

Protest the Islamic Regime's 'Elections'

The repressive and crisis ridden Islamic Republic of Iran is staging its sham presidential "elections" on June 8, 2001. In this farcical religious ceremony, even its most ardent supporters are refused access, let alone the people and opposition. This is not an election by any standards; only the foes of freedom in Iran can label this mockery an

'election.'

The majority of us living abroad - millions of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants - are the surviving victims of this regime's repression. We have transformed our countries of residence into bastions of resistance against its brutality. Our struggles have been an extension of the

struggles in Iran against the Islamic regime. In continuation of that resistance, no one should participate in the farcical June 8 'elections.' Instead, we must transform 'election' day into a day of protest against the entirety of the regime. We must mobilise our ranks and rage against this reactionary and repressive regime. Every so-called poll-

ing station must become the scene of protest. On June 8, let's show Western governments that our reason for flight is the very regime they support. Let's expose the regime. Let's support the movement for freedom and equality in Iran.

Let's give the regime and its friends a day to remember.

Human Rights and Cultural Relativism

Ali Javadi: In the area of civil and individual rights, many political institutions maintain that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international declarations are the first basis of civil rights. From your viewpoint, is the Universal Declaration that formula which can safeguard civil rights?

Koorosh Modaresi:
Let me initially raise one point.

Human rights are not a 'divine' phenomenon, apparent from the origins of history to its end. The question of what human rights are depends on the social, ideological and philosophical systems of various movements in various historical periods. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, we



see movements, which belong to this epoch with certain interpretations of human rights and we see movements that belong to several centuries ago and have other interpretations of human rights,

like Islamic movements. Therefore, when we speak of human rights and a specific Declaration, we must examine the movement that has produced it and how that movement defines human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a product of bourgeois-liberal thought. According to this viewpoint, human beings are respected as atomized indi-

viduals and are responsible for the conditions under which they live. They are respected in that they have equal legal rights but the conditions needed to realise legal equality - equal economic rights - are ignored. Clearly, compared to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises individual rights and freedoms is a more positive and advanced phenomenon and is based on a more progressive interpretation of human beings and their environment. When examined closely, however, as I initially noted, we see that it is basically limited to the legal rights of individuals.

The Declaration does not discuss the economic con-

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ditions necessary for the realisation of legal equality. Freedom of expression and organisation are recognised in this Declaration, but this legal equality cannot be realisable because of economic inequality. For example, the worker and employer are recognised under this law; workers can be exploited and made redundant. Also, the possibility to access and influence mass communications and politics is completely incomparable between the rich and poor. Here equality for the masses is nothing more than a mirage. From a Communist and working class perspective, such conditions violate the most basic rights of a large segment of humanity. The economic sphere has been left out of the Declaration of Human Rights and therefore there is no guarantee for the realisation of even the rights declared.

Ali Javadi: There is a trend, which states that civil rights cannot be universal because people are not the same; they have had different histories and lives, and live in diverse societies with different cultures, thereby drawing certain conclusions about human rights. What is your response and criticism?

Azar Majedi: In my opinion these are attempts to silence those who struggle for freedom and equality and justify the situation. This assertion that is also discussed under the framework of cultural relativism, has mostly been promoted during the past couple of decades. Half a

century ago, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was put forth, cultural relativism was not an issue.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was written amidst Cold War rivalries in opposition to the Eastern bloc, though the Soviet Union's constitution recognised more progressive rights and put forth a more advanced model.

With the advent of cultural relativism, we are now witnessing the undermining of universal rights, and different definition of rights relative to different societies, histories, cultures and religions. This is in fact a move backwards. Cultural relativism is being used to justify the lack of rights, exploitation and repression in the West, in Western public opinion and among people who live in countries like Iran. It claims that Islam is people's religion and what happens within the Islamic framework is acceptable or that women should not demand freedom in 'Islamic societies' as they must respect their culture. This is nonsense and must be firmly rejected. These are completely reactionary and backward ideas. Civil rights, freedom and equality are univer-

sal concepts; that people worldwide are struggling for equality and freedom and to overcome rightlessness is a confirmation of this fact.

