

Centre for Urban and Community Research

CUCR NEWSLETTER

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centre for
URBAN AND
COMMUNITY
research

CUCR NEWS

Things have settled at CUCR since the period of growth we experienced over the last few months. Our new colleagues are all contributing positively to the life of the Centre. Jane Tooke and Neil Spicer are making important progress on the Health Action Zone Evaluation Project. In addition, Jane is taking over the editing of our working papers series so if you have any papers you would like to submit for consideration please get in contact with her directly (j.tooke@gold.ac.uk). Neil has taken responsibility for co-ordinating statistical and quantitative data on London, so if you are interested in finding out more about this please get in contact with him directly (n.spicer@gold.ac.uk).

Garry Robson and Michael Keith have completed the first report for the Pepys Community Forum SRB Programme. This has meant a very demanding start for Garry and an intense period of interviewing and synthesising the progress of this community development programme. It is an extraordinary achievement that the first report was produced so quickly given that it had to be researched and written in just eight weeks. The report has been received very positively and its recommendations have been embraced by the management group on the Pepys Estate. Copies of the report will be available via the Centre by the end of July. In addition, Garry and Michael put in a successful bid for a research evaluation of an urban regeneration scheme in Abbey Wood/Thamesmead. The project will start in the next few months and the grant is worth £30,000. The project will complement their work on the Pepys Estate and add a comparative dimension to their research on city change.

Saulo Cwerner has completed the initial stage of the research on Asylum Seeker settlement policies. Saulo is about to commence the main period of field research. In addition, Saulo and Garry are in the middle of planning a year long programme of

seminars and events which will start in September.

Alison Rooke and Roger Hewitt have completed their work for the Stockwell Project that examined the reasons behind the high mortality rates and increased incidence of Hepatitis C amongst drug users involved in the project. The report was extremely well received. As a result a second piece of research was commissioned on the development for a comprehensive strategy for drug abuse issues in the Borough of Lambeth. This piece of work also involved Anan Collymore and Anita Naoko Pilgrim and the project report is in the final stages of production. Roger Hewitt has recently been to the United States to visit academics and researchers in the Boston area and in Gloucester, Massachusetts who are doing comparable work to that being conducted here at CUCR. He is developing ideas for international and USA/UK comparative projects focusing on issues of community politics, social divisions and urban change. *(Continued on page 2)*

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It has been really good to see the work of PhD students associated with CUCR receiving acclaim. Lez Henry gave a lecture at the Reggae Studies Unit, Institute of Caribbean Studies in Jamaica. Lez - himself an established DJ and recording artist - made a range of media appearances including TV Jamaica's Breakfast Show 'Smile Jamaica.' Articles appeared about him in *The Sunday Observer* and the *Daily Observer* newspapers. During his stay Lez extended an invitation to acclaimed writer Carolyn Cooper – author of *Noises in the Blood* - to become an Associate of CUCR. We are hoping to develop a close relationship with the Reggae Studies Unit headed by Carolyn.

Recently Philomena Essed visited CUCR and gave a paper on her work on racism and 'diversity policy' in the Dutch Police Force. Philomena is the author of many books including *Understanding Everyday Racism, Diversity: Gender, Color, and Culture* and she has a forthcoming co-edited books with David Goldberg entitled *Race Critical Theories*. Philomena is a new Associate of CUCR and we are hoping that through her we will develop close links with the Amsterdam Research Institute for Global Issues & Development Studies.

Over the next few months my period as Acting Head of CUCR will come to an end. Michael Keith will be resuming his rightful place as Head of Centre from October.

Les Back
Acting Head of CUCR

GENDER IN CONSTRUCTION RESEARCH PROJECT

In spite of 20 years of equalities legislation only 1.75% of people participating in skilled craft positions within the construction industry are women, while people from black and minority ethnic communities represent only 1.9% of the craft labour force.

This inequality is taking place at a time when the construction industry faces a serious skills shortage. The Construction Industry Training Board report craft skills shortages in London with over 90% of employers reporting severe difficulties in recruitment. The Construction Federation recently stated that 'in the next 4 years approximately 350,000 new people will be needed to replace those being lost to cope with the increased workload'.

The **Gender in Construction Research Project** is a partnership project between CUCR and two London women's projects: **Women's Education in Building**, a women's construction training organisation which has been established for 17 years with centres in both Surrey Quays and Ladbroke Grove, and **Building Work For Women**, which is a recently established pilot project based in Lambeth which gives women entering the industry a range of support in finding and negotiating employment in the building industry.

There appear to be a number of barriers specific to women's progress in the industry. Some of these are already well documented: a lack of confidence, childcare, a lack of role models, a lack of previous skills and qualifications. There is already a much-documented effect of gender stereotyping which means that women do not consider the construction industry as a profession. Women are often excluded from informal

