

COMBATING RACIST HARASSMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

A joint submission by the

Chinese Welfare Association

*Committee on the Administration of Justice
Racism Subgroup*

Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People

to the

HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO RACIAL ATTACKS AND HARASSMENT

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Introduction

The Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) is an independent civil liberties group working to secure the highest standards of the administration of justice in Northern Ireland. The CAJ has had a long running concern about the absence of anti-racist legislation in Northern Ireland. In early 1991 the CAJ Executive Committee decided to establish a sub group on racism in order to advance our work in this area. Its membership includes representatives of the Chinese Welfare Association (CWA) and the Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People (NICTP), lawyers, academics, students, community activists and campaigners. The CWA and the NICTP are the two umbrella organisations representing the Chinese and Traveller communities in Northern Ireland.

In April 1991 CAJ raised the absence of anti-racism legislation at the United Nations Human Rights Committee session on the United Kingdom. In November of the same year the sub group organised Northern Ireland's first conference on racism which was attended by over 130 people. The conference heard presentations on the experiences of the Chinese and Traveller communities together with a number of presentations by experienced anti-racist practitioners from Britain. The United Kingdom's international obligations in respect of racism were also highlighted. The conference concluded that there was an urgent need for the introduction of "comprehensive and appropriate anti-racist legislation for Northern Ireland."

This is a joint submission from the CWA, CAJ and NICTP which draws on the experience of all three bodies. However, in preparing our response to the Home Affairs Committee Inquiry Into Racial Attacks and Harassment we have engaged in extensive consultations with members of each of the various minority ethnic communities throughout Northern Ireland. While the Chinese and Travellers are the two largest minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland, there is no suggestion that harassment is confined to these groups - each of the other minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland has experienced racist harassment in varying degrees.

The size and distribution of the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland is not well documented, but Government estimates suggest that the total is 'in the region of 10,000'.¹ Such figures can only remain vague estimates given that no ethnicity question is included in the Northern Ireland census. It is probable that the minority ethnic community numbers considerably more than 10,000. For example, the Chinese community, estimated by Government as totalling approximately 5,000 people, has been assessed at 7,000-8,000 by the Chinese community itself. Even this estimate is based on the size and scale of the

¹ CCRU *Race Relations in Northern Ireland*. Stormont: CCRU.

Chinese restaurant industry and we are aware of other estimates placing the figure as high as 15,000.

In any case we take the view that an effective remedy for harassment should not depend on the size of the minority ethnic population. Racist harassment is unacceptable whether there is only one person of minority ethnic background in Northern Ireland or whether there are 100,000. Harassment is objectionable in principle and its victims deserve to be protected from it. We believe there is a strong argument for suggesting that smaller numbers of minority ethnic people are at greater risk given their smaller numbers and therefore the need for protection is increased.

Put simply, the focus should not be on the numbers of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland but on the task of combating racism. During the course of our work on this issue we have gathered a large amount of evidence which suggests that members of minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland *do* experience racist harassment from members of the public and from official bodies.

Defining Harassment

The Commission for Racial Equality defines racial harassment in the following way:

Racial harassment is violence which may be verbal or physical and which includes attacks on property as well as on the person, suffered by individuals or groups because of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins, when the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and/or there is evidence of racism.²

Research in Britain has suggested that racist harassment involves *at least* the following forms:

- (1) attacks on persons,
- (2) attacks on property,
- (3) threats and abuse, and
- (4) racist graffiti.³

We are unaware of any similar Government-sponsored research on racist harassment (or, indeed, racism in general) in Northern Ireland. This absence of research in itself indicates a worrying indifference on the part of Government. We feel that major research into this area is an urgent priority and we hope that the Home Affairs Committee will recommend that such research is carried out. However the experience of our organisations suggests that these categories are equally applicable in the analysis of racist harassment and intimidation in

² CRE 1987. *Living in Terror: A Report on Racial Violence and Harassment in Housing*. London: CRE.

³ Home Office 1981. *Racial Attacks: Report of a Home Office Study*. London: HMSO.

Northern Ireland. *Each one of these forms of racist harassment has occurred in Northern Ireland.* (APPENDICES 1-4)

We also recognise the need for consideration of a further category: that of racist 'parading' or 'marching'. The importance of parades as tools of racist harassment and intimidation is perhaps less obvious in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the United Kingdom. However there have been many anti-Traveller marches and demonstrations and there is always a possibility of other racist parades. We believe that these could be regarded as a specific form of harassment in Northern Ireland as well as the rest of the United Kingdom. (APPENDIX 4)

We also believe that 'hate speech' or 'incitement to hatred' must be seen as a specific form of harassment or incitement to harassment. The most appalling examples of hate speech in Northern Ireland have been directed against Travellers. Some of these are genocidal in implication. Most notorious of these was a speech by a Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast calling for the 'incineration' of Travellers.⁴ However, there have also been examples of hate speech directed against other minority ethnic communities - one 'community leader' in Craigavon called for Protestants and Catholics to unite to attack Asians in the area.

Harassment in Northern Ireland

The CWA, CAJ and NICTP are seriously concerned about the incidence of racist harassment in Northern Ireland. These organisations have received complaints about harassment from each of the main minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. This harassment has taken place in an area which, although part of the United Kingdom, enjoys much less legal and administrative protection from racism than Great Britain.

There is a worrying absence of anti-racist legislation and practice by Government in Northern Ireland. This means that racist harassment in Northern Ireland takes place in an environment in which racism in general seems to be 'tolerated' by Government - in the sense that anti-racist measures enacted for Great Britain have not been enacted for Northern Ireland. However, following pressure from minority ethnic groups and other interested organisations, the Government's Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) recently produced a consultation document on, 'Race Relations in Northern Ireland' (henceforth the 'CCRU document'). Much of our understanding of Government thinking on racism is dependent on this document since it was the first Government publication to address racism in Northern Ireland in any depth. The following analysis is therefore centrally informed by the consultation document.

⁴ 17th Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights p 360.

The CCRU document made very little mention of harassment. We are unaware of any steps taken by the government to investigate the incidence of racist harassment in Northern Ireland in contrast to the efforts of the Home Office in Britain. Furthermore we are aware of the cultural barriers which often make it extremely difficult for people to make a complaint - if someone has little or no English it is extremely difficult for them to inform Government of the harassment that they are experiencing. The absence of any racism-specific monitoring agency makes the reporting of harassment even more problematic.

What is certain is that when minority ethnic people do experience racist harassment in Northern Ireland, they have no recourse to an *effective* legal remedy for this. Harassment in Northern Ireland also takes place in the wider context of the absence of any anti-racist discrimination legislation. It is entirely unacceptable that it remains perfectly legal to discriminate against someone on the grounds of race in Northern Ireland. *The realisation that it is legal to discriminate in a racist way in Northern Ireland, no doubt informs the idea that it is legal to harass in a racist way in Northern Ireland.*

While there is a specificity to racism in Northern Ireland, our analysis of racism and anti-racism must be informed by lessons from the experience in Great Britain. We believe that racist harassment must be addressed as part of a comprehensive package of anti-racist measures. Existing powers do not provide an adequate remedy to racist discrimination in general and racist harassment in particular.

Existing Powers

We are of the view that there is a necessity for tough, effective anti-racism legislation to be introduced as quickly as possible. As has been pointed out, the absence of anti-racist discrimination legislation implies a tolerance of racism which can only encourage racist harassment in Northern Ireland. The existence of relatively strong anti-discrimination legislation covering gender and religion only serves to highlight the absence of anti-racist legislation.

