

Young Blacks, Political Groups and the Police in Handsworth

The Formation of Black Handsworth

In the early post-war World War II years, Handsworth was a multi-class district of Birmingham ranging from the relatively homogeneous professional middle class in Handsworth Wood to the heterogeneous Irish and European immigrant manual workers, single people, newlyweds, the old, poor and war displaced in Soho.¹

The post-war economic boom coupled with declining economic viability of maintaining nineteenth century villas as single family residences, encouraged an outward movement of sectors of the population into the new residential suburbs. These villas had been converted into multi-occupational units² and facilitated an inward movement of immigrants from the Caribbean, principally from Jamaica, attracted to Birmingham by the shortage of labour,³ and the USA Walter-MacLaren Act restricting immigration from the Caribbean into the USA. The changes taking place produced an accelerated outward movement of White residents fleeing from a perceived status deprivation and a dislike of the behaviour of the new immigrants.⁴ With the difficulties in obtaining accommodation in other parts of Birmingham facing black people,⁵ 'White flight' from Handsworth created space for more Caribbean immigrants to come into the area and, a zone populated primarily by black people began the process of formation.⁶ The Soho area of Handsworth now accommodated an increasing population of Jamaican immigrants and Whites, who were either immigrants or elderly people confined to the area because of their financial inability to move out. On the boundaries of this sector of Handsworth was a white population viewing the situation with trepidation or alarm and primarily concerned with halting the outward expansion of the black population.⁷

Between 1960 and the mid-1970s a variety of methods were tried by the White population on the boundaries of Soho to confine the growing black population within the area already occupied by the newcomers. Support for immigration controls was a general way to register their protest. In the Sandwell ward, which included affluent Handsworth Wood, an anti-immigration candidate standing in the local council elections on a platform of a five year ban on all immigration collected 24% of the vote.⁸ Despite the rise in anti-

immigrant feeling in Handsworth, political intervention by neo-fascist and overtly racist organizations was unsuccessful in attracting support from the local White electorate.⁹

The introduction of immigration controls by both Conservative and Labour Governments between 1961 and 1971 did not diminish the concerns of White residents, who continued to draw attention to their grievances – actual and imaginary, by organizing petitions to the local council complaining about the deterioration of the area, noise, overcrowding, unkempt gardens, vandalism, vagrancy, prostitution and general nuisance.¹⁰

A Conservative local councillor and a local White worker spelled out their particular grievances. The councillor, a guiding influence behind one petition protesting about the establishment of the Handsworth Community Venture in Hamstead Road that would predominantly serve the immigrant population, said,

The centre would have been used intensively. Why should we inflict this (i.e. problems) on hard working people who have bought their homes and want to live in peace and quiet. I do not want them to spread further out. People can't sell their homes to prospective buyers...People don't want to see their standards dropping.¹¹

The worker, who claimed to have been complaining to the Member of Parliament for seven years, said,

...Handsworth is being spoiled by an influx of coloured immigrants, who bring with them a certain amount of vice.¹²

To provide a political/ideological dimension as justification for the dissatisfaction being expressed by elements in the White population, the spectre of Black Power was invoked. A number of residents using St. Peters Church Hall complained about a Black Power symbol inside the church hall¹³ and an article in the Sunday Times reported that rumours were circulating in the area about the possibility of the proposed community venture being taken over by Black Power advocates.¹⁴ When these attempts at containing the Black immigrant population proved ineffective, the fear of falling house prices came to the fore precipitating demands for the City Council to assist the outward movement of whites from the area by buying their homes at 'realistic' prices.¹⁵

Beyond the boundaries of Handsworth, the politics of immigration became a major issue in General Elections and by-elections. In 1964 Birmingham Conservative Parliamentary candidates, with two exceptions including the Handsworth MP,¹⁶ decided to fight the

forthcoming General Election on two major issues - one of which was immigration.¹⁷ This set a precedent for the future and in several elections over the next ten years, candidates, from a number of different parties in constituencies bordering on Handsworth, were prepared to use immigration as an electoral tool or as an instrument of propaganda. Candidates from the major established parties and the small right-wing groups made every effort to outbid each other in the 'immigration issue' political stakes. Walden, the Labour MP for All Saints, put under pressure at a public meeting prior to the 1966 General Election, came out in favour of universally applied immigration controls.¹⁸ Davies, Conservative candidate for Perry Barr, an area whose residents were watching the gradual increase of Black immigrants not far from their 'border', wanted the Government to provide return fares to be available for immigrants to return home if they could not settle here – a forerunner to calls from national politicians for the exclusion of Black immigrants irrespective of whether they could settle or not.¹⁹ The ease with which candidates from the major parties conceded to immigration controls did not abate the issue and they were prepared to go even further to attract votes.

Wallace Lawlor, the Liberal candidate in the 1969 Ladywood by-election, who had earlier come into conflict with Liberal Party headquarters for linking immigrants with disease,²⁰ wanted immigration into Birmingham stopped except for professionals.²¹ A spokesperson for Birmingham City Council also called for immigrants to be diverted to other areas of the country.²² Neither Lawlor nor the Council spokesperson gave any indication how this could be carried out. Did they expect passport controls to be set up all around Birmingham or the erection of a Berlin-style wall all around the city? As constructive proposals they bordered on the ridiculous. The Conservative candidate, Glass, wanted complete control of all immigration from all sources,²³ and the Labour candidate, Fisher, erstwhile not a proponent of firm controls, came over to the cause of limited immigration for the reason, as she put it, to safeguard immigrants.²⁴ The issue of immigration controls had become the means to win elections in areas adjacent to Handsworth and candidates were taken advantage of this new 'seat winner'.

At the time of the Ladywood by-election, a rent-strike was organised in the constituency by tenants in a block of council flats when Birmingham Council proposed to place a second family of African-Caribbean origin there. The Conservative Council threatened

the strikers with eviction if they refused to pay their rents, which quickly led to the tenants abandoning their threat.²⁵

The neo-fascists campaigning slogans did not differ from the major parties. The Union Movement's candidate for the Handsworth constituency, Hamm, its General Secretary, promised that all post-war immigrants would be returned to their own lands, which given that most of whom his declaration was aimed were from the Caribbean and their home countries were under British colonial occupation and were not yet 'their own' was rather less than accurate.²⁶ The British National Democratic Party's candidate for All Saints in 1966, Finnegan, who eventually did not stand and who later became Secretary to the National Front in Birmingham, was for humane repatriation.²⁷ Colin Jordan, British Movement candidate in the Ladywood by-election called for generous grants for immigrants and free passage home.²⁸ The similarity of policies on immigration between the major parties and the neo-fascists was reflected in the votes where the neo-fascist parties received very few vote.²⁹ The voters had no need to go to the organised racist and neo-fascist parties when parties more likely to be elected to government had commandeered their political platforms by proposing similar programmes.

Within those areas adjacent to Handsworth into which immigrants were gradually moving, the constant calls for the control of immigration maintained the pressure on the black population pointing out to them their 'alien' status in Britain. The face of 'respectable' racism embodied by Enoch Powell exerted considerable influence on the West Midlands electorate.³⁰ The national and local media played their part in isolating Black people and defining them as 'the problem'. The local Birmingham Evening Mail portrayed Handsworth as a violent, crime-ridden area,³¹ suggesting that the core of the problem lay in the nature of the black community and not in the position they occupied in British society. The Mail did acknowledge certain structural causes behind the problem, e.g. high unemployment, but it put the blame for this, as well as a 'broken education' and an unstable family life, not on Britain's economic and social order and inherent racism but on what they call the social failures of the (African-Caribbean) community.³²

The seeds of social discontent: 1960—1976

(a) The Emergence of Young Blacks

The standard and quality of living in Handsworth was one of general deterioration. In the Soho ward, which had the greatest density of black habitation, the rate of overcrowding; shared dwellings; lack of hot water and fixed baths was significantly higher than either the Birmingham or national average.³³ Soho had also become a ‘dumping ground’ for what was were defined as white problem families.³⁴ Social facilities were virtually non-existent: a general lack of nursery and play facilities and youth clubs; no formal provision for cultural education; and an absence of job satisfaction.*³⁵

The general blight brought with it a growing dissatisfaction amongst young blacks, which led to a rapid breakdown in relations between youth and existing institutions - family, education and police. Gus Johns noted a significant minority who felt that their teachers were either racists or second-rate who saw their students as factory-fodder or behind the wheel of a bus.³⁶ Increasing alienation was thought responsible for the rise in truancy, theft and conflict within the family.³⁷ More significantly was the deteriorating relationship with the police.

