

# International VIEWPOINT

Issue 222

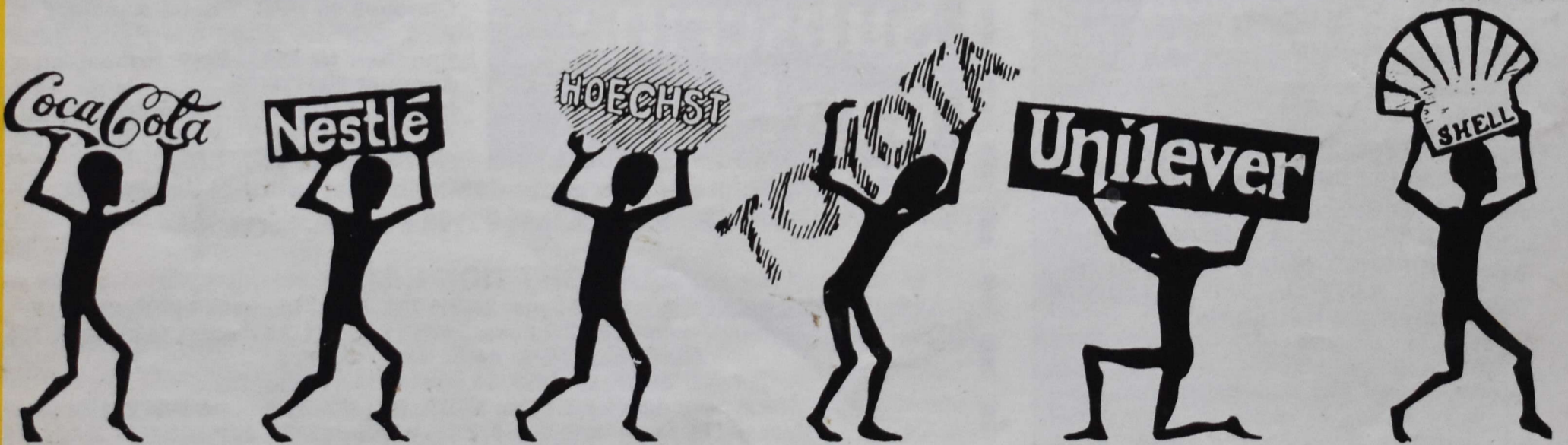
February 17, 1992

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South Africa:

EDWIN MADUNAGU

## *Is Black majority rule near?*



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people and not just asylum seekers.

**4. Fingerprinting:** In line with other European countries asylum seekers will be treated as criminals by being subjected to fingerprinting. There are no safeguards in the bill as to who the manual records can be passed on to. One of the reasons behind the introduction of fingerprinting of asylum seekers is the Dublin Convention signed by all EC countries. This says that a refusal of an asylum seeker in one EC country gives all other EC countries the right to refuse that person.

**5. Housing:** Asylum seekers will also be denied their full right to rehousing. Local authorities will only be able to offer temporary accommodation, and then only if the asylum seeker has "no reasonable accommodation" to go to. However, at the same time, the government has announced that it will provide 300 detention places for asylum seekers "considered likely to abscond... and to enable those refused asylum to be detained while awaiting removal".

**6. Carriers Liability Act:** In order to stop asylum seekers coming to the UK the government has already introduced visa requirements for nationals whose countries "produce" refugees, such as the Kurds from Turkey. In order to stop people fleeing to the UK the Carriers Liability Act 1987 allows the government to fine airlines if they bring passengers to the UK without "valid" documents. The government has increased the fines to £2000 per passenger by mid-1991 they had earned £30 million through such fines! The Asylum Bill extends airline liability to include passengers in transit.

**7. The asylum seekers credibility:** The draft immigration rules contain a list of criteria for refusing an asylum seeker — for instance an application will be treated as doubtful if the applicant has "made false representations... destroyed, damaged or disposed of a passport". The UN Commission on Refugees has indicated its opposition to this paragraph. It should not be held against asylum seekers if they arrive with false documents or none at all, as is stated in the UN convention (Article 31).

**8. Guilt by association:** The draft rules state that actions by a person "acting on behalf of the asylum applicant", whether or not with the applicant's express approval, "may be taken into account". An asylum case can therefore be prejudiced by so-called "agents" in the country of origin or incompetent advisers in Britain.