The one piece of existing legislation which is formally anti-racist is woefully inadequate. Incitement to Racial Hatred legislation (which has been in place since 1970) has proved wholly ineffective in combating racial hate speech. No prosecution has been taken under the Public Order (NI) Order 1987 for race hate speech in spite of the fact that there have been several incidents of race hate speech which unambiguously incited hatred.⁵ Official inaction in the face of compelling evidence can only contribute to a climate which facilitates - and indeed encourages - racist harassment. We also feel that Government is already

⁵ For examples, see 17th Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights pp 360 - 361.

under an obligation to provide comprehensive and specific protection from racism under a number of international legal instruments.

International Legal Instruments

The most important anti-racist international legal instrument to which the UK is a party is the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). Article 2 (1) of this Convention provides that:

'States parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all forms and promoting understanding among all races, and to this end:

- a) Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local shall act in conformity with this obligation;
- b) Each State Party undertakes not to sponsor, defend or support racial discrimination by any persons or organisations;
- c) Each State Party shall take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists;
- d) Each State Party shall prohibit and bring to an end, by all appropriate means, including legislation as required by circumstances, racial discrimination by any persons, group or organisation;
- e) Each State Party undertakes to encourage, where appropriate, integrationist multiracial organisations and movements and other means of eliminating barriers between races, and to discourage anything which tends to strengthen racial division.'

With regard to racist harassment, we cannot underestimate the importance of Article Four of the ICERD:

'State Parties ...

- (a) shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;
- (b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organisations, and also organised and all other propaganda activities which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognise participation in such organisations or activities as an offence punishable by law;
- (c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.

We feel that these clauses oblige the Government to introduce effective measures to address racist harassment in Northern Ireland.

While the UN establishes the important principle, the most detailed examination of the practice of racist harassment in the Member States of the European

Community has been carried out by the European Parliament.⁶ There are a number of important recommendations from the European Parliament *Committee of Inquiry on Racism and Xenophobia* which offer more specific advice on dealing with harassment:

Recommendation 65: That Member states set up appropriate mechanisms responsible for monitoring the strict application of convention, resolutions and directives and of legislation concerning acts of racism, antisemitism or xenophobia.

Recommendation 66: That Member States respect the traditional way of life of [G]ypsy and other travelling communities, encouraging the provision of the necessary facilities to make this possible, at external frontiers as well as within the Community.

Recommendation 69: That Member States renew the instructions given to the various services responsible for carrying out checks to avoid any discriminatory harassment likely to suggest to the persons being checked that external characteristics pertaining to a particular race or category may have predisposed them to the checks concerned.

More recently the European Parliament passed a, 'Resolution on respect for human rights in the European Community'. This included an important section on 'racism, xenophobia and discrimination' which *inter alia*:

32. Expresses its condemnation of the growing intolerance in Europe towards foreigners, non-EC citizens and persons belonging to minority social groups and roundly condemns acts of openly racist and fascist violence perpetrated in the name of this ideology and, in general, any action liable to be a vehicle for such ideology or to encourage racist behaviour, in particular amongst young people; also expresses its solidarity with all victims of racism and xenophobia;

35. Makes an urgent appeal to the governments of the member States and the Community authorities to guarantee the protection of foreign communities against racist and fascist violence and to work towards improving their living, housing and working conditions;

36. Calls on the governments of the Member States and the Community authorities to step up the struggle against racism and xenophobia, in particular by adopting and, where appropriate, strengthening legislation against racism and xenophobia, monitoring the application of such legislation and granting legal entities and associations the right to institute proceedings against acts of a racist nature and to act as civil party in such proceedings;

This resolution represents an important advance in the commitment to address racism and racist violence within the Member States of the European Community. We would encourage the United Kingdom Government to implement the suggested changes in anti-racist legislation and practice forthwith.

In consequence of the aforementioned international legal instruments and bodies, the United Kingdom government has a legal and moral obligation to

⁶ *Committee of Inquiry on Racism and Xenophobia: Report of the Findings of the Inquiry.* Luxembourg: European Parliament.

eliminate - 'without delay' - racist harassment in Northern Ireland. The CWA, CAJ and NICTP urge the Government to proceed immediately to introduce legislation which meets these obligations.

Anti-harassment Legislation

The Northern Ireland experience supports the idea that racist harassment is a specific crime and that it should be recognised as such in law. While in theory racist harassment is punishable under existing legislation, in practice racist harassment often goes unrecorded and unprosecuted. A Racial Harassment Act would declare unambiguously that racist harassment is an offence. The model for this could be the draft Racial Harassment Bill which was put before Parliament as a private members bill in 1992. This recognises that crimes of incitement and violence which are motivated by racism are a specific category of violent crime. The bill also ensures that crimes of racist violence are processed with the seriousness they merit. We endorse this analysis and accept that much of the harassment experienced by minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland is motivated by racism. We feel that such harassment must be specifically outlawed. Consideration could also be given to the argument that racial motivation should be regarded as an aggravating factor in sentencing. However, we also believe that people's right to be protected from racist harassment should be enshrined in a broader Bill of Rights.

Bill of Rights

The CAJ has long campaigned for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Our draft bill (CAJ pamphlet no. 17 which is included here as APPENDIX 5) contains a specific anti-discrimination clause (Article 16) which reads as follows:

' The enjoyment of rights, whether referred to in this Bill of Rights or not, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, ethnic or national or social origin, association with a national minority, sexual orientation, property, mental or physical disability, birth or other status'

Reinforced by this clause, many of the other clauses in the draft bill offer protection from harassment. These include Article 1, 'the right to life'; Article 2, the 'right not to be subject to torture'; Article 7, the 'right of freedom from interference'; Article 10, the 'right of freedom of expression'; Article 11, the 'right to freedom of peaceful assembly'; and Article 13, the 'right to liberty and security'.

We believe that a Bill of Rights should be implemented for Northern Ireland. If this were done it would play a key part in addressing the problem of racist harassment. In the absence of a Bill of Rights we propose that consideration should be given to amending section 17(1) of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 to ensure that discrimination on the grounds of race be expressly prohibited. However the terms of the legislation should specifically protect the possibility of affirmative action measures.

Traveller ethnicity

Travellers experience at least as much racist harassment as other ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. Travellers should be specifically included as a group protected by any anti-harassment legislation. We are concerned that the government appears to be equivocal on the ethnicity of Irish Travellers. Irish Travellers are an ethnic group and their ethnicity has been confirmed by academic research.⁷ There is no academic evidence to suggest that Irish Travellers are not an ethnic group. We believe that the specific inclusion of Travellers in legislation is necessary to put the issue of the applicability of any anti-racist measures to Travellers beyond doubt.

Monitoring

It is particularly important that the police be required to monitor incidents of racist violence. We believe that it is desirable for legislation to require the monitoring of harassment in terms of ethnicity. Appendix 2 contains a limited harassment monitoring exercise conducted by the CWA. This is the only systematic example of existing monitoring of racist harassment and illustrates the importance of recording (APPENDIX 2). Even this under-resourced project has allowed some analysis of the kind of problems which are being experienced by one minority ethnic community. The increase in harassment in recent months is at least in part attributable to the fact that the community was being consulted in response to the CCRU document. This illustrates the fact that racist harassment is much more likely to be identified when it is recognised as a specific category of crime. There is a need for much further rigorous research on and recording of racist harassment in Northern Ireland.

