

RAM BULLETIN

Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Mass media Project

advice
information
research
& training
on media ethics



Promoting best practice in media representation of refugee and asylum issues

No 18, May 2002

Double Standards

An appalling diatribe against 'illegals' (asylum-seekers) by Roger Tavener in the *Western Daily Press* (19 April 2002) - accusing them of drug trafficking, prostitution, security fraud, smuggling, stealing 'our' health care, council houses, state benefits and jobs - has given rise to protests and complaints to the Press Complaints Commission. Tavener's xenophobic tirade, masquerading as commentary on the Budget, was high on emotion but low on evidence. On the same day his sister paper the *Bristol Evening Post* lead with 'Don't Send Us Home' - a heart-rending story about how a 10 year old Kosovan child had prevented her father from killing himself after the Home Office turned down their asylum application. They fled to Britain after he witnessed the killing of three members of his family by Serbs.

The *Post* devoted two news pages and a double page feature to the family's predicament, backed by an editorial demanding that they be allowed. 'What purpose does it serve to send them back whence they came, to a place where they still fear for their safety and which hold hellish memories. None at all. It is not fair. It is not right. It is not humane. And it is not the British way.'

Both papers are owned by Associated Newspapers, which also owns *The Daily Mail*.

Congratulations to CBBC Newsround

The 22 April edition of the BBC children's news programme Newsround was exemplary. Using news clips and interviews with young people it got behind the headlines to explain why asylum-seekers come to the UK and why

they want to stay. Space was given unaccompanied minors who have made the dangerous trek to Britain by illegal means and to Dover children who don't approve. And then CBBC set up a web-space for children to share their views - have a look at

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/chat/your_comments/newsid_194300/1943705.stm

You couldn't make it up!

Journalists' trade paper the UK Press Gazette recently pointed out that the picture illustrating a *Daily Express* story in March headlined 'Migrant wave swamps Tunnel', was the same photo used on a story last December about an Iraqi asylum seeker depicting *Express* reporter Paul McMullan getting under a fence at the Sangatte camp. For its second outing readers were told it showed asylum-seekers getting into the Channel Tunnel enclosure at Frethun...

CALLING EXILED JOURNOS

The RAM Project and the Refugee Media Agency are developing training and work opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers with experience in the print & broadcast media.

Simply send names, tel & fax numbers, postal & email addresses to RMA
c/o PressWise, 38 EBC, Felix Road, Bristol BS5 0HE
Tel 0117 941 5889; Fax 0117 942 5848; Email: rma@presswise.org.uk

Good News in Wales continued..

As reported in last month's bulletin, a number of newspapers in Wales have been producing positive stories about refugees and asylum seekers. They include articles from *The Daily Post*, *The Shropshire Star*, *The Evening Leader*, and *The Mail*.

Catherine Green, project manager of the Asylum Seekers Initiative for Wrexham Council is responsible for helping asylum seekers in the area settle into their new lives and says of the headlines: "This Council did issue a comprehensive list of questions and answers to the press in the area. We were open with facts and figures about how many people were coming here and why and we called reporters in to an informal meeting to ask for their support. We tried to dispel myths and pointed out the bad effect that the press were reported to have had in some areas of the country. We were looking for a partnership approach and appealed to them for a responsible reporting."

Advocacy Training for African refugees and asylum seekers

In June, World University Service (UK), a charity working to support access to education for refugees, will be hosting an advocacy training course for 18 asylum seekers and refugees from Africa. The course aims to enable refugees and their community organisations to enhance the important contribution that many are already making to the promotion of human rights and the development of more democratic and equitable societies in the countries from which they come. The course also aims to help refugees to engage effectively in public education in Britain concerning human rights in Africa and to influence public

perception of refugees currently here. Applicants should be nominated by a refugee or community organisation or, if applying independently, have strong links with their community and be willing to work within it to share their knowledge and experience. Applications from women are particularly welcome and help with childcare is available. APPLICATION DEADLINE 15th May 2002.

For further information or an application pack, please contact Richard Germond
Tel: 020 7426 5825
email: hراط@wusuk.org

Development Courses for Refugee Women

Organised by the Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) who specialise in refugee education and employment and are based in the University of North London.