The woeful socio-economic position of Black youth and the consequent breakdown in police/black youth relations led to three developments: (i) the gradual development of a youth sub-cultural criminal element, estimated at fifty strong in 1969;³⁸ (ii) the existence of racist elements in the police force and the use of strong-arm tactics by some police officers;** (iii) pressure exerted on the police by elderly whites, African-Caribbean parents and Asians about the anti-social or perceived anti-social behaviour of young blacks.*** Young Blacks emerged as the focus of police attention in the 1960s when the

* In 1963, there was only one part-time youth club for 10,000 Handsworth youths of whom 3,000 were black, whereas in Northfield with 12,000 youths there were 11 clubs open all the week. In 1967, there was still no purpose built club in the Handsworth area, which now had two youth clubs open one night per week, a church club open four nights per week and two church clubs open one night per week.³⁹

** Superintendent Webb confirmed that racism and strong arm tactics amongst the police were evident when he arrived in Handsworth in 1976.⁴⁰ Gus Johns research identified police on the beat as guided by racist attitudes.⁴¹

*** John Brown, of the Hendon Police College, said that the elderly whites saw the police as their only means of protection. The older African-Caribbeans saw Black youth sub-culture as “bringing shame to their people” and “they press the police for stronger action to clear the youths from the streets.” John Brown’s research, masquerading as a *bona fide* enquiry appeared to be for the purpose of confirming his pre-research and pro-police views by presenting the police in the most favourable light. His research received space in the local newspapers but no serious researcher saw his enquiry as a serious contribution to the study of police/Black youth relations or a study of the situation in Handsworth.⁴²

police attempted to stamp out big crimes and petty pilfering. Unemployed Black people or Black people frequenting clubs were put under a considerable amount of scrutiny by the police that created a great deal of resentment amongst those not involved in any criminal activity.⁴³ In 1969, police action against young blacks was intensified further when the stabbing of a black youth prompted the police, supported by a prominent black community worker, to pursue a policy of stopping and searching all young Black men (SUS), which was interpreted by the target group as racial harassment.⁴⁴ An alternative culture developed out of this close police 'attention' that in itself attracted greater attention from the police, who treated this new Rastafarian/Dreadlock culture as a criminal sub-culture. This amplified the charges, not without good cause, the charge of 'racial' harassment. The police fuelled a cycle of action – reaction – action- reaction.*

One consequence of the conflict of values between parents and youths combined with youth unemployment, financial problems and lack of accommodation led to the creation of the 'squat', which heightened police suspicion that they were centres of criminal activity.⁴⁵ The police then used this suspicion to clear out the squats and disperse or arrest the squatters.⁴⁶

People involved in community work in Handsworth, alert to the situation, gave warnings about the grave state of police/black youth relations. Besides Johns, other people, although recognising the 15-25 age group as particularly hostile, saw the problem as not 'stem(ming) from a small minority of black trouble makers....(but from) the policies and attitudes adopted by the police." The critics urged action 'before the policeman in Handsworth becomes a symbol of oppression and prejudice to all black people a point from which there could be no return.'⁴⁷ Later in the month, a police spokesman was continuously heckled and a succession of black and white platform speakers brought allegations against the police of brutality, victimization and planting of evidence.⁴⁸

These critical and insightful comments, inevitably, given the way the 'politics of race' operated where criticism of the "forces of law and order by representatives of this alien population" brought its own flavour of indignation from a variety of sources in their attempt to direct attention away from the sources of the problem. The counter critics dismissed the warnings as irresponsible, exaggeration and failing to present a true impression of the Handsworth police or the local community.⁴⁹ The Johns' Report was

criticised for failing to give a true impression of Handsworth police or the local community; that things had improved since the report was compiled; and probation officer wrote that he had never come across anyone manhandled by the police, which gave the impression of him never having stepped foot in Handsworth or speaking to a Black person.⁵⁰ They were a representative sample, draped in the raiment of the local establishment, including 'the Chief Constable of Birmingham, the Senior Community Relations Officer, the Conservative City Council, a Handsworth Conservative Councillor, the Leader of the Labour minority in the City Council, the Vice Chairman of the Birmingham Community Relations Committee, several social and community workers and the Birmingham Evening Mail.

The establishment gave the impression of seeking to alleviate the discontent by making Handsworth a priority area for aid⁵¹ but when it came to positive a political considerations took precedence. Handsworth Conservative Councillors were reluctant to call for money to assist blacks lest it lose them votes⁵² and 'people in high places' were not prepared to help, especially in election years.⁵³ Securing little more than verbal assistance merely confirmed the belief amongst black people that they were confronted by an inflexible society⁵⁴ and that black people would be waiting a long time for the system to do things for them.⁵⁵

Despite the circumstances confronting Black people in Handsworth, no significant organized opposition amongst the black population had emerged. The West Indian Federation (WIF) established in 1953 was, primarily, a social not political organization; and the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organization (ACSHO) formed in 1966, which was a black self-help organisation. Nonetheless, young Blacks youth, while not moving towards organized opposition, did not passively accept the situation confronting them and expressed it in anger and militancy.⁵⁶ Yet, despite general agreement among Black youth that they should fight for their rights, they showed considerable reluctance to express their discontent overtly or through organised groups.⁵⁷

Prior to 1970, organized overt discontent was expressed by the miniscule Black self-help and Black consciousness groups. However, after 1970, these groups were supplemented by the movement into the area of liberal or radical White-led community action groups, who offered advice and assistance on social security, legal, housing and immigration

problems. Furthermore, revolutionary political groups, predominantly White in membership, began to direct their attention to Handsworth. Their aim was to mobilize the older Blacks not so much towards immediate issues affecting the Black community but towards the revolutionary vanguard.

(b) Aid and assistance finds its way to Handsworth

Local authority and government social and community work; radical community work; extra-Parliamentary political activity; and Parliamentary politics were the types of assistance on offer for the people of Handsworth.

Formal social work covered housing and educational advice, probation services, counselling and general information services, play group and youth club facilities came to Handsworth. These were hardly adequate and high levels of poverty, housing problems, lack of facilities, immigration problems, and the absence of cultural education attracted a variety of radical community groups to cater for these various needs. Housing advice and assistance was provided by the Action Centre, established in 1969 by a group of radical ex-university students. Harambee, a Black self-help group, established a hostel to provide a limited number of places for youths with accommodation problems. In 1973, Trinity Housing Action Committee was set up as a placement agency for those with accommodation needs as well as acting as a pressure group on the local Housing Authority. However, the impact of these housing services was strictly limited and the problem of homelessness amongst young Blacks led to group action in creating the squat, estimated at around twenty-two squats in 1957.⁵⁸ In 1979, the Handsworth Single Homeless Action Group began to cater specifically for the single homeless and in the first ten months over 450 people, male and female and primarily young blacks registered with it.⁵⁹ Play school facilities were provided by Harambee, WELD and Lozells Social Development Centre, established in 1974; and in 1976, the Law Centre came into being to deal with legal issues affecting the community.

