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Two days of action against Racist Press

## NEWS No to 'Fortress Europe'

A number of private companies operating within the immigration and asylum system were targeted last month as part of a European week of action against the deportation machine. > P4

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Euphemisms and derogatory terms used by government and media to paint refugees and migrants in a negative light and blame them for all sort of economic and social problems. > P3



## ASYLUM Myth-busting the media

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# Gordon Brown to be deported to Scotland



Scottish illegal immigrant, Gordon Brown, is arrested at a village beer festival near Cambridge last Sunday



The new coalition government has announced plans to build 20 new immigration detention centres around the country. A recent survey commissioned by the Home Office found that 98% of migrants prefer to be locked up in detention centres rather than being housed in normal houses because they do not appreciate freedom.

THE FORMER Labour leader is to be deported back to his home country after losing his job as prime minister, the new coalition government has announced.

Following Labour's humiliating defeat in May's election, Gordon Brown resigned as the party leader, with the hope that he would quickly find a job in the City. But unlike his predecessor, Tony Blair, he has failed to secure a position on the board of a multinational company or at a prestigious university. 'He does not seem to be a popular public speaker,' his agent admitted.

His Tory successor, David Cameron, last night said the government is determined to go ahead with the decision despite numerous appeals by Labour MPs. 'We will not tolerate those who do not play by the rules and will not make exceptions,' the new prime minister added.

Immigration minister Damian Green said the country already has enough unemployed people and cannot cope with more migrants. 'Even if Brown eventually found a job,' he added, 'there are many in the country who should be given priority. English jobs for English workers!'

Mr Brown is said to be determined to fight against his 'unjust' deportation. In a letter to the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, he wrote, 'I need your help to fight this injustice. I have served this country for many years and deserve another chance.'

By Jon Huggingson  
Home & Foreign Affairs Editor

With the proposed scrapping of the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal, however, the process is expected to be fast-tracked and Mr Brown may not have time to campaign for his 'right' to remain or pursue other legal avenues.

A spokesperson for the UK Border Agency said yesterday that Home Office case workers will be given extra powers to decide on cases as quickly as possible, with no right to appeal. Most immigration judges and solicitors are expected to lose their jobs as a result.

The move comes among other tough immigration policies announced by the Con-Lib government earlier this week. The new measures include a ban on non-English nationals from occupying high government posts and a cap on the number of foreign nationals who are allowed to settle and work in England. Thousands of Welsh and Scottish migrants are expected to lose their jobs and be deported as a consequence.

Other measures include creating a new specialist force to protect England's land borders against the flood of illegal migrants from neighbouring countries and the construction of new concentration camps along the borders, where those who do not have the right to stay will be held pending their forcible removal.

## Hey big boy!

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# Myth-busting the media

## Myth: Britain gets more asylum seekers than any other country.

Per head of population, Britain actually has fewer asylum seekers than 12 other industrialised countries. Globally poor countries in the south take the most refugees. Four-fifths of the world's refugee population live in developing countries.

## Myth: British people don't have any responsibility for refugees.

The two largest groups of refugees in the world are from Iraq and Afghanistan. Both these countries suffer problems that stem from the wars being waged there that Britain has direct responsibility for.

## Myth: Asylum seekers get more money than pensioners.

Most adult asylum seekers receive only £5 a day to live on. This is only 70 per cent of what an adult UK job seeker can receive and much less than average state pensions. In addition, asylum seekers are currently not legally allowed to work to support themselves. A joint study by Oxfam and the Refugee Council in 2002 revealed that 85% of asylum seekers experience hunger, 95% cannot afford to buy clothes or shoes and 80% are unable to maintain good health.

## Myth: Asylum seekers take jobs British workers could be doing.

Asylum seekers have been banned from working and paying taxes since 2001. As a result, they cannot work and pay taxes to support themselves while they are in the UK. They can go to jail if they are caught working.

## Myth: Asylum seekers get housing before local people.

Asylum seekers are not put on housing waiting lists but get housed, often in very bad conditions, under a separate system called the National Asylum Support Service run by the Home Office. No money from Council Tax is spent on housing asylum seekers.