CUCR NEWS

GENDER IN CONSTRUCTION RESEARCH PROJECT *(Cont/p.2)*

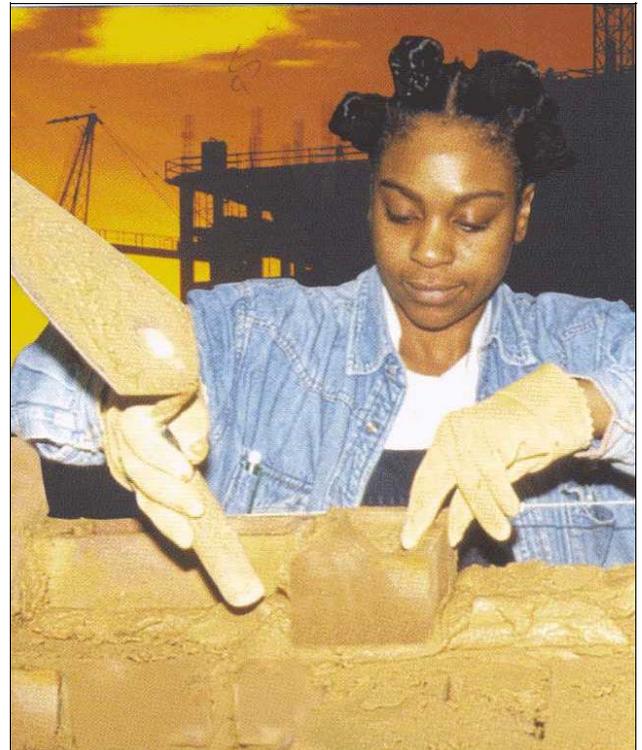
but important learning situations via male family and friends. Lone parents and women from black and minority ethnic communities face additional barriers.

This research project will provide a qualitative analysis of the barriers to the inclusion of women in the construction industry. It will examine the attitudes and practices that maintain the current gender imbalance and make practical recommendations on the required measures to overcome the current exclusion. The research will focus on the experience of two key groups of women: lone parents and women from minority ethnic communities. In addition it will examine employers experiences and perceptions including workplace cultures in a range of firms from the boardroom to the shop floor. Key Stages in the Research are as follows:

- Literature review: A structural analysis of the construction industry and comparisons with other occupational sectors that have successfully addressed gender imbalances.
- A qualitative survey of 40 employers selected from the private sector, housing associations, local authorities and small to medium enterprises (SMEs). This will look at employers' attitudes and everyday work practices. Methods will include observation in the work place and qualitative interviews. This survey aims to analyse the gap between an organisation's commitment to equality of opportunity at a policy level and the experience and attitudes of the workers who are in daily contact with the people these policies aim to include.
- A Qualitative Longitudinal Study: This aspect of the research will complement the case studies by tracking the experience of women emerging

from the training environment and entering the workforce. These will be selected from Women's Education in Building (WEB) and a selection of other training organisations.

The report will be promoted to training providers, government agencies, the industry and employers through a multi-sectoral conference at Goldsmiths. It is hoped that the practical recommendations will be used by training providers, employers and the industry.



To find out more about the project, please contact either Les Back, Alison Rooke or Monica Moreno at CUCR or email on gic@gold.ac.uk.

“SIGNS IN THE STREETS”

GENERAL ELECTION 2001: DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND ETHNIC MINORITY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN PROJECT

As a result of the recent general election showing the lowest turnout of voters to date at 59.2%, ‘political participation’ and ‘democracy’ have once again become headline issues in Britain. The main argument is that low voter turnout indicates ‘apathy’ on the part of the British electorate. There are a variety of reasons cited for the unmotivated electorate:

- a. laziness
- b. a failure to appreciate the right to vote
- c. a loss of faith in the established political parties
- d. a greater degree of cynicism about politicians
- e. politicians being more interested in presentation than principles
- f. a convergence of the mainstream political parties to the point that they are difficult to distinguish on policy.

Whether the problem lies in the politician or the voter, all seem to be agreed that apathy or non-participation is a danger to the very fabric of the democratic system. Few are prepared to consider non-voters as active refuseniks who are using their vote by the very fact of not casting it. Non-voters are not considered people who have critically assessed the electoral campaigns and decided that they would like to use their vote to register a demand for something other than what is already on offer.

Similar arguments played themselves out in the realm of debates about ethnic minority political participation. In the main, the argument was two-fold:

- a. ethnic minorities should recognise and activate their voting power
- b. mainstream political parties should recognise the issues affecting the ethnic minority electorate and increase opportunities for black representation.

In promoting these ideas, one ethnic minority org-

anisation, Operation Black Vote, called for black people to register to vote and, together with related organisations, produced a ‘Black Manifesto’. In the run up to the general election, OBV arranged public meetings in several marginal constituencies around the country to enable ethnic minority voters to question candidates from all mainstream parties. However, these events attracted local ethnic minority political and professional elites rather than broader ethnic minority community interest. In the event, the ethnic minority vote failed to become a political phenomenon in the way that OBV campaigners would have liked. By contrast, the extreme right parties in Oldham made visible gains by mobilising 16% of voters in BNP leader Nick Griffin’s seat alone.

The events surrounding the recent general election have raised further questions for our research project. Why is it, at a time when voter abstention is growing and may even be taking on a new political significance as a conscious act of abstention, so many ethnic minority organisations continue to argue that ethnic minorities should vote for one of the three mainstream political parties? With notable exceptions, of course, like Al-Muhajiroun, which campaigned against voting on the basis that ‘voting for a man-made law is a sin (haram)’. What role do campaigns like Operation Black Vote and National Assembly Against Racism play in engaging ethnic minorities within the mainstream political sphere? What can be achieved through greater ethnic minority political participation and representation? What are the key issues behind the tensions that have swept across northern towns and cities like Leeds, Oldham and Bradford? How have established ethnic minority organisations responded to the problems faced by asylum seekers and refugees?

