

Professor Ruth Pearson

Subverting Stereotypes: Asian Women's Political Activism - a Comparison of the Grunwick and Gate Gourmet Strikes

End of Year Report for 2007

We are finding a significant two-way relationship between diasporic memory and identity and the role of different communities within the public and political sphere. We are also aware that the political contest of the two disputes as well as the different item period are crucial to understanding the different ways in which they are taken up – or ignored within contemporary discourses.

In spite of some difficulties we have managed to interview key informants involved in both disputes.

We are building an extensive bibliography on the disputes themselves and the analytical and theoretical issues of the research.

We are constructing a time-line about the Gate Gourmet dispute since this is an ongoing process with no existing secondary sources.

We have made very good links with a number of documentary film makers and have collaborated in a recent BBC film about Grunwick, and we are also tracing films which were made but not shown on TV networks because of fear of litigation. We are now more aware of the importance of film as archive and memory.

We are developing further activities with Vera Media (a community video company in Leeds to organise formats and venues for the exhibition to be mounted in Year 2.

We attended the Gate Gourmet Support rally in Southall on October 14 2007, and built on contacts already made with local organisations. We are building on contacts with the TUC and with a range of Asian women's organisations and projects including Southall Black Sisters, Imkaan, Sahehi and Asha.