## Myth: Asylum seekers get healthcare before local people.

Asylum seekers do not receive any priority in receiving medical care from the NHS. The vast majority of asylum seekers who have their claims refused by the courts must pay for hospital treatment and must rely on the discretion of their GPs as to whether they receive primary care at all. The NHS relies heavily on foreign labour, including that of refugees and migrants.

## Myth: Asylum seekers bring more crime to our streets.

There is no evidence of increased crime rates due to the presence of asylum seekers or migrants. In fact, refugees and migrants are more likely to be victims of crime, particularly racially-motivated hate crimes, than commit them.

## But why are these myths being told?

The people that benefit from the anti-refugee and anti-migrant campaigns are the bosses, the millionaires, the financiers and industrialists, who want to pay less income tax and less corporation tax.

Bad housing, long hospital waiting lists and under-resourced schools are problems, but instead of funding our public services properly, the Lib-Con government, and New Labour before that, would prefer to blame asylum seekers.

Most of us are getting fed up with being told that there aren't enough decent jobs, houses, doctors and school places to 'go round'. We're sick of being told that basic things we need to live – healthcare, education, a roof over our heads – have to be cut because of a 'crisis' of someone else's making. And it's hard to believe that 'we're all in it together' when the people running the country continue to possess extraordinary wealth.

Telling lies about asylum seekers and migrants is a convenient way for millionaires like David Cameron and George Osborne to deflect attention away from themselves when people start asking why they are not having to tighten their belts along with the rest of us.

People in power have long blamed migrants during times of social unrest – in the 1900s they blamed the Chinese, in the twenties and thirties they blamed the Jews, in the 1970s they blamed Black and Asian people, and today they blame Arabs, Muslims, Eastern Europeans etc.

These myths are mainly spread by the media. And who owns the media? The same billionaires and financiers that want to pay less taxes and cut more services.

*Don't believe everything you hear, especially when it's politicians and corporate media who say it!*

**These myths are mainly spread by the media. And who owns the media? The same billionaires and financiers that want to pay less taxes and cut more services.**

**: 60  
second interview**



**Mary came to the UK from Somalia three years ago seeking asylum. She has been detained twice during this time in Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre in Bedfordshire, which is run by private security company Serco. She is still waiting for the Home Office to decide on her case and receives no government support.**

### How were you detained?

I came to this country 3 years ago. I immediately claimed asylum and that same day I was detained. They said they were going to help me, so I thought the detention centre was a good place to be. When I got there I realised it was like a prison.

### What are the worst things about being in detention?

The food is often inedible. During Ramadan [the Islamic fasting month], there were several occasions when I did not receive food in the evening after I had broken my fast. The healthcare is inadequate and understaffed. You could die in there. Most of the nurses are mental health nurses, not general nurses. Once I was in terrible pain with a migraine, and I went to get my medication as we are not allowed to keep it in our rooms. The nurse left me for half an hour without giving me the tablets. Oh, and the [detainee custody] officers are very rude.

### What is the situation like for children and families in detention?

Most of the ladies with children get depressed; they may be separated from their children or have them with them in detention. The children are used to different kinds of food and there is nothing for them. And there are no social activities, nothing. The children are crying all the time.

### Is it common for people to work in detention?

You can request it, so you get some extra money. Outside you are not allowed to work, because you are 'illegal', but inside detention it is OK! It is cheaper for Serco to use detainees rather than employ more staff.

### How much do you get paid?

You get £1 per shift. For example, cleaning during and after a mealtime is one shift.

### What support have you received with your case?

Like others, I have had problems with solicitors. One solicitor took on my case and then did nothing about it for 15 months. When I was in Yarl's Wood, I was sent a self-help guide for detainees produced by a women's group. This helped me to work on my own case. I carried on meeting with others from the group to work on my case and give mutual support when I got out.