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“SIGNS IN THE STREETS”

GENERAL ELECTION 2001: DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND ETHNIC MINORITY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN PROJECT

(Continued from page 4)

Why are ethnic minority faith groups becoming increasingly engaged in politics? Tony Blair and William Hague, for example, were included on the platform at the African-Caribbean Evangelical Alliance's annual conference last year.

While the research team has kept a close eye on the many 'race' related issues that have arisen during the general election campaign (eg. reactions to the CRE compact; extreme right candidates; asylum seekers debate; Oldham/Leeds; Berrymondsey; Keith Vaz; civil rights issues) the primary research activity so far has been around conducting interviews for the case studies in Tower Hamlets, Greenwich and Lewisham – all of which are areas in which local government has been 'modernised' and introduced new structures for consultation and decision making. Other current case studies include a BME Housing Association and several umbrella ethnic minority organisations.

The ideas emerging from the project have been presented in three different conference papers. One paper presented the themes of the project, another considered the concepts of 'participation' and 'social capital' while a third presented preliminary findings from the case studies of the umbrella organisations.

For further information about the project, see the CUCR website or call for a leaflet outlining its aims and objectives. The project is part of the ESRC's Democracy and Participation Programme.

Kalbir Shukra
Senior Researcher

Street Portraiture in the Metropolis

Over the past few months Paul Halliday has developed and conducted a photographic project on street portraiture and visual ethnography. Paul is one of the most important exponents of visual urban ethnography and he has been based in CUCR and linked with its work for four years. His film *Living with the Bunker* was the first and best portrayal of the events surrounding the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The *About the Street* project has been conducted in collaboration Croydon College where Paul teaches a course in Photomedia.

In addition, photographer Ingrid Pollard has also been connected with the project. Her work is wide-ranging and focuses on rural and urban contexts and subverts subtly the stereotypes about what is expected from a 'black female artist.' Equally, filmmaker Anastassios Kavassis is making a new work as part of the project about public space and nationalism and comopolitanism focusing on Deptford High Street and Oxford Street. His work has previously addressed issues of urbanism in Greece and the controversy surrounding the 'Elgin Marbles'.

Their work transcends the straightjacket of expectations usually levelled at 'minority arts.' It establishes lines of sight and perspective that are not about 'otherness' in any crude sense. Rather, they produce views on the city life that are simultaneously inside and outside, bringing things into focus that are otherwise invisible. The urban landscape is ground anew in this lens.

The About the Streets Project is a collaboration between Halliday, Pollard and Kavassis but also includes student work. The project is due to be completed in September but a provision seminar on the project entitled 'Street Signs' was held at Croydon College on Tuesday 19th June.

AT THE EDGE OF ASYLUM

The alarms are going off, again. The patient lies still, lifeless except the shallow movement caused by the rhythm of each breath. One of the cruel ironies of intensive care is that those in most distress are deprived of their voice. Their anguish and pain speaks through the frequency of electronic pulses: alarms that signal readings on the life support machines. The nurses interpret these mute traces. Like profane seraphs they carry a burden that is beyond the call of duty. “That is what the nurses, who are of all colours, suffer from: supererogatory love” writes Martin Amis. “It overflows in them and so they have to come here and do all this.”¹

Walter Benjamin commented famously that Paul Klee’s painting ‘Angelus Novus’ could be viewed as a metaphor for history. Here ‘progress’ corresponded to something close to an anarchic piling up of human debris at the feet of the Angel. His powerful image looms as New Labour preens itself after another landslide elec-



'Angelus Novus' by Paul Klee

toral victory and rewards the ‘Mandarins of Millbank’ who lead it. But a storm is brewing. The details of its proportions are documented through the intimate witness provided by those who work at the bedside of the afflicted.

Nurses, who experience the daily pressures of skill shortages, understaffing and patient disappointment, are perhaps the best contemporary substitute for Klee’s Angel. They oversee the human consequences that follow from the politician’s ‘weasel words’ and the lack of adequate resources in the National Health Service. But they also administer, document and take readings on the magnitude of the tempest. “The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed” wrote Benjamin.² But ultimately she is confounded and cannot repair what is broken. Fragment is heaped upon fragment and the relentless energy that is released drives movement forward without purpose.

Perhaps you can spend too much time in hospitals. More and more they seem to me to be places of internment and disposal. Benjamin’s desperate refrain is perhaps a diagnosis of the present, rather than a metaphor for history. The nurses and doctors, whose endeavours are in good faith, simply can’t “make whole what has been smashed.”

After a long day shift in the eye of the storm a very ‘modern Angel’ offered another haunting tale from ICU. It concerned an unknown man who died today from massive head injuries. No-one knew exactly what happened to him. It was certain that he was an Asylum Seeker. In his clothes were military papers that identified him as a former member of the Iraqi Army. Some assumed he must have been a deserter. Why else would he be trying to enter the United Kingdom through the channel tunnel on foot? No-one can be sure. The details of his story were erased as his life ebbed away. What is known is that he sustain-

AT THE EDGE OF ASYLUM

ned his injuries in a fatal attempt to hitch a ride on a train. No-one knew his name, and few will ever hear his story.

