

UK: Baptised by fire: an interview with Suresh Grover

Monday 15 February 2021, by [GROVER Suresh](#), [NIJJAR Jasbinder S.](#) (Date first published: 26 January 2021).

In this contribution to narrating the black British history of struggle, one of the leading lights of community-based anti-racism, who has worked over four decades from Southall, west of London and one of the first post-war settlements of 'New Commonwealth' Asian workers, is interviewed. He records some of the milestone struggles of The Monitoring Group from the street campaigning against lethal racist violence in the 1970s to the nationally important watershed government-commissioned report by Macpherson acknowledging institutional racism in 1999. Suresh Grover explains the impetus for organising, and the ways of building an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchal movement around and beyond family campaigns against state injustices - changing over time to meet new circumstances.

Jasbinder S. Nijjar: You, along with other community campaigners, formed the Southall Monitoring Group (SMG) in 1981. Anti-racist struggle was, of course, being conducted in and beyond the streets of Southall for many years before. So, what were the political conditions and motivations behind the birth of the SMG?

Suresh Grover: Southall was, and remains, a conurbation of working-class black and Asian people. It has a powerful history of waging struggles against racism and discrimination and is home to a significant South Asian diaspora that remains active on subcontinental politics and culture. Southall's Asian workers led the important strike for equal wages and trade union recognition at Woolf's Rubber factory in the 1960s, demands they eventually won. There were numerous and sometimes mass campaigns against immigration controls from 1961 onwards, including the degrading virginity tests that were carried out on Asian women at Heathrow Airport, a few miles from Southall. [1] It also witnessed a more than a decade-long campaign against 'bussing', when Southall's immigrant children were sent to schools outside of the area due to the government's discriminatory education policy [that there should not be more than 30 per cent of immigrant children in one school]. There were also housing struggles, as the local authority had imposed a length-of-residence rule that effectively prevented immigrants from qualifying for council housing. [2]

The arrival of black and Asian people into the town provoked significant anger among white residents, who mobilised as one of the first anti-immigration organisations in 1963, the Southall Residents Association, to keep the town white despite its decaying state. (The fact that the new immigrant workers were actually maintaining local industries such as Woolf's, Rockware Glass, Perivale Gutermann and food processing by doing the dirtiest and most dangerous and unpleasant jobs that local workers were not there to do or could choose not to do, passed the racists by.)

And then in the mid-1970s, a younger generation of activists emerged, which challenged the giant twins of racial violence and police racism on the streets. On 4 June 1976, Gurdip Singh Chaggar was murdered by racists in Southall, which resulted in youth rebellion and public disorder on the streets

and the emergence of youth movements locally and nationally. In 1979, anti-fascist protester Blair Peach was killed by the Special Patrol Group (SPG), while the community of Southall was (to allow a meeting of the National Front in the town hall) subjected to militarised and violent policing, which led to the demolition of the local Peoples Unite building, arbitrary arrests, and trials at Barnet Magistrates Court, nineteen miles away – trials by stipendiary magistrates where a large proportion of the 342 people arrested were convicted. [3] On 3 July 1981, we had coachloads of skinheads arriving for a music gig come into Southall and try to intimidate the community, which resulted in local youths organising and burning down the Hambrough Tavern pub where the musicians were to perform. A week later, there was further public order disturbances after a confrontation between young activists and police. These are the experiences that were taking place in Southall.

When we met in December 1981 to begin our discussions to form the Southall Monitoring Group, the national situation had also blown up that year. In January 1981, the 'New Cross Massacre' had happened, where thirteen people died in an unexplained house fire. There was also the Swamp '81 police operation in Brixton in April that year, and, because of institutionally racist policing, SUS laws, and the attacks on communities, we saw uprisings or urban rebellions in over thirty cities and towns across Britain. [4] Several of us were also active in coordinating a national campaign for the Bradford 12 [who, during the self-defence of their community against a fascist incursion, had been accused of conspiracy to make explosives and cause explosions]. [5] The second phase of the hunger strikes by Irish Republican prisoners also had a deep impact on many of us.

