Another day, another scare story. The papers say Britain is under siege from asylum seekers. They blame them for higher taxes, crime, rising house prices, hospital waiting lists, cheap labour, terrorism and AIDS. Mainstream politicians either agree or refuse to challenge these stories.

The second is that you are being lied to - deliberately, day in, day out - about asylum seekers.

There are two possible reasons for this press campaign. Only one of them can be true.

The first is that fake refugees are being lied to - deliberately, day in, day out - about asylum seekers.

The second is that you are being lied to - deliberately, day in, day out - about asylum seekers.

Many people believe asylum seekers are one of society's biggest problems. No wonder.

The scare stories printed every day in the Sun, Express, Star and Mail are hardly ever challenged in the press or in parliament.

That's why, inside, we set out some facts that might make you think differently. We think they show that asylum seekers are not causing these problems, but are being used as scapegoats for society's problems.

If we're right, then whoever is responsible for society's problems are getting away scot-free.

It's the oldest trick in the book. Blame the other folk. Divide and rule.

We didn't produce this leaflet because we're a bunch of bleeding hearts. We did it because we're a fella. Divide and rule.

Above all, we're fed up with low pay and crime. Fed up with piecemeal. Fed up with schools and hospitals being run down and sold off piecemeal. Fed up with low pay and crime.

Above all, we're fed up being lied to. Let's look at what the papers say - and let's look at the truth.

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DOES BRITAIN TAKE MORE THAN IT'S FAIR SHARE?

Does the UK really take more away from the rest of the world than it gives back? This is a worldwide league table of countries taking asylum seekers. The countries with the highest numbers are all poor, developing countries. Pakistan has most refugees, with over 2 million. Then comes Iran with over 1.1 million. Turkey comes third in Europe.

DOESN'T UK IMMIGRATION CAUSE CRIME?

The popular myth is that asylum seekers cause crime. However, the Home Office's own figures confirm this is not the case. In 1998/99, the 10% highest crime areas had 41% of all asylum seekers. Yet in the same year, the 10% lowest crime areas had 41% of all aslyum seekers.

AREMIGRANTS DRAGGINGBRITAIN'SRESOURCES?

The Government’s own figures show that migrants and refugees make a huge positive contribution to the British national wealth. They made a net contribution of around £2.5 billion to income tax in 1999-2000. This means they bring £600 million a year more than the cost of providing asylum seekers medical treatment.

AREASYLUMSEEKERSJUSTONYTHEMAKE?ARETHEYMAINLYBOYS?

They, too, come from any poor country, not just where there is war and persecution. But the countries asylum seekers come from closely follow the pattern of wars, conflicts and repression around the world.

In 2000-2001 they mainly came from, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Zimbabwe. In the 1990s it was the Balkans. In the 1980s it was south east Asia. And the 1970s were the Balkans. In the 1960s were the Middle East and south east Asia.

AREASYLUMSEEKERSUSEFALSEDOCUMENTS?

Of course. A method is required to check mainly from a refugee regime like the Taliban’s or Saddam Hussein’s. That’s why Article 31 of the 1951 Convention on Refugees prohibits governments from penalising refugees who use false documents.

AREN'TALWAYSITJUSTONTHEMAKE?

Then how come one in three applications succeed, even though the government keeps tightening up on the rules to keep people out? This means these people will remain in peace. They were there because they were protected by oppressive regimes, despite very restrictive rules. It was the government, not asylum seekers, in need of some kind of humanitarian protection.

AREASYLUMSEEKERSJUSTONTHEMAKE?

Hardly. Asylum seekers get just £37.7 a week. 30% below the poverty line. They are not allowed to claim other benefits.

ARE THEY MUSLIMS?

No. Services for asylum seekers are not far out of line with others.

AREN'TASYLUMSEEKERSANDMIGRANTSCAUSECRIME?

In every country where there are asylum seekers or refugees there is evidence that refugees and asylum seekers are more likely that other people to commit crimes. The Home Office's own figures confirm that asylum seekers are the only group of people in the country likely to become victims of crime in the UK.

AREASYLAMCESEEKERSCAUSINGUNEMPLOYMENT?

No. In fact there are more workers here. This is the basic fact that the Tories’ working population in declining and fact that the education and health services are crying out for staff. The EU estimates that Europe needs 1.8 million new workers a year.

AREN'TTHEYTAKEINGCHEAPJOBSANDDRIVINGDOWNWAGES?

Some take casual work or jobs “off the books” – because of poverty and the bar on working. This means they are not a drain on the minimum wage and are always subject to downward pressure on other workers’ pay. The name changes that blame them for undercutting wages. The £10, £10.5, the £11, the £12. They are not new workers to pay.

AREN'TTHEYCAUSINGUNEMPLOYMENT?

Nowhere in the world is there a country where asylum seekers are found to be a drain on employment or wages. The opposite is true.

SOURCES: IPPR research paper 'Asylum in the UK'; Refugee Council ‘Press Myths’; Independent ‘Asylum – the facts’; plus papers from Home Office, UNHCR, ACPO, General Medical Council, Commission for Racial Equality, MOPI.