Ali Javadi: What were the grounds for the development of cultural relativism? Why would the bourgeois movement, which produced the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights, now argue for cultural relativism and against the universality of human rights? What are the economic and social causes of this?

Azar Majedi: This has partly to do with the collapse of the Eastern bloc and state capitalism, which was called Socialism. As I said, the Soviet constitution, which was written after the October revolution, contained more progressive rights for its citizens. The fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent assault of the Right and free market effectively prepared the grounds for this backward move. Post-modernism was put forth as the philosophical justification for cultural relativism.

Furthermore, the invigorated growth of Islamic movements and their spectre of terrorism over European countries after the establishment of the Islamic Republic gave further practical justification for cultural relativism for Western societies and its ideologues. In the two recent decades, Islamic movements have become widespread, tak-

ing power in several countries or becoming powerful opposition groups in others. The struggle against these reactionary movements and the absolute rightlessness that they have subjected people to has been one of the most serious struggles of the last two decades.

The growing political power of Islamic movements, fear of their blind terrorism and specifically the Western bourgeoisie's need for this movement to control progressive and labour protests have been the political grounds for the growth of cultural relativism. Of course, today, little by little, the reactionary and backward nature of cultural relativism is becoming more widely recognised in public opinion.

Koorosh Modaresi: The most important aspect of this argument is drawn from Post-modernist philosophy, which has taken shape in the last twenty years. This coincided with two phenomena; one was the beginning of the collapse of the Eastern bloc and support for the kind of Socialism it was advocating. This alternative gradually lost its attraction and consequently lost its dangers for the West. The second factor was the maturing of the 60s-70s generation and their absorption into mainstream bourgeois society. Western ideologues and academics needed a philosophy to which they could refer to in order to justify their retreat from their previously

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June 11, 2001**

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declared position on certain rights and the universal nature of rights. Furthermore, the movement in America and Europe, which took shape during the 60s and 70s and demanded widespread freedom and a certain degree of equality, was reaching its end. A major section of that movement was absorbed into mainstream bourgeois trends and needed to justify itself,

thereby defending a philosophy, which considers rights as relative and does not specify what is right or wrong. For example, civil rights are a relative concept to them. As a result, not only is it unnecessary to oppose the lack of rights of the majority of the world, but also it is racist to do so. They have discovered that the suppression and humiliation of certain races and human beings is an aspect of their culture. They say: they are Moslems and deserve

nothing more. This theory is a reflection of Post-modernism, which treats rights as relative. In my opinion, rights are universal. Rights like children's happiness and education, the right to work, prosperity, unconditional freedom of expression, etc. are rights that cannot be denied for living in a corner of Africa or under the rule of the Islamic Republic.

The above is segments of an interview first published in

English in the WPI Briefing number 13, dated May 16, (www.wpibriefing.com). Ali Javadi, Azar Majedi and Koorosh Modaresi are members of the Worker-communist Party of Iran's Executive Committee and Political Bureau. Azar Majedi is also the Editor of Medusa. The above is a translation from Farsi of a Radio International transcript first published in International Weekly number 53, dated 11 May (www.haftegi.com).

END DEPORTATIONS

IFIR Protest against Danish Government

On May 18, the IFIR – Denmark Office organised a demonstration at the Danish parliament to protest that government's anti-asylum policies. The demands of the demonstration were the right to asylum for those fleeing the Islamic regime, the right to asylum for all women fleeing Islamist societies, an end

to deportations and declaring Iran unsafe. Mahmood Ghazvini, the IFIR representative in Denmark, Soren Sonogaa from Enhedlisten parliamentary party, Helle Blindal from the Clandestine Refugee Committee and Nahid Riyazi from the International Campaign in Defence of Women's Rights in Iran as

well as a number of asylum seekers addressed the protest. Following the demonstration, an IFIR delegation, which included several asylum seekers, met with the representatives of three Danish parliamentary parties, including SF - the Socialist People's Party, Enhedlisten and Radikal Vensrer. The

delegation highlighted violations of civil rights under Islamic rule and put forth the demonstrator's demands. In a continuation to the demonstration, on May 19, Iranian asylum seekers in Fredericia refugee camp held a sit-in against the increased refusals, delays in processing and introduction of food vouchers.

