



DEATH AND DEPORTATION: A CASE STUDY

JOY GARDNER

Using items from the [Bernie Grant Archive collection](#), this resource uses the case of Joy Gardner to explore the history of community activism against oppressive policing and deportation methods.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the significance of the case of Joy Gardner in the history of deaths after police contact
- Recognise why the Joy Gardner Campaign was set up, and what its aims were
- Relate the case of Joy Gardner to current events around immigration policies, and governmental debates on the rights of people to reside in the UK

Joy Gardner (29 May 1953 - 28 July 1993) was a Jamaican-born mature student and mother living with her then 5-year-old son in Crouch End, North London. She was killed in her home during a brutal deportation raid.

Joy's mother, Myrna Simpson, described Joy as "a very hard working girl who was determined to do her best for her children. She only wanted to make a good life for them... My abiding memory of her is that she was always helping people"

Key Stages 3-5



Joy Gardner, photo held at Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/6/5/2

BACKGROUND

Prior to 1981, Gardner would have had the right to British Citizenship through her mother, but the **1981 British Nationality Act** meant this was no longer possible. At the time of her death, she was in the process of a lengthy legal challenge to remain in Britain, where much of her family resided, and where she wished to make a better life for herself and her children.

Note: the 1981 British Nationality Act created the concept of the 'British Citizen', replacing the earlier 'British Subject' status. It restricted access to British citizenship for people from former British colonies and elsewhere in the world, and still forms the basis of immigration policy to this date.



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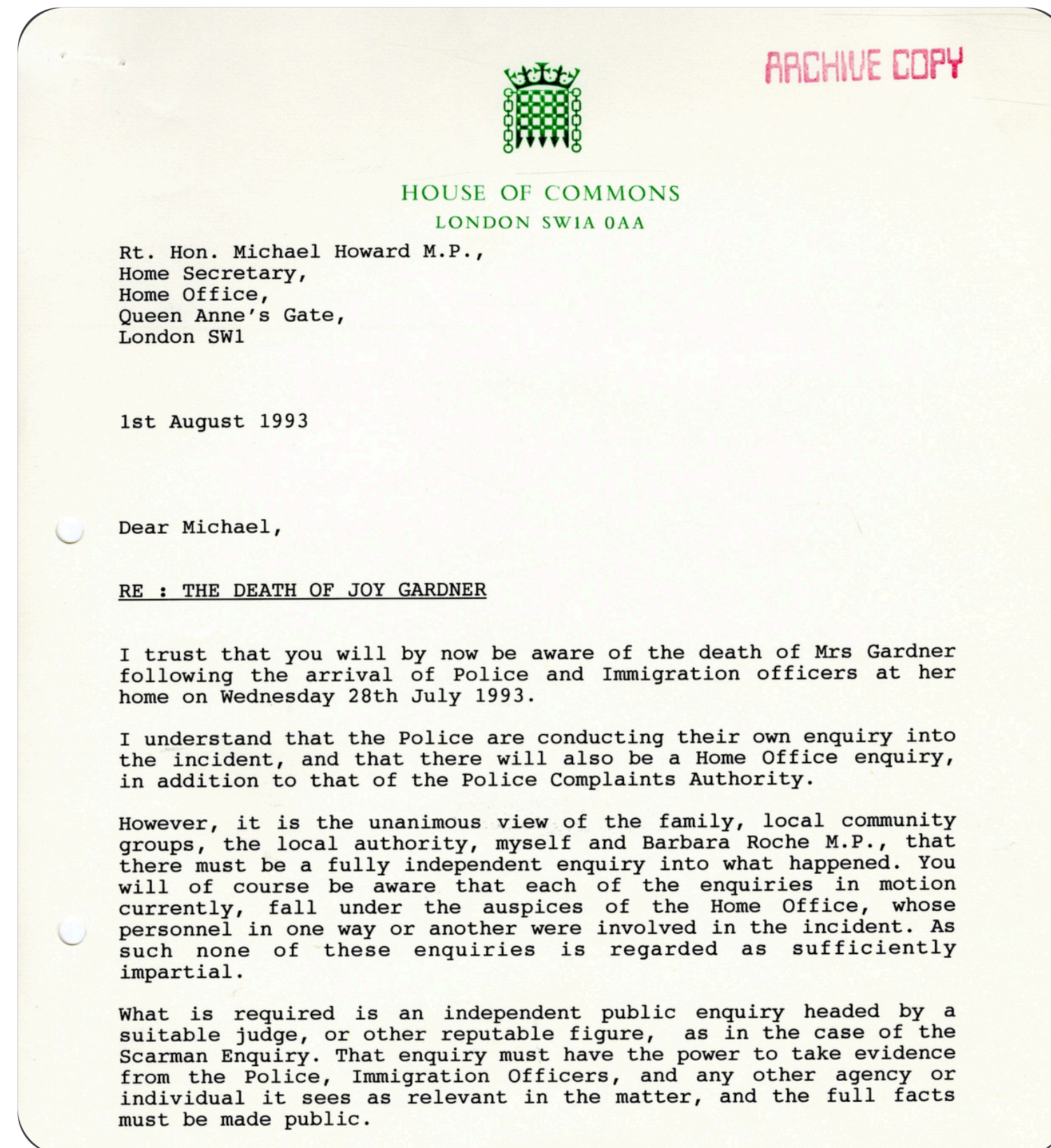
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28 JULY 1993