So, it was an intense period of baptism by fire, where racism was at the fore and young black and Asian people were trying to build anti-racist resistance starting from the streets with communities at the centre. We wanted to establish and develop a self-organised and independent organisation that was embedded in Southall and had a progressive political and social outlook.

Although the youth movement had made a significant impact locally, it was having to deal with being overshadowed by the might of different Indian Workers' Organisations that collectively could galvanise thousands of supporters. They had influence within the trade union movements (and much later in the Labour Party) and, depending on the politics of their leaders, provided support to workers fighting discrimination at different factories. They had provided the leaderships and the troops for mass anti-immigration demonstrations and the early anti-racist struggles. [6]

However, Chaggar's murder broke their monopoly which sought to accommodate to state power through multiculturalism rather than anti-racism. And their power slowly waned as the '79 and '81 events unfolded – in essence the terrain on racism had shifted from nominal equality to racial justice.

This meant that any new organisation or movement had to be inclusive and shaped by young people, women and workers in black communities. We were conscious of sexism and the overriding strength of patriarchy in our families, and looked towards black and South Asian feminist discourse to shape our thinking. From the outset, and mainly because we had witnessed the sexism and intimidation suffered by the founders of the Southall Black Sisters, some of whom we counted as friends and who remain so until today, we began supporting women-led self-organised groups and provided support to domestic violence victims. It is almost forgotten but, even before the establishment of Southall Black Sisters in 1979, there were Asian women's groups active in Southall.

There was also new momentum developing within the local Caribbean community. We saw the emergence of the Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookshop in the borough, that served as a cultural hub for the community by providing support, guidance on campaigning and books from Africa and the Caribbean. In Southall, Peoples Unite, which was a self-organised education and music cooperative closely associated with [reggae group] Misty in Roots, also began to take centre stage. After the

Peoples Unite building was attacked by the SPG in 1979, it was demolished within months under the leadership of Ealing council – in fact, its Conservative leader was to be awarded an OBE for ‘community relations’.

Most of us in that period were also influenced by the fusion of political and cultural movements across the world, such as the music of Miriam Makeba, who linked the struggle for freedom in South Africa with support for the Black Panther Party. We also gravitated towards local bhangra bands like Alaap and Kala Preet, the reggae music of Misty in Roots, and the dub poetry and music of Linton Kwesi Johnson, as well as generally supporting Rock Against Racism.

The birth of the SMG was influenced by the political and cultural landscape that existed around us. To be honest, we fought on the streets, we carried out legal defence and campaigning work, and we quarrelled and debated amongst ourselves to make sense of the political period we were living in. It was the fire in our belly that was shaping our politics and activism. When we sat in a damp room, during a bitterly cold winter, in front of a paraffin heater, with not much light, it was the need to organise against the violence of state-sanctioned and street-based racism that drove us to discuss the inception of the group.

JSN: The idea of a monitoring group is rooted in the activism of the Black Panther Party, and its efforts to monitor and resist systemic police brutality against African-American communities. What influence did radical black politics have on the formation of the SMG?

SG: For us, the idea of monitoring police violence and actions came from the work of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in the United States. At that time, members of the Black Panther Party would follow police cars to observe the policing of black neighbourhoods. So, we took the concept of a monitoring group from the Black Panthers, and that is what we meant by monitoring. It is not the monitoring of data and analysis, but the monitoring of police racism, violence and misconduct. Also, the Black Panther Party’s efforts to link up with the poorest sections of the community, and to represent them politically, were a big influence on us. We learnt from their ten-point programme, and from their food programme, which showed us the importance of connecting political struggle with providing a service that could deal with daily effects of poverty as well as racism.

Regarding local influence, by 1981, the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) had written a report called *Police Against Black People*. It documented the experiences of black and Asian communities with the police in different settings, from the systematic over-policing of music venues to facing daily police harassment on the streets and so on. The IRR was a natural and logical home for us, and one which we gravitated towards more than any other organisation because of its radical anti-racist stance and publications such as *CARF* [Campaign Against Racism and Fascism] and *Race & Class*. Discussions with Siva [Sivanandan the IRR director and founding editor of *Race & Class*] and other people confirmed our view that we were moving in the right direction, in terms of creating a group that would actively focus on challenging the multiple forms of institutional racism in policing. We saw that this was the common experience affecting young black and Asian working-class people and we were part of that generation at that moment.