Campaign against Deportation and Official Racism in Germany

IFIR-Germany has called for a two-week sit-in in Bokhum and Dortmund beginning June 5 in protest against the institutionally racist and anti-asylum practices of the German authorities. While the German government has not officially included Iran in the list of safe countries, it is effectively deeming Iran safe to deport asylum seekers. This

campaign also aims to expose the Islamic Republic in the upcoming mockery of a presidential 'elections.' The IFIR – Germany will resolutely resist the German government's anti-asylum policies and declares that Iran is not a safe country. Those who have fled Iran must be granted asylum and no one must be deported to Iran.

Farrokh Shiri has been Released

Farrokh Shiri was released on bail on May 18 thanks to the persistent intervention of numerous civil rights organisations. Shiri is an Iranian asylum seeker who had been imprisoned for attempting to commit suicide as a result of his being refused asylum by the UK Home Office. His release is the

beginning of a campaign to secure his right to asylum and prevent his deportation to persecution. In a message to the IFIR-UK Director, Shiri conveyed his sincere gratitude to those who campaigned for his release and asked for continued support in obtaining his right to protection.

International Refugee News

* Arrests

The Uruguayan Interpol office arrested seven Ecuadorians, two men and five women, as they prepared to board a United Airlines flight to the United States with false U.S. visas and passports. (Agencia EFE, May 24, 2001)

Spanish police detained 47 North Africans who tried to enter Spain illegally after crossing the hazardous Strait of Gibraltar by boat overnight. Those detained are being held while arrangements are made for their 'repatriation.' (The Associated Press, May 25, 2001)

The Indian immigration authorities have arrested Afghans for trying to reach London to seek political asylum using fake Spanish passports. The Afghans were remanded to judicial custody and sent to Vellore jail. (The Hindu, May 25, 2001)

A total of 1,558 foreigners illegally have entered Indonesia since early last year in hopes of reaching a third country. Director of Immigration said the 'illegal' immigrants were from Iraq, Iran, India, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Somalia and Bahrain. The last case involved 92 Iraqis who were found stranded on the North Sumatra sea. In Makassar, South Sulawesi, 135 Pakistani, Iraqi and Afghans were arrested when they were about to leave for Australia. In Bogor, 193 Iranians were arrested in Garut, West Java, in September last year. The Director said the UNHCR

had granted refugee status to 420 'illegal' migrants in Indonesia, but only one had been sent on to a third country. He added that on Tuesday two Pakistanis, one Sri Lankan and one Chinese national were arrested for immigration violations during a raid in Kemayoran, Central Jakarta. (The Jakarta Post, May 25, 2001)

Austrian police picked up 58 'illegal' immigrants, of which 52 were Afghans and six Iraqis, along the Austria-Slovakia border within the space of a half hour. It follows the discovery on Tuesday by the Austrian army of 26 Afghans who had illegally entered Austria from Slovakia. Last week 92 'illegal' immigrants, half of which were from Afghanistan, were also picked up by police along the Austro-Slovakian border. (Agence France Presse, May 24, 2001)

Italian police held nearly 80 people, mostly Albanians and Kurds of Iraqi origin, for illegally entering the country. (Agence France Presse, May 24, 2001)

Mexican authorities arrested 152 'illegal immigrants' crowded into the trailer of a cargo truck that was traveling through the state of Chiapas, in southern Mexico to wards the US. Officials said the immigrants, mostly Guatemalan and Salvadoran, were traveling under "subhuman" conditions. The Central Americans were to be promptly repatriated. (Agencia EFE, May 23, 2001)

