

RACIST ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS

HARROW community relations council (CRC) and the chairman of Waltham Forest CRC have both recently expressed concern over racist activity in schools. Such concern is no new thing. In November 1980, after numerous reports that the NF had been leafletting, recruiting and giving talks, CARF asked just what the NF is doing in our schools. And in May 1981, the Centre for Contemporary Studies wrote of an alarming growth of fascist infiltration into schools. The report concluded that right-wing groups were waging a fierce struggle for the allegiances of white youth and that the fight could well spill over into the playground. Aware that this situation had already arrived (in London schools at least), the All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism (ALTARF) took a welcome initiative in July 1981 by asking London teachers to monitor racist incidents. Their ultimate aim was to compile a dossier, but for various reasons (the most likely being that teachers were frightened that if they reported incidents they would reflect badly on their schools), the report fell through.

CARF documents below just some of the incidents, reports of right-wing activity and resistance to it that have reached us in the last couple of years. These incidents and activities should be viewed in relation to the birth of youth branches of right-wing organisations. Since the 1979 NF election humiliation, such groups have openly acknowledged that a new nazi society can only be built 'through the youth of today': 'we are out to recruit schoolchildren. They are tomorrow's leaders' (Michael McLaughlin, British Movement). It seems that the newly-formed BNP will continue in this tradition — there have already been reports that they are planning to campaign in schools.

The Young National Front

The YNF, formed in 1977, was one of the first organisations to launch a schools campaign. Since 1978, members have been encouraged to identify 'red teachers' with a view to publishing their names in NF organs such as *Bulldog*. Suspected 'reds' are often physically attacked and sent threatening letters and sometimes their homes are vandalised. The YNF sought to arm recruits with tactical weapons for use inside the classroom too: 'How to combat red teachers', a YNF document, aims to verse members thoroughly in the ideology of 'nationalism'. It has been widely condemned by teachers.

From up and down the country have come reports from worried groups of teachers and other concerned bodies. Par-

ticularly from April to July 1981 there were many calls for schools to take action. In April a confidential meeting took place in Watford in which headteachers, teachers and senior policemen discussed right-wing activity, whilst in Basildon, the Junior Schools' Council called for a campaign of lectures and films in order to combat extremism. Some East London teachers took to public leafletting and the United Association for Asians in Coventry wrote to the City Director demanding an immediate investigation into the increasing distribution of racist literature in schools.

Inevitably increased fascist activity has led to even more attacks on schoolchildren. It should be remembered that not all attacks on black schoolchildren are the result of fascist activity — racism is even more widespread than this. Following a NF meeting at a Gravesend school in June 1981, a Sikh boy was attacked, chased down an alley, his turban snatched and his hair cut off. Reports received from Morden, Surrey, in November indicate that Asian girls are constantly harassed, even pushed on to the road, by skinheads who shadow them as they journey home. Schoolchildren are attacked whilst waiting at bus stops or, as in the case of Daraz Miah (see *Searchlight* No.78), they are attacked in the playground itself. An attack in the playground of Keighley School, near Bradford, almost turned into a riot when a gang of white youths set upon two Asian lads. Even though reports suggest that petrol bombs were used, the incident was hushed up by police who claimed it wasn't 'newsworthy'.

Groups such as ALTARF are now asking, not only what fascists are doing in schools (and teachers can be fascists too! An association of Nationalist teachers has recently been formed to give private lessons to white schoolchildren), but also what the police are doing there. Cynical about 'Panda competitions', organised discos and what is known as 'Metropolitan Observation', they are critical of certain police actions in schools, such as at Archway School last May (see *Searchlight* No.71), and are questioning the relationship teachers are expected to have with the police. They are also unhappy about the way teachers are increasingly being asked to check schoolchildren's passports and act as immigration officials.

Home Office initiative?

It would seem that even the Home Office has woken up to the problems of 'racialism'. Last December the Home Office report on racist attacks specifically condemned the bringing of fascist materials into schools. But the problem still remains how to fight this. The Home Secretary has said that the "law must rule in the fight against racialism", but in February at Richmond magistrates court, that fighting spirit of the law was seen in action. A National Front member, who had been arrested distributing party literature outside a school, was fined the grand sum of £20 — not, as you might think, for the crime of sowing the seeds of racism amongst schoolchildren, but rather for the public nuisance of obstruction!

**AND THEY WONDER WHY THERE
ARE NO BLACK POLICE . . .**



"By Jove, Inspector — I'll wager no other Force can boast a Sannyasi Saddhu, a Papuan Headhunter and an albino Bush Pigmy!"

Derbyshire County Council police committee have written to the Police Federation magazine *Police* to express their disgust at the above cartoon, which appeared in the May issue. Coun. Ron Decker, committee chairman, said that the cartoon was "at least objectionable, might be offensive and some would call it racist". He said he believed that the cartoon would certainly deter members of ethnic minorities from joining them.

Derbyshire Chief Constable Mr Alf Parrish said that he found the whole page of cartoons in bad taste and had passed on his views to the editor, though he added he had no sympathy with the present editorial views of the magazine either. (*Derby Evening Telegraph* 5.6.82.)