**9. Travelling as part of a group:** The rules also state that if an asylum seeker "is a part of a group" their case is not to be considered individually. This is a denial of natural justice and a violation of the 1951 convention, which specifically provides that each applicant must have his/her case individually assessed.

**10. The Asylum Act will become retrospective:** Asylum decisions which have already been held up for several years within the Home Office bureaucracy will now

## **SWEDEN — strike against racist violence !**

IN THE course of the last two months Sweden, and Stockholm in particular, has been shaken by an unprecedented wave of racist violence. In November shoot-to-kill attacks injured 5 immigrants and led to the death of an Iranian student. In late December/early January there was a campaign of bombings and bomb threats in connection with the trial of two members of VAM (White Aryan Resistance).

In late January a series of 5 attacks within 5 days shocked Uppsala and Stockholm. The attacks, random in nature, seriously injured two Turks and a Palestinian: three other immigrants were also shot. Meanwhile, around Sweden, there have been arson attacks and physical assaults on shopkeepers and shopworkers.

This racist campaign of violence is now dominating the political debate and atmosphere in Sweden. Stockholm is in a state of shock, and immigrants are in fear of their lives. Throughout the country, demonstrations have been organized in support of the immigrants. On the initiative of the Kurdish National League, 15 immigrant organizations have called for a one hour strike between 10 and 11 am on Friday February 21. A committee has just been formed to organize the strike, with the support of *Riksförbundet Stoppa Rasismen* (the National League to Stop Racism).

The strike is being called a "manifestation of mourning". One of its declared aims is to show what happens to the Swedish economy if immigrants do not work. The first appeal of the strike committee, however, leaves the door open for any Swedish organization or individual to "give their support in the manner they find suitable".

An indicator of the gravity of the situation is that the Minister of Social Affairs (a member of the liberal People's Party in the four-party bourgeois coalition) has publicly supported the strike, while King Carl Gustav XIV has condemned the violence and said that, "It is necessary for us all to come together and fight the injustice of our society". Trade union leaders are divided, some in support and some against.

The Swedish employers federation (SAF) has described the strike as "unmodern" but has not openly condemned it. The Conservative Prime Minister, Carl Bildt, is under much pressure. He also has not openly opposed the strike, but has said that it is "perhaps not a good idea". Restricting his condemnation of the attacks to saying, "We are of course against all types of criminality", he has said that racism is a "peripheral problem" of society, and suggested that the gun attacks might be connected with underworld rivalry.

In the Stockholm area, the Socialist Party (SP — Swedish section of the Fourth International) is pushing for the formation of "Guards Against Racism" standing outside shops where immigrants work alone. The initiative has already been taken in one suburb (Orminge), and has involved the SP, the Left Party and the Social Democrats. It has already been taken up by *Stoppa Rasismen* and has spread to another suburb.

There is currently a debate on whether immigrants should individually arm themselves in self-defence, given the inability/unwillingness of the police to protect them. While not condemning this, the SP is advocating collective defence as a better method at this time.

**The "21 February Committee" is calling for European-wide support for their initiative, with broad demonstrations outside Swedish embassies on the evening of Friday February 21. The Committee can be contacted at:**

**tel: 46-8-6528585 fax: 6502120. The person responsible for press contacts and information is Kurdo Bahksi. ★**

be considered under the proposed new laws.

So why is the government attacking asylum seekers? It is part of the creation of a Fortress Europe. The government wants to be seen as doing something to stop black people coming to Britain. In the imagination of the Tory popular press "illegal" immigrants and asylum seekers are lumped together as costing the British taxpayer millions of pounds.

In the public debate about asylum rights all the political parties try to separate "economic" refugees from "political" refugees.

Labour's spokesperson on domestic affairs, Roy Hattersley, said in Parliament on November 5, 1991: "I have made it clear that I would not allow in the bogus asylum seeker... No one I know wants the open door policy on immigration".

But in the real world it is not possible to separate "economic" from "political" refugees. This is particularly so inasmuch as the economic devastation of those parts of the world where refugees and immigrants was caused by the same countries now implementing immigration controls. ★