Greek authorities detained 88 'illegal immigrants' from Iraq and Iran off the coast of Keratea, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Athens. The vessel was carrying 77 men, four women and seven children. (The Associated Press, May 23, 2001)

Korean police officers and the army are searching for about 20 Asians believed to have illegally entered the country. Police said their belongings include Iranian money. (The Korea Herald, May 21, 2001)

Spain's Civil Guard arrested 77 North Africans who entered the country illegally via the Strait of Gibraltar. The arrests bring to 250 the number of 'illegal immigrants' detained this week while attempting to enter Spain. (Panafrican News Agency, May 17, 2001)

Immigration officers with the help of the police and the army have detained 120 apparently 'illegal' foreigners in an round-up operation held in Oshakati, Namibia. (The Namibian (via BBC), May 16, 2001)

Indonesian authorities have arrested 134 foreigners who mostly from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan heading for Australia. (Agence France Presse, May 17, 2001)

* Deaths

Three 'illegal immigrants' from Iran were killed when they stepped on a mine field at the Evros border cross-

ing between Greece and Turkey. The fourth Iranian, aged 24, was injured and is lying in a hospital in the northern Greek city of Alexandroupolis. Tens of 'illegal immigrants' have been killed by land mines at the vros broader between Greece and Turkey in the last few years. (May 21, IRNA)

This month alone, 29 Afghans — mostly children — have died from heatstroke and dehydration in Pakistan. (The Associated Press, May 20, 2001)

A Somali official said that 86 'illegal immigrants' had drowned after the crew of a boat carrying them to Yemen forced passengers into the sea when the vessel suffered engine trouble. 70 people had been rescued by fishing boats, but five of those saved had since died. The news followed reports that Libyan authorities had found the decomposed bodies of 93 African immigrants who were stranded and died of thirst in the Saharan desert. (Reuters, May 18, 2001)

South African police Commissioner dismissed claims that South African policemen threw 14 Mozambican 'illegal migrants' off a moving train, while they being deported back to Mozambique. "The police on board the train performed their tasks admirably, and did a hundred per cent delivery of all the deportees to the Mozambican authorities," the police chief affirmed in his disclaimer, denying 14 pas-

sengers were hurled off, let alone died. (Panafrican News Agency, May 16, 2001)

*** Deportation**

According to the Auditor-General's latest report from the South African Department of Home Affairs, a total of 181 286 'illegal aliens' were 'removed' from the country and returned to their countries of origin during 1998, compared with a total of 176 351 during 1997. Most came from Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho and other countries, which have been hit by the scourge of war and poverty. (WOZA (Johannesburg), May 25, 2001)

Namibia's Immigration Tribunal ordered the deportation of 109 'illegal aliens' rounded up in the past two months in the country's north-eastern part to Angola, Botswana and Zambia. (Panafrican News Agency, May 23, 2001)

A group of 56 people trying to enter Italy illegally aboard were 'rescued' and taken to Vlora in southern Albania. An agreement between Rome and Tirana provides for the immediate 'repatriation' of 'illegal immigrants' arriving from Albania. (Agence France Presse, May 20, 2001)

Defying pleas from the United Nations, Pakistan said it will repatriate thousands of Afghans who fled their homeland to escape drought and civil war. (The Associated Press, May 20, 2001)

Cambodia has expelled dozens of asylum seek-

ers from Vietnam despite assuring the United Nations it would not forcibly send them home. (The Associated Press, May 20, 2001)

*** Detention**

About 21 719 people were illegally detained at the Lindela detention centre for 'illegal' immigrants between August 1996 and September 1999, only to be released once they were identified as South African citizens, according to the Auditor-General's latest report from the South African Department of Home Affairs. (WOZA (Johannesburg), May 25, 2001)

Refugee groups have cautiously welcomed a decision to release women and children from the Woomera Detention Centre into the local township on a trial basis. (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, May 25, 2001)