Departmental Programmes

The experience of our organisations and our consultation with minority ethnic communities suggests that the formal commitment by Government to oppose

⁷ See 17th Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights pp 355-364 for an overview.

racism in Northern Ireland contained in the CCRU document very rarely informs administrative practice in government and quasi-government organisations. This analysis has been confirmed by the research we recently conducted asking different government departments, local authorities and public bodies about their anti-racist and multicultural policies. The research makes clear that none of the departments and authorities have any substantive anti-racist or multi-cultural policies and practices. While many of our respondents supplied evidence of equality of opportunity policies with regard to employment, none provided evidence of any more substantive work responding to the needs and demands of minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. Regrettably, a number went so far as to say there was no problem with racism in Northern Ireland.

The one substantive area of policy mentioned in the CCRU document pertains to Travellers. Unfortunately, the 'designation' and 'toleration' policies of the Department of the Environment mentioned in the document are in themselves racist rather than examples of 'equality of opportunity' and equity of treatment'. In Northern Ireland, a combination of deeply-ingrained anti-Traveller racism among settled people and an uncoordinated approach to provision by local and central government has ensured that site provision has been woefully inadequate.⁸ There are insufficient numbers of legal, serviced sites and the legal, serviced sites which do exist provide services of a very poor quality. Local government policy seems intent on 'dumping' Travellers sites in the most marginalized settled communities and ensured that Traveller/settled tensions were exacerbated. This actively encourages the racist harassment of Travellers. We feel that the best way to circumvent localised anti-Traveller sentiment is for central government to assume a mandatory responsibility for site provision.

In Northern Ireland site provision by local councils has always been discretionary rather than mandatory. (This is not the situation in Great Britain where there is an obligation on councils to provide sites.) Our experience suggests that a more appropriate approach here would be an integrated plan for site provision along the lines of the recommendations of the Standing Advisory Commission for Human Rights:

'responsibility should be transferred from District Councils to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as part of a comprehensive plan and policy to establish, in consultation with the Travelling People, appropriate and adequately serviced sites'.⁹

A commitment by Government along these lines would confirm rather than deny its responsibility for site provision. Current policy seems designed to criminalize Traveller identity and institutionalize anti-Traveller harassment. In

⁸ 17th Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights p 360.

⁸ See 17th Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights pp 366-370.

⁹ 17th Report of the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights p 38.

the absence of legal and serviced Traveller sites the criminal justice system is obliged to prosecute Travellers *for what they are rather than for what they do*. This is against all natural justice and actively encourages racist harassment.

The CCRU consultation document claims that the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) is fully committed to the equitable treatment of all members of the public, irrespective of racial origin or religious belief. The RUC claim that links with Chinese, Vietnamese, Indians, Pakistanis, Jewish, Malaysians and the Travellers are close. The only evidence of such links supplied in the document is that the RUC is currently involved with the Chinese Welfare Association with regard to burglaries and robberies. In fact the Chinese community is extremely concerned about the police response to the crime they experience. Many Chinese people feel that they are specifically targeted for robbery and burglary. They also feel that the RUC have not responded appropriately to their concerns. These crimes are themselves perceived to be examples of racist harassment.

Even if the RUC had responded satisfactorily to the crimes experienced by the Chinese community, this would be perfectly normal and hardly an example of anti-racist policing - it would be profoundly worrying if police were not concerned about such crimes. Other than this inappropriate example, there is no mention of how the police maintain their close links with minority ethnic communities. Without appropriate mechanisms, any contacts made remain *ad hoc* and unsatisfactory. It is especially important that the police develop mechanisms which allow them to draw on the knowledge and experience of minority ethnic organisations.

The CCRU document suggests that the importance of complete impartiality is stressed at all levels of a police officer's training.¹⁰ But this ongoing training has failed to provide an accessible or acceptable police service for minority ethnic groups. The RUC training branch is currently planning a "cultural awareness" package which is to be welcomed. However, it should be supplemented with more focused anti-racist training and close consultation with the different minority ethnic communities about their concerns around policing. A recurring complaint from members of minority ethnic groups is the poor police response to incidents of racist harassment. A remedy to this problem must be central to any effective response to harassment.

While the CCRU document mentions racial harassment, it does so solely in terms of the Public Order Act (1987). There is increasing evidence of widespread racist harassment and incitement to hatred. Yet, as has been mentioned, existing Incitement to Hatred legislation is totally ineffective. No-one has ever been prosecuted for incitement to racial hatred, let alone been convicted for it. Enquiries must be made of the police and DPP as to why no cases of incitement

¹⁰ CCRU *Race Relations in Northern Ireland* pp 18-20.

to racial hatred have ever been taken. Existing legislation is simply not good enough - it needs to be replaced by effective legislation which will actually address ongoing harassment and incitement. Amendment to the legislation outlawing racial hate speech -the Public Order (NI) Order 1987 - should be made. This legislation must be made effective. As part of this it should name Travellers as an ethnic group protected by the legislation. A specific responsibility for reviewing the DPP's record in pursuance of prosecution in cases of racial hate speech should be given to the new anti-racist agency established by anti-racist legislation for Northern Ireland. In addition to this, racist harassment has to be seen as a serious criminal offence which should be addressed with sensitivity and urgency.

There is little or no provision of translation facilities within the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. Until this is remedied, the most basic civil rights are being denied to members of minority ethnic groups. This problem is particularly acute in cases of racist harassment where the victims are already traumatised by their experiences.

In conclusion, existing departmental programmes and practices are palpably inadequate as mechanisms for addressing the serious problem of racist harassment in Northern Ireland. They must be radically improved in conjunction with the implementation of strong and effective anti-harassment legislation.

The Chinese Welfare Association Perspective

Prior to June 1990, no systematic form of monitoring and recording cases of harassment within the Chinese community occurred either within or outside the Chinese Welfare association. However sufficient anecdotal evidence was emerging to identify this major area of concern and so the community were mobilised to come forward to register complaints with the CWA.

Reluctance to do so in the past initially kept figures low and therefore can not be used to provide a true reflection of daily life.

This reluctance was due to:-

- a) language barrier (almost no interpreting facilities)
- b) cultural barrier (not wishing to be seen to challenge authority)
- c) fear of reprisals (including stronger immigration checks)
- d) no formal legislative protection (i.e. Race Relations Act 1976)
- e) no prosecutions to date (lack of confidence in present protection)

The most commonly occurring reported cases of harassment were:-

- "business" - small Chinese take-away food shops facing incidents of verbal abuse, vandalism, demands for protection money and so on.
- "education" - racial bullying in playground; inadequate/unequal teaching provision.
- "goods /services" - verbal harassment in shops, leisure centres and so on.
- "health" - lack of equity of treatment from medical staff; culturally inappropriate assessments/treatments.
- "police" - direct harassment of Chinese people by police; poor response by police to reported burglaries and robberies; failure to record and monitor reports of harassment by Chinese people.
- "immigration" - lack of access to information, including basic legal rights, in mother tongue; exploitation by unqualified "immigration advisors"; random, unprovoked house checks.

The most obvious point to note regarding the figures on harassment is the sudden rise in the number of cases reported during the consultation period with the community over the Government document "Race Relations in Northern Ireland". The consultation raised awareness about:-

- a) the need for legislation in Northern Ireland.
- b) the need to monitor complaints.
- c) the effectiveness of Chinese Welfare Association in taking forward complaints.

The Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People Perspective

In 1990 the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights in Northern Ireland noted that, *'There is a good deal of evidence of discrimination against members of the Traveller Community'*. However they also pointed out that the evidence was not carefully documented because:

'in the absence of any law against racial or ethnic discrimination or harassment, there is no basis for systematic investigation or recording by the police or other Agencies'.

The Northern Ireland Council of Travelling People, through its network of Traveller Support Groups in the local areas, has kept a constant account of all racial attacks and harassment experienced by Travellers in Northern Ireland. This has revealed a horrific pattern of vicious attacks on Traveller families, which seem to be almost tolerated by the Settled Community. A survey carried out by the NICTP in November 1992 showed that there were 209 Traveller families (approximately 1 000 Travellers). 48 of these families were living on unofficial sites without access to water sanitation or bin disposal facilities and frequently under constant threat of eviction. 37 families were living on legal temporary sites with minimal basic facilities and 136 families were living on permanent legal sites.

Existing legislation and safeguards to protect human rights in Northern Ireland have not had any significant impact in relation to the Traveller Community. Two complaints were made, 1986 and 1992, by Travellers in Belfast under the Commissioner for Complaints Act (NI) 1969 against Belfast City Council. The Travellers were alleging maladministration on the ground of unjustifiable delay in completing an agreed programme of serviced site provision to the detriment of the well being of the Travellers concerned. Both complaints were ruled inadmissible on the grounds that such provision is discretionary.

In March 1988, Alderman Frank Millar, Belfast City Council, publicly called, *'itinerants rubbish'* and said that, *'... the only place for rubbish was the incinerator the council's Duncrue Street plant is badly under-used.'*

The Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People was advised by a solicitor that it was not possible to take action under the Prevention of Incitement To Hatred Act (NI) 1970 or the Public Order (NI) Act 1987, as Alderman Millar had not indicated which specific group of Travellers he was referring to.

More recent attacks on Travellers include an arson attack on a house allocated to a Traveller family in Craigavon in June 1992, a petrol bomb attack on 3 Traveller families parked on the roadside due to overcrowding of an official site in Newry and a pile of manure was dropped by a local farmer on a lay-by in Armagh

where 4 Traveller families had their caravans parked. This incident occurred during Christmas week of 1992.

Travellers also experience continuous harassment from local authorities and the Settled Community, when they move into an area and are forced to camp on the roadside due to no provision of a site in that particular area. Local Residents' Associations are always on the ready to whip up Anti-Traveller slogans and statements in local press and organise vicious campaigns against Site Provision for Travellers in that area. A representative of a local residents group in Craigavon said in a local newspaper that they were investigating the possibility of taking legal action against any agencies responsible for the provision of a site for Travellers in the area on such grounds as, *'devaluation of houses, health dangers and loss of privacy'*.

Another member of a local residents' association warned that if the situation continued (a site provided for Travellers) he could foresee violence being aimed at the Travellers and said that he had heard, *'definite whispers'*.

All the above examples derive from the perception that Travellers are the problem and the solution deemed to be to control the nomadic lifestyle of Travellers and an assimilation policy to get rid of the *'problem'*.

Extensive research has shown that Travellers are a distinct ethnic group and the Advisory Committee on Travellers (1989) and the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights (1992) have both recognised that Travellers do indeed constitute an ethnic group. However, there seems to be some ambiguity in the Government's Race Relations Consultative Document on the area of the ethnicity of Travellers. Travellers have to be specifically mentioned as an ethnic group, if they are to have any hope of protection under anti-discrimination legislation and there has to be a strong and effective monitoring body that is capable of overseeing implementation of aspects of the legislation and advancing equality of opportunity for all members of ethnic groups in Northern Ireland.

The examples given above of racial attacks and harassment experienced by Travellers are only a few examples of such acts that Travellers experience in everyday life. Current legislation is ineffective in protecting Travellers from these acts. There needs to be a strong anti-racist harassment legislation which specifically includes Travellers as an ethnic group, to prohibit and criminalize the often violent and disturbing racist acts experienced by Travellers in Northern Ireland - we can no longer sit back and quietly tolerate such overt racism against Travellers.

APPENDIX 1
Racial Attacks in Northern Ireland

Conclusion and Main Recommendations

1) We feel that the situation vis-a-vis racist harassment in Northern Ireland is different from that in Great Britain given the absence of anti-racist discrimination legislation here. We insist that racist harassment in Northern Ireland cannot be addressed without the support of wider anti-discrimination legislation. While the 1976 Race Relations Act should be the template for anti-racist discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland, there are several flaws in this legislation. These flaws need to be taken on board in formulating similar legislation here. Specific anti-racist harassment legislation is also necessary if racist harassment in Northern Ireland is to be addressed successfully. There is also a specificity to the experience of racism and racial disadvantage in Northern Ireland which should inform the development of legislation for Northern Ireland. The absence of any anti-racist legislation encourages harassment and ensures that there is no societal signal that racism is unacceptable.

In short, anti-racist legislation is a necessity. This legislation must be strong and effective and recognise the specificity of racist attacks and harassment.

2) There must be an appropriate anti-harassment monitoring body. Our preferred option for monitoring is a Commission for Racial Equality (Northern Ireland) which has basically the same remit as the CRE (GB) but is equipped to work in the very specific context of anti-racism in Northern Ireland. This body should be given a specific brief to monitor and combat racist harassment. Further to this, an obligation should be placed on the police to record and monitor incidents of racist harassment as a discrete category of harassment. Review of their performance and that of the Director of Public Prosecutions in relation to incidents of racist harassment should be within the powers and responsibilities of the new Commission for Racial Equality (Northern Ireland).

In short, we need a properly resourced and empowered monitoring, enforcement and development agency. This agency should have a specific brief to monitor racist harassment and should be separate from existing anti-discrimination agencies.

3) We are certain that legislation and administrative changes which do not specifically include Travellers as a named minority ethnic group will be inadequate. There is no room for ambiguity on this question - if Travellers, as the second largest minority ethnic group in Northern Ireland, are not protected, anti-harassment interventions will have failed one of the most oppressed and marginalized groups and will be unacceptable. We believe that the inclusion of Travellers as a named minority ethnic group is essential.

In short, any anti-racist legislation and monitoring must identify Irish Travellers as a minority ethnic group included in and protected by that legislation and monitoring.

Arson attack on house for family of itinerants

POLICE in Craigavon are investigating an arson attack on a house in the Burnside estate which was to be allocated to a family of itinerants.

Upwards of £15,000 worth of damage was caused to the unoccupied house which was set alight on three occasions during Friday and Saturday morning.

The Housing Executive has confirmed that the house was to be allocated to a family of 13, including 11 children aged between 16 months and 18 years, from the travelling community.

A spokesman admitted that complaints had been received from residents in the Burnside estate about the fact that an itinerant family was moving into the area.

He said the house, which was protected by

security shutters erected while renovations were being carried out, had been the target of an arson attack, and he estimated damage between £10,000 and £15,000.

BLAZE:

Police say a fire was discovered in the house around 3pm on Friday. A small blaze in an upstairs room was extinguished by Lurgan Fire Brigade who were called to the scene again around midnight when a second blaze was reported.

The house was again set on fire around 5.30am on Saturday and by the

Report by
Richard
Stewart

time the Fire Service had arrived the kitchen area was well alight.

Eventually the blaze was brought under control but the house had been extensively damaged.

Maria Barry, community worker with the travelling people in Craigavon, described the attack as "explicitly racist".

