

Twenty border guards violently separated the children from their parents and claim that injuries sustained by Mr Soyut were self-inflicted. After the deportation, the parents were taken to the psychiatric ward of a hospital. Their reunion with their children lasted some thirty minutes. (BARIN)

Deportation on 'social hygiene' grounds

Berlin immigration authorities have stated that the deportation of an immigrant accused of drug dealing was carried out as a 'social hygiene' measure. The *Tageszeitung* newspaper disputes the authorities' claim that the reasoning behind the measure – all too reminiscent of nazi terminology – has only been used once, saying it has papers which prove otherwise. (BARIN)

Chronicle of refugee deaths

The Berlin Antirassistische Initiative has produced a document outlining the deathly consequences of German asylum politics from January 1993 to mid-May 1996 which concludes that more refugees have died due to asylum politics than through racism. The reports chronicles deaths due to suicides, attempts to cross borders, and during deportation. From 1993 up to the present, 61 refugees died either on their way to FRG or at the border; 39 refugees killed themselves in protest at their deportation and 32 refugees have died as a result of racist attacks. At least ten people held in the transit area of Frankfurt airport attempted suicide during 1995, according to figures released by the federal government (BARIN, further information from ARI e.V., Yorkstr. 59, 10965 Berlin).

News from refugee hostels

Refugees at the Neckarsulm hostel near the town of Heilbronn went on hunger strike in February in protest at hostel conditions, food 'not fit for human consumption' and brutal treatment by police. During an incident involving 50 police officers on 12 February, a pregnant woman was punched and kicked.

Eighteen people were arrested when 300 police officers raided a refugee hostel in the eastern German city of Halle on 7 February. Two people were accused of being illegal immigrants and two of those arrested were young girls previously reported missing. (BARIN)

Social control of asylum-seekers through smart card

The Federal Interior Ministry is considering whether to bring in an asylum card similar to the smart card issued in Holland, which would mean that applicants would be required to produce a card for purposes of 'identification access and residency control' and for the 'receipt of items and work permits'.

Meanwhile, the owners of a refugee hostel in the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen have been issuing computer chip plastic cards to residents which have to be shown on entering and leaving the hostel as a precondition for receiving food and articles such as toothbrushes. According to Westfalen-Lippe Social Counselling and Care Company, the information stored on the card 'only serves the protection of the asylum applicant. There could be no question of social control and all the data stays in house.' (BARIN).

Racism and fascism

State elections: the far-Right vote

State elections in Baden-Württemberg, in the western state of Rhineland-Palatinate and in the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein have shown good results for the Christian Democrats and its partners the Free Democrats, while in Baden Württemberg the far-Right Republikaner gained 9.6 per cent of the vote. It is now the only state in the country where the Republikaner is represented in parliament.

In the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein, the far-Right German People's Union (DVU) gained 4.3 per cent, a drop of 2.9 per cent from 1992. However in the state's Lübeck constituency, the DVU gained an average vote of 6.1 per cent, one of their highest results. In the Rhineland-Palatinate, the Republikaner won only 3.2 per cent of the vote. All the same, they scored 8.2 per cent of the vote in the Ludwigshafen constituency where unemployment is high.

The new Republikaner leader, Rolf Schlierer, claims that the party's revival is due to its shaking off its far-Right image. But political commentators claim that the SD's campaign against the Aussiedler (see above) played into the Republikaner's hands. Lafontaine's stance had percolated down to a local level, with SD leader Dieter Späri declaring 'Baden-Württemberg can take no more refugees'. (*Observer* 10.3.96)

Lübeck fire: blaming the victims

The survivors of the Lübeck fire, which claimed ten lives (see *Bulletin 18*) have written an open letter criticising the police investigation of the fire and the media campaign to present them, the victims, as divided and feud-ridden between Arab and African. Furthermore, the asylum-seekers point out that since the fire the survivors have been threatened with deportation, presumably because the authorities want to get rid of troublesome witnesses.

The survivors' story

This was not the first attack on the hostel – a fact that the authorities have suppressed. Last June, inflammable liquid was poured through the letterbox but failed to ignite. When fire broke out on 18 January, the survivors claim, the police hindered attempts to rescue the families. At the hospital where the victims were taken suffering from burns, broken bones and smoke poisoning, they were treated as suspects. 'At first they accused us of dumb stupidity. We must have lit a bonfire in a flat, or messed around with paraffin or with electrical wiring. Then they tried to find an arsonist amongst us. First it was the two who had died. Then they fastened on Safwan, claiming he had argued with another resident and had fired the house with himself and his family in it for revenge...'

Survivors rally around arrested man

'We all know Safwan could not have done it ... he was asleep with his brothers on the fourth floor... As he opened the door the flames and smoke hit him. He started to help others out of the house and was injured in the process. Three young Germans were held for a short while, less than two days, and then released without further investigation. Their names were not released. Safwan's name and photo, on the other hand, were given