Growing dissatisfaction with educational content inspired the development of alternative educational schemes. Westminster Endeavour for Liaison and Development, established in 1968 by two teachers from the Westminster Road primary school, provided education considered relevant by the local community⁶⁰ as well as youth club facilities but in 1978,

WELD was firebombed, and although many people in the Lozells area felt that they could point the finger at the perpetrators, nothing substantive about guilt is known. Harambee established a summer school in 1970 and ACSHO's ten-point programme for black self-help called for "supplementary education of high standard and of relevant historical education"⁶¹ and provided a weekly school for cultural education and library facilities for Afro-Caribbean cultural material. The provision of cultural education by Harambee and ACSHO led to charges that they were using the facilities for propagating Black Power. A local newspaper carried an article claiming that 'Black Power' and the International Socialists, which had 29 Black members in Handsworth, were running Handsworth, and that Harambee was acting illegally. This report was based on information provided by an anonymous Justice of the Peace but when Birmingham Broadside, a radical monthly journal, traced the source of the article the newspaper published a retraction.⁶²

A wide range of community problems were catered for by All Faiths For One Race, which developed out of the 1970 Stop the South African Cricket Tour campaign and opposition to the 1971 Immigration Act, which organized demonstrations and campaigns around issue relevant to the people of Handsworth. Its activities were "not political in the party sense but in the broad sense of being to do with the community."⁶³ AFFOR aimed to contribute "to the building of a successful multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-faith Britain" and to achieve this by being "directly involved in the ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism of Birmingham, and on this basis to contribute nationally to the work of helping the indigenous white population to understand the problems and appreciate the immense opportunities of a pluralistic society."⁶⁴

The African-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation was engaged in a more direct political objective both ideologically and politically. ACSHO was waging the ideological war against cultural imperialism and the political/military war against economic imperialism – Britain, the home of modern imperialism, was the ground on which they fought for African liberation by raising Black consciousness and in developing Black separatist action to further Black self-help while assisting African liberation movements. ACSHO stressed the concept of black is beautiful; were highly critical of the black intelligentsia, which they saw as worshipping Western capitalism instead of encouraging black

liberation movements; criticised Christianity for initiating and maintaining the oppression of Blacks; was critical of 'white' education which they saw as irrelevant for an oppressed people seeking liberation; praised the teachings of Malcolm X, especially the separatist aspects.⁶⁵ It had a ten-point programme of black self-help covering employment, housing nurseries, education, welfare advice, legal advice, library facilities, producing a newspaper, promoting business co-operatives, and developing a black political party.⁶⁶ White liberals and radicals were not seen as allies but as part of the problem prepared, on the one hand, to support liberation movements in Africa but extremely reluctant to provide real support for Handsworth Blacks in their struggle against a system that oppressed them⁶⁷, or, on the other hand, if they were active in Handsworth were seen as the new colonisers, beneficiaries of employment opportunities financed by the system to solve the Black 'problem'.⁶⁸

In the early 1970s the International Socialists (IS), with White activists already in the area, placed a Black member in Handsworth with specific responsibility for mobilising Black workers by placing them towards the IS. IS' policy was aimed at class conscious Black workers to organise them into IS factory branches around workplace issues not directly related to the problems in Handsworth. The IS' workerist orientation⁶⁹ was primarily to organise Black workers into a multi-ethnic nucleus of the revolutionary party. Although there was little initial success, with meetings called without attendance confined to the already committed attending, the use of factory issues and the threat of the National Front had by 1976 produced an IS Black and Asian branch consisting of twenty-nine members with its own newspaper - Brum Black Voice, attempting to penetrate Handsworth trade unions; organising meetings on British fascist organisations and police brutality, and creating black self-defence groups.⁷⁰

The Labour Party in Handsworth attracted some Black members and the Handsworth ward party had a Black Chairman, Webster, in 1965 who subsequently resigned over Labour's immigration policy.⁷¹ The party included some active community workers but Labour Party activity virtually confined itself to resolutions condemning racism. However, in response to the speeches of Enoch Powell and growing activity by the National Front the ward party called on the District Labour Party, in March 1976, to launch a city wide campaign with trades unions and the Trades Council on the issue of

racism but to no avail.⁷² The Labour Party Young Socialists, whose secretary, Chapman, also resigned over Labour's immigration policy,⁷³ failed to involve itself in a way radically different from the main body.

The Conservative Party was represented until 1970 by Edward Boyle, a 'liberal' in the field of race relations, while Conservative Councillors inclined towards practices directed against Black constituents. The next Conservative MP, Chapman 1970 – 74, whose selection as candidate created a minor revolt within the local party,⁷⁴ favoured severe restrictions on immigration but not a total ban.⁷⁵ Opponents to his candidacy wanted someone who knew Handsworth and its problems intimately.⁷⁶ Chapman's lack of familiarity with the area was later confirmed by Chapman himself when he claimed that Handsworth was on the way to becoming an attractive and thriving suburb and that by the end of the 1970s would be one of the most pleasant areas of Birmingham - a statement showing how out of touch with reality was the new MP.⁷⁷

The Conservative Party, having held the seat in every Parliamentary election since the constituency was created in 1919, gradually lost its hold on the seat. The erosion of Conservative dominance was reflected in local elections. In Lozells/Newtown, it never won a council seat after 1951; in Soho not after 1969; and in Handsworth not after 1970. Only in Sandwell, which included the affluent area of Handsworth Wood, did the Conservatives maintain uninterrupted control of the seat. Population changes, reflected in the decline of the Conservative vote in local elections, resulted in the Labour Party taking the Parliamentary seat in February 1974.

Handsworth, up until 1976, was in a state of general deterioration of life attracting ad intervention from community groups. External pressure to contain the Black population within its present boundaries couple with the low-level economic roles assigned to you Blacks, led these youths to seek alternative ideological solutions. These pressures were responsible for, as one activist called it, the development of a sense of territory – a ghetto mentality, that defined the outer limits of 'their Handsworth', i.e. black Handsworth. In 1976 and 1977, two opportunities arose for this 'ghetto mentality' to show itself when counter-demonstrations organised ostensibly against the National Front, gave young Blacks an opportunity to vent their anger not only at these external intruders but also at what were the most visible representatives of a system that confined them to the

economic and cultural periphery. These representatives were members of the Handsworth police force.

Focus on Young Blacks: 1976-79

(a) The catalysts of change

The events of May 1976 and August 1977 brought young Blacks into the limelight and ensured they would become the focus of attention from both the police and political groups.

The May 1976 event arose out of the imprisonment of Relf (**first name**) incarcerated for contravening the Race Relations Act by placing a sign outside of his house in Leamington Spa advertising it for sale to an English family only - meaning a White family only. The resultant publicity gave the National Front the opportunity to parade itself as the champion of English libertarian rights. The National Front had already placed a picket outside the prison at Winson Green, which was situated close to Handsworth, and followed this up by announcing its intention to hold a demonstration in support of Relf. This decision was supported by the British Movement,⁷⁸ which like the National Front was a neo-fascist organisation; both of which were trying to recruit Relf to their respective ranks. The National Front's decision led to a group of eighty women from the Valor factory in Erdington assembling outside the prison in what was less than a spontaneous gesture of support on their part for Relf three days before the proposed National Front demonstration. The women denied that they were acting on political grounds and tried to justify their actions in the name of human rights. From the opposite side of the political fence demands were made for the banning of the National Front demonstration and steps were taken to organise a counter-demonstration involving the local Labour Party, the Birmingham Anti—fascist Committee, the Bangla-Deshi Workers Association, the Indian Workers Association, the ACSHO, the International Socialists and other groups on the left.

The activity of these various organisations prior to the demonstration and counter-demonstration was intensive with mass leafleting urging people to attend the march from Lozells to Winson Green prison. After the march began with about 750 counter-demonstrators, activists drew people from the cafes, record shops and the billiard hall that

the march passed on their route, which swelled the numbers to about 1500* by the time it reached Soho Road, the main road running through Handsworth.⁷⁹ When the march reached Winson Green prison it fell apart and erupted into violence between the counter-demonstrators and the police resulting in twenty eight arrests.