The Irish struggle was important for us too, given that it was a struggle of self-rule, civil rights and Republicanism against British colonialism. What was key for us was the question of how it was possible for a Republican Movement to sustain itself and not be defeated, despite the intensity and brutality it suffered at the hands of the British state through legal and non-legal means. We realised that it had close connections with its communities, and it serviced them through advice centres and so on. What we took from that – and perhaps it is just our understanding and I am not saying it is absolutely accurate – was the idea that if you wanted to develop political resistance against state

racism, you had to deliver services to, and keep in contact with, communities. We knew we had to create a vehicle which was able to engage in political campaigning, while also directly affecting and supporting black and Asian working-class communities on the ground by providing a service.

The emergence of black politics and anti-racist mobilisation in Britain coincided with seismic political upheaval in South Asia, the struggles of which were also very prominent for us. In Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had come into power in the 1970s and there was a popular movement against the military dictatorship. In Bangladesh, there were the liberation struggles waged and won by the Mukti Bahini movement that created Bangladesh. I was involved with a group called Asian Socialist Forum that established the Campaign to Free Indian Political Prisoners, which publicised the plight of thousands of prisoners detained under 'The Emergency' imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975. Many of us had also been influenced by what was happening in Sri Lanka in the early 1970s, such as the rise of the youth insurrection under the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). One of the leaders of the JVP, Rohana Wijeweera, had been incarcerated, which led to the creation of the Ceylon Solidarity Campaign - this was one of my first insights into campaigning.

It was not like we did some sort of systematic analysis of all these struggles. But there was an understanding of them based on our own lived experience, in terms of how they were being waged, what their intensity was and where they were leading. And there was also absolute sympathy for them.

JSN: Now the Southall Monitoring Group is known as The Monitoring Group and supports victims of racism across Britain. How and why did The Monitoring Group expand its focus from doing anti-racist work in Southall to organising on a national and, indeed, international scale?

SG: Before we go into the 1990s and 2000s, when we became The Monitoring Group, it is important to explore what happened prior to that. From 1981 onwards, there were multiple campaigns that took place which were key to our development. Among them is the Kuldip Sekhon campaign - Kuldip was a taxi driver killed in Southall in November 1988 after being stabbed fifty-eight times. The person who killed him was known as a young 'fronty'. In other words, he was a racist who had been taking part in attacks on black and brown people in the area. He deliberately created a plan to get a taxi driver - likely to be Asian - to come and pick him up, and then took Kuldip to an area where he could kill him. It was a premeditated racial attack, but the police refused to acknowledge it as racial violence.

Kuldip Sekhon's family wanted to call a demonstration on the day of his funeral, which took place on 31 January 1989. With the family, we managed to close Southall for half of the day after speaking to shop owners, schools, banks, bookmakers and so on. We also attracted four to five thousand people at the funeral, outside the local Dominion Centre. It was obvious to us that if we worked in a family-centred way, if we tried to enable justice, if we were true to people and explained what we did, providing you have the connections and are rooted in those communities, it is possible to do anything. Numerous campaigns took place in the following years which were just as powerful, but the Sekhon campaign enabled us to consolidate our support in the community, which we did through service delivery, political campaigning and not misusing trust.

Following the Sekhon family campaign, in 1993, a relative of the Stephen Lawrence family approached me for assistance on developing a campaign. [7] The Lawrences had been discouraged, if I can use that word, by the kind of support they were getting. By the time the private prosecution came about in 1994, the Southall Monitoring Group was coordinating the Lawrence campaign and we sustained that connection with the Lawrences from 1993 to 1999. And when the recommendations from the public inquiry came out, around a thousand families had contacted us nationally. We were not amazed by that, because we were coordinating other family justice

campaigns, including those for Ricky Reel [who drowned following or during a racist attack in October 1997], Michael Menson [who was set alight by racists and died from his burns in January 1997] and others who suffered racism and then the reluctance of the police and criminal justice system to recognise what had happened and investigate thoroughly. But it showed us the large-scale lack of assistance that black and Asian families had faced, and the gravity of racism they had endured. It further confirmed to us that the litany of failures which the Lawrences had suffered were being experienced by other families on a broader, systematic scale. [8]