"This was an attack against a family of travelling people who had wanted to make their home in the area. "They have lived at the

Ridgeway site for two years and their kids have attended school in Brownlow. But because of the lack of facilities for travellers they were forced to look for proper accommodation.

SUCCESSFUL

"An approach to the Housing Executive was successful and the family were set to move into the house in three weeks.

"But it is obvious that local residents did not want them in the estate and it is for this reason I believe the house was burnt," she added.

The Housing Executive spokesman said the arson attack was regrettable adding that the Executive was "perturbed" at the number of such attacks which had now spread to the Burnside estate.

1-1-1977

CASE STUDIES OF POLICE HARASSMENT

1. A Chinese woman who was walking along the pavement, was stopped by a police officer from a nearby station and asked to produce her driving licence. The officer detained her physically and the woman had difficulty in reaching for her identification. She attempted to free herself in order to produce her licence as requested. The policeman in question then called another policeman to join him and in fact a large group of allegedly 10 officers arrived and surrounded the Chinese lady. She was forced against her will to enter the station building where she was held for 2 hours. No interpreter was provided and she was not given any explanation but a doctor was called who proceeded to take details of the injuries which had occurred due to the manner in which she was held and brought into the building against her will. The case is currently being investigated.

2. At around 9.30 pm on a Friday evening (busiest time for any Chinese food business) a person claiming to be an immigration officer entered a Chinese restaurant, accompanied by several uniformed policemen. They did not show any identification but proceeded to search the kitchen and store rooms. One of these rooms was locked and without requesting the owner to open it, one of the officers broke the lock causing considerable damage. Another three policemen, who were all carrying guns, ran through from the back of the premises. They behaved in a very aggressive manner and many of the customers were obviously alarmed and left without paying. This kind of behaviour and show of force was not obviously called for, caused unnecessary damage and also meant considerable loss of income for the restaurant owner during that period. Customers will also take future custom elsewhere which has longer term consequences.

3. A Chinese take-away owner took a telephone order which was subsequently sent out. The delivery driver however found no-one at home at the address given and so returned to the shop with the order. Approximately one hour later, the customer who had telephoned came into the shop and demanded that she get her food free of charge due to the long waiting period. The owner's wife explained the situation and that a new order would be made immediately, but that the customer would have to pay. The customer became physically and verbally abusive at this point. The owner called the police. A witness to the proceedings was able to stop the customer from running away when she heard that the police had been called.

When the police arrived, the owner's explanation was not accepted, he was verbally abused by the police and found himself being arrested and taken off to the local police station. During the arrest, the owner's arms were considerably bruised. This was confirmed by a medical report later. The owner was extremely angry at the conduct of the policemen and their treatment of both his wife and himself.



The grass verges on both sides of the Monaghan Road, stretching from Umgola Road for three hundred yards, have been ploughed up to prevent encampment by the travellers.

W15 7

Site Suggestion angers Residents

Residents from nearby housing complexes are up in arms at suggestions that the former customs station on the Monaghan Road on the outskirts of Armagh could be converted into a permanent fully serviced site for the travelling community.

There has been quite a lot of speculation that consideration is being given to hand the site over to the travellers which isn't amusing nearby dwellers, some of whom are absolutely livid and contemplating early action to hit any suggestion firmly on the head.

Meanwhile the thorny problem of finding a permanent home for members of the travelling people is never allowed to gather much dust on the files of the local council. It has been on-going for many years and the council, who are being held responsible for providing the site are continually faced with fierce opposition when any site is suggested. The council has always

stated that it is committed to providing a site for travellers in the district. But the problems remains, where? With regard to sites used by the travellers, some of these are not owned by the council and therefore they have no powers to seek injunctions to have them removed.

The council may be able to serve public health abatement notices on the travellers requiring them to move or take other measures in order to remedy any public health nuisance existing.

Legal action in the past has only had the effect of moving the travellers from one location to another.

Abatement notices have been served by the council and summonses have been issued to those travellers who did not

comply to the notices.

The council accepts that they have a statutory placed upon them to consider making provision for the travellers to reside in their area.

The funding of any site is one hundred per cent aided by the DoE and a policy has been adopted by the council to make such a provision subject to finding a suitable site.

Two sites were submitted for planning application in November 1991.

However, the applications were withdrawn in response to an overwhelming public reaction against the sites.

The council claim it's now placed in an almost impossible situation. The provision of a serviced site for the travelling people would solve the prob-

lem but the stark reality remains that nobody wants them on their doorstep.

Recently manure was spread along the grass verge on the Moy Road to move the travellers on and more recently the grass verges on the Monaghan Road were ploughed up to discourage them.

Under the present circumstances the council say it is hard to envisage a solution which all would be agreeable to. The council stress that the provision of a permanent site requires a change of attitude from the public towards the travellers.

The council is anxious to meet with any body or organisation who may be able to come up with an acceptable solution.

BY-LINES



The muck stops where?

EYESORES in beauty spots often - in a manner of speaking - get up people's noses. Armagh has gone one better by managing to produce an eyesore which literally gets up your nose.

At a picturesque picnic area on the Moy Road, this spring instead of enjoying a prepared outdoor lunch surrounded by sweet smelling cowslips, your ability to enjoy your food will be 'environmentally challenged.' In other words they will picnic against a backdrop of small mountains of cow dung.

It was several months ago that a person or persons unknown took it upon themselves to dump manure in the picnic area near Drumsill Hotel to prevent the return of travelling people.

In doing so they have also dumped on the local authorities a mess which is apparently being shovelled about a number of departments in search of that place where the buck - or in this case the muck - is supposed to stop.

The reasons for the manure dumping have been made abundantly clear, but to the man-in-the-street one question remains unanswered. 'Why doesn't someone move quickly to clean up the eyesore?'

The local district council have said emphatically that the problem does not lie with them, it is on DoE property, it is their concern.

For their part, the DoE have said they are looking into the matter - not too closely I hope - and they told us this week: 'We are moving in a certain direction but may have more to say in a week or so'.

Pre Xmas Week

*Copy to SAC/R
22/3/93*

APPENDIX 2
Monitoring Racist Harassment and the Chinese Community

Attack on travellers sparks action calls

By Stephen O'Reilly

A PETROL bomb attack on three families of travellers in Newry this week has prompted calls for the local council to provide extra serviced sites in the area.

Commenting on the attack, which took place in the Carnagat area, Mr Pat Murphy of the Dove Project in the town said it was "a miracle no-one was seriously hurt".

"One of the travellers told me that just before midnight a mob of youths attacked the three caravans with about 20 petrol bombs," he said.

"One of the men drove to the permanent site in Newry looking for help. A traveller there phoned the police, fire brigade and ambulance.

"Thankfully, they were not

E There were young children in all of the caravans — the outcome could have been horrific

Pat Murphy

needed. But one of the petrol bombs hit the tow bar of a caravan. If it had hit the caravan proper, the whole thing would have gone up."

The project leader said the outcome could have been "horrific, because there were young children in all three caravans".

An Armagh RUC spokesman confirmed that a patrol had attended the incident, but said no

one was hurt and no arrests were made.

Mr Murphy, whose group works for travellers' rights and provides a pre-school playgroup in Newry, went on to call for extra sites to be provided for travellers in the town.

"There are sites for 20 families at the St Christopher's Park site, but when a census was carried out at the time the site was being planned, no provision was made for the natural expansion of the community.

"That means when young people from the site are married, they are treated as a separate family unit and have to move off. That has happened about four times this year alone," Mr Murphy said.