Amongst the additional crowd that joined the march were many young Blacks not connected to any political organisations. The response of young Blacks in joining the march was attributed, by one activist, to the years of propagandising against the National Front which, whilst not having an immediate effect at the time, had provided a basis of consciousness that aided the process of mobilizing Black youth onto the counter-demonstration. However, it may have had more to do with the general feeling of alienation arising from their circumstances in Handsworth and the intrusion of the National Front into their 'patch' made them a target on which to vent their anger.

Fifteen months later and the National Front was back again to hold a public meeting in a school three hundred yard from the Soho Road, which inevitably led to young Blacks taking to the streets. This came during the Ladywood by-election following the resignation of Brian Walden, who gave up the seat in order to pursue a career as a TV political commentator. This election campaign was unpleasant with an assortment of ten candidates.** During the campaign the Liberals had attempted to establish a tri-partite political pact with the Conservative and Labour candidates to freeze out the National Front for fear of violence being brought into the campaign,⁸⁰ Claims of racism were directed against the Ladywood Liberal Party by some Liberals when Ted Ratnaraja was not selected as the candidate;⁸¹ The election agent or the Labour Party's candidate was exposed as a member of the neo-fascist British Movement,⁸² and James Hunte, a member of the Handsworth ward Labour Party stood against the official Labour Party candidate as an Independent but was only warned about future behaviour and not expelled in order not to alienate the Black vote. James Hunte, acknowledged in the press as one of Handsworth's most important leaders, was involved in a number of controversies in the

area. In October, 1976, Hunte attacked Enoch Powell's speech on the repatriation of

* The Birmingham Evening Mail assessed the number of marchers at about 1,000.⁸³

** Sever (Labour) 8,227 votes; Davies (Conservatives) 4,440; Reed-Herbert (NF) 888; Hardeman (Liberal) 765; Ahsan (Socialist Unity) 534; Hunte (Independent) 336; Gordon (SWP) 152; Matthews (Ind Conservative) 71; Courtney (Reform) 63; Boakes (Independent) 46

immigrants as playing into the hands of extremists but accepted that some African-Caribbeans might be prepared to leave the UK for a financial consideration.⁸⁴ In 1977, after being approached by a group of young Blacks, who complained about housing, jobs and lack of resources, he suggested that finance should be provided for those who wanted to be repatriated.⁸⁵ As a result of this suggestion, the Afro-Caribbean Co-ordinating Group, which represented black organizations, attempted to get Hunte removed from the Community Relations Council. However, that move was unsuccessful⁸⁶. In February 1977, Hunte was removed from the Presidency of the West Indian Federation amid accusations of misappropriation of funds. He was subsequently cleared after a police inquiry.⁸⁷

When the National Front announced its intention to hold a public meeting at Boulton Road School, a warning came from the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Unity that they would prevent it from taking place.* Initially about a hundred people, predominantly White and including members of the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Unity and the Labour Party Young Socialists, mounted a picket outside the school. They were joined, after a loudspeaker van had toured the area and activists had visited cafes and shops in the area, by approximately 2000 others who were mostly young and black.⁸⁸

When members of the National Front were marshalled by the police into the school by the back entrance, violence erupted with the police as the main target. The situation quickly became out of control with the organisers of the picket now merely bystanders. In the general uproar 200 to 300 unattached young Blacks turned their attention to what had become the symbol of black oppression in Handsworth, Thornhill Road police station, and they marched towards it joined by others on the way.⁸⁹

The most significant outcome of the counter-demonstrations was the response of young Blacks dissatisfied and frustrated with society in general and with the police in particular, whom they saw as the symbol of oppression. The marches, counter-demonstrations and

picket provided them with the opportunity to express their grievances about everyday life
*At the end of 1975, the 'Left Faction' in the International Socialists and Birmingham supporters of the Broad Left in the AUEW were expelled. In 1976 some Black members of the International Socialists dissatisfied with developments withdrew from the group. In late 1976, the International Socialists changed its name to the Socialist Workers Party. Socialist Unity comprised the International Marxists Group and Big Flame - Trotskyist organizations; and individual Marxists.⁹⁰

on the streets of Handsworth. Prior to the Relf incident a number of young Blacks had tried to draw attention to their plight by parading outside Thornhill Road police station to protest about police discrimination. However, this demonstration was banned by the police.⁹¹ In effect, young Blacks were being prevented from expressing their concern over the way they were treated by the very agents of their discontent. The Relf counter-demonstration was the initiation ceremony for young Blacks to engage in 'collective' action against the police. The second incident merely reinforced this 'collective' awareness. In between these two events three occasions arose when young Blacks marched on police stations to protest about specific issue. In July 1976, 60 to 90 youths marched on a city police station from Handsworth when a Handsworth youth was arrested;⁹² two months later, in September 1976, 50 teenagers stoned Thornhill Road police station when five people were arrested and were held there;⁹³ and Beanie Brown of the ACSHO led between 100 and 200 youths in a demonstration outside the local police station. Taken together, these protests heralded the emergence of young Blacks as a possible potential force for violent opposition to their intolerable circumstances and both the police and political groups looked on young Blacks in a different light and re-assessed their approach towards them.

(b) The Police and Political Groups Compete for Young Blacks

The manifestly overt deterioration in relations between the police and young Blacks caused concern to both the police and community organisations and in late 1977 a joint survey sponsored by a community group and the police was commissioned and was carried out by John Brown of Cranfield Institute of Technology.⁹⁴ The findings of the survey and its recommendations would have come as no surprise to the police bearing in mind the 'academic' origins of the author and the fact that the recommended action in the report had already been partly introduced by the police. The joint sponsor, AFFOR, were highly critical of Brown's analysis of the situation, disowning it and then producing their own pamphlet, 'Talking Blues', that provided specific examples of police harassment, which Brown had shied away from.⁹⁵

The police were about to develop an all-embracing policy directed at young Blacks. One dimension of the policy fell within the sphere of what most members of society would

accept as the role of the police in preventing and detecting criminal activity. However, the policy included non-criminal targets because they were part of the Rastafarian/Dreadlock sub-culture and in the ideological preconceptions of the Handsworth police no distinction was made between criminal and non-criminal members of this sub-culture. This police complemented this action by paying heed to Brown's recommendation that "residents' associations can play a major role in harnessing community resources to preventive functions"⁹⁶ and they set about developing strong links with residents associations, community leaders, official and unofficial leaders of ethnic groups that included some members of the Rasta Fari, religious leaders, and people in educational, probation, employment and social services.⁹⁷ The other dimension, using the same agencies and methods, embraced socio-political functions. Brown had suggested that the police should seek "to establish identity of purpose and values between themselves and the local community."⁹⁸ However, the identity of values was selective and in ideological conformity with the values of the police and the anti-Rastafarian/Dreadlock sections of the community expressed by Superintendent Webb in an unpublished paper.⁹⁹ As to be expected of a senior police officer, the superintendent's value system embodied a narrow conformist vision of culture that excluded a considerable section of the local population from any reasonable consideration and unsuitable for the role he was assuming on behalf of the people of Handsworth. Webb commented on what he described as "...the unfortunate spectacle of young West Indians in many parts of Britain, Jamaica and the United States wearing the dreadlock hairstyles, festooned with the Ethiopian National colours either on their tea cosy hats or scarves, trousers at half-mast, no socks and open sandals on their feet, the universal uniform of the Rasta man."¹⁰⁰

The police hoped that by linking together their values with those of local leaders of formal and informal institutions would create the trust that would make the police the agency to which complaints and problems would be directed.¹⁰¹ The police were introducing a quasi-representational role for itself far beyond the usual police/community relationship whereby the community would report criminal acts and the police would respond to that information. As part of this new role, the police also adopted for itself a part in the socialisation process of young Black males by trying to prevent "the flow of youngsters moving towards the squats and Rastafarianism",¹⁰² which fitted in with the

unfavourable image Superintendent Webb held of Rastafarians based principally on the way they dressed. This desire to undermine sub-cultural developments, which were not criminal, was only part of the process. Brown had also recommended that services should be provided that could be “guaranteed against....usurpation by dominant groups”¹⁰³ which was his strategy for outmanoeuvring Black political groups (ACSHO and Harambee) whom it may reasonably be argued could offer young Blacks more in the field of cultural, social and recreational facilities than was on offer from police supervised or police monitored services.