As a response to this, we, along with others, created a national network following the recommendations in the Macpherson Report of the Lawrence Inquiry. [9] The first meeting attracted around 800 people from all over Britain – and we made a conscious effort to speak to every single family. It became obvious to us that we could not just call ourselves the Southall Monitoring Group, and that we had to have a national profile, so we changed our name to The Monitoring Group. However, we were always conscious that Southall would be our home, our base, and that we would never not be involved in our local community.

JSN: The Monitoring Group has been involved in coordinating many family-led justice campaigns, some of which you mentioned above. It has also coordinated defence campaigns for those charged when effectively protecting themselves or their communities such as the Bradford 12 and Drummond Street youth. How would you describe The Monitoring Group's method or its strategy of turning issues into campaigns that are part of a broader movement against racism?

SG: Three things describe our work. The first is that we are an advocacy agency, and advocacy is not just about advocating at an individual level. If possible, it is about changing the system that reproduces racism. We are concerned with addressing not only the impact of racism, but also the root cause of it. Otherwise, you are just firefighting all the time, and there are moments where we are doing that. But, for our work, recognising the politics of racism is critical. It means that when we work on a case of racial violence, or of police or structural racism, we are challenging the myth that black and brown people are the problem, rather than institutional racism. It also means that we do not see these cases as exceptional. The rule is that we live in a racist society and the families we work with are the victims of a systematic form of racism.

The second point is that we have never sought to patronise the families who come to us. We have always viewed them as individuals who have the power to change the broader conditions around them. What they lack is either an acknowledgement from the state, the response that the state should be giving, or, more importantly, the information and knowledge required to change the wider circumstances that have shaped their lived experience. So, for us, holding state agencies to account becomes pivotal to that process of change. We have always seen the families we work with as people who have the capacity to analyse, take part in decision-making, and generate momentum for not only addressing the injustices they have faced, but also understanding the wider political causes of them.

The third point is that if cases become causes, and causes develop into a movement, three things happen. Firstly, victims become protagonists and the leading agents of change. This is evidenced by the Lawrence campaign, as well as other campaigns we have coordinated, in that The Monitoring Group is less known than the victims themselves, and that is a model we have actively created. Secondly, if you can create a grassroots movement and show a collective or united front to the state, the chances of making positive changes, even on a reform level, become greater. And finally, the alliances or coalitions that are built between families, communities and organisations are a vital step towards dismantling the structures that perpetuate racism. Coalition work allows collective thinking and discussion about making root-and-branch changes. That is the most difficult part. You can build causes and movements but dismantling and rebuilding the structures of society requires a much broader analysis. [10]

We have pockets of radical histories and communities. This is important, because they make it possible to develop alliances at local or grassroots levels, which are necessary steps towards building a broader movement. But movements are also dynamic, rather than static. It is important to acknowledge that movements are not formed or developed simply by naming something as a movement. They are made up of a constellation of different political and economic forces which change over time. Any form of collective organisation and mass mobilisation must recognise and respond to these ongoing shifts in power.

JSN: The Stephen Lawrence campaign perhaps received the most mainstream attention, leading to the Macpherson Report and its verdict of institutional racism. Can you tell us about The Monitoring Group's role in articulating the long-lived experiences of black and Asian communities, in what was such a high-profile scenario?

SG: We were involved at different levels of the Stephen Lawrence campaign, beginning really from 1993, when, as I alluded to earlier, Stephen's cousin visited me. That was when we began working with the Lawrence family to revitalise the Stephen Lawrence campaign. The Southall Monitoring Group was part of the decision-making process regarding the private prosecution [of the alleged attackers that the Crown Prosecution Service had failed to charge]. Also, by the time we started this process, Stephen's mother Doreen was working in the Southall Monitoring Group as a domestic violence worker, while his father Neville would come and assist, so that is when some of the meetings on campaign strategy took place. Not everything happened at these meetings - obviously the lawyers were involved independently and were the people that decided the strategies with the family. But, working with Doreen and Neville allowed us to have closer contact with them.