He said this had led to friction between travellers and the local

IRISH NEWS 29/5/92

settled community and claim that the only way this could be avoided was with the provision of extra permanent accommodation.

Mr Murphy said there was a study being conducted into provision in the Newry area but called for "immediate action" from the council.

Mr Hugh O'Neill, chief environmental health officer, said "The council-provided sites do not address a need but it would be very simplistic to believe we could continue to do so for each generation of travellers."

Mr O'Neill instead suggested that "group housing would be the next logical step" in accommodation and said Newry and Mourne had lobbied the Department of the Environment with such a proposal.

北愛華人福利會

CHINESE WELFARE ASSOCIATION (N.I.)

17, EBLANA STREET, BELFAST BT 7, N.I.
TEL.: 0232-238220

Figures on reported cases of harassment within the Chinese Community

1990	TOTAL
JULY - Health x 1	1
AUG' - Police x 1 Press-Media x 1 Immigration x 1	3
SEPT' - Media x 1 - Education x 3 - Leisure x 1	5
OCT' - Business* x 1 - Press x 1	2
NOV' - Goods & Services x 1 - Education x 1	2
DEC' - NONE	-
1991	
JAN' - Housing x 1 - Goods & Services x 1	2
FEB' - Business x 1	1
MAR' - Housing x 1	1
APL - NONE	-
MAY - Business x 1	1
JUNE - NONE	-
JULY - Housing x 1 - Education x 2 - Business x 2	5

(Aug' 91 to Jan' 92: records not kept)

* Business = restaurant/take-away shop

1992

FEB'	- Individual x 1	1
MAR'	- Business x 1	1
APL	- Education x 1	1
MAY	- Housing x 1	1
JUNE	- Personal x 1 - Business x 1	2
JULY	- NONE	-
AUG'	- Business x 1 - Health x 1	2
SEPT	- Business x 1 - Housing x 1	
OCT'	- Employment x 1 - Business x 1 - Education x 1 - Immigration x 1	4
NOV'	- Police x 1 - Industry x 1 - Education x 1	3
DEC'	- NONE	-

1993

JAN'	- Police x 1 - Individual x 1	2
FEB'	- Police x 1 - Housing x 2 - Health x 1	4
MAR'	- Education x 2 - Police x 2 - Business x 2 - Health x 1	7
APL	- Individual x 2 - Goods & Services x 1 - Health x 2 - Business x 3 - Housing x 1	9
MAY	- Business x 5 - Education x 2 - Housing x 3 - Individual x 1 - Goods & Services x 1 - Police x 1 - Health x 1	14

APPENDIX 3
Incitement to Racial Hatred in Northern Ireland

ST. CRISTOPHER'S PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

~ ~ ~ ~ ~
PRESS RELEASE
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A job advertisement which appeared last Thursday in the Newry Reporter for a Temporary Enforcement Officer has caused great offence to the residents of St. Christopher's Park, Newry as the advert stated that the post was to cover "(Dogs Order/Litter Control/Travelling People)".

It went on to give the requirements for the post and stated that the applicants must have experience of handling dogs. It appears that Travelling people like litter require no experience. This advert is another example of the prejudicial and racist attitude that faces Travelling people on a daily basis. Whilst Newry and Mourne District Council may not have intended to be racist the advert shows a lack of sensitivity and ignorance that leaves us bewildered. We, as Travellers, want to point out to Newry and Mourne District Council that we are human beings with rights and not some type of waste disposal or dogs.

While some members of the Settled community may wonder what the fuss is all about we would ask them how they would view the advert if Travelling people was replaced by Catholics or Protestants or some other ethnic group. In fact this type of advertisement would not be out of place in racist South Africa.

Newry & Mourne District Council are not alone in expressing this type of attitude. Not so long ago a member of Belfast City Council described Travellers as "rubbish which should be incinerated".

We, the Travelling community of Newry call upon the Council to apologise for this gross insult. It is also our request that the responsibility for managing the existing site be moved from the Public Health Department to Community Services which would allow a more humane and sensitive approach to be used rather than being viewed as a public health nuisance.

Finally, we wish to point out that we have a right to be here, a right to exist, all that we ask is for us to be allowed to do so with due respect to our rights and dignity as members of the human race.

Martin Ward
Chairperson
St. Christopher's Park Community Association

UDA plans to burn travellers off site

CRAIGAVON UDA men want the local council to place a travellers site in the middle of Brownlow — so they can burn the caravans.

The paramilitaries living on Parkmore refused to sign a petition drawn up by the Brownlow Forum which has been campaigning to oppose such a site.

Two weeks ago militant supporters of the Forum which represents a half dozen tenants groups picketed the local planning office at Marlborough House after the council applied for planning permission to set up sites at three locations around Craigavon.

More militant supporters jammed the switch board of the office for several hours. Others wrote letters of protest to councillors and other local authorities.

Petition

This week one campaigner revealed that UDA members have told petition collectors, "We don't mind if the travellers move in because we'll have a few bonfires and that'll scare them off."

The threat is being taken serious by some members of the Brownlow Forum who said the group did not want its peaceful campaign to be marred by threats of violence.

One spokesman who asked not to be named said,

"Those boys in Parkmore are serious and they'll do whatever they say they'll do."

"The last thing we want is for the UDA to get involved in our campaign. It could lead to a innocent person, even a child being burned to death."

"Already several children have been burned to death in Travellers caravans after

By **MARTIN O'HAGAN**

SUNDAY WORLD

6/10/91

fires began accidentally. What will happen if a fire is started deliberately," the man asked.

The Brownlow Forum called a hasty meeting two weeks ago after the local

prels carried planning applications for three possible sites for the travellers to be located in the Brownlow area.

Angry

At the time local spokesman Peter Keily warned that there was an angry mood among local people

who attended a meeting a local ball.

The meeting agreed to set up pickets of the planning office and a letter writing campaign local councillors and police.

According to Mr. Keily "Everybody feels sorry for the travellers and everybody wants to see them get a but not outside their front door."

Is it likely that an advertisement relating to any other section of the community would have been framed in this way? The initial affront is compounded by the requirement that applicants should have "experience of handling dogs" and be "able to communicate with the General Public"! Clearly there is no need to have any knowledge of, or experience in working with Travellers. In fact insult is added to injury by the references within the advertisement to the Council's commitment to Equal Opportunity Policy. It would appear that the only opportunity for Travelling People is to be treated equally with litter and dogs!

It is assumed that the drafting of the advertisement was the work of more than one person and that in keeping with good management practice it would have been checked for any errors, etc. It is highly regrettable that nobody was sensitive to the way in which it would be received. The Dove Project would suggest that this circumstance is explainable in terms of the perception of Travellers outlined above and is likely to happen again until this perception is challenged. It is unfortunate that the District Council chose to locate responsibility for Travelling People within the Department of Environmental Health, thus reinforcing their view of Travellers as a nuisance. The Dove Project would hope to begin a dialogue with the Council with a view to considering other alternatives, such as Community Services, in an attempt to develop a more sensitive approach.

It is highly regrettable that this incident has occurred. While the Dove Project has a responsibility to highlight the issues involved in order to raise awareness of the wider implications, it is not the intention to engage in recrimination for its own sake. It is to be hoped that real dialogue will result, and will lead to an improvement in relationships between Travellers and District Council, and a betterment of the quality of life of Travelling People in the area.