The proposal for the police to perform quasi-representational and socialisation functions presupposed that the police were capable of mobilising people towards accepting the legitimacy of these functions. The police were confident it could be achieved through what they considered to be its unique position in society, which would enable them to “mobilise public support more effectively than any other agency.”¹⁰⁴ The police were keen to extend themselves as the central force into these new functions operating through a network of community groups. This came to be known as community policing – a euphemism for clearing young Black Rastafarians/Dreadlocks out of Handsworth.

While the police began to implement this political strategy in Handsworth, groups acknowledged to be political in orientation began to intensify their activities. The most successful of the left groups in terms of black membership in Handsworth, the International Socialists, had been racked with internal problems.¹⁰⁵ There was nationwide dissatisfaction among Black members resulting from the subordination of specific Black issues to the International Socialist’s factory orientation, which Black members felt gave them no voice in influencing the group’s policies. As a consequence a black caucus was formed with its own newspaper - Flame, and, ultimately, virtually the whole of the Handsworth Black branch broke away and, together with other Black dissidents, established an independent group, Samaj, with its own newspapers - Samaj in’a Babylon, directed towards an English and Asian speaking audience. The new organization quickly deteriorated due to: (a) increased political work that most members were unwilling or unable to do; (b) conflicts within its leadership over political direction; and (c) isolation from a larger organization whose facilities were now denied to it. These problems seriously undermined Samaj’s effectiveness.¹⁰⁶ In October 1978, the six remaining

members of Samaj, now organised as the Handsworth Collective, decided to rejoin mainstream radical politics and re-developed the link with Flame.¹⁰⁷

Flame, in Handsworth, targeted discontented, frustrated and alienated youth by becoming involved in defence committees, leafleting and demonstrating against the police harassment of young Blacks. Flame was also involved in the wider issues of Black unemployment; the activities of the National Front; and the liberation of Southern Africa. These issues were thought the means to raise the consciousness of young Blacks from a national to a class perspective. In February 1979, Flame organized a film show featuring a Rhodesian armed forces raid on a refugee camp in Mozambique; provided a platform for a speaker from the Zimbabwe African National Union; and held a money-raising disco at the Lozells Social Development Club, which attracted about 200 people. The aim was to give the opportunity for the Patriotic Front to put its view of the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe situation to a section of the Handsworth population whose usual source of information was subject to the distortions of the British press.¹⁰⁸ The event created a furore amongst Birmingham Conservative Councillors and the local press, who had a field day in denouncing this kind of money-raising activity.¹⁰⁹

The 'predominantly white' left did not try to mobilise young blacks directly but approached them through other organizations. The Socialist Workers Party directed its activities through the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) and, to a limited extent, through Flame. However, while Flame nationally was closely linked with the SWP, the Handsworth branch acted autonomously, and although SWP Black members were in the branch most of the political work was carried out by non-SWP members.¹¹⁰ The SWP was considerably more active in the ANL being instrumental in setting up the North Birmingham ANL branch in Handsworth in April 1978 - a branch consisting of members of the SWP, the International Marxist Group, (IMG) the Communist Party, Labour Party members, Clan n'Eirinn and Flame, plus a few independent Marxists and socialists.*

The ANL branch was active: in disseminating information about the Nazi origins of certain National Front members; in leafleting the area; holding public meetings; and

* The Conservative Party's candidate for the Soho ward in the 1978 local elections was an Asian named Duggal, who joined the ANL but subsequently disappeared from the scene when his pre election public meeting, at Boulton Road school, was picketed by his 'fellow' ANL colleagues over the Conservative Party's policy on 'race'.¹¹¹

organizing fund-raising socials. The emphasis moved towards mobilising young Blacks in conjunction with Rock Against Racism. An attempt was made to hold a carnival in Handsworth Park but because of lack of support from the central body in London and opposition from the local authorities, this was replaced by a 'musical march' from Handsworth to the city centre. The police apparently had no objection to the ANL Carnival but the authorities would not allow it.¹¹²

The Trotskyist groups responded in different ways. The IMG canvassed on behalf of the Socialist Unity candidate in the Ladywood by-election of 1977; in the Soho ward in May 1978; and had been involved in the North Birmingham ANL from the beginning. However, apart from this, its presence in Handsworth amongst young Blacks was non-existent. Workers Power,* although strongly opposed to the ANL for not posing the class question, which it considered crucial to the struggle against fascism,¹¹³ was represented at ANL Committee meetings until he was barred for refusing to join. Apart from this temporary 'involvement' with the ANL, Workers Power had no presence amongst young Blacks. The LPYS also opposed the ANL and sought to mobilise young Blacks through the Peoples National Party youth section. Black activists in the LPYS and the Peoples National Party organized meetings on police activities, housing and unemployment problems and discos, as well as leafleting schools and shopping precincts. The PNP youth section disappeared in early 1979 due to lack of response; demoralization of activists; and the redirection of activists towards LPYS activities.¹¹⁴ Attempts were made to resurrect the PNP youth section and, in November 1979, a march through Handsworth was organized jointly by the Handsworth LPYS and the national PNP around the issue of Zimbabwe independence but it had little impact.

The all-black ACSHO's primary concern was to link the situation of Blacks in Britain with the oppression of Blacks in Africa and for this purpose provided cultural education, lectures and meetings. ACSHO was also actively involved in providing cash and medical supplies for liberation movements in Africa and was at the forefront in organising demonstrations and defence committees for young Blacks arrested by the police. As a Black separatist organization it avoided any involvement with 'White' or 'White-

* Workers Power broke away from the IS in 1975 joining the Workers Fight to form the International Communist League. In 1977, Workers Power was re-established as a separate organization.

associated radical or revolutionary political groups.

The Labour Party's main concern was to stabilise its electoral gains, therefore, young Blacks did not figure significantly in its policies. Labour Party policy was aimed at maintaining this electoral dominance by 'educating' the voters, especially "youth, (the) coloured population, women and trade unionists" by leafleting; letters to prospective voters; and holding public meetings. Resolutions were perennially submitted by the Handsworth constituency to the Labour Party's Annual Conference on the dangers of racism and in 1979 its resolution called for the disbandment of the Special Patrol Group; the repeal of the arrest on suspicion and other laws used against young Blacks and trade unionists; and the abolition of immigration controls, all of which had specific relevance to Black and Asian voters in Handsworth.¹¹⁵

The theoretical differences between these groups presented a complex and confusing picture to young Blacks. With the exception of the LPYS, the Trotskyist groups virtually ignored them. This may well be attributed to their policy of building up the revolutionary vanguard with the 'most class-conscious elements' in society, that is, those responsive to a Trotskyist interpretation of history and change - a perspective with little appeal to most young Blacks. The LPYS/PNP (youth) did approach young Blacks with this general aim but their mechanistic view of the class struggle enabled them to rationalize failure in terms of the immaturity of economically objective forces. The perspective presented to the author by one activist was that young Blacks would remain demoralised until the crisis deepened further. At that point the class would move to the left and young Blacks would then also move with to the left. Flame included Afro-Caribbean and Asian members, who saw the group as "basically a black nationalist organization with a class perspective for the future,"¹¹⁶ incorporating in its ideological framework the Black pride of Garvey; the revolutionary nationalism of Malcolm X; the self-help of the Black Panthers; and the Black revolutionary activism of the one-time Trotskyist, C L R James.¹¹⁷ This was somewhat ambiguous for an organization with African-Caribbean and Asian members to have an emphasis predominantly on Black nationalism portrayed by African-Caribbean and African-American writers. This enigmatic position was extended to Flame's nationalism embracing as it did an international socialist perspective. The ACSHO's source of inspiration also came from Black writers and its ideology

incorporated pan-Africanism, Garveyism, the separatist aspects of Malcolm X and the self-help of the Black Panthers. Its nationalist dimension was to be found within the framework of African socialism.¹¹⁸

The groups targeting young Blacks - the LPYS/PNP, Flame and the ACSHO were separated by their theoretical orientation and the objectives identified in their theoretical standpoint. The LPYS/PNP posed only the class question as the tool for mobilising young Blacks; Flame offered a class perspective via black nationalism; and the ACSHO identified Black nationalism sprinkled with socialism as the ultimate aim while presenting the other 'Black' groups as fronts for 'White' organisations.

