

Listings

This is a free information service. If you have anything you want included, please get it to the Listings Editor by the Wednesday of the week before publication.

Meetings

Employment law. 12 March, 10.30 pm. Meeting organised by Mary Ward Centre. At the Mary Ward Centre, 9 Tavistock Square, London WC1. Details from Centre (01-387 1816).

How way child care? 14 March, 10.30 am. Meeting organised by the Midland Intermediate Treatment Association. Speakers include Dr Colin Brewer and Hugh H. Details and location from Mary Ward (021-565 2843).

Time and the MP. 14 March, 1.30 pm. Meeting organised by the Bristol Migraine Association. At the Christ Church crypt, 11, Bristol. Details from R. H. (0272 821881).

Police law reform. 15 March, 10.30 pm. Meeting organised by the Police Need Fathers. At the Parlor, YWCA, 16 Great Portland Street, London WC1.

Preventing disabling accidents. 16 March. Symposium organised by the Open Section of the Society of Medicine. At 10, Old Street, London W1. Details and booking forms from M. H. H., conference office, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1.

Policy in Europe: research progress. 20 March, 11-4.30 pm. Conference organised by the administration department, University of Birmingham. Details and booking forms from John Morgan, University of Birmingham (021-472 1301, 2310). Application closing date 16 March.

Community work, issues and practice in the 80s. 20-22 March. A general meeting organised by the National Federation of Community Work Training Centres. At further education centre, Argyle Road, Southampton. Details from Dave Jones, 7 K Road, Shirley, Southampton (0703 39674).

Contributions of childhood and adolescence. 21 March, 10-4 pm. Conference organised by the Teaching of the Social Sciences.

At the Polytechnic of Central London, New Cavendish Street, London W1. Details and application forms from Adrian Wilson, 55 Chiltern View Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex.

Mediawatch. 21 March, 10-6 pm. Meeting and workshops organised by the Mediawatch group. At Islington Bus Company, 7 Palmer Place, London N7. Details from Ruth Sabey (01-267 5806).

Marriage, divorce and the family. 24 March, 9.45 am. National conference organised by the Marriage Research Centre, Central Middlesex Hospital.



Photograph by Phillip Poiglaze, from an exhibition of his work at the Gallery, 52 Acre Lane, London SW2, until 23 March

conference organised by the Marriage Research Centre, Central Middlesex Hospital. At the Royal College of Physicians, 11 St. Andrew's Place, Regent's Park, London NW1. Speakers include Patrick Jenkin, MP. Details and application forms from T. Harvey, Department of Psychological Medicine, Central Middlesex Hospital, London NW10.

Women's Therapy Centre. 11-12 April. Fifth annual conference. Details and location from Gill Holden, Women's Therapy Centre, 6 Manor Gardens, London N7. Applications close 18 March.

Talks

Elders in ethnic minorities: continuing developments. 20-22 March. Seminar organised by the Commission for Racial Equality. At the Hawthorns, University of Keele, Staffordshire. Details and

application form from Dr Frank Glendenning (0782 625116).

Eurobarometer surveys. 27 March, 11 am. Seminar organised by the Social Science Research Council, Survey Archive. Details and location from the workshop organiser, SSRC Survey Archive, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex.

Workshops

Accommodating the elderly: to move or stay put? 13 March. Day

at Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol (0272 311117).

The family, marriage and divorce. 19 March. Workshop organised by the Institute of Family Therapy. Details and location from the course secretary, IFT, 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1 (01-388 3872).

Care in the community: challenging new perspectives for medical and social work professionals. 30 March-3 April. Series of workshops organised by the Foundation for Alternatives. At Urchmont Manor in Wiltshire. Details from Stan Windass, The Rookery, Adderbury, Banbury, Oxfordshire (0295 810993).

Family therapy. 29 April and 20 May. Workshops organised by the University of Kent at Canterbury, school of continuing education. At Rutherford College, University of Kent. Details and application forms from Joan Thomason, social work office, Rutherford College, University of Kent, Canterbury. Application closing date, 31 March.

Course

Making sense of society. 27-29 March. A residential weekend course organised by the University of Kent at Canterbury, school of continuing education. Details from the residential courses secretary at Rutherford College, University of Kent.

Publications

Where's my mum? and The law says... By Ivis Lasson and Harry Tunnicliffe respectively. Two publications by Pepar. Available from Pepar, 50 Knightlow Road, Harboren, Birmingham. Prices £2.20 and £3.50 (including postage and packing).