This course in Management Development is designed for refugee women with some experience of management and supervision and/or qualifications or experience in non-profit organisations (health care, education, social and community work, public administration) who are interested in developing their skills of managing people and organisations in the UK context. For more information: Tel. 020 7753 5044
email. ragu@unl.ac.uk

Letter from a Refugee

The following was received by NCADC:

Dear NCADC,
Insensitive words like the ones used by the Home Secretary last week put many refugees lives in danger. No wonder narrow-minded fascists are finding room and gaining popularity. The Home Secretary should have looked at the unrest in France due to anti-immigration and racists ideas of a presidential

candidate. Of all the people in the UK he should not have used such words. I came to UK in October 1995 and have been fighting to stay here since. I get frustrated when I read news that millions of taxpayers money is used on refugees, and nobody says anything about how much working refugees like myself pay in tax and National Insurance. I was on state funds for only 9 months Nov 1995 to August 1996. I got a full-time job and started college September 1996 and have been a taxpayer since then. I am a qualified Accounting Technician (MAAT), Studying to be A qualified Chartered Accountant(ACCA), no criminal convictions (Law abiding Citizen), taxpayer, voter, donor to charities (Centrepoint Largest UK homelessness Organisation, Oxfam and Local neighbourhood Credit Union).

I received a total of £2,340 in state funds (Income support and Housing benefit), before finding work. My P60s total for last 6 tax years is £ 15,000 (Tax & NI Paid). Hope you see my point why am angry to be called 'good for nothing immigrant'. As a refugee myself I care about others like me and my message to everyone and my fellow refugees is 'Together We'll Overcome, Conquer, Prosper And Stand.'

Yours Sincerely,
W W

Celebration Commonwealth – contributors wanted

The Celebration Commonwealth Parade will play a vital part in the National Golden Jubilee Festival Celebrations taking place on June 4th 2002 in Central London. The Parade will be a colourful, dynamic and joyous event, forging international links with communities in London to reflect the diversity of the Commonwealth and beyond. Over 3,000 participants will create a dynamic spectacle that will parade down the Mall, in front of

Her Majesty The Queen. The event will be televised and transmitted live across the UK and around the world.

Moti Roti, the award winning arts company, has been commissioned by the Commonwealth Institute to organise the Commonwealth Jubilee Parade.

They are looking for a diverse range of groups to play a key role in creating an exciting visual presence and atmosphere for this spectacular event.

If you or your group would like to become involved, contact Poulomi Desai
Outreach - Jubilee Celebrations
jubilee@usurp.org.uk or
07956 817 038

Voice experts to root out false asylum claims

Last Sunday The Observer reported that the Home Office is paying Swedish linguistic experts to analyse the voices of asylum seekers in an effort to pinpoint their accents and root out false claimants. But the company being used has been accused of making a string of mistakes which led to the deportation of some refugees to the wrong countries.

The method has been strongly criticised by the Refugee Council, which has expressed doubts on the reliability of the tests. A spokesman said there was 'extreme concern' about the development.

A Home Office spokeswoman said the Government has not yet decided whether to extend the pilot test.

Visit the RAM Project website for information, contacts, news and views
<http://www.ramproject.org.uk/>

COPY FOR NEXT BULLETIN SHOULD REACH
ram@presswise.org.uk
BY 20 MAY

'PEG' BOARD

Keep your ears and eyes open for events which can provide you, and the media with a 'peg' on which to hang positive stories about refugees or asylum seekers.

Help to set the media agenda by generating stories rather than having to react to theirs.

Keep your media contacts informed about what is happening and why it is relevant for them.

Saturday 11 May to Sunday 12 May

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AND THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Weekend workshop at the Refugee Studies Centre.
Venue: Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA

For more info and to register, contact Dominique Attala on 01865 270721 or rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Sunday 12 May 1.00pm
SPEAK OUT AGAINST RACISM

Organised by the Speak Out Against Racism - Defend Asylum Seekers campaign and supported by the Asylum Rights Campaign to stop the extreme right from setting the agenda and to protest about Blunkett's Nationality, Immigration and Asylum bill.

Speakers include Ken Livingstone Mayor of London, Tony Young TUC President, Omid Djalili Comedian and many more.
Venue: Trafalgar Square (nearest tube Charing Cross)

For more info, contact AA_R@compuserve.com

Monday 13 May 7.30pm
POETRY CAFE

Exiled Writers Ink! presents Women Across Cultures hosted by Nathalie Teitler with Choman Hardi (Kurdistan), Shereen Pandit (South Africa) and Shirin Razavian (Iran).

