

Special Report

19th day of April 1983

SUBJECT

1. The following information has been received from a secret and reliable source:-

Subject: Workers Against Racism

2. "On Wednesday, 13th April 1983 between 7.30pm and 9.20pm at the Council Chamber, County Hall, SE1, a public meeting was held under the auspices of Workers Against Racism (WAR) and the Greater London Council's Committee for Women (GLCCW) to discuss the case of Afia BEGUM, an Asian girl who, with her baby, is due for deportation from the United Kingdom. Approximately 95 people attended.

References to Papers

3. Chairperson for the evening was Fran EDEN who gave a brief introduction to the case before calling upon the first speaker, Tony BENN, Member of Parliament. BENN spoke of his support for the campaign to prevent the deportation, and attacked the allegedly racist and sexist nature of the present immigration laws. He emphasised the current commitment of the Labour Party to reform these laws. He then drew comparisons between the cases of BEGUM and that of a Rumanian youth recently deported, claiming the reason that there was such an uproar in the case of the Rumanian was simply because he was a white person, being deported to a Communist country.

4. At the conclusion of his speech BENN was pressed by EDEN to raise the matter in Parliament. He promised to join with Ian MICKARD MP, Neil KINNOCK MP, Joan LESTOR MP, Michael FOOT MP, and other supporters to table an early-day motion in the hope of securing debating time on the matter.

TO [redacted] 1983 P.A. IN

5. Other platform speeches came from Pudi FARAYAN, Atkar ALI (phonetic) of the Bangladesh Welfare Association and Farehk AFZAL, an active member of WAR and a leading figure in the campaign. The theme of all these speeches was that whilst the present campaign centred on BEGUM it in fact carried far wider implications for all immigrants whether legal or not. It was thought a victory in this case would give encouragement to fight others. AFZAL also pointed out that never before had a person refused to be deported in the way BEGUM had done by simply turning to the authorities and refusing to comply with their directive.

6. Valerie WISE, chairperson of the GLCCW, in a brief appearance to add that the GLCCW had supported the campaign for BEGUM and at their next meeting, to be held on Tuesday 19th April 1983 the sum of £3,170

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was to be given to the campaign in the form of a Greater London Council grant.

7. Debate from the floor then ensued and although many of the speeches were amusing and vibrant they contributed nothing to the content of the meeting.

8. In concluding the meeting EDEN stated that the grant given by the GLC would be used to publicize the fact that it was for the defence of an officially 'illegal' immigrant and stressed this was an important point to be made during the campaign. It was also announced that a collection taken at the meeting raised £58.

9. Tony BERN had been contacted by [Privacy] of WAR on Monday, 11th April 1983 and, subject to other commitments, had agreed to address the meeting. That he made the effort to attend was undoubtedly a tremendous fillip to the campaign as well as giving WAR a credibility they had not hitherto enjoyed. Even more encouraging for the leadership of WAR was the GLC grant, not simply because they now have access to a sum of money which will, no doubt, be loosely audited but because they regard it as a first step to breaking out of the isolation imposed upon them by large sections of the British 'left'. It is felt that having obtained a degree of 'official' recognition and by demonstrating their ability to succeed in particular campaigns - as they are sure they will in the case of BEGUM - other groups of the 'left' will be forced to try to work with them regardless of whether or not they would prefer it."

10. The following persons were identified as being present at the meeting or are mentioned in this report:-

Atkar ALI

Farehk AFZAL

[Privacy]

Tony BERN, Member of Parliament.

[Privacy]

Fran EDEN

[Privacy]

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Privacy

Michael FOOT Member of Parliament.

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Neil WINNOCK Member of Parliament.

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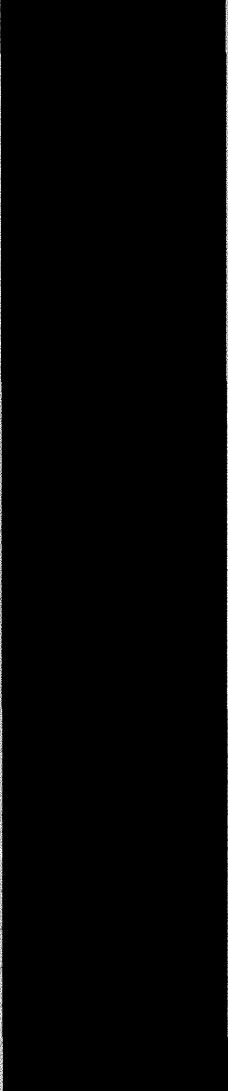
Joan LESTOR Member of Parliament.

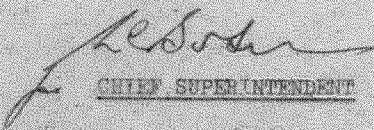
Privacy

Rudi NARAYAN

Privacy

Valerie WISE




CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