New Labour has held firm against the ‘aliens’ whose desperation impels them to attempt ‘walking under water.’ Their authoritarian displays are aimed to boost focus group ratings. For they know that immigration is the only issue where the moribund Tories can hold consistently the upper hand. Such tough asylum postures are justified in the name of pragmatism. But they simply don’t believe their own rhetoric. And somehow this is worse. It is worse because for them intolerance is not a matter of grim commonsense held sincerely. Rather, they solicit hate in bad faith. These displays of firmness on the issue of Asylum are just a means to covet public opinion.

Fleeing from the Nazis and refused entry to Spain at the village of Porbou, Walter Benjamin killed himself with a overdose of Morphine. He had made the long trek over the Pyrenees carrying his precious manuscript and life work – what was to become the Arcades Project - in a suitcase. The Spanish border police sent him back but there could be no return. Exhausted he took the decision to, as Marshall Berman has written, make a “preemptive strike on himself.”³ Tragically, the very next day his fellow asylum seekers were allowed entry into Spain and took flight. In 1994 the townspeople of Portbou erected a monument to Benjamin’s memory. Engraved in stone are his words:

“It is more arduous to honour the memory of the nameless than that of the renowned. Historical construction is devoted to the memory of the nameless.”

Benjamin’s words venerate the mute voices of those who are - like the unknown Iraqi - fatally caught at the edge of asylum. But, the grinning impostors of politics, who hide from culpability, sleep better because the nameless are kept out of sight. They have no name, therefore they do not exist. The cruel truth is that on each ward round those who

nurse the afflicted, both named and anonymous, are left to preside over a storm that hurtles them forward. Public sector burn out, skills shortages in the NHS, the British National Party polling 12,000 votes in Oldham, civil unrest in Bradford, Tony Blair awarding himself a £50,000 pay increase are all readings from the barometer of public life. Echoing Benjamin’s prophesy we might ask: is this tumult ‘what we call progress’?

Les Back

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- 1 Martin Amis *Experience* (Vingage, 2001) p.341
 - 2 Walter Benjamin ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’ in *Illuminations* (Fontana Press, 1973) p.249
 - 3 Marshall Berman *Adventures in Marxism* (Verso, 1999) p.240

NAZI MEMORABILIA

In the week of the first UK Holocaust Memorial Day I watched as a Goldsmiths' student attempted to purchase a Hitler Youth Armband. Regrettably I did not attempt to talk to her and so at this point I can only guess her motives. I cannot also be fully sure of the reasons behind my own actions and inaction. The situation throws up questions of ethics, authority and political action. However, without talking to the student these questions cannot be answered.

I'm not a particularly nosy person. When the student sat next to me in the first floor computer room to do her email I noticed her red hair, boots and fishnet tights my only thought was that there are always new punks to replace the retirees... much the same as the goths. I took more notice of her when she was browsing the online catalogue of Data records, a Coventry record shop specialising in old and new punk. Working in a record shop myself and for a long time being responsible for this shops online catalogue I am always curious about competitors. So as I thought about planning my essay I took occasional glances at the next screen.

The student's record browsing told me that her main interest was Skinhead and Oi!. Although the skinhead movement is widely perceived as being white, working class and racist this image has been contested since its beginnings. Many bands resent being categorised as racist and describe themselves as 'anti-racist Oi!'. Apart from the notorious Skrewdriver the overt stance of most bands is either anti-racist or ambiguous. In addition, this straight translation of political affiliation from band to fan is problematic even if one is in the audience. This is also more often the case with fandom at a geographical or temporal distance. As with the current goths, many punks in London are from other countries in Europe and so do not have the same background influences as the stereotypical white, English, working class punk or skin.

It was what happened next that surprised me. The student began browsing listings of Nazi memorabilia on Ebay (www.ebay.com), an online auctioneer. She spent between thirty minutes and an hour browsing through photographs and descriptions of medals, armbands and signed photographs amongst other souvenirs of the Third Reich. At first it looked like youthful curiosity but all the way through the browsing the student was using a calculator to convert currency (into UK pounds or her 'home' country's currency?). And then it happened. She saw a Hitler Youth Armband at the right price and made a bid of 15.50 for it.

I have tried to think of explanations for this behaviour. Research? But why actually buy an item. Fashion? Medals maybe, but in what circumstances would you wear the armband? And it's hard to see how signed photos of prominent Nazis could be a fashion accessory. As a prop for a play? She would have been looking for a specific item and not comparing prices of medals AND armbands. As part of a

historical collection? Surely she would have looked at memorabilia from other wars.

It was the requirement for authenticity that really closes off these possibilities. For fashion purposes the painting of a swastika onto a ripped T-shirt would be enough. It is hard to imagine a situation in which this level of authenticity would be a requirement. A trip to an army and navy store would usually suffice.

At this point I felt a need to speak to her. But I also knew that in the library I do not have the authority to tell others what they can or cannot do. I also knew that as soon as she knew I was watching her behaviour would change. A warning would also enable her to find an explanation for her potential purchase. However, I needed to know that I could find out who this student was before leaving the library. In the end I decided to speak to whoever was manning the computer helpdesk. I was informed that there is an ethical policy regarding the use of Goldsmiths' computers. He was sure that pornography was banned but did not know whether the purchasing of Nazi memorabilia was permitted (the purchasing of Nazi memorabilia is legal in the UK but banned in France, Germany, Austria and Italy). He also assured me that the records of who is logged on where and any network traffic is stored. I knew at this point that any conversation or confrontation could wait.