On the morning of 28 July 1993, a team of police and immigration officers raided her home in an attempt to deport her and her son that same day.

But Joy was still awaiting a Home Office reply to her solicitor's application for a deportation order to be rescinded. She thought her application was still under consideration, and was taken completely by surprise. In fact, her solicitors only received a letter later that day, after the raid had taken place. The letter stated that Joy's plea had been rejected by the Home Office.

In the presence of her young son, officers put a leather belt around her body, and taped her legs and mouth to restrain her. She collapsed as a result, and died in hospital three days later from cerebral hypoxia and heart failure.



Letter from Bernie Grant to Home Secretary Michael Howard, 1st August 1993. Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/4/7/5

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Immediately after her hospitalisation and death, her family were joined by the local community, members of parliament and activists in expressing their outrage at the treatment of Joy, and demanded an investigation into the events that led to her death.

PRIMARY SOURCES

This is a primary source letter written by Bernie Grant to the then-Home Secretary Michael Howard, shortly after Joy's death.

1: Using the information in this letter, why was it important to demand an **independent inquiry**?



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TIMELINE OF EVENTS

At **8.04am** officers called for an ambulance claiming that Joy had “collapsed”. She was admitted to hospital at **8.46am** and placed on life support

At **2.30am** Joy’s mother Myrna arrived at the hospital and was informed her daughter had little chance of survival

On **3rd August** Bernie Grant met with Police Commissioner Paul Condon, who informed him that three officers had been suspended, and confirmed the police had used a body belt, handcuffs and tape to bind and gag Joy

On **10th August** a post-mortem established that Joy died from suffocation. By now, many politicians, members of the public and human rights organisations such as Amnesty International joined the call for a public enquiry

Between 7am-8am on **28th July**, over a dozen police and immigration officers raided Joy’s home in Crouch End, North London

At **11.30 am** Mark Sanger, local community relations officer, informed Bernie Grant and others that Joy suffered a heart attack after officers arrived at her home

On **1st August** Joy was still on life support but pronounced dead

On **7th August**, thousands of people took part in a peaceful demonstration through Crouch End to express their outrage at Joy’s death and demand a public enquiry into the circumstances



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CAMPAGNING FOR JUSTICE

After her passing, the Joy Gardner Campaign was formed with Bernie Grant and Myrna Simpson as the main organisers. The campaign was formed and demanded those responsible for Joy's death be held to account, it also campaigned for an end to inhumane restraining and deportation practices, and challenged racist and discriminatory immigration laws, which remain in place to this day.

Myrna Simpson, Joy's mother, worked tirelessly to raise public awareness around Joy and her brutal killing. The case was covered heavily by the media, but not always with compassion and accuracy.

Take a look at the following primary sources, and discuss how useful they are in providing information about the campaign and its aims and methods...



Bernie Grant with Joy's family including her mother, Myrna Simpson, photo held at Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/13/2/2



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Appeal for Joy Gardner, Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/6/5/2

The Joy Gardner Campaign Information Bulletin, Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/6/5/2

PRIMARY SOURCES

These are two **primary sources** produced by the Joy Gardner Campaign. Take a look and answer the following questions

1: What do these sources tell us about the aims of the Joy Gardner Campaign?

2: What important pieces of information can you locate about the Joy Gardner case?

3: What do they tell us about the impact of Joy's death on her family, and their role in the campaign?

