

Many Cultures *Working* in **UNISON**

The Asylum Myths

If it wasn't bad enough that the fascist BNP stood two candidates in the recent General Election in Glasgow peddling their race hatred – we now have mainstream parties attempting to play on misguided fears over asylum and immigration.

The facts are that the birth rate in Scotland has been steadily declining and our population is projected to have fallen to 4.6 million by 2040. This leaflet addresses some of the most common myths:-

We're full up, we can't take any more

The vision is frightening: population growing out-of-hand; foreigners flooding in from across the world to take our jobs and live well on state hand-outs. But what is the truth?

Scotland's population in decline

The 2001 census is reckoned to be the most accurate ever. The first shock was that we have been over-estimating our population. The survey knocked off a million people!

There are 58.8 million people living in the UK – just over 5 million (5,045,000) in Scotland. In 2040 it is projected that the population will fall to 4,590,000.

The UK is home to less than 2% of the world's refugees - around 250,000 people from around nearly 10m worldwide.

The birth rate in Scotland has been steadily declining and is expected to fall further. Average family sizes have already fallen from just 2 children per woman born in the 1950s to 1.6 born in 1975 and later.

They're taking our jobs

In Scotland unemployment is low – we have a labour shortage in many areas. Without migrants our building trade would collapse, our catering and tourist trade would suffer and crops would go un-harvested. The health service as we know it would fall apart. Migrants often create new industries, Indian and Chinese restau-

rants are a good example of this. Old sectors can also be given a new lease of life such as corner shops.

They're a drain on taxes

Migrant workers actually give more than they take. Largely because most migrants are of working age. The Home Office estimates that migrants contribute 10% more in revenue than they receive in benefits. Without them taxes would need to rise by 1p in the £.

They all head for Britain

Britain is a great place to live and work and Britain is attractive to those who speak English and have links here. Nevertheless our tight immigration controls mean that in the European league table, Britain is in the middle. The greatest burden falls on the developing world.

We're losing our identity

The fear of change is a powerful force exploited by racist groups. What does it mean to be Scottish? Throughout its history, Scotland has absorbed foreign cultures. We are a mix of races gaining strength and trade from outside ideas and influences. International food, diverse music, dance and theatre have all benefited from a multi-cultural Scotland.

Here in Scotland, if all asylum seekers and refugees gathered in Glasgow's Hampden Park it would still be over 80% empty.

Stop the far right

UNISON and UNISON members can stop far right groups spreading their hatred in Scottish workplaces and communities. The lies spread by far right groups must be answered. The UNISON booklet *The Asylum Myths* tackles a few of the main myths.

Fight racism

Racism has no place in workplaces and communities across Scotland. UNISON will champion victims of discrimination and press employers to adopt recruitment and promotion practices that treat everyone equally. Racism flourishes when it is unchallenged. Please use the information in this leaflet and its companion book to attack racism.

If you want to know more about UNISON Scotland's Anti-Racism campaign or order campaigning material including copies of *The Asylum Myths* booklet (stock no. 2-sco), please contact UNISON Scotland on 0870 7777 006, or by e-mail k.oneil@unison.co.uk, or at 14 West Campbell Street, Glasgow G2 6RX. To join UNISON call 0845 355 0845.

UNISON Scotland's website is at **www.unison-scotland.org.uk**