I left the library a little confused. I felt that I needed to talk to someone and ask advice about what to do next. I also felt disappointed that I did not take the opportunity to talk to her and would probably not follow it up with more research. In some ways that is why this is being written. As it is now in the open it compels me to finish the story, to find the student and discover her motives.

Technical Note: When using the Internet your activities are recorded in many places. Your computer keeps a copy of the material (a cache) in order that it does not need to be retrieved again if it has not changed. Your web server at your Internet Service Provider (e.g. Goldsmiths or Freeserve) can log any page requests and may also keep a cache of data to speed up access to commonly requested pages. In addition the server that hosts the website keeps records of which computers have requested the pages. If I was browsing the BNP website from the Goldsmiths' library the creator of the website would have a record of goldsmiths.ac.uk requesting pages. In commercial circles this is used to see how popular the site is and from where people are looking. Of course the BNP webmaster has no way of telling whether the user was a supporter, an enemy or just indifferent but even by browsing the site you inform him that he has had an influence.

Gavin Bailey
MA Culture, Globalisation and the City Student

“SUPREMACY AND RAGE IN OLDHAM”

As student on the MA *Culture, Globalisation and the City* I am getting used to wrestling with questions and paradoxes. With all our course deadlines met, the weekend should be a time for relaxing after the slog. But the lecturers have encouraged us to apply what we've learnt in the class room to our everyday lives. As a black student this has meant thinking about the recent events in the north of England. What could be less relaxing you might ask than me spending the weekend in Delph, Oldham and Mossley, in the north west of England? When you are a student at the Centre of Urban and Cultural Research nothing could be more interesting.

So I set out to gain first hand experience of what the papers did not say about the conflict in Oldham and to investigate the rebirth of British National Party's electoral fortunes. I wanted to apply what I had learned about urban ethnography to this challenge. My aim was to meet people and listen to real stories about a community that now seemed as cold as ice. What does it mean to live in what the media described as 'a ghost town?'

I left inner London by car and headed north on Whit Friday. As a mature student, financial misery is always a dire. But thanks to my friends and family I headed off with roughly forty pounds in my pocket. My room-mate is from Saddleworth. He had made reservation for my visit and helped me with accommodation. Friends and family worried about how my outspoken personality would be interpreted by the locals.

Oldham is like many great towns in the north of England. Their industrial architecture takes you right back to Fredrich Engels' classic book *The Condition of the Working Class in 1844* that we've studied on the MA. The same cotton mills that Engels described offered both Asians and whites work up until recently. They have all, more or less, closed.

There's a good reason why the music of black America is so popular in the north. On both sides of the Atlantic, soul music - or 'Northern soul' as it came known here - became a means to escape temporarily the humdrum of industrial living. Aretha Franklin and Gene Chandler still resonate with these people, even those who may also be drawn to the BNP. Now in these industrial communities, unemployment, poverty, deprivation, urban decay, poor housing and institutional racism is endemic. They are also places where voices of peace are muted.

Some people I spoke to voted BNP as a protest without understanding the connections between the fascisms of today and yesteryear. May, a pensioner from Oldham, was horrified when she heard about the real face of the BNP in an Anti Nazi League leaflet. She concluded:

“You want somebody to help you out, but you don't know what they stand for. These are people, who sent children to the gas chambers in the 1940s. Now they

claim there was no Holocaust – well, they should ask people of my generation. I am sorry I voted for them. I wish I could take back my vote.”

There are other stories of the real consequences of the hatred that has been stirred up.

Miss X is a mother with five mixed heritage children. She is an incredible and brave woman. She told me what it is like to live here with a mixed family and the abuse she faced moving through the town. One of her daughters has light brown skin and because of this she is identified and classified as a “Paki.” Her view was that these communities are not really full of hardened bigots. Local white people lack an understanding of different cultural backgrounds. Miss X told me she had to leave a brass bandstand that she played in because of the atmosphere of intolerance and xenophobia. She was in tears as she told me these stories and her partner - who is white - looked on confused.

In both communities – white and Asian – there are feelings of resentment. The high percentage of BNP votes seems to place a question mark in everyone's mind about their neighbour. ‘Did they vote BNP, or not?’ ‘Which side are you on?’ Mistrust seemed to be written on the faces of everyone. One local stated that she was “very surprised that this could happen in Oldham”. But should we really be that surprised?

I think the BNP were successful because white people in Oldham felt let down by both Labour and the Conservative parties. They are angry with the state and politicians for abandoning them. They are angry because they have been relegated to live in dilapidated conditions and forgotten by the London-based elite. They are very angry at the behaviour of the police and lack of local authority social reforms. These genuine grievances have been replaced by jealousy, resentment, despair, anxiety, shock and anger. Those who speak out against racism are punished. Both Asian and white working class people told me of the intimidation and harassment experienced by those people committed to opposing racist behaviour. An Asian memorial site in Green Acre was desecrated and vandalised.

As you walk through the city the distrust and tension within the community is palpable. But isn't this really a response to the poverty and deprivation. It seemed to me like a contemporary echo of what Engels described in industrial towns like Manchester in the nineteenth century? I wondered what Engels would have made of it all had he been at my shoulder. He showed us over a hundred years ago that we must understand the city through an appreciation of the economic forces that bring it to life and the political struc

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COURSE NEWS

THE MaCCOLL SCHOLARSHIP:

A NEW AWARD FOR THE MA IN CULTURE, GLOBALISATION AND THE CITY

This coming academic year we will be offering a fees only scholarship for the MA in *Culture, Globalisation and the City*. It will be a competitive award and Kirsty MacColl's family have agreed to have her name associated with the scholarship. Kirsty died in December last year in a tragic speedboat accident off the Mexican island Cozumel in the Caribbean.