The Australian Federal Government's plan to give guards the power to strip search detained immigrants above the age of 10 is doomed after Labour told the Government it would support such measures only if there was a judicial inquiry into detention centres. The bill would increase the penalty for escaping from centres to five years' jail and allow x-ray machines to be installed in the centres to make sure visitors were not bringing 'weapons' in. (The Sydney Morning Herald, May 25, 2001)

Detention centre operator Australasian Correctional Services may lose its contract after the immigration department said it was looking for better offers. It has been

criticised over its management of detention centres after protests and riots by inmates at Woomera, Port Hedland and Maribyrnong. The contract covers the Villawood, Perth, Maribyrnong, Woomera, Curtin and Port Hedland centres. (The Australian Associated Press, May 25, 2001)

*** Living Conditions**

The proposal to accommodate people waiting on housing lists in flotels (ships) by Irish Fine Gael deputy leader Jim Mitchell resulted in a row at a party meeting. Mitchell was criticised at the weekly parliamentary party meeting for the proposal that people could be temporarily housed for up to two years in this way. (The Irish Times, May 24, 2001)

A family which fled persecution in the Middle East was detained in Australia for five months, left at a Canberra hostel with no money and survived on bread for a month, a refugee advocate said. They had now moved interstate on a three-year Temporary Protection Visa. (The Canberra Times (Australia), May 21, 2001)

*** Laws / Legislation**

Hundreds of legal challenges by asylum-seekers have been temporarily suspended pending a Supreme Court decision on the interpretation of immigration legislation. At the core of the case is the nature of the reasons that the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform is

obliged to give when proposing to issue deportation orders. Section 5 of the 2000 Act provides that any application for leave to seek judicial review of a deportation order shall not be granted unless the High Court is satisfied there are substantial grounds for contending that the decision should be quashed. The appellants contend that the judge was wrong in holding that substantial grounds meant the case was strong and likely to succeed. The correct meaning, they claimed, was "reasonable", "arguable" and "weighty". (The Irish Times, May 25, 2001)

Amnesty International expressed alarm at proposed new European Union rules on immigration and asylum which the human rights watchdog said contravened international standards for refugees. The proposals are due to be discussed by justice and home-affairs ministers from the 15 EU nations Monday. They include a common system of "temporary protection" in the event of a large influx of refugees fleeing a from crisis area. The EU says the rules would guarantee refugees access to housing, health and education, but Amnesty International fears they could be used to restrict access for asylum seekers and make it easier for EU nations to expel refugees. Amnesty is also concerned that proposals to crack down on so-called "people-smugglers" could make criminals of citizens who help genuine refugees escape danger in their homelands. (The Associated Press, May 25, 2001)

Interior Minister Otto

Schily declared himself in favour of a "sweeping solution" with regard to the planned immigration law. The interests of the labour market must be taken into account, just as those of demography and integration. At the same time, he declared himself against broadening the right to asylum for victims of nongovernmental persecution. Instead, Schily called for a tightening of the asylum process and a more purposeful practice of deportation. (Die Welt web site (via BBC), May 23, 2001)

Labour was denounced by John Edmonds, the general secretary of the GMB union, one of Britain's biggest unions for trying to outbid the Conservatives over who has the toughest anti-asylum policies. Straw called for each member of the European Union to agree to annual quotas of asylum-seekers allowed to stay in the country. (The Independent (U.K.), May 21, 2001)

The South African Cabinet approved a framework for the immigration bill. (South African Press Agency, May 16, 2001)

Thousands of Pakistani immigrants awaiting deportation were given the chance to re-apply for asylum in Britain after a leading judge ruled that Jack Straw had acted unlawfully. The master of the rolls said that the home secretary had erred in law and acted irrationally by including Pakistan in a list of countries considered safe for the return of immigrants. He ordered their cases be heard by a new special adjudicator. But he also ruled that the removal orders were invalid since Pakistan

should not have been included in the "white list" of safe countries. Any asylum seeker from such a classified nation, including Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ghana, India, Poland and Romania, goes through a "fast track" procedure and has no right to appeal against the special adjudicator's decision. (Press Association Friday May 18, 2001 Electronic Guardian)