When the public inquiry came about in 1998, we had further discussions with Doreen and Neville about what the campaign strategy would be. On the first day of the inquiry, not many people attended, perhaps because people thought the inquiry would be sterile. Nobody knew what it would bring. The Lawrences decided that we had to become more active, which led the Southall Monitoring Group to create a Stephen Lawrence family campaign afresh by including new people. The campaign was made up of us, three members of the Newham Monitoring Project, the legal team, and the family. We also involved black trade unionists. It was a small group of people whom the family trusted, and I took a *de facto* role in coordinating that campaign, because I had been involved with the family before.

There were three things that we were conscious of, and that we needed to have an impact on. The first was to fill the space and bring community experiences to the hearing. It meant making the public gallery become active and reflect a community's experience in the court setting. It was not simply about listening at a micro level on a specific case. Macpherson and his advisors were conscious that the public gallery was full, and we wanted them to see that the Lawrence case was not exceptional, and that it was a pattern of other systemic failings that had taken place. We managed to get scores of families, activists and the general public to attend, and there was no turning back once we had reignited the campaign.

We also had international people and activists who had been part of anti-racist struggle or black struggle coming and visiting. I had the privilege of meeting Fredrika Newton, the widow of Huey P. Newton, when she turned up with David Hilliard. I introduced her to the Lawrence family, and we had a meeting with her and the Black Panther representatives separately.

The second thing was that it was obvious the legal team would be restricted in what they would say. So, we encouraged the public gallery to become more active and outspoken - we wanted it to be noticeable, to be seen to be reasonable, but also to not stand the bullshit that was being said by police officers as justification for their failures. It led to the creation of the Public Gallery

Committee, which would issue its own statements, independent of the Stephen Lawrence family campaign. It was a riveting period because people who came to the inquiry, but who were not necessarily connected with the Lawrences, became a part of it. I think that worked well, it got people involved, but, at the same time, they did not have to be part of the individual decisions that were made by the family.

The third thing is that we put ourselves at the disposal of the Lawrence family. We would have done anything for them, because we thought they represented the public face of a massive tragedy, whose characteristics – racial violence and police failures – had impacted on black and brown communities in Britain for decades. We had the resources and experiences to develop campaigns, given that we had experienced racial violence personally, and because we had been part of a larger struggle against state racism. But, ultimately, it was the Lawrences who were the central face of the campaign until February 1999, which was the final time the campaign group met.

JSN: It has been over twenty years since the Macpherson Report was published, but our current moment is one where institutional racism, police militarisation, nationalist sentiments, and far-right fascism are flourishing at local, national and global levels. What does The Monitoring Group's current work tell us about the state of racism today?

SG: Racism has always been, and remains, a political problem. The state is the foundation, the arbiter and developer of racism, including racism in its popular or individualistic forms. If you lose sight of the politics of racism, it becomes an issue of prejudice between different people. I am not saying that day-to-day racist interactions are not relevant or important. But you cannot challenge everyday racism unless you challenge the source of that racism, which is the state. It is state policies and laws that set the context for, and create new ideologies and forms of, racism.

We also know that racism has a historical dimension. It has existed for centuries and comes in many forms, which means that, as a political problem, it is never static. But, the racism of today is different to the racism that existed during the industrialisation of countries and colonialism. Today, we have the racism of neoliberalism, which has led to the mass exodus of migrant populations from their home countries because of local and foreign economic policies, the devastation of industrial complexes by multinational corporations, famine, regime change, and so on. [11]

Secondly, there is no question that the legacy of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry is its use of the term institutional racism. But now we are witnessing a concerted effort post-Macpherson, by people who have never really accepted the implications of institutional racism existing, to create newer definitions of racism. These new definitions, that are rooted in concepts like unconscious bias and hate crime, personalise and depoliticise racism. [12] They create a hollow definition of racism. I think this has been a deliberate and systematic manoeuvre, because the consequence of acknowledging the existence and prevalence of institutional racism is structural and systemic change. To avoid this, state agencies have done everything possible to dismantle Macpherson's definition of institutional racism, regardless of how accurate or full it was.