She became famous for her shimmering pop hits like 'New England' and 'Walking Down Madison,' but her song-writing addressed a wide range of themes. She was born in Croydon. Her career began when she joined a proto-punk rhythm and blues band called the Drug Addix who were from a large council estate called New Addington. The fortunes of the group were short lived but through them she came to the attention of Stiff Records who signed her.

Although best known for her shimmering pop songs, Kirsty MacColl developed her own unique commentary on the metropolis. In particular, her song *Still Life* is equal as a London ballad to her father Ewan MacColl's epic *Sweet Thames Flow Softly*. In it she portrays a city that is dying as its citizens leave for Milton Keynes but in which a 'still life' - that is both mundane and inviolable - endures. Many of her songs are acutely observed vignettes about London life, family and relationships always from her own unique point of view. Bono of U2 described her as the "Noel Coward of her generation." Later in her career she developed a close association with Cuba and she championed Cu-



These aspects of her life and career resonate with the issues of music, culture and politics that are key themes within the MA.

There are also connections between Goldsmiths and her father, Ewan MacColl. He wrote 'First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' and 'Dirty Old Town,' the latter was in part inspired by Engels' book the *Condition of the Working Classes in 1844* which is one of the set texts on the MA. Ewan MacColl was closely connected with the left-wing folk movement and his collection of sheet music and publications on folk music is lodged in the college library. Kirsty was often impatient about being asked about her father and her songs deserve serious attention in their own right.

As a social observer she was less dogmatic and ideological than earlier generations of song writers, she saw through the human frailty and foibles - particularly in men - that were passed over by others. The scholarship will form part of a series of memorial events that will be happening this summer. These include the setting up of a fund to support musicians and arts in Cuba and a memorial that is to be placed in Soho Square.

Les Back



COURSE NEWS

NEW COURSE IN PHOTOGRAPHY AND URBAN CULTURE

The *Photography and Urban Cultures: Workshop Programme* will be offered for the first time this coming academic year. This initiative has featured in a previous newsletter but we are pleased to announce that its start date has been confirmed and it will run in the coming session, convened by Paul Halliday.

The programme has been developed in response to the increasing interest in urban theory and visual representation of urban cultures and places. The course will encourage participants to relate urban theory to their own work as photographers and photomedia practitioners. It will involve theoretical and practical units, presentations to group and critiques along with a programme of visiting lectures from reputed photographers and practitioners.

The course is aimed at intermediate and advanced practitioners interested in exploring the links between cultural research, urban studies and photographic practice. It will be of particular interest to those concerned with visual presentations of city life and debates within contemporary sociology, anthropology and geography.

The course is a three term programme commencing in September 2001, culminating in a final show in the summer of 2002. It will run on Mondays between 6.30-8.30pm at the Centre for Urban and Community Research and it will cost £194.

For details and application requests please contact PACE, Goldsmiths College, University of London, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW, telephone 020 7 919 7200.

“SUPREMACY AND RAGE IN OLDHAM”

tures that administer the divisions between rich and poor. The closed factories and mills lay behind the feelings of despair and resentment. But the racial segregation that is found in these northern towns cannot be just explained by economics. So, racism is both an effect of poverty and a cause of segregation.

I left to return to London. I switched off the car radio. I wanted to reflect on what I had seen and what the people I had met had told me. Yes, Nick Griffin and the BNP had fed on the prejudice that is undeniably there. But, all political parties are responsible for what happened in Oldham. If the problems of racism are to be tackled in these communities they need to undergo an urban and economic form of regeneration that addresses the real consequences of poverty and deprivation. In the end my conclusion was that we must support the people of Oldham in their attempt to find another kind of future and not just condemn them.



TRAVELS

Roger Hewitt in Massachusetts

During April I had meetings with agencies and academics in Boston with a view to forging links and developing a dialogue around the issues of urban regeneration and neighbourhood renewal. I was interested in one particular neighbourhood project – the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative – a genuinely community-based initiative with a twenty-year history of unique community empowerment. Based in an economically deprived area of Boston comprised of predominantly African American, Hispanic and Cape Verdian communities, the DSNI turned on its head the old ‘law of eminent domain’- an ‘urban renewal’ (=‘slum clearance’ for profit and racial segregation) law by which a city authority could purchase scattered parcels of disused/condemned land within an area and sell them on for private developments which could also acquire the ‘good’ property within the same area. For the first time in its use, this predominantly resident-run initiative took advantage of ‘eminent domain’ to acquire scattered parcels of derelict land used for dumping, and began a process of turning around an ugly depressing neighbourhood – for the people who lived there. The history of the Dudley Street area and how it has been transformed is one of the most cheerful chapters in the book of affordable housing and community action in the USA.

I had already begun identifying a number of individual researchers in academic institutions in Massachusetts whose interests converged with CUCR’s. By a happy co-incidence, Emma Haughton’s mother, Rosemary, was visiting the Centre earlier in the year, and had come from Gloucester Massachusetts, a few miles north of Boston, with Nancy Schwoyer to discuss the possibility of basing a sabbatical in the Centre. They were (and are) to use the time to write a history of the remarkable land trust they developed over twenty years, responding to the needs of some of Gloucester’s homeless families through housing,

educational and other strategies. One of the academic bodies they had worked in tandem with was the MacCormack Institute of Public Affairs, part of the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMas Boston), which was also one of those I was particularly interested in. Largely as a result of their visit I arranged a meeting with Donna Haig Friedman, senior fellow and director of the Centre for Social Policy within the McCormack Institute, and other colleagues.