The European Union Commission is hoping that the next few months will bring some progress in moves to develop a joint EU policy on immigration and asylum. The Commissioner responsible, Portugal's Antonio Vitorino, stands firm in his expectation that the Laeken summit in December will bring agreement among the 15 member states on a joint strategy. "We have presented a long list of initiatives. But the Council was able to reach an agreement on just two of the eleven proposals." And these two were both 'pretty uncontroversial: the setting up of a data bank for finger prints, and of an EU fund for refugees. (Handelsblatt (Germany), May 18, 2001)

*** Myths**

Asylum seekers find it paradoxical that they are demonised for "sponging off the state" when the current immigration system prevents them from working for the first six months they are in the country, forcing them to live on benefits. Britain has a big shortage of workers in key industries that could be

filled by asylum seekers who are prevented from using their skills. If asylum seekers can help to plug the gaps in Britain's professions, they can also help fill vacancies for unskilled manual jobs. The United Nations estimates that to keep the working population constant, Britain would need to double the number of immigrants from its current level. (The Guardian (U.K.), May 23, 2001)

*** Racism**

With the continued influx of 'illegal' immigrants, including Zimbabweans, Zambians, Angolans and Namibians into Maun, Botswana, local authorities have launched a major move counter the situation blaming them for using 'our health facilities for their benefit,' 'taking jobs away from citizens, and for the 'recent spate of robbery attacks,' according to the Maun District Commissioner. But a member of Women Against Rape (WAR) said Maun suffers from a more serious problem, which is rooted in hatred for foreigners. (Mmegi/The Reporter (Gaborone, Botswana), May 25, 2001)

The All Assam Students' Union in India's remote northeast said that it wanted the army to be posted along the India and Bangladesh border to stop the entry of 'illegal' immigrants from Bangladesh. (The Associated Press, May 25, 2001)

In Sighthill, north of Glasgow city centre, there have been more than 80 racist incidents since the beginning of the year. The British Na-

tional Party has been active in the area with a leaflet campaign. (The Express (U.K.), May 24, 2001)

United Nations Refugee Commissioner Ruud Lubbers denounced as dangerous what he called the populist rhetoric against refugees that is sweeping across Europe. (Reuters, May 23, 2001)

The Federation for American Immigration Reform, said the Southern Poverty Law Center's spring report was unfounded in its allegations that his and other groups in the Coalition for the American Worker have connections to white supremacist groups. The law center's report also said that the director of another group in the coalition, the American Immigration Control Foundation, is John Vinson. Vinson is a founding member of the League of the South, a group the law center considers white supremacist. The center also spoke of Numbers USA's director Roy Beck, Washington editor for the Social Contract, a publication that "has published articles by "white nationalists." (Des Moines Register, May 16, 2001)

A Dutch minister proposed that the Netherlands and other European Union countries encourage more, not fewer, migrants to their shores because of its aging population. He also hoped to encourage a more understanding attitude from Dutch citizens. "We need to distance ourselves from the idea of the underprivileged, poorly-educated good-for-nothing who is not a real asylum seeker and whom we don't want," Van Boxtel said. (Reuters, May

18, 2001)

Umberto Bossi, the xenophobic leader of the far-right Northern League, said Italy's incoming centre-right government would propose a tough new law making 'illegal immigration' "a serious crime". The government coalition led by media mogul Silvio Berlusconi, to which his party belongs, would base its suggested immigration law on a joint proposal presented last year by the Northern League and Berlusconi's conservative Forza Italia party, which called for stricter repressive measures against immigration, including prison sentences of up to 18 years for people who encouraged illegal immigration and a 10-year ban on entering Italy for immigrants deported from the country. (Agence France Presse, May 18, 2001)