It is a devastating indictment of our times, especially when considering that race and class disparities expressed through Covid-19, the disproportionate use of stop and search on black people – even during lockdown – and Black Lives Matter have shown how institutional racism still exists. Yet you have prime minister Boris Johnson creating a new commission on racial and ethnic disparities, which is meaningless since it involves people like Tony Sewell and Munira Mirza, who are deniers of institutional racism and have got together to redefine, re-strengthen and re-legitimise an attack on the notion of institutional racism, without ever addressing its realities. [13] That is also why the Metropolitan Police commissioner, Cressida Dick, told the Home Affairs Committee that institutional racism is not a helpful term or concept. [14] So, in effect, what we are witnessing is an

attack on the gains made by grassroots family justice campaigns on the issue of understanding and dealing with racism.

All of this requires us to be very decisive about how we shape the future. I think the first thing we need do is ensure that we reclaim anti-racism with its political and historical roots. Both the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles of the past, and the lived experiences of communities today, must be central to anti-racism, so that we can make connections between historical and contemporary phases of racism. I also think we must take on the far Right with a broader analysis that encompasses anti-racism rather than just anti-fascism. We must understand that the fight against institutional racism is part and parcel of defeating the far Right and fascism.

The Left has always dealt with fascism, but not with structural racism. Part of that is because it must question itself, and because the labour movement, including the Labour Party itself, does not know how to deal with systemic forms of racism. It deals with racism in a populist way, by highlighting antisemitism, not structurally, but in a kind of all-encompassing way that then silences legitimate criticism of Israel and, so, silences the Palestinian people. As a result, it fails to dismantle the structures that perpetuate racism. Labour has no policy or strategy on how to deal with institutional racism in the police force, the criminal justice system, or anywhere else, and it is unlikely to come for the next five years, which leaves us in a very dangerous and alarming situation.

JSN: From a personal perspective, among the lessons I have learnt from working with The Monitoring Group is the importance of rooting anti-racist activism in a sense of hope and possibility about building a better future. And while the present appears particularly bleak, calls to defund the police and end racist police brutality are louder than ever. What are your hopes for the future of The Monitoring Group, and for anti-racism more broadly?

SG: I believe that the future is black, by that I mean politically black. There is enough courage at an individual level, enough resilience at a community level, and enough vision at a global level, in terms of anti-racist and anti-colonial struggle, for us to unite, establish strong alliances and reshape the future. I am not somebody who has been pessimistic, nor have I ever really been demoralised. At sixty-odd, I still feel the future is winnable. I am optimistic because we are seeing the emergence of a younger generation that perhaps is not baptised by fire like my generation was, but they are willing to grapple with the nature of state racism and expose it more diligently than we did, using different tools. I think they have learnt that the gains that should have been made have not been made, and they are a generation that do not see themselves as going back to any other country - Britain is the country they wish to transform.

The other point is that over the last four to five years, despite the growth of far-right authoritarianism, we have seen real victories, both locally and nationally. From The Monitoring Group's perspective, we have won massive campaigns locally. We won the campaign to save the Southall Town Hall, which is a public utility that was being sold to a private buyer by Ealing council. It is a massive victory, because it shows that when people come together with a vision for Southall that rejects neoliberalism, anything is possible. [\[15\]](#) We also won the Save the Tudor Rose campaign. The Tudor Rose is an iconic building in Southall - a space for black music, arts and culture - that has national prominence, but was being sold purely for gentrification purposes. The campaign brought African-Caribbean, Asian, church and secular people together. It happened when Black Lives Matter was gaining significant momentum, and its success meant that the council could not just live by symbolic gestures towards anti-racism.

These victories show the resilience that communities have, when it comes to resisting the twin forces of racism and neoliberalism. They show that communities count and that they have a voice. People understand that a future built on austerity and privatisation is meaningless and damaging,

and they understand the need to preserve public spaces and services which are critical for the prosperity of future generations. There is a model that works in anti-racism, which has been invigorated by grassroots community campaigners. We are the forces of victory, and not only can we win, but we can win with others as a collective force. We just hope that these local victories can be replicated on a national and international level.

