terrorism, Islamophobia and human rights'.

13 November

Welcome address and Keynote speech on Islamophobia at Swedish Human Rights Annual Forum, Stockholm.

14 November

Speaker at Research Seminar on 'Criminalisation of Migration', at Swedish Human Rights Annual Forum, Stockholm.

22 November

Lecture on 'Islamophobia and the politics of hatred in Europe' at public lecture series on (In) Security, Surveillance and the State, Edge Hill University, Liverpool.

28 November

Participant at Tower Hamlets New Migrants and Refugee Forum meeting, London.

5-December

Participant at Final Workshop of EPIM II, Brussels.

6 December

Participant at EPIM/European Policy Centre public meeting, Brussels.

8 December

Guest speaker on racism and the extreme Right at research seminar on Nordic Populism, University of Aalborg, Denmark.

3 February 2012

Chair of discussion of Twelve Cities Project, City Circle, London

23-24 March

Presentation of paper on 'The human cost of deportations' at conference on 'Torture and inhuman and degrading treatment in the migratory process', organised by the Coordination for prevention and denunciation of torture, with the Commission for the Defence of Rights, and the College of Lawyers, Barcelona.

4 May

Speech on 'The threat to integration' at seminar and launch of *Integration from Below* a book edited by Ronit Lentin and Elena Moreo, Trinity College, Dublin.

12 May

Expert witness on detention and deportation at Tribunal 12, Kulturhuset, Stockholm.

7 June

Speaker at rally in support of Ali Aarrass, Brussels.

SUPPORTING NETWORKS THROUGH IRR NEWS

The following briefings and stories have been published online on the IRR News Service

■ Berlin anti-racist coalition formed as threats increase (Sibille Merz & Liz Fekete, 31 August 2011)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/remembering-the-victims-of-germanys-neo-nazis/>

■ Other victims of the Oslo massacre (Liz Fekete, 13 October 2011)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/other-victims-of-the-oslo-massacre>

■ Whatever happened to Norway's incitement laws? (Sindre Bangstad, 20 October 2011)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/whatever-happened-to-norways-incitement-laws>

■ Remembering the victims of Germany's neo-nazis (Liz Fekete, 24 November 2011)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/remembering-the-victims-of-germanys-neo-nazis>

■ Germany's Stephen Lawrence (Eddie Bruce-Jones, 11 January 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/germanys-stephen-lawrence>

■ Two deaths in three weeks in Spain's notorious detention centres (Frances Webber, 18 January 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/two-deaths-in-three-weeks-in-spains-notorious-detention-centres>

■ Calling the State to account (Liz Fekete, 28 March 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/calling-the-state-to-account>

■ Protests over Ali Aarrass conviction (IRR Europe News Team, 1 December 2011)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/protests-over-ali-aarrass-conviction>

■ Travellers and Roma organise (Paul Grant, 15 March 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/travellers-and-roma-organise>

■ Vindication for German anti-racists in campaign against spying charter (Sibille Merz & Liz Fekete, 24 May 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/vindication-for-german-anti-racists-in-campaign-against-spying-charter>

■ Boats for People (Frances Webber, 31 May 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/boats-4-people>

■ No Justice for Maxwell Itoya (Joanna Tegnerowicz, 31 May 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/no-justice-for-maxwell-itoya>

■ Change the climate of hatred (Collective Against Islamophobia in France, 22 March 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/change-the-climate-of-hatred>

■ European anti-Islam demonstration flops in Denmark (Peter Hervik, 5 April 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/european-anti-islam-demonstration-flops-in-denmark>

■ Inhuman response to distressed children (Frances Webber, 12 April 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/inhuman-responses-to-distressed-children>

■ Death and Deportation in Holland (Frances Webber, 10 May 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/death-and-deportation-in-holland>

■ Sarkozy's racist legacy (Graham Murray, 8 June 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/sarkozys-racist-legacy>

■ Justice for Nouredine Rachedi (IRR European News Team, 14 June 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/justice-for-nouredine-rachedi/>

■ Europe in lockdown (Frances Webber, 19 April 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/europe-in-lockdown>

■ Vindication for German anti-racists campaign against spying charter (Sibille Merz & Liz Fekete, 24 May 2012)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/vindication-for-german-anti-racists-in-campaign-against-spying-charter>