The ANL differed from the other organizations as it was an umbrella organization and its weakness in Handsworth resulted from the sectarian interests of constituent groups and lack of support from Black groups, who saw as either another White organization posing questions to Blacks on what they saw as principally a White problem - the National Front, or failing to pose the class question or in failing to take up other issues such as Black self-defence and opposition to immigration controls.¹¹⁹ Consequently, those activists in the ANL who were instrumental in establishing Flame in Handsworth withdrew from active participation in October 1978.

One section of the black youth with no formal organisational structure – followers of Ras Tafari, came into conflict with Harambee accusing the self-help group of not providing them with the necessary skills for their prospective return to Africa nor in sponsoring their return. Harambee counter-attacked by claiming the Rastafarians were being manipulated by Black business interests who were dependent on the goodwill of the police at Thornhill Road station. Harambee called for unity of Black people in the face of internal and external attack and police manipulation.¹²⁰ The Rastafarians responded by founding the Rastafarian Action Movement in July 1979, whose sole concern was to leave 'Babylon' and 'return' to Africa.* The Movement covered only a small number of young Blacks, claiming to be Rastafarians and while maintaining a sectarian stance it did associate with other Black groups on Black self-defence committees dealing with police harassment of Rastafarians.

After 1977, the police and political groups perceived a potential force developing among

* Babylon is the name given to those areas outside of Africa where Black people are living

a dissatisfied, alienated and frustrated group of young Blacks. The police adopted community policing as an alternative form of politics aimed at bringing young Blacks into its orbit or dispersing them outside of Handsworth. The political groups had no real basis for unity; their sectarian antagonisms brought in from outside and their long-term perspectives of a revolutionary change in society did not solve the immediate problems faced by young Blacks. Neither the socio-political strategy of the police nor the promise of a revolutionary transformation of society by the political groups had anything constructive on offer for young Blacks.

(c) Police and Political Group Activity

The police viewed disaffected young Blacks as a potential threat to the social-value system and, therefore, sub-cultural belief systems had to be replaced by an 'acceptable' system of values. Several political groups saw young Blacks youth as potential material for mobilisation towards revolutionary socialism or Black nationalism, although this did not apply to Trotskyist groups except the LPYS/PNP.

The police believed that it had achieved some measure of success based on the reduction of 'robberies and theft from the person' in the area. This was cited as evidence in foiling Flame's call for "every black youth (to) become a political revolutionary...organized to challenge every police attack."¹²¹ While the police used crime reduction as its measure of success against sub-cultural development and anti-capitalist political activity neither Flame, nor any other political group in Handsworth, would consider robbery or theft as a tool of political mobilization or evidence of political consciousness. Nor did a reduction in crime mean that young Blacks were more responsive or had a favourable view of the police. What it did mean was that those responsible for crime had been arrested or removed from the scene, which was what the police had claimed.¹²²

A survey was carried out by the author between May and August 1979 of 120 young Black males aged between 16 - 20 years including both the unemployed and employed – not a random sample of young Blacks but part of a number of different networks, independent of each other, and based on social clubs, youth clubs and a college of further education. From this survey it was plain that young Blacks remained antagonistic and they saw all police work as repressive and designed to intimidate and dominate black

people. An overwhelming number of the sample (114 or 95%) saw the police role as being to intimidate young Blacks. Of this 114, twenty eight (25%) said that police policy was specifically aimed at the Rastafarians/Dreadlocks while the rest said it was directed at young Blacks in general. Almost as many, 122 (93%) saw the police liaison function, upon which the police placed considerable emphasis, as designed to infiltrate the black community to obtain information to use against the black population. These views were reinforced in Handsworth and neighbouring areas by large-scale police actions, replete with riot shields and dogs, used against individuals and groups in the community, which brought into existence defence committees and/or demonstrations against the police. 92 respondents (77%) claimed to have been stopped and searched by the police; 80 (66%) were subjected to verbal abuse while being searched or abuse was shouted at them from passing police cars; 30 (25%) claimed to have been pushed or assaulted when stopped. Fourteen (12%) accepted that there was some justification for being stopped but not for the treatment they received.

There were a number of operations involving the police that served to reinforce young Blacks view of the role of the police. In Westminster Road, 30/40 youths went to confront the police when officers went to arrest one person in a house. In Beeches Road, West Bromwich, a party celebrating Haile Selassie's birthday was broken up by police and the resultant fight led to several youths being arrested. In Hamilton Road, a youth suffered severe neck injuries while being arrested, and there were a couple of 'minor' incidents at a house in Baker Street when the police broke down the door.

In August 1979, the court where the Beeches 8, the name given to the defendants arrested at Beeches Road, were remanded was picketed and about 70 Rastafarians packed the court during committal proceedings. A march took place through Birmingham on 1st September 1979 in defence of the Beeches Road Eight and on the 24th November 1979, another march took place from Birmingham city centre to Thornhill Road police station in protest over the Hamilton Road incident. The Beeches Road Defence Committee brought together such diverse groups as Flame, the ACSHO, and the recently formed Rastafarian Action Movement.

Any unity that developed between black groups was around coercive police operations.

However, this took place on an ad hoc basis and any prospect of a more embracing political unity failed due to the theoretical differences between the groups and their irrelevance to the immediate needs of young Blacks.

The impact of political groups on young Blacks was extremely limited. While the names of most groups were known,* little was known of their theoretical perspectives, although aspects of policy affecting Black people had penetrated the consciousness of a significant number of young Blacks. Flame was seen as fighting for black people's rights and against discrimination; the ACSHO as a group with a Back to Africa and black consciousness perspective; PNP was another Flame but working with white people; the SWP was a white Flame or PNP active in the struggle against racism; and the ANL was known for its fight against the National Front. Although young Blacks had no interest in becoming part of these groups, a majority (78 or 65%) thought that more effort should be directed towards black rights, employment, housing and a better understanding between blacks and whites, and a substantial minority (42 or 35%) wanted nothing more than repatriation to Africa.

The most significant criticism levelled against the political groups was the confusion caused by the divisions between them. A considerable number of young Blacks (48 or 40%) called for unity and for a Black political organization to fight on issues specific to Black people, and to show Black people fighting for themselves. However, while mentioning the need for Black political unity, they stressed they would not join an organization, primarily, because it would infringe on other activities, that is, their employment; their search for employment and accommodation; or their leisure time activities.

This created a fragmented sector of young Blacks lacking cohesion and direction, restricting any form of organized political involvement. Other young Blacks adopted the cloak of Rastafarianism and counter ideology opting out of any participatory role within the system. They formed themselves into 'grouplets', detached from organized political protest, searching for extra-wordly and extra-system solutions to their problems, that is, Rastafarianism and repatriation to Africa. These grouplets were in a constant state of flux

* 99 respondents (82.5%) knew something of Flame; 111 (95%) of ACSHO; 102 (85%) of Harambee; 102 (85%) of the ANL; 45 (37.5%) of SWP; 3 (2.5%) of IMG

as ‘membership’ changed, either due police pressure on the squats or as ‘members’ sought out other forms of survival in a hostile environment, namely, the search for employment and accommodation.