Amongst the many interesting projects that the McCormack Institute is involved in, one is an evaluation of the work of the D.S.N.I. and it was with some enthusiasm that we were able to discuss the work we were doing in CUCR – especially the Pepys Estate SRB evaluation and the Paddington Partnership Trust. Clearly there were areas of overlapping interest, and a congruence of perspectives and academic values. We agreed to start to get familiar with each Centre’s work, start to exchange reports and other publications, and work towards developing an intellectual dialogue that might lead to joint research and maybe joint publications.

I also visited the DSNI with a proposal for contact between a youth educational project in Merton, organised by the environmental group Groundwork, and the DSNI youth group Nubian Youth. The CUCR are represented on the partnership that is working on the Groundwork project, which is designed in part to get young people in video dialogue internationally. The DNSI people were keen to link up so we shall see where that one goes...

Finally, I also visited Emma’s mother, Rosemary, and Nancy Schwoyer up on the north shore in the harbour town of Gloucester – a place I’ve long been very fond of for a string of reasons. Celebrated in the book and film *The Perfect Storm*, Gloucester has a wonderfully rich and long his-

TRAVELS

Roger Hewitt in Massachusetts

tory of seafaring and commercial fishing. Rosemary and Nancy bought the 17th century Well-spring House, together with a number of other left idealists about twenty years ago. They formed a land trust and started being active in addressing some of the needs of the rarely foregrounded poor and homeless families in the area. Since then they have grown in the range of their projects - buying, doing up dilapidated privately-rented houses and making them available as affordable housing, organising a range of educational programmes etc., and still having homeless families living with them at Well-spring. There were two families there the day I visited. Though Well-spring is not an academic organisation it does have strong contacts with various bodies that conduct research for them in relation to the development work they plan. The McCormack Institute at Umas Boston is one of these.

Rosemary and Nancy are to start their sabbatical here later this year so I suspect we'll be persuading them to run at least one seminar on their work at Well-spring. I'll certainly look forward to having them about.

Roger Hewitt
Senior Researcher

London Style in Jamaica

Greetings one and all. In April Y2K+1, I spent a couple of weeks in Jamaica achieving one of my life-time ambitions, which was to present my own take on reggae/dancehall music and its cultural resonance from a black 'British' perspective. The opportunity for me to do so came out of a series of reasonings I have had over the past couple of years with the renowned Jamaican cultural critic, Dr Carolyn Cooper. Dr Cooper has written extensively on the impact of Jamaican language and culture throughout the diaspora, with a focus on reggae music and deejay culture. As a result of one of our email reasonings, I was invited by Dr Cooper to speak as part of the Reggae Studies Unit's guest lecturer series. My lecture took place on 25th April 2001 at the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre, which is part of the Phillip Sherlock Centre for Creative Arts.

Dr Cooper kindly arranged for me to stay with professors Rupert and Maureen Warner Lewis who live with their two children in the Mona suburb of Kingston and they are both based at UWI Mona Campus. They were wonderful hosts and Maureen specialises in West and Central African retentions in Caribbean languages and cultures. The reasonings I had with them were both fruitful and enjoyable—in fact Rupert was kind enough to give me two impromptu tutorials after reading one of my papers and the guidance I received from him is proving to be invaluable.

As part of the promotion for my lecture, I was featured on the following programmes:

24th April: **TV Jamaica's Breakfast Show**, 'Smile Jamaica' which is hosted by Dahlia Harris who was very engaging and prompted me to perform in the studio 'live an direct'. That afternoon I was invited to speak on my perspective on reggae/dancehall music on **HOT 102 FM's 'Vibes Connection'** with

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London Style in Jamaica

(Continued from page 13)

Cathy Owen. This included the opportunity to select my favourite tunes as well as featuring some of my own tracks in my lezlee lyrix deejay persona. I also took live calls from listeners which generated a good rapport between us in the studio and the participants from radio land, as my ideas were well received and Cathy and her engineer, Neto, are truly 'full ah vibes'.



That evening I was an invited guest at 'The University of Technology's' open poetry session that takes place in an amphitheatre in Down Town Kingston on the last Tuesday of every month. The coordinator, Tommy Ricketts, has asked me to headline one of their main events when I next return to the Island.

Wednesday, 25th April: **Hot 102 FM's 'The Breakfast Club'** which is a political show that reviews the major political and cultural features on a daily basis, with Beverley Anderson-Manley (Michael Manley, the former Prime Minister's ex-wife) and Anthony Abrams. Again, as a consequence of my being a deejay, I was asked to perform live on this show as well, so I just 'let off a style', for as we say in the culture, 'wi flash lyrics anyweh cau wi always ready'. That afternoon I featured on **KLAS FM's 'My Place'**, where I was interviewed by Michael Cuffe who is a very engaging host. I took live calls on this show as well.

In the evening, whilst facing stiff competition for an audience from the 'Reggae Boyz who were playing a World Cup qualifier against Honduras,

consisted of lecturers, students and members of the public and, therefore, was a very good mix.