### How are you coping now that you are out of detention?

Now I am not entitled to anything and I am not even entitled to work! I receive nothing from the government. Provided I sign on at the reporting centre every week, they do not care about me, how I live, how I eat.

### What final message do you have for readers?

The so-called fast-track system is damaging so many people because it does not allow time to listen to people's cases; decisions are made quickly and people get deported very fast. There was a woman who was taken back to Jamaica, after a day she was shot. She had said she was at risk, but she was still returned; now she's dead! The other thing is to stop detaining children.

Asylum seekers are human beings, not animals. We did not come here to take anything from people; we came to ask for help. But asking for help gives us more problems. We came here to seek asylum, to seek refuge, but even here our human rights are not upheld.

*NB: This is a true interview. Only her name has been changed to protect her identity.*



**Why am I here?**  
Your ancestors made slaves of my ancestors - they colonised us, raped and killed us, and exploited our lands ...Mr. Officer.

Your grand-parents' generation bribed and bullied our leaders and gave us 'fake independence' where power was just transferred to rich western corporations & local thugs.



Your parents' generation continued to exploit us, selling arms to bandits, creating regional wars, dividing us. Your banks trick us into toxic loans that keep us in crippling debt.

Your wasteful 'developed' societies have squandered the worlds' limited resources & created climate chaos which your 'leaders' are still denying.

Your banks & corporations have destroyed our economies forcing us into deeper poverty. My family saved up for three years to send me here to study and clean toilets so that I might send them money!



And now you arrest and deport me because... I am "Illegal" ?!

# Racism and Immigration Controls

IMMIGRATION CONTROLS are racist by definition. The language of immigration controls often refers to 'aliens' and 'foreigners' who can expect different standards of treatment from British citizens. Even if they are allowed to enter the UK, they can be detained without trial, kicked out of the country, and denied welfare, housing and education.

The authorities have always tried to pretend that immigration controls are nothing to do with racism but about numbers and sustainability. Dig a little deeper, however, and politicians start to talk about 'integration' and 'our way of life'. The culture, ethnicity, language and nationality of people entering the country become a central consideration in the definition of who can and cannot come in and under what conditions.



Paddington Bear was a refugee. This stencil was found on a wall in Bristol.

Every substantial change in immigration controls in the 20th and 21st century has followed fascist and racist agitation. A trawl through the Daily Mail from the last decade of the 19th century to the present day reveals campaign after campaign against different groups of migrants. You find virtually identical headlines directed against different groups of people.

At the end of the 19th century, this agitation was directed against Jewish immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe. Anti-migrant rallies in the East End of London organised by the fascist British Brothers League formed the backdrop to the Aliens Act of 1905. Further campaigns against 'Jewish terrorism, anarchism and Bolshevism' led to further legislation. In the 1930s, agitation by the British Union of Fascists against Jews, and then a campaign by the Daily Mail against Jewish refugees coming to Britain to flee the Nazis, led the Home Office to decide to admit only children into the UK.

In the 1950s and 60s, racist agitation and riots in Notting Hill and Nottingham, with Black people being battered and killed, proceeded the introduction of laws restricting the entry of people from Commonwealth countries in 1962.

Tory governments of the 1970s and 80s produced a whole raft of immigration legislation. The rise in support for the National Front led to Margaret Thatcher saying that people were worried about being 'swamped by immigrants' and promising to do something about it. Nationality Acts in 1971, 1981 and 1983 tightened the link between race and citizenship, introduced virginity tests for Black

and Asian women entering the UK (now abolished) and brought in new rules against people coming to join their families.

Racist agitation has had an important influence on the decisions that governments have made to strengthen immigration controls. At the 2003 Labour Party Conference, the then immigration minister Beverley Hughes said, 'The BNP feed on people's fears and use these for their own racist political objectives. It's imperative that we sort out the asylum system and have a fair robust process the public can have confidence in.' Within a few minutes of the BNP winning its first MEP, a government minister warned, 'We must listen to what the electorate is telling us about immigration.'

But is this the whole story? Is the state simply led by the prejudices of the people as fuelled by the tabloid press, racist politicians and fascists? Or does the state and big business have their own agenda?