* Protests

Protestors converged on the German capital for a three-day protest against the restriction in German law on asylum seekers' freedom of movement. While they await a final verdict on their application, asylum seekers are sent to hostels or camps, often in extremely isolated locations. They are not allowed to work. They are not allowed to study. And for as long as their case takes to decide normally several years they are obliged to remain within the boundaries of the local police authority. (The Guardian (U.K.), May 23, 2001)

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rights organisations. Shiri is an Iranian asylum seeker who had been imprisoned for attempting to commit suicide as a result of his being refused asylum by the UK Home Office. His release is the beginning of a campaign to secure his right to asylum and prevent his deportation to persecution. In a message to the IFIR-UK Director, Shiri conveyed his sincere gratitude to those who campaigned for his release and asked for continued support in obtaining his right to protection. (IFIR – UK Branch Press Release, May 20, 2001)

On May 18, the IFIR – Denmark Office organised a demonstration and meeting at the Danish parliament to protest that government's anti-asylum policies and demand the right to asylum for those fleeing the Islamic regime, the right to asylum for all women fleeing Islamist societies, an end to deportations and declaring Iran unsafe. (IFIR – Denmark, May 19, 2001)

IFIR- Germany has called for a two-week sit-in in Bokhum and Dortmund beginning June 5 in protest against the institutionally racist and anti-asylum practices of the German authorities. (IFIR-German branch Press Release, May 19, 2001)

'Illegal immigrants' from Iraq were hurt in scuffles with Cyprus police during a protest near a British base. The incident occurred when a group of about 15 Iraqis protested outside a police station in the southeast of the island in an area bordering on British sovereign base territory. "They were there protesting

at the conditions they are held in," British bases spokesman told Reuters. One of their key demands is to be allowed to get into Britain. The Iraqis arrived in Cyprus secretly earlier this year and have been kept within the British sovereign base area until a decision was made on their application for political asylum. (Reuters, May 16, 2001)

* Repressive / Restrictive Measures

Asylum applications in April dipped to their lowest level for two years. The 5,000 applications lodged in April represented a 15% drop from the corresponding month in 2000 and the lowest the UK has seen since April 1999 when they stood at 4,095. The large backlog of applications also dropped to 31,795, from over 90,000 in the previous year - reaching the lowest level for 10 years. (British Broadcasting Corporation, May 25, 2001)

Two men were sentenced to five years in prison for trying to smuggle 12 'illegal' immigrants into Britain in the back of a refrigerated container packed with meat. (Press Association (U.K.), May 25, 2001)

Slovak officials approved a plan to possibly introduce stricter conditions for issuing of passports to certain citizens of Slovakia "about whom there is suspicion" that they might try to emigrate abroad, as many Romany Slovaks have done, 'claiming' to be victims of persecution at home. (CTK news agency, Prague (via BBC), May 24,

2001)

An illiterate 72-year-old woman has been sentenced to six months in jail for renting her Singapore home to 'illegal immigrants.' (The Associated Press, May 24, 2001)

After an ambush at sea and a chase in the jungle, Singapore police 'nabbed' seven Indians and Indonesians who were allegedly trying to 'sneak' into Singapore. Police spokesman said Singapore police arrested 307 'illegal immigrants' in 2000, and 43 as of April 2001. Those found guilty of trying to illegally enter Singapore face up to 6 months in jail and a fine of up to 6,000 Singapore dollars (dls 3,300) or three strokes of the cane. (The Associated Press, May 23, 2001)

During his visit to Berlin, Romania's Interior Minister Ioan Rus announced his country's readiness to take back 'illegal immigrants' who renounced their Romanian citizenship in order to avoid the termination of their stay in Germany for many years. (DDP news agency, Berlin (via BBC), May 16, 2001)

Police and the Japan Coast Guard conducted a joint drill at a port in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, to be better prepared for illegal immigration attempts. (Kyodo News Service, May 17, 2001)

**IRAN
IS
UNSAFE**

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