

## **court case that got little attention**

10th July 2000

**ATHE recent coverage of the cases of Tony Martin and postmaster Richard Watkins must be compared with the indifference shown to the case of Satpal Ram.**

The Morning Star reports that Mr Ram went out for a meal in Birmingham in 1986. Six white attackers snarled racist taunts at him. One of them, a Stuart Pearce, stabbed Mr Ram twice in the face with broken glass. Mr Ram defended himself with a small knife which he used at his work.

The result of this defence was that Mr Pearce received two knife wounds. He and Mr Ram were taken to hospital. Ram received treatment and was discharged. Mr Pearce refused treatment and pulled out the drips, leading to death by blood loss.

Mr Ram turned himself in and was charged with murder. He spent eight months on remand and had one 40-minute interview with his barrister before the trial. The barrister advised him to change his plea from self-defence to provocation.

In court most prosecution evidence was provided by Mr Ram's attackers. Defence witnesses, drawn from the restaurant staff, spoke mainly Bengali and their evidence was delivered in broken English. The judge, despite speaking no Bengali himself, offered to interpret. No interpreters were provided by the court. The judge never asked the all-white jury to consider the racist nature of the attack or if Mr Ram acted in self-defence. Mr Ram was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The paper further suggests that Mr Ram has been the victim of mistreatment at the hands of the authorities since his imprisonment.

This is not a plea for people to read an alternative paper. I believe that The Herald over a sustained period has shown itself to be an impartial source of knowledge. However, I cannot recall Mr Ram's case receiving the same amount of coverage as that of Mr Martin and Mr Watkins. Surely in this multicultural land matters such as this deserve better treatment.

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