Our society values people in terms of what they contribute to the economy. People who are not white, or come from other countries, are measured solely by what they produce, often without the rights that other workers have.

We see this most clearly with slavery, where people were treated with

such callous and deadly brutality because they were seen as sub-human. We also see it in today's immigration controls, with the recent introduction of the point-based system allowing or denying entry according to how 'useful to our economy' the migrant worker is.

Because of racism, the state can, through immigration controls, introduce practices that take away human,

**Immigration controls reinforce racist attitudes by normalising the fear of people from 'outside'. Whether to appease racists and fascists or for economic considerations, intensifying immigration controls intensifies racism in society.**

civil and other rights, setting a precedent for their application to the whole population at a later date. Biometric ID cards and passports, for example, were tested on migrants before being applied to everybody.

Immigration controls reinforce racist attitudes by normalising the fear of people from 'outside'. Whether to appease racists and fascists or for economic considerations, intensifying immigration controls intensifies racism in society.

## Britain's full... of crap press

A COMMON argument used by right-wing, racist press against immigration and migrants is that the country is 'full' and cannot cope with the 'floods' of immigration.

The truth is, what is often presented as news is, in fact, distorted information, exaggerated figures and unfounded claims driven by certain political agendas. Respondents to a 2003 poll estimated that 23% of the world's refugee population come to the UK - ten times the actual amount. Here is an example:

**'Britain can't keep an open door policy....The tide must be turned. Posters should be put up at every point of entry with the message SORRY, THIS COUNTRY IS FULL.'** - Daily Star editorial, 21 November 1995.

And the Daily Star led on 16 December 2008 with this:



And here is a historical example to show that not much has changed, except that the Jewish refugees of yesterday have been substituted with asylum seekers, Muslims or whatever the new scapegoat happens to be:

**'Once it was known that Britain offered sanctuary to all who cared to come, the floodgates would be opened and we would be inundated by thousands seeking a home.'** - Daily Mail, 23 March 1938

### Racist quote of the month

**'Wouldn't it be great if TV coverage of the World Cup was limited to England's games, those of hosts South Africa and of the tournaments 'big guns'. Then we would be spared the ordeal of having to sit through a match between Bongo Bongoland and the Former Soviet Republic of Bulimia and other meaningless events.'** - a Daily Mail reader's letter, Daily Mail, 10 June 2010

# Immigration Newspeak

**Asylum seeker:** A person who is seeking to be recognised as a refugee in another country, but who is still in the process of trying to prove they have a well-founded fear of being persecuted in their home country. The term 'asylum seeker' is used by European governments and the mainstream media to de-legitimise unwanted refugees. The result is the introduction of further negative and inaccurate terms, such as 'bogus asylum seekers', 'failed asylum seekers' and 'illegal immigrants'.

**Balanced Migration:** A quota system that would only allow a person into the country when someone else leaves. This is in breach of international law that obliges countries to receive refugees. It is often used as a euphemism by anti-immigration pressure groups, such as Migration Watch, to call for stricter immigration controls.

**Detention centre:** A special prison used to lock up refugees and migrants, whose only 'crime' was to seek safety and security in another country. Without trial and with no automatic bail review, they can be detained indefinitely until they are forcibly deported to the countries they had fled. Most are run by profit-making companies. The 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act introduced a further change of name and all immigration prisons are now known as Immigration Removal Centres.

**Economic migrant:** A term introduced to demonise those migrants who move to a second country for reasons other than fleeing persecution, often because of extreme poverty. Wealthy migrants who are able to pay their way in do not fall under this category. This false hierarchy of economically 'beneficial' and 'unbeneficial' migrants is reflected in discriminatory immi-

gration policies such as the Points-Based System for accepting immigration applications.

**Enforcement operations:** Forcibly detaining, and eventually deporting, rejected migrants and refugees, using force if necessary. This usually involves special immigration units in prison vans, know as Snatch Squads, that carry out dawn raids to arrest families from their homes early in the morning, before they go to work or school.