The everyday experiences of young Blacks in Handsworth with the religious/ideological alternatives on offer prevented both the police and the political groups from making inroads into their attitudes and attracting them into their orbit.

¹ Woods, R. [1979] Ethnic Segregation in Birmingham in the 1960s and 1970s; in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol 2 No 4, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Henley-on-Thames, p 458

² In the Soho ward, between 1950 and 1970, the turnover in the lodging houses was 95%. *Ibid.*

³ In 1955 there were 48,000 vacancies in the city. *Daily Herald*, 4 Nov 1955

⁴ There were many complaints from residents, some that could be substantiated others not. Complaints came from residents in the Heathfield Road and Wellington Road area, which takes in the area between Soho and Birchfields, and from Rookery Road and Hamstead Road areas, which are areas extending outwards from the Soho area. For the effects of immigration from Jamaica on certain parts of Wolverhampton, see Foot P [1969] *The Rise of Enoch Powell*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Chapter 2

⁵ Research by J Darragh showed that 85% of White Brummies would not rent accommodation to black people. Chater A [1966] *Race Relations in Britain*, Lawrence & Wishart, London

⁶ In 1961 the density of the immigrant population in the Soho area was between 1280 and 1920 per square kilometre. Only the Birchfield/ Trinity Road area to the East of the Soho area had a comparable density. Jones, P N [1970] *Some Aspects of the Changing Distributions of Coloured Immigration in Birmingham 1961-66*, Institute of British Geographers, Transactions and Papers No 50, p 207

⁷ In 1966 the population density in the areas mentioned in footnote 6 had increased to between 1920 and 2560 per square kilometre. The area between these two areas had an extending immigrant population of between 1280 and 1920. There was also a virtual doubling of the population in those areas extending outwards from these two focal points. *Ibid*, p 208

⁸ The election was held on the 11th May 1961 and the voting figures were: Wood (Conservative) 4,886; Jones (Midland Immigration Control Association) 1,839; Poulton (Labour) 926. see *Birmingham Post & Mail Yearbooks*, 1963, Birmingham

⁹ In local elections in 1962 and 1963, the Union Movement stood candidates once in Soho and twice in Sandwell; and in 1975 and 1976, the National Front stood candidates twice in Handsworth, once in Soho, Sandwell and Aston. The total number of votes cast for these candidates was 1,614 or 2% of total votes cast. In General Elections, the Union Movement candidate in 1966 and the National Front in 1974 polled less than 3.5% of the votes cast. See *ibid.* 1962 - 1977

¹⁰ See *Birmingham City Council Minutes*, p65, 16 Jun 1970; p345, 6 Oct 1970; p188, 11 Jul 1972; p 273, 3 Dec 1974; p 473, 4 Mar 1975; p336, 6 Oct 1964; memorials 55820, 5 Jan 1971; 55947, 2 Mar 1971; 57289, 7 Nov 1972; 56661, 1 Oct.1974; 49441, 24 Jul 1962; and Capper, Chief Constable, in *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 1 Feb 1973. Some complaints were substantiated, others had no substantiation whatsoever.

¹¹ Councillor Locke, Conservative councillor for Sandwell, quoted in Johns A. & Humphreys D, 1971, *Because They're Black*, Penguin, Harmondsworth p 115

¹² Mr. W. B. Kelly, *Birmingham Evening Mail* 18 May 1968.

¹³ *Birmingham Evening Mail* 10 February 1970

¹⁴ *Sunday Times*, London, 15 Feb 1970

¹⁵ *Birmingham City Council Minutes*, memorial 57289, 7 Nov 1972

¹⁶ The Handsworth MP was Edward Boyle. The other was Aubrey Jones, MP for Yardley

¹⁷ The other issue was nationalization. *Birmingham Evening Mail* 24 July 1964

¹⁸ *Birmingham Post* 29 Mar 1966

¹⁹ *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 30 Mar 1966

²⁰ *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 2 May 1968; *Birmingham Post* 23 Jan 1969

²¹ *Birmingham Post* 28 Jan 1969

²² *Guardian* 17 Jul 1968

- ²³ Birmingham Evening Mail, 16 Jun 1969
- ²⁴ Birmingham Post 28 Jan 1969
- ²⁵ Birmingham Evening Mail 13 Feb 1969
- ²⁶ Birmingham Post 1 Nov 1965
- ²⁷ Birmingham Evening Mail, 8 Mar 1966
- ²⁸ Ibid 16 Jun 1969
- ²⁹ In between 1962 and 1976 neo-fascists standing in local elections in Birmingham polled 3.3% of the vote; and in general elections polled 5.4%. Birmingham Post & MYB 1962 to 1976
- ³⁰ A Gallup Poll conducted before the 1969 Ladywood by-election found that 81% of Conservative voters, +5% of Labour voters and 68% of Liberal voters agreed with the views expressed by Enoch Powell on immigration. Birmingham Post 19 June 1969
- ³¹ The Birmingham Evening Mail between 1967 and 1982, ran a series of articles on Handsworth every two or three years which tended towards sensationalism and distortion.
- ³² Birmingham Evening Mail 2 Feb 1973
- ³³ Housing conditions in Soho, 1966
- | % figures | (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | |
|-------------------|------|------|-----|------|------|
| England and Wales | 1.2 | | 7.3 | | 12.5 |
| Birmingham | 8 | 8.6 | | 17.5 | 17.5 |
| Soho | 11.5 | 29.2 | | 31 | 32.6 |
- (Source, Sunday Telegraph, London, 14 Mar 1971.)
- Key (A) - More than 1.5 persons per room
 (B) - Shared dwellings
 (C) - Absence of hot water
 (D) - Absence of a fixed bath
- ³⁴ Birmingham Evening Mail 28 Nov 1970
- ³⁵ Johns A, 1970, Race in the Inner City, Runnymede Trust, London pp 5 & 8; Johns A. & Humphreys D, 1971, Because They're Black, Penguin, Harmondsworth p 13
- ³⁶ Johns A, 1970, Race in the Inner City, Runnymede Trust, London p 7
- ³⁷ Meredith, Headmaster of a Handsworth school, Post 26 Aug 1971
- ³⁸ Johns A, 1970, Race in the Inner City, Runnymede Trust, London p 12
- ³⁹ Times, London, 4 Nov 1963; and McGraw, General Secretary of the Birmingham Association of Boys Clubs and one unnamed local councillor, Times, London, 14 Feb 1967
- ⁴⁰ Birmingham Broadside, Birmingham, No. 2 October 1978
- ⁴¹ Johns A. & Humphreys D, 1971, Because They're Black, Penguin, Harmondsworth p 16
- ⁴² Brown J, 1977 Shades of Grey, Cranfield Police Studies, Cranfield Institute of Technology, Cranfield pp 21, 22 & 33; Webb D, undated, Policing in a Multi Racial Community, Birmingham (Unpublished Paper) p 6
- ⁴³ Birmingham Post 6 Jan 1970; Johns A. & Humphreys D, 1971, Because They're Black, Penguin, Harmondsworth p 15
- ⁴⁴ Johns A. & Humphreys D, 1971, Because They're Black, Penguin, Harmondsworth p 15
- ⁴⁵ Brown J, 1977 Shades of Grey, Cranfield Police Studies, Cranfield Institute of Technology, Cranfield p 20; and Webb D, undated, Policing in a Multi Racial Community, Birmingham (Unpublished Paper)
- ⁴⁶ Superintendent Webb, Birmingham Evening Mail 29 Aug 1978
- ⁴⁷ The critics were: Wright, Hargreaves and Taylor (Labour Councillors) Wadhams, Lambert S, Fisher, Ward, Hick, Fuller, Critcher, Lambert J R (community workers; teachers) in a letter to the BEM 1 Feb 1973
- ⁴⁸ Birmingham Post 19 Feb 1973
- ⁴⁹ Council Debate, reported in the Birmingham Evening Mail 7 Feb 1973; Tyler, Conservative Councillor (Handsworth ward) Birmingham Evening Mail 1 Feb 1973; Traxson, SCRO, Birmingham Evening Mail 5 Feb 1973; Yapp, Labour group leader, Birmingham Evening Mail 7 Feb 1973; Fennel, Handsworth Parents Association, Birmingham Evening Mail 2 Feb 1973; Capper, Chief Constable, Birmingham Evening Mail 1 Feb 1973; and Prem, Vice-Chairman, Birmingham Community Relations Committee, Birmingham Evening Mail 20 Feb 1973
- ⁵⁰ Capper, Chief Constable; Traxson, Senior Community Relations Officer; Rogoff, probation officer. Birmingham Post 16 Nov 1970