APPENDIX 4
Racist marching in Northern Ireland

Protest campaign against plans for an itinerant camp is now underway Residents threaten legal action against Craigoon Council if a gypsy site is foisted upon them. Action over gypsy sites

Report by Richard Stewart

THE people of Brownlow are threatening to take legal action against Craigoon Council if a gypsy site is foisted upon them.

Residents of more than a dozen housing estates in the area have launched a campaign to stop an itinerant camp being sited in central Craigoon.

And tonight (Thursday) at a public meeting in Moyravery Hall they will consider employing a solicitor to institute legal proceedings if the go-ahead is given for a gypsy camp.

On Monday morning a crowd of around 30 people from the Brownlow area picked up a letter from the Marlbrough House objecting to plans for a permanent gypsy site in the area.

And later the same day around 50 people lobbied local councillors at Craigoon Civic Centre during the council's mid-monthly meeting.

They packed the public gallery waving posters declaring "Brownlow Says No to Itinerant Sites" and during an interval, expressed their objections to individual councillors.

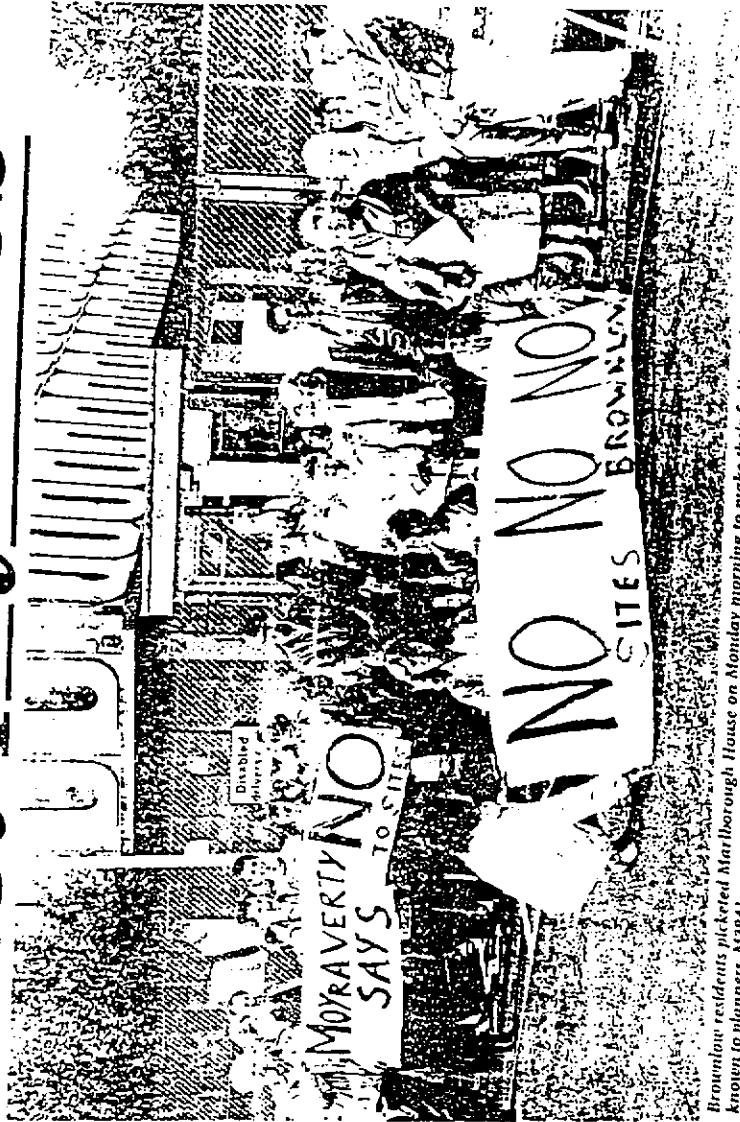
The controversial issue was not discussed at the meeting but after a number of councillors had remarked at the public interest, the council's chief Executive Mr. Eric McKinley, explained a response from DoE planners on three sites would come before the council in October.

Planners are presently considering outline plans for residents' and tenants' groups in the area. "We are determined there will be no camp and if it is foisted upon us we will consider legal action against Craigoon Council," he added.

Mr. Kieley said itinerants who camped illegally in the area could not be controlled. "A legal site will not alleviate the problem, rather it will only make it worse," he said. "Moves are in hand for extensive regeneration of the Brownlow area and an itinerants camp will not in any way encourage investment."

PROTESTS

"The objections and protests are part of a concerted campaign by residents to prevent an itinerant site being developed in Brownlow," said Peter Kieley, PHO for Brownlow Forum, an umbrella



Brownlow residents picketed Marlbrough House on Monday morning to make their feelings about a proposed gypsy camp in the area known to planners. N3841

Rector adds voice to storm of protest

A CHURCH of Ireland Rector in Craigoon has spoken out against plans for a gypsy site in the central area.

Rev. Donald Collins of the Church of St. Saviour has written to the DoE to object to plans for itinerant camps at Drumgor and Ballynamoney Lane. In a strongly worded letter he says parishioners have expressed "grave concern" at the siting of an itinerant camp in Drumgor. And he claims such a site would lead to a 'drop

in housing valuation and demand" and a "further lack of confidence in one of the few private developers in Brownlow".

"A considerable number of parents and leaders of parish organisations have expressed to me personally, grave concerns over the safety and willingness to send their

young ones to activities in or near to the Parish, should a site be created," his letter reads.

At a time when so much effort in recent months and hopes of new employment has boosted the image of Brownlow, it seems

intitely out of wisdom or purpose to grant permission for a gypsy site," in his letter Rev Collins also objects to the site at Ballynamoney Lane which, he says, is a private residential farming and historic site with great potential for commercial or industrial expansion.

"If this were used as an itinerant site it is very unlikely any investor could be attracted," says Rev Collins.

"Sadly it seems that those in authority have sought to once again make Brownlow the 'dumping ground' for problems which they would not desire near themselves."

"We in Brownlow, have already seen at Bridgeway and Myrlinn what the siting of itinerant families can do.

"There have been actual attacks on people and threats against individuals. We do not want this to continue," the Rector adds.

Support of County Council in Travellers' Campaign

CHALGAVON Travellers' Support Committee says the current campaign against the planning of a legal site is 'misguided, irresponsible and immoral'.

The group issued a lengthy statement in reply to the campaign being waged by Brownlow Residents' Forum to prevent a permanent site for Travellers being placed anywhere in the area.

A spokesman - about the campaign, indicated, saying it is in the face of reality and contributed to the oppression of travelling people by statutory authorities and settled communities.

It is misguided to try to promote the development of Brownlow whilst at the same time depriving a section of the population of their rights in an effort to guarantee our own, said the spokesman.

This strategy has been tried and failed disastrously in Northern Ireland.

The campaign was also said to be irresponsible and based on exploiting the understandable concerns of people. It was suggested that the role of some organisations and individuals was somewhat sinister and to be deplored.

The use of emotive language such as

'inhuman action' is particularly unhelpful and prevents the development of strategies which could meet the needs of all parties.

The campaign undermines people concerning what the provision of legal sites entails and how this could be done in the interests of both the settled and travelling community.

Most crucially, it would be far from the settled community, government and statutory authorities have a clear responsibility to recognise the rights of travellers.

In this respect, the campaign is clearly immoral. Travellers are human beings. They live in Third World conditions because historically settled communities refuse to make adequate provision for them or indeed recognise their right to

basic self-determination as an ethnic minority.