**Removal:** Administrative removals are deportations decided by Home Office case workers under immigration laws without being reviewed by a court or personally endorsed by the Home Secretary. The judicial oversight of deportation has been progressively curbed over the last few years, particularly with the introduction of the fast-track system for deciding asylum cases and deportation charter flights.

The Home Office routinely ignore judicial review applications and last-minute representations by detainees due for deportation. The use of 'removal' helps the government avoid the negative connotations associated with 'deportation'.

**Voluntary Return:** A programme run by the International Organisation for Migration under which migrants and refugees are offered a small amount of money if they give up their asylum claims and agree to return home. In most cases, people are forced to return 'voluntarily' as their cases are closed, their benefits and accommodation cut and they face the threat of being detained and deported. So often people do not have any option other than accept the IOM's bribe. This is cheaper for the government than forcible deportation, but only works in conjunction with it.

For more information on racism in the press, see this blog: [pressaction.wordpress.com](http://pressaction.wordpress.com)

# Fortress Europe

A NUMBER OF PRIVATE companies operating within the immigration and asylum system were targeted last month as part of a week of action against deportation. The week saw various protests and actions throughout the UK and other European countries.

The carrying out of forcible deportations, and immigration controls more generally, is increasingly being outsourced to private companies that are making big profits in this new 'market'.

Targets of the week of action included Carlson Wagonlit Travel, a multinational travel agency contracted by the UK Border Agency to book seats on scheduled and chartered flights for immigration detainees due for deportation; Group 4 Securicor (G4S), the security giant that runs a number of immigration prisons and is the UKBA's main provider of detainee 'escort' services; and British Airways, which continues to carry deportees on board its planes.

To operate a deportation charter flight, the Home Office contracts a range of private and semi-private bodies to do its dirty work. Airlines are a key link in this 'deportation machine'. Not only are they one of the major contributors to the progressive killing of the planet, many airline companies are also happy, in their pursuit of profit, to fly people to their possible death. Airlines that have been used include Hamburg International, Czech Airlines, Titan Airways and BMI.

In addition, bus companies driving deportees from detention centres to airports have included WH Tours and Woodcock Coaches, both based in Crawley, near Gatwick airport, whilst G4S and Serco provide private security guards to 'escort' deportees.

Recent years have also seen increased coordination and cooperation between European states to manage their immigration and border regimes. With this has come an increasingly prominent role for the EU's external border agency, Frontex, in carrying out joint deportation operations and border controls. This saves countries money but also, by putting deportations in the hands of



**A French Public Order Police officer celebrating the destruction of the Hasara 'jungle' in Calais, France, in late May 2010. Last September, as the French authorities were bulldozing the migrant make-shift camps in northern France, former home secretary Alan Johnson said he was 'delighted' about the announcement that the so-called Jungle will be closed.**

an EU body, pushes accountability to another level away from national governments.

Frontex has recently assumed extra powers to charter mass deportation flights on behalf of European governments, buy equipment and explore satellite technology to monitor the 'EU borders'. The Frontex Regulation does not apply to the UK and Ireland, as they are not part of the Schengen agreement, but both countries have representatives on the Frontex Management Board and frequently take part in Frontex joint operations. The UK also makes an annual financial contribution to Frontex of up to one million euros and provides equipment, such as new detection technology.

In 2007, Frontex organised 12 joint mass deportation flights to various African and Eastern European countries. In 2008, the number was up to 15 flights. In 2009, it more than doubled, to 32. 17 of these were to Nigeria, of which the UK took part in four and organised two. The first joint flight fully operated by Frontex and funded directly by the EU was to Nigeria on 3rd February 2010.

The week of action tried to draw attention to the fact that anti-deportation is not a 'single issue campaign'. People choose or are forced to migrate for a variety of reasons. When it comes to deportation orders, the causes of migration are con-



**March to improve rights for refugees Glasgow, 13 March 2010**

niently forgotten about. Western-manufactured weapons and armed conflicts, wars of aggression in pursuit of oil and other natural resources, repressive regimes backed by our governments, climate change and land grabs... they can all be traced back here, to our capitalist economies, consumerist lifestyles and imperial interests.