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P.S.

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Footnotes

[1] Such invasive vaginal tests were carried out to ascertain whether a woman was a bona fide fiancée, or a wife trying to 'jump the queue', sometimes two years long, for entry to the UK.

[Google Scholar](#)

[2] For further reading on Southall's early struggles see Peter Marsh , *Anatomy of a strike* (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1967); A. Sivanandan, 'From resistance to rebellion: Asian and Afro-Caribbean struggles in Britain', *Race & Class* 23, no. 2-3 (1981), pp. 111-52. [Google Scholar](#)

[3] To understand more about this period, see Campaign Against Racism and Fascism and Southall Rights , *Southall: the birth of a black community* (London: Institute of Race Relations, 1981); Suresh Grover and Jagdish Patel, eds, *Coming of Age: 1976 and the road to anti-racism* (The Monitoring Group, 2017); Jasbinder S. Nijjar, 'Southall: symbol of resistance', *Race & Class* 60, no. 4 (2019), pp. 65-69. [Google Scholar](#)

[4] For details of these 'riots' and Swamp '81 see Notes and Documents 'the riots' in *Race & Class*, 23 no. 2-3 (1981), pp. 223-232. [Google Scholar](#)

[5] For more on the Bradford 12 case, see <https://libcom.org/history/bradford-12-self-defence-no-offence>. [Google Scholar](#)

[6] The Indian Workers' Associations (IWAs) in the UK divided along party political lines (IWA Congress/CP, IWA GB, IWA GBML) . One of the first and strongest IWAs was formed in Southall in 1957. For more on IWAs, see John Dewitt, *Indian Workers' Associations in Britain* (OUP for Institute of Race Relations, 1969).[Google Scholar](#)

[7] Stephen Lawrence was stabbed to death by a white racist gang on the street in Eltham, south London on 22 April 1993. When the Crown Prosecution Service decided in July 1993 there was not enough evidence to charge those arrested for the murder, the family brought the first private prosecution for murder in modern legal history. It failed. However, after a constant family campaign for justice, on 3 January 2012, two of the gang were found guilty of Stephen's murder. But before that conviction, agitation by the family and campaigners had pressured the Home Secretary to hold a public inquiry into 'matters arising from the death of Stephen Lawrence and identify lessons to be learned from the investigation and the prosecution of racially motivated crimes'. Sir William Macpherson reported in February 1999, finding for the first time in an official inquiry, the evidence of institutional racism in the police. [Google Scholar](#)

[8] For an account of cases taken up by The Monitoring Group see <http://www.tmg-uk.org/history-of-tmg/>. [Google Scholar](#)

[9] The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report . . . chairman Sir William Macpherson (London: Home Office, 1999), CM4262. [Google Scholar](#)

[10] See for discussion of such building, Jenny Bourne , 'Movement for Black Lives: an interview with Barbara Ransby', IRR News, 24 July 2020, <https://irr.org.uk/article/movement-for-black-lives-an-interview-with-barbara-ransby/>. [Google Scholar](#)

[11] Sivanandan, See A. , 'Poverty is the new Black', Race & Class 43, no. 2 (2001), pp. 1-5. [Google Scholar](#) | [SAGE Journals](#)

[12] Bourne, See J. , 'Unravelling the concept of unconscious bias', Race & Class 60, no. 4 (2019), pp. 70-75. [Google Scholar](#) | [SAGE Journals](#)

[13] Kevin Rawlinson and Vikram Dodd, 'Race equality chief faces legal challenge over appointment', The Guardian, 11 August 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/11/race-equality-chief-tony-sewell-faces-legal-challenge-over-appointment?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other. [Google Scholar](#)

[14] Forrest, Adam , 'Metropolitan Police chief denies force is "institutionally racist" and pledges to listen to Black Lives Matter protesters', The Independent, 8 July 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/met-police-cressida-dick-racism-bianca-williams-stop-search-a9607671.html>. [Google Scholar](#)

[15] Grover, Suresh , 'Save Southall Town Hall', IRR News, 16 February 2018, <https://irr.org.uk/article/save-southall-town-hall/>. [Google Scholar](#)