The commitment that you have one another is strangely non applicable. It is a contradiction within the campaign to seek to promote the welfare of the community whilst at the same time sowing the seeds of fear, suspicion, even hatred, in our children.

Teaching children to hate may not be the direct intention, but it is an inevitable spin-off and will most certainly affect the quality of relationships of our children in their adult lives and their ability to be wholesome and happy individuals.

According to the Committee, constructive dialogue was impossible in the present atmosphere and this would have to be changed by the Council, which was

responsible for the provision of Traveller sites.

The Council was also criticised for its lack of consultation with both the settled and travelling communities and urged to begin taking a more constructive approach.

Up until now, neither of the two committees have been consulted as regards any of the sites in Brownlow for which planning permission has been sought.

The onus lies with the Council to inform the settled community as to what constitutes a properly designed and serviced site as laid down by the Design Guide for Permanent Residential Sites for Travelling People in Northern Ireland, issued by the DoE.

Executive is accused of a 'hostile, sorry' approach by Brownlow residents

Protest against Travellers is gathering momentum

Report by Daire McMahon

THE silent protest by Brownlow residents at last week's meeting of Chalgaon Council led to over 200 people and Councillors attending a later meeting to voice growing opposition to placing an official Travellers' camp in the area.

And since that meeting last Thursday, Brownlow Residents' Forum has been investigating the possibility of taking legal

action against any agencies responsible for the siting of such a camp in central Chalgaon.

Mr. Peter Kelly, JMD for the group which claims support from every estate in Brownlow, was this week meeting with a Belfast barrister to discuss taking representative action on behalf of residents on such grounds as deprivation of homes, breach of privacy, loss of privacy.

Mr. Kelly said a permanent site would not solve the problem of transients who could not be accommodated even now, and admitted the DOE and Housing Executive for taking what he called a 'silly, silly approach' to Travellers while asking everyone else to clean up Chalgaon and hand out awards for gardens near sites like open sewers.

'The people from every estate have come together

on this and the question they are asking is 'why Brownlow again?'

If the Government wants a site put there, the half planning officer of the Council seems a site, there is a purpose-built camping site at O'Connell Island or one of the traditional sites at the Lough Road in Lurgan. There are no more of these in Brownlow.

For want to oppose such a site

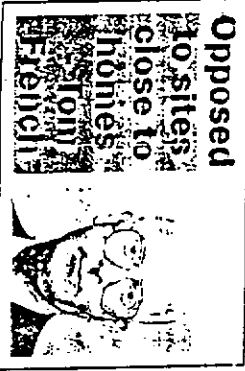
Councillor McLaughlin said the Travellers' deliberately 'broke the law' and said it was not right that the community should have to put up with their abuse.

She suggested that some Councils faced with similar problems on the mainland had overcome them by employing disused factory sites, but none were suitable in this area. Three people told Councillor Lundy they would accept a site, but she felt it would only encourage the problem rather than solve it.

Alderman Yvonne Calvert, who was the first to draw with protesters after the Council's meeting, three Councillors and asked if any of them would welcome such a site on their estates.

Councillor French was the only one of the six not locally opposed to the site and he said he believed all Councils would in future be required to have sites and felt they could at least alleviate the problem, if not solve it. He said Travellers were a tradition in Ireland and not all of them were bad.

But while opposing sites close to houses, he would not vote one out altogether and wanted one that affected the minimum number of people.



Opposed

Close to homes

Tommy Hendon

The charade Diesel Turbo

Over 75 miles* per gallon

Under £8,000* per car



Another public meeting was planned for October 17 at Moyacreevy Hall and it would be for the benefit of officers, when the planning application for proposed sites would be on the agenda.

He said the residents were totally opposed to any site within the Brownlow area and felt they had suffered enough from the Travellers over recent years.

He also said the whole concept of a site there was incompatible with the current push to upgrade the area and make it attractive to investors and so the residents were determined to stand together against any decisions made against their will.

The Councillors attending last week's meeting were Alderman Yvonne Calvert, Dorothy May, Fred Clouse, and Councillors Betty McElduff, Tom French, Pauline Harney and Robert O'Dowd. Councillor Clouse said the Council had set up a body to look in depth at the issue, which he said was designed to

ISSUE

A member of Parliament, the Travellers' Association wanted that if the situation continued, he would force his head 'down' behind the wipers.

He also pointed out that unlike Lurgan and Portadown, Brownlow had no traditional sites. Councillor French agreed, saying Government had stated that when Travellers were in an area for two or three years, then it becomes a traditional site and therefore Lurgan no longer counted as such.

He also said that the Travellers' Association had been by the authorities 25 years ago. He could only agree now to a site which would be away from the people and their property.

Other speakers raised their many objections and fears about the proposed site and all were agreed that action should continue and be stepped up.

It was also decided to write to David Trimble MP, Environment Minister, Richard Robinson, the Taoiseach and Chalgaon Council, expressing opposition to any site in Brownlow.

Residents' petition demands removal of families, but...

Council blamed in Travellers' site row

Residents of the Poleglass estate have collected a 1,000-name petition which they intend to present to the DoE as part of their ongoing campaign to have a group of 25 travelling families ejected from a local site.

SDLP Councillor Hugh Lewsley has thrown his weight behind the campaign to have the families ejected from the site, claiming that tension between the travellers and Poleglass residents is on the rise and that a lack of sanitary facilities on the unserviced site is providing a health hazard for the Travellers and settled families alike.

But Paul Noonan of the Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People said the families were being forced to live on unserviced sites such as that at Poleglass because of the failure of Belfast City Council to deliver on its promise to provide five serviced sites for Belfast Travellers. Mr Noonan said that at present there was service site provision for only around 40% of the total Belfast Traveller population.

Six years ago the council made a commitment to provide five service sites, each

catering for 20 families." Mr Noonan told the Andersonstown News. "To date they have provided just two sites - at Glen Road and Colin Glen. Add to that the fact that there is limited temporary provision for Travellers in Belfast and you have a problem that is very clearly not of the Travellers' making."

But Cllr Lewsley said the fact that over 85% of people living in proximity to the site had signed the petition made it clear that the Poleglass community didn't intend to wait until the council provided serviced sites for the Travellers. "I can understand the problems faced by these itinerants and I sympathise with their plight," said Cllr Lewsley. "But the fact of the matter is that the vast majority of the people of this estate are suffering as a result of the occupation of this site. There are no toilet facilities there, of course,



• Marching orders: Cllr Hugh Lewsley of the SDLP and Colin Mill resident, Rose Ward, demand travellers be moved on

which means that unsanitary conditions in and around the site are posing a major health hazard to all concerned. There have been clashes between local youngsters and itinerant children and that's only going to get worse."

The petition has been drawn up by the Colin Mill

Residents' Association who decided to act when the present occupiers of the site moved in after seven other travelling families had moved on after being served a notice to quit by the DoE.

"There's a perception around Poleglass that even if another order is served, other families will continue to move back here," said Cllr Lewsley. "The Suffolk Action Team, for example, have just spent £5,500 on drainage work and improvements to football pitches beside the itinerants' camp. But thanks to the fact that these people have been living on top of it, the

ground is virtually unusable. It's time that the rights of the residents of Poleglass were taken into consideration for a change."

Meanwhile Paul Noonan is urging Belfast City Council to speed up its service site provision to cater for the Belfast traveller community.

APPENDIX 5
CAJ's Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

APPENDIX 6
CCRU's consultation document on, 'Race Relations in Northern Ireland'