Behind deportations lies a mixture of racism, nationalism and imperialism in a global capitalist context. Whilst capital and the nationals of the EU and other 'first world' countries are free to travel wherever they want, those on the wrong side of artificially-erected borders are illegalised, criminalised and prevented from exercising their fundamental rights. These are often people whose countries have been torn apart by these very privileged Europeans and their capitalist and imperial conquests. They simply cease to be people; they become 'illegal immigrants', 'over-stayers' and 'failed asylum seekers' who can be dispensed with when their exploited labour is no longer needed or when they stand up for their rights. As a consequence, common struggles and communities are divided and a culture of suspicion and surveillance prevails. As the callout for the week of action put it, "The machine is growing and getting stronger, and so must the resistance against it!"



**Activists blockade Colnbrook detention centre to stop a mass deportation flight to Iraqi Kurdistan, 12 May 2009.**



## Businessman of the year?

EARNING £4,000 a day, Christopher Rajendran Hyman, Serco's 'charismatic boss,' has every reason to laugh, and praise the Lord, all the way to Bank.

Hyman is the head of British outsourcing company Serco, which runs two immigration detention centres in the UK, Yarl's Wood and Colnbrook. The company makes vast profits from imprisoning women, men and children for the 'crime' of seeking refuge.

Hyman is also a committed Christian, who regularly donates money to his local Pentecostal church. So how does he square his religious values with the fact that he has got rich through other people's suffering? How does he feel about the fact that the conditions in his detention centres are so bad that detainees have repeatedly gone on hunger strike in protest at the rotten food, racist abuse and beatings they are subjected to?

To be fair to Hyman, his upbringing is proof that the spectacle of human suffering was never likely to put him off earning a fast buck. As the son of a wealthy South African car dealer, Hyman lived it up first as a student at Natal University and then as an accountant for the scummy finance firm Arthur Anderson. Meanwhile, South Africa's black townships erupted around him, struggling against the vicious apartheid regime.

Hyman left his homeland two years before Nelson Mandela was

released from prison. He apparently never went back. His business empire currently extends to the white world, the Middle East and the Asian Pacific, but he is never tried to get a foothold in Africa. You may wonder why.

Hyman was raised in a fervent Indian Pentecostal family, where any form of politics that challenged the status quo was viewed with suspicion. In fact, many Pentecostal Christians of all races worked for the apartheid police. Perhaps it wasn't such a bad idea, then, to make a swift and permanent exit once democracy was finally established in South Africa.

Hyman at least has one thing in common with the people he locks up for a living: he is an immigrant too. Except when he first arrived on Britain's shores, it was a cushy job at Ernst and Young, rather than a detention centre, that welcomed him.

Hyman cosily declares that joining Serco was like 'coming home.' A strange vision of home, you may think, but if he really feels such family-like attachment to his job, why doesn't he spend some of his £1.5 million yearly income to sort out the conditions inside his homes, sorry, detention centres?

Giving 10 percent of his fat salary to some, presumably conscience-free, Pentecostal church is one thing; profiting from human suffering is another. That's what makes a successful businessman, after all, and Hyman does deserve the title of 'businessman of the year'.

## Just an advert?

Newspapers, and so-called free papers in particular, depend on commercial advertising to survive. Adverts, however, don't only generate profits for the advertisers and ad carriers. They also make you want goods you don't really need and make you identify with these commodities; they turn you into a stupid consumer. Many groups, such as Adbusters, have realised this 'colonisation' and sought to actively challenge it, for example through 'subvertisements', or subverting commercial advertisements.

'Free' papers are particularly bad as they often bombard readers with all sort of adverts to make up for the lack of serious content. Because of their cost-cutting policies, they also produce increasingly bad journalism, often just recycling government and companies' propaganda and presenting it as news.



**For more info about the issues raised in this edition of the Metr0 visit:**  
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