Members £1, others £2
Venue: 22 Betterton Street, London WC2
For more info, contact Jennifer Langer on 020 8458 1910 or jennifer@exiledwriters.fsnet.co.uk

Tuesday 14 May 7.30pm
FICTION WITHOUT FRONTIERS

In the Wilderness? The Kurdish and Turkish Diaspora. Moris Farhi (poet, novelist and campaigner) and Choman Hardi (writer, poet, artist, translator and interpreter) with Amanda Hopkinson.

All tickets £5 (£3 cons)
Venue: The Voice Box, Royal Festival Hall, Belvedere Road, London SE1. Nearest tube Waterloo
For more info, or to book tickets, contact the box office on 020 7960 4242.

Wednesday 15 May 10.00am to 6.00pm
ENGAGE AND EMBRACE 2002

Central Scotland Racial Equality Council Ltd (CSRECL) presents a free employment and training opportunities open day for ethnic minorities.

With employer's information stalls and workshops on applications forms, CV's and interview preparation.
Venue: Alloa Town Hall, Marshall, Alloa, Clackmannanshire, Scotland

For more info, or to book your place, contact Nina Giles (CSRECL) on 01324 610 950 or csrecl@aol.com

Wednesday 15 May 11.00 - 4.00pm

JOB FAIR: PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) is holding a job fair for refugees and asylum seekers who have professional or high level/experience. Opportunities to meet directly with employers to discuss work and placements, and to receive advice about employment prospects.

Venue: University of North London, Stapleton House, Holloway Road.
For more info, contact 020 7753 5044 or ragu@unl.ac.uk

Wednesday 15 May 5.00pm

REFUGEE STUDIES CENTRE SEMINARS

The Colson Lecture - Medha Patkar of Narmada Bachao Andolan will speak about her work to stop construction of a series of dams planned for India's Narmada River.

Venue: To be confirmed... check

www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsc/
For more info, contact Dominique Attala on 01865 270721 or rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Sunday 18 May
LITERATURE OF EXILE SEMINAR

Organised by Exiled Writers Ink! and Index on Censorship, a seminar on the literature of exile with creative and academic strands.

The seminar seeks to explore some of the themes and issues related to the literature of exile.
Tickets £10, unemployed refugees free, lunch included.

Venue: Soho Theatre and Writers Centre, Dean Street, London W1
For more info contact Jennifer Langer on 020 8458 1910 or jennifer@exiledwriters.fsnet.co.uk

Wednesday 22 May 5.00pm
REFUGEE STUDIES CENTRE SEMINARS

Forced migration and the politics of burden-sharing. With Dr Eiko Theilmann, London School of Politics and Economics
Venue: Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA

For more info, contact Dominique Attala on 01865 270721 or rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Wednesday 29 May 5.00pm

REFUGEE STUDIES CENTRE SEMINARS

Algerian narratives of exile. With Dr Cathie Lloyd, Queen Elizabeth House
Venue: Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA

For more info, contact Dominique Attala on 01865 270721 or rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Wednesday 5 June 5.00pm
REFUGEE STUDIES CENTRE SEMINARS

Boat people: A special case?
With Professor Michael Pugh, University of Plymouth
Venue: Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA
For more info, contact Dominique Attala on 01865 270721 or rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Saturday 8 June 12.00 - 5.00pm

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NCADC's AGM will bring together Families and Individuals already campaigning against deportation, introducing new campaigns and discussing strategy as to how migrants and asylum seekers can best defend themselves.
Venue: Hinde Street Methodist Church, 19 Thayer Street, London W1
Nearest tube Bond Street
For more info, or to confirm attendance contact 0121 554 6947 or ncadc@ncadc.org.uk

Wednesday 12 June 5.00pm

REFUGEE STUDIES CENTRE SEMINARS
Deportation and the liberal state
With Dr Randall Hansen, Merton College and Dr Matthew J Gibney, Refugee Studies Centre
Venue: Refugee Studies Centre, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA
For more info, contact Dominique Attala on 01865 270721 or rscmst@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Wednesday 19 June 12.30am

TRADE JUSTICE MOVEMENT LOBBY
Planned by Oxfam to be the biggest ever mass lobby of Parliament to persuade the UK Government to do more to support fairer trade rules and practices ahead of the European Heads of State Meeting in Seville.
Venue: Westminster Central Hall, next to Houses of Parliament
For more info and transport to London visit <http://www.tradejusticemovement.org.uk/lobby.html>