- ⁵¹ Chapman, Conservative MP for Handsworth, Birmingham Post 13 June 1970; The Handsworth constituency Labour Party, Birmingham Evening Mail 20 Jan 1970; City councillors and community workers, Birmingham Evening Mail 6 & 12 Jan; and 2 Mar 1970
- ⁵² Johns A. & Humphreys D, 1971, *Because They're Black*, Penguin, Harmondsworth p 117; Locke, Conservative Councillor for Sandwell, organized a petition to block planning permission for the Handsworth Community Venture, Birmingham Evening Mail 16 Feb 1970
- ⁵³ S. Dickinson, Handsworth Community Venture, said this was the response when she approached certain people to find accommodation for the Venture. Sunday Times, London, 15 Feb 1970
- ⁵⁴ Ibid
- ⁵⁵ Harambee, information pamphlet/paper of the ACSHO, No 2, March, 1970; and Birmingham Evening Mail 28 Jan 1970
- ⁵⁶ Johns A. & Humphreys D, 1971, *Because They're Black*, Penguin, Harmondsworth p 1
- ⁵⁷ Evans P, 1971, *Attitudes of Young Immigrants*, Runnymede Trust, London pp 28-31
- ⁵⁸ Hunte J, community leader, Birmingham Evening Mail 25 Nov 1977
- ⁵⁹ Information from a HSHAG officer
- ⁶⁰ New Society, London, 14 Aug 1975
- ⁶¹ Harambee No 2, March 1970
- ⁶² Birmingham Evening Mail 27 Apr & 25 May 1976
- ⁶³ J. Hicks of AFFOR, in Searchlight, June 1976 A F & R, Birmingham; J. Plummer of AFFOR and the International Socialists, Birmingham Post 24 Aug 1973
- ⁶⁴ D. Jennings, Director of AFFOR, quoting J. Hicks, AFFOR's first Director, in AFFOR Annual Report 1977/8
- ⁶⁵ Harambee No 2, March 1970 and copies of *The Africa*, newspaper of the ACSHO
- ⁶⁶ ibid
- ⁶⁷ B Brown, of ACSHO, speaking from the audience at the Conference of the Committee for the Freedom of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea, Aston University Birmingham, 1974, which the author attended and noted his comments.
- ⁶⁸ *The African*, undated, but approximately April, 1974. ACSHO's publications have been Harambee, Paw and *The African*.
- ⁶⁹ For details of the ISS's workerist orientation, see Shaw M, (1978), *The Making of a Party*, Socialist Register, Merlin, London pp 130-132
- ⁷⁰ Initial activity was described to me as a 'disaster area' by one original member, who provided the other information.
- ⁷¹ Sunday Mercury 1 Jan 1967
- ⁷² Information provided by a Labour Party member
- ⁷³ Birmingham Evening Mail 4 Oct 1965
- ⁷⁴ Birmingham Post 6 Dec 1969
- ⁷⁵ Birmingham Evening Mail 18 Dec 1969
- ⁷⁶ Ibid 5 Dec 1969
- ⁷⁷ Ibid 26 Jun 1972
- ⁷⁸ For a brief analysis of the British Movement and its Nazi connections, see Searchlight No 37 July 1978, A F & R, Birmingham
- ⁷⁹ Birmingham Broadside No. 2 June/July 1976.
- ⁸⁰ Birmingham Post 1 Aug 1977
- ⁸¹ Ibid 2 Aug 1977
- ⁸² Ibid
- ⁸³ Birmingham Evening Mail 17 May 1976
- ⁸⁴ Ibid 4 Oct 1976
- ⁸⁵ Ibid 2 May 1977
- ⁸⁶ Birmingham Post 13 May 1976
- ⁸⁷ Birmingham Evening Mail 2 & 3 Feb 1977; 7 Mar 1977; 11 May 1977; 16 Mar 1978
- ⁸⁸ Birmingham Broadside, September 1977
- ⁸⁹ Birmingham Evening Mail 16 Aug 1977
- ⁹⁰ Shaw M, 1978, *The Making of a Party*, Socialist Register, Merlin, London p 137
- ⁹¹ Ibid 5 Mar 1976

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- ⁹² Ibid 16 July 1976
- ⁹³ Birmingham Post 6 Sep 1976
- ⁹⁴ Brown J [1977] Shades of Grey, Cranfield Police Studies, Cranfield of Technology, Cranfield
- ⁹⁵ Bishton D, Homer B, and Short C, 1978, Talking Blues, AFFOR, Birmingham
- ⁹⁶ Brown J [1977] Shades of Grey, Cranfield Police Studies, Cranfield of Technology, Cranfield p 23
- ⁹⁷ Birmingham Broadside, Nos. 16 & 24; and Observer, 19 Aug 1979
- ⁹⁸ Brown J [1977] Shades of Grey, Cranfield Police Studies, Cranfield of Technology, Cranfield p 38
- ⁹⁹ Webb D [undated] Policing in a Multi Racial Community, Birmingham p 9
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid
- ¹⁰¹ Anotation made by Superintendent Webb on a letter sent by the Handsworth 1 Residents Association to the Superintendent, dated 22 June 1977. Webb D [undated] Policing in a Multi Racial Community, Birmingham, Appendix.
- ¹⁰² Ibid p 11
- ¹⁰³ Brown J [1977] Shades of Grey, Cranfield Police Studies, Cranfield of Technology, Cranfield pp 27, 35 & 41
- ¹⁰⁴ Webb D [undated] Policing in a Multi Racial Community, Birmingham, p 13
- ¹⁰⁵ Shaw M, (1978), The Making of a Party, Socialist Register, Merlin, London p 132 - 137
- ¹⁰⁶ Information from an ex-Samaj activist
- ¹⁰⁷ A Flame spokesman
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid
- ¹⁰⁹ Birmingham Evening Mail 19 Feb 1979; Sunday Mercury, 18 Feb 1979
- ¹¹⁰ A Flame spokesperson
- ¹¹¹ Source: the author
- ¹¹² Supt Webb, Birmingham Broadside, No. 24 October 1978
- ¹¹³ Member of Workers Power in 1978
- ¹¹⁴ Information from a LPYS member; and a PNP member
- ¹¹⁵ A Labour Party member
- ¹¹⁶ A Flame spokesman
- ¹¹⁷ Bogues T & Gordon K, 1979, Black Nationalism and Socialism, Flame/SWP, London
- ¹¹⁸ The African
- ¹¹⁹ Views expressed by spokespersons from PNP; the ACSHO; and Flame
- ¹²⁰ Harambee leaflet July 1979
- ¹²¹ Webb D, undated, Policing in a Multi Racial Community, Birmingham (Unpublished Paper) p 11
- ¹²² Birmingham Evening Mail 29 Aug 1978