Whatever happened to freedom of choice? A response to the proposals in command paper 8106 to pay child benefits monthly. By Ruth Lister. Published by the Child Poverty Action Group. Available from CPAG at 1 Macklin Street, London WC2. Price 75p (including postage and packing).



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New black toughness

When a visiting American (who has perhaps read last week's *International Herald Tribune* report entitled "Fears of Racial Strife Growing in Britain") asks, "How are race relations in Britain these days?"—how does one respond?

Racism, evidenced by racist attacks on Pakistanis and members of other minorities, seems to be on the increase. Yet the confidence of blacks in themselves—as we saw in the New Cross demonstrations last week—seems to have undergone a sudden and dramatic transformation. Minority group children are no longer doing uniformly badly in the schools. As Geoffrey Driver of Leeds University reminds us in a letter to *NEW SOCIETY* last month, "There is a pronounced tendency for 'West Indian' pupils' performance to catch up with and even to overtake their 'English' peers by the age of 16." The new Schools Council report doesn't undermine the general point.

Discrimination and racism are far from eliminated, as the Commons home affairs subcommittee is confirming in its current hearings. But, after all the reservations are made, you could argue that minority groups are beginning to develop sufficient trust in some of the institutions of British society (with the notable and increasingly dangerous exception of the police) to be able to accept their lot reasonably peacefully. There are racist nuts around, and a larger and insensitive body of public opinion among whites which supports South Africa. But there are perhaps enough individuals and institutions which are not racist for things to be tolerable.

This is not simplistic optimism. Recent research on minority groups and the labour market takes this even further. David Smith of the Policy Studies Institute found that workers from minority groups were at least as likely as "English" workers to join a trade union (more so in the case of some Asians). When faced with a problem at work, they tended to take it up with the proper machinery for dealing with employment questions (the union or ACAS), rather than to the race relations or community relations structure.

All of this has very serious consequences indeed for government policy. Blacks born and brought up in Britain will not for one moment tolerate being consigned to the reserve labour market role which their parents fulfilled. Deference, *baas*-mindedness or passive toleration of racial inferiority are now gone. Ordinary blacks, denied equal rights, will now stand up and fight. Yet the government still runs a community relations machinery, based essentially on the old "voluntary liaison committee" philosophy, and pronounces on immigration and nationality matters as though the problem were still

that of appeasing a white electorate fearful of a multiracial society.

This is where the controversial Nationality Bill comes in. Ministers and officials constantly tell us that this is a measure designed simply to correct anomalies, to move us, legislatively, out of the imperial age into an approach more suitable to a second-rank European power. Yet everyone knows that it is nothing of the sort.

The Indians who demonstrated outside the British High Commission in Delhi understood very well what it was all about. The fact is that the rights of existing members of minority groups living in Britain will hardly be affected at all; while those about to be stigmatised as "overseas" British citizens have been so stigmatised (through immigration, rather than nationality, legislation) since Callaghan's Kenyan Asians act of 1968. But all the measures to prevent immigrants to Britain (or former residents of Britain returning home) from transmitting British citizenship to their children, show what the real political intentions of ministers, are.

This is a bill which—regardless of what its formal detail may say—has been sold to the government's supporters and to the public as a measure to keep blacks out. It comes out of the "reassuring white public opinion" side of the traditional Home Office community relations equation.

The details are irrelevant, just as they were in 1962, 1968 and 1971, when controversial immigration laws were enacted—or, come to think of it, when the Aliens' Restriction Act was rushed through the Commons in one night in 1914 to keep out German spies. We are dealing with signals, not with clauses and provisions. And the signal is, to the whites, "We understand your dislike of non-whites, so will keep any more of them out"; while, to blacks, the message is: "We can't get rid of you, but we'll keep out your sisters, brothers and children."

This is not a policy based on principle. It is a bipartisan piece of expedience designed to keep the race issue under control in establishment politics. It is a purely political stance and it is based on an assessment of the relative political power of the minority and majority. This assessment was very much associated with Roy Hattersley, then a junior minister, in the 1960s.

A whole succession of writers, from Nicholas Deakin to Dipak Nandy, have for years been drawing attention to the intellectual disreputableness of the Hattersley equation—with no effect whatever. Now, however, there is a distinct change in the political wind. Blacks will no longer sit idly by while establishment politicians play politics with white racism (as witness the articles by Professor D. C. Watt and Martin Kettle in today's issue). They may be minorities, but they can mobilise. They can use, not the community relations machinery designed to "integrate" them into British society, but their own power as a group.

The new black toughness is an excellent development in British race relations. The Home Office should learn the lesson.