APPEAL FOR JOY GARDNER

Joy Gardner is dead. She died as a result of the actions of the Police and Immigration Officials. Postmortem results showed that she died from suffocation.

Her family do not have the financial resources to deal with the crisis they now face.

They need help to bring her nineteen year old daughter from Jamaica for her mother's funeral.

They need help with the funeral expenses.

They need help to provide for the future of Joy's five year old son Graeme who has lost his mother.

They need help to continue the Campaign to find out the truth about Joy's death, and to press for an Independent Enquiry into all Britain's deportation policies, practises and procedures.

Please help by sending your donation urgently to :

The Joy Gardner Fund
c/o Bernie Grant MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

or directly to :

Lloyds Bank plc
Account Number 0348 868
Sort Code 30 - 98 - 70

Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to **The Joy Gardner Fund**.

The Joy Gardner Campaign & Fund
Chair : Bernie Grant. Secretary : Etta Khwaja. Treasurer : Sharon Lawrence.

THE JOY GARDNER CAMPAIGN Information Bulletin

Joy Gardner was killed when Police and Immigration Officials came to her home on 28th July 1993. We want the truth about her death.



ABOVE: Members of Joy Gardner's family including her five year old son Graeme and mother Myrna Simpson join Tottenham MP Bernie Grant outside the Home Office. RIGHT: Joy Gardner.

"There has been enormous public outrage over the death of Joy Gardner. At the moment all enquiries are being conducted behind closed doors. We feel that only a public enquiry will answer all the questions in people's minds... they want to know what is being done in their name."

Bernie Grant MP



WHO WAS JOY GARDNER?

Joy Gardner was born in Long Bay, Jamaica in 1953. She had worked as a Civil Servant, before coming to Britain as a visitor in 1987. Her 5 year old son Graeme was born in Britain, and she had numerous members of her family here, in London, Birmingham, and Leicester. Joy wanted to become a journalist and had begun a degree course in media studies at Guildhall University last year.

Myrna Simpson, Joy's mother, remembers "Joy was always a very hard working girl, who was determined to do her best for her children. She lived for her children, and only wanted to make a good life for them. She was a loving mother and a devoted member of the Methodist Church. My abiding memory of her is that she was always helping people. We miss her terribly, and still can't quite believe that she lost her life in this terrible way. The Police killed my daughter. They went in with vengeance in their hearts. It's one law for black and another for white..."

WHY DID SHE DIE ?



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Joy Gardner Campaign badge, Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/5/1



1: What role do badges and other physical items play in helping to publicise a cause or campaign for social justice?

PRIMARY SOURCES

These are also **primary sources** produced during the Joy Gardner Campaign.

One a badge and the other a poem, they represent the various different forms primary sources can take

2: Listen to the poem, how do you think it portrays the thoughts and emotions of those affected by the case of Joy Gardner?

3: Can you think of current examples of poetry or music, where the artist takes a stand against injustice?

The Death of Joy Gardner, poem by Benjamin Zephaniah

*“They put a leather belt
around her
13 feet of tape and bound her
Handcuffs to secure her
And only God knows what
else,
She’s illegal, so deport her
Said the Empire that brought
her”*

LISTEN HERE:





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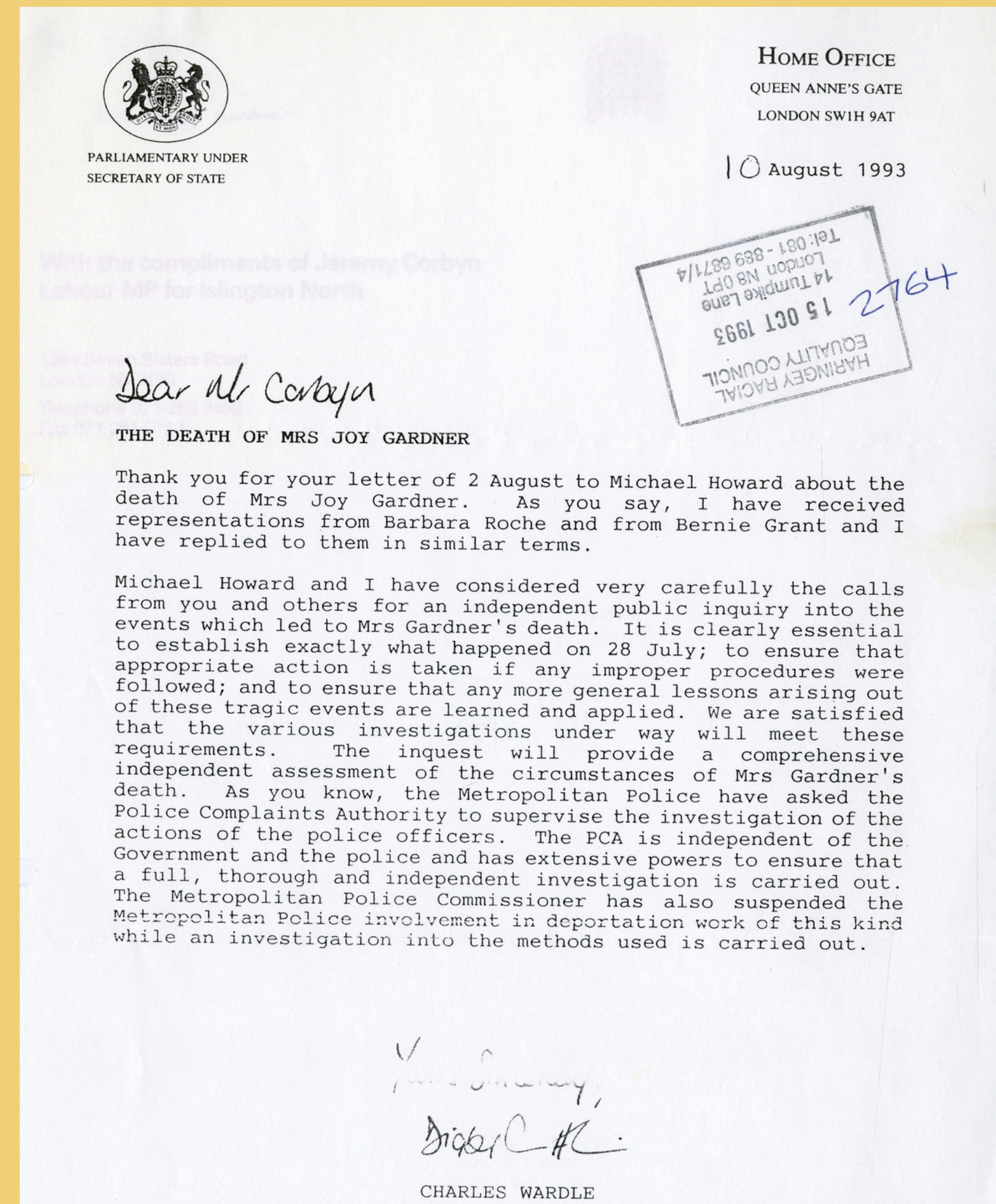
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INVESTIGATION

The family of Joy Gardner, alongside campaigners and public officials, were adamant that only a public inquiry could provide a fully unbiased investigation that would lead to some sense of justice. Alongside Bernie Grant, other Members of Parliament including Barbara Roche and Jeremy Corbyn, wrote on numerous occasions to government officials, including the Home Secretary, requesting a public inquiry.

These requests were never met. Take a look at this response to a letter sent by Jeremy Corbyn.

- 1:** How useful is this as a primary source, in telling us the reasons why a public inquiry was refused?
- 2:** What information does this letter provide about the actions that were taken after Joy's death?
- 3:** Do you think these actions were sufficient? What else do you think would have been helpful for the family and campaign's supporters?



Home Office response to Jeremy Corbyn's request for a public inquiry, Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/4/7/5



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INVESTIGATION

On 3rd August 1993, two days after the announcement of Joy's death, the Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police announced that the case would be investigated under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority (PCA)

Despite constant calls from the Joy Gardner Campaign for a full public inquiry, the demand was never met. The Police Complaints Authority was not authorised to investigate the actions of the immigration officers, and so it could only bring charges against the officers involved. On 26th April 1994, three police officers were charged with Manslaughter, but were all acquitted in June 1995.

After this, Joy's mother Myrna Simpson continued to fight for justice. She attempted to enlist the help of a private barrister to carry the case forward, but was told there was nothing more that could be done after the acquittal. In 2018, which marked 25 years since Joy's death, Mrs Simpson stated: "I'll fight until I have no breath left in my body because I'm not only fighting for Joy - I'm fighting for everybody, whether black or white, if you have been killed unlawfully".