My ideas on the role and purpose of the culture from a black British perspective was thoughtfully engaged in a very lively question and answer session, in which many expressed a level of astonishment at my knowledge of the culture. For instance, the fact that we have been performing in much the same way as they do in Jamaica for the past twenty years in reggae/dancehalls in Britain was a chief talking point. After the lecture I was interviewed for '**The Sunday Observer**' by Basil Walters, who suggested in an article that was published on 29th April that I was a 'remarkable "thoughtist" (thinker) because:

'There are not many dancehall-type deejays who take a consistent stance about not using slack or lewd lyrics in their performances. But then, Lez Henry, a British born deejay of Jamaican parentage, defies the stereotypical perception associated with exponents of that art form. The commonly held view is that they are semi-literate at best, uneducated and unsophisticated... Well Henry, whose stage name is Lezlee Lyrrix, is on the threshold of opening new frontiers to the way people view dancehall deejays.'

On my travels in Jamaica I met Jimmy Cliff the actor, Mutabaruka the host of Irie FM's 'The Cutting Edge' and renowned Dub Poet. I also met and reasoned with Mortimo Planner, the Rastaman who, it is suggested, encouraged Bob Marley to embrace Rastafari. I also met up with one of Jamaica's Grammy Award-winning producers, Mikey Bennet, who I may well do some recording for in the future. I spent a lot of time with Carolyn Cooper and her husband Cecil Gutzmore, which gave me the chance to 'chin wag' about life in the 'Old Smoke' (London), as well as checking up on my own family and friends on the Island.

One love and nuff rasspeck!

Lez Henry

Post Graduate Research Student



REVIEW

BOOK REPORT ON "*THE JOURNEY OF CHARLIE NEILSEN*"

In "The Journey of Charlie Nielsen", Rogilds writes as a Danish sociologist called Charlie Nielsen, who, in 1997, goes to London and Berlin to do research on multiculturalism in these cities. Charlie Nielsen wants to explore the new exodus that is taking place in multicultural European cities and the new kinds of racism, which simultaneously are to be found here.

"The Journey of Charlie Nielsen" points at both the positive aspects of multiculturalism, i.e. transcultural, translocal and transnational dialogues between different classes and races, and also the negative sides of it, which Charlie Nielsen encounters along his journey, such as terror, violence and the fear that form the base of the new racism found in Europe.

The main question Charlie Nielsen seeks an answer for throughout his journey is how to take action against violence in the local societies with marginalised social groups that are already fighting each other on the basis of ethnicity, race and territory. In his search for answers he consults various cultural analysts, intellectuals, teachers, politicians, social workers and young people.

All in all "The Journey of Charlie Nielsen" is about the importance of multiplying cultures and the fear this results in when debating identity and belonging. The book confronts our images of "whiteness", imperialist thought and social hierarchy in a way that forces the reader to rethink these terms in a non-hostile rational way. Charlie Nielsen regards a new awareness as a necessity in the issue of multiculturalism and also the realisation that this cannot be done without creating alliances with the "Others" that are already living in Europe. His aim is to eliminate the fear that surrounds the meeting between "Them" and "Us".

In "The Journey of Charlie Nielsen" Rogilds tries to create a different way of researching multiculturalism. Instead of focusing only on the

talks with people from different academic backgrounds he creates a new understanding of multiculturalism. The research of Charlie Nielsen thus has a theoretical and scientific aspect as well as a very equal and constructive way of analysing multiculturalism.

Rogilds has a remarkable way of shedding light on the unjust aspects of the relation between ethnic minorities and the majority in a society. As he writes about Charlie Nielsen and his journey, Rogilds describes himself as a bystander that meets Charlie Nielsen and discovers that they share many interests. Thus, it is through Charlie Nielsen's experiences of the hostile focus on ethnicity, culture and race in white communities that Rogilds realises, and makes the reader realise as well, that the term "Resentment" is not as outdated a sociological term as he thought it was. By this realisation Rogilds makes the reader aware of the narrow solidarity there is to be found in contemporary well-fare states as well as the true nature of hostile minority-majority relations.

Because of the clarity with which Rogilds discusses the issues of ethnic minorities in Europe, "The Journey of Charlie Nielsen" has a very refreshing view on the city as a place where both the majority and the minority is seen as being responsible for building a bridge between each other.

Centre for Urban and Community Research

CUCR in the News

5th January 2001 'On the Dark Side of Cyberspace,' *Searchlight*, pp. 22-25
10th January 2001 'White Fortresses in Cyberspace,' *Unesco Courier*, 1pp.44-46
24th April 2001 'A Write Off,' *Guardian Education* p. 12
29th May-June 1st 2001 Les Back interviewed for radio documentary 'Skinheads' by Oleg Boldyrev BBC Russian Service
16th July 2001 'Scholarship names after MacColl,' BBC News On-line http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/entertainment/music/newsid_1441000/1441672.stm
16th July 2001 BBC Radio 5 Live 'Open All Night' coverage of the Kirsty MacColl Scholarship
17th July 2001 interview for BBC Radio 5 Live Breakfast News coverage of Kirsty MacColl Memorial Scholarship
17th July 2001 interview for BBC London Live Breakfast News – Kirsty MacColl Memorial Scholarship
17th July 2001 'Goldsmiths Honour Dead Singer' THES News <http://www.thes.co.uk/news/story.asp?id=6061>

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