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

PRESS RELEASE FROM BERNIE GRANT MP 14/6/95

Following the acquittal of two Police Officers charged with the manslaughter of Joy Gardner, Bernie Grant said that there would be anger in the black community at the verdicts, but that the case was far from closed.

MR GRANT COMMENTED:

" I think that there will be anger, but no surprise within the black community at these acquittals. It is becoming increasingly commonplace for the deaths of black people in custody to go unpunished. There is a feeling that black life is worth nothing."

"Joy Gardner died a horrible death, and people will find it hard to accept that these officers should get off scott free for what they did. The verdict poses major questions for the black community. In this case we behaved ourselves, played the game and used the system. It has let us down. I am afraid that in future people may well find other ways of expressing their anger."

" However the matter is not yet closed, and we must now have the full public enquiry into all the events which led to Joy's death, which we have demanded for so long."

Press release from Bernie Grant, Bishopsgate Institute BG/P/4/7/5



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OVER 30 YEARS ON... RACE & IMMIGRATION

The case of Joy Gardner is one of many deaths at the hands of police which have not received a resolution. Joy Gardner's case is not only an example of excessive police powers, but also of discriminatory immigration policies, which negatively affect people of African and Caribbean descent...

- 1: Can you think of other examples of cases of injustice by police and immigration systems?
- 2: What do you think should happen in order for Joy's family and loved ones to receive justice?
- 3: Why is it important that we learn about Joy Gardner and similar cases in British history?

PRIMARY SOURCES

In 2017, it was reported that hundreds of Commonwealth citizens - many from the 'Windrush' generation of post-WWII Caribbean migrants to Britain - had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights.

This became known as the '**Windrush Scandal**', and was a result of a 'hostile environment' policy by the British Home Office, which aimed to make life in Britain difficult for people who had migrated from elsewhere to the UK.

However, this was not just a recent policy, and Bernie Grant and others fought against such policies decades earlier. Here is an example of a case from 1994, when UK immigration targeted passengers from Jamaica at Gatwick Airport.

Observer article, Bishopsgate Institute: BG/P/6/1/7

OBSERVER 9 JAN 94 ★★★★★ NEWS/5

Immigration chiefs targeted Jamaican deportations flight

Dean Nelson

SENIOR immigration officials targeted the flight carrying Jamaican passengers who were detained at Gatwick Airport and deported on Christmas Day up to a week before it left Kingston, *The Observer* has learnt.

A senior Home Office official warned the airline that large numbers of passengers would be refused entry and said that it should cancel plans for another flight in March.

Correspondence between the airline and the chief immigration officer at Gatwick, where 190 Jamaicans were detained on 21 December, contradicts statements in letters to the press from Home Office Minister Charles Wardle that the flight was not targeted and that passengers were not 'under collective suspicion'.

Letters from the airline, Leisure International Airways, to Caribbean Gold, the company which chartered the aircraft, on 16 December detail conversations with senior immigration officers who warned it to 'expect big trouble' when the passengers arrived at Gatwick.

The warning was issued after 100 Jamaicans were detained from a British Airways flight on 15 December when 31 passengers were refused admission. This caused concern at Leisure International, which was told on 15 December that extra immigration officials would be drafted in to police large numbers of Jamaicans.

The company offered to fly several immigration officers at its own expense to Kingston to clear passengers before departure, but this was refused. Acting on information from immigration officers, the company asked Caribbean Gold to provide a £50,000 bond to pay fines likely to be imposed under the Carriers Liability Act.

Caribbean Gold director Don Gooding told *The Observer* that his company has been informed that it faces costs of up to £200,000 to cover the removal of the 27 Jamaicans on Christmas Day on a privately chartered aircraft. 'This means we will go out of business and 10 jobs will be lost. So much for the Government encouraging black businesses,' he said. The company has traded for 12 years. Its director is former cricketer Sir Gary Sobers.

Immigration officials abandoned plans to put the returnees on scheduled British Airways flights, which would have cost the operator an estimated £15,000. Instead the Home Office decided to charter its own aircraft to speed their removal.

Philip Ovenden, marketing director of Leisure International, said Jamaican passengers would in future be required to obtain clearance from the British High Commission in Jamaica before being allowed to board Leisure International flights.

A Home Office spokeswoman declined to comment on individual cases or the actions of individual immigration officers, but said the mass interviews were held because of information from Leisure International. The company said it had provided only details of when the aircraft was due.