RACE & CLASS

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UK: RACISM AND THE STATE 2007

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From Good Friday to Good Relations: sectarianism, racism and the Northern Ireland state

ROBBIE McVEIGH and BILL ROLSTON

Abstract: This article addresses the nature of contemporary racism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland in the context of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) and its outworking. It responds to the increasing dominance of the 'good relations' model for understanding and addressing race and sectarian division in Northern Ireland. It debunks the gathering support for the notion that Northern Ireland is somehow 'post-sectarian' – finding instead a state formation that hides its incapacity to address rising racism and sectarianism under the fig leaf of 'good relations'. It locates these key developments in the specific new formation of the statelet which has emerged from the GFA.

Keywords: Good Friday Agreement, IRA, Irish nationalism, Unionism, Sinn Féin

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Introduction

To first appearances all seems to be changed utterly in the North of Ireland. Since Secretary of State Peter Brooke stated on 9 November 1990 that Britain had no 'strategic or economic interest' in Northern Ireland and would accept unification of Ireland if that were the wish of the people of Northern Ireland,[1] the British government, especially under Tony Blair, has presented itself as the dispassionate arbiter of the ancient squabble between Ireland's two tribes. There has also been a major change in the approach of Irish nationalism in the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland. The traditionalist sentiments of former Taoiseach Charles Haughey[2] are a long way from the current role of Taoiseach Bertie Ahern alongside the British government working to establish a power-sharing devolved government in the North. In addition, signing up to the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in 1998 led to the Republic abandoning its claim to the whole island of Ireland by dropping Articles 2 and 3 of the Constitution.

Most interesting/confusing of all is that the peace process that brought these changes about also led to cataclysmic changes in republicanism. Sinn Féin, supported by the IRA, which has been traditionally implacably opposed to British involvement in Ireland and to the 'Northern Ireland statelet', signed up to the GFA. Admittedly, the belief that this is only an interim measure, pending the demise of the state if and when a majority desired (as agreed in the GFA), undoubtedly made that decision possible. Yet few could have foreseen in 1998 that by 2005 the IRA would state: 'The leadership of Óglaigh na hÉireann has formally ordered an end to the armed campaign. All IRA units have been ordered to dump arms. All volunteers have been instructed to assist the development of purely political and democratic programmes through exclusively peaceful means.'[3]

Such events are a radical challenge to those who seek to analyse the nature of the Northern Ireland state. Traditionally, nationalists have seen the state as unnatural, imposed on the Irish people by British imperialism underwriting the British/unionist minority on the island, and inevitably destined to discriminate against the large nationalist minority trapped within the boundaries of a state to which they did not choose to belong. Unionists, on the other hand, have represented the partition of Ireland as an inevitable consequence of two distinct peoples on the island of Ireland with fundamentally incompatible political identities and aspirations. Repression was needed against the nationalist minority only because of their recalcitrance and disloyalty, represented most obviously in the periodic armed rebellions of the IRA, aided and abetted by the logistical and ideological support of the state on the other side of the Irish border.

There is a similar challenge in relation to the characterisation of sectarianism. The Northern Ireland state was established as a sectarian entity and preserved through sectarian policies and institutions. The civil rights campaign of the late 1960s was a popular challenge to that sectarianism. But, as one reading of the history has it, the intervention of the British state from 1969 onwards was the beginning of the death knell for the sectarian state. The British succeeded in reforming the worst aspects of institutionalised sectarianism, not least in relation to employment practices. That they did not progress further, it could be argued, was not just because of unionist resistance to reform but the major diversionary task of combating republican terrorism. In this reading, the GFA represents the final chapter of that reform programme begun over three decades earlier. The sectarian state is now in terminal mode. Even the upsurge of sectarianism in everyday practice and attitudes since the GFA does not undermine the optimism of this conclusion; this is just a final kick of a dying phenomenon.

A more complex explanation of sectarianism is possible, one which views it as integral to both the process of British colonialism in Ireland and the existence of the state in Northern Ireland. This approach begins with the premise that the state's role in the reproduction of sectarianism has mutated a number of times in history, before and during the existence of the Northern Ireland state. The ultimate purpose of this article is to examine how this mutation has occurred to accommodate the fact that the post-GFA state is currently emerging from an accentuated reform mode. It seeks to discover whether sectarianism is indeed in terminal mode or has merely been reconstituted to fit the new times.

Sectarianism is a racism

But first it is necessary to attempt to overcome the under-theorisation of sectarianism[4] by naming it as what it in fact is, a form of racism. Sectarianism is rooted firmly in the process of British imperialism in Ireland. The British conquest of Ireland led to a specific power structure linked to the imperial project. This was evident in the dispossession of land, the subordination of Irish administration, laws preventing economic development, and so on. All of this was justified and advanced by a racial ideology that suppressed the indigenous population on account of their supposed moral, intellectual and other failings.

The main signifier of the racialisation of the Irish was that of religion: the native Irish were Catholic and the colonisers Protestant. This has served to muddy the waters of analysis, leading many commentators to see the Irish case as unique and ensuring that it not be characterised as a case of racism. But the distinctiveness on which

this denial rests is dubious. The interplay of race and religion was a defining feature of every colonial interface. From Australia through Africa to the Americas, British, French, Spanish, Portuguese and other colonialisms made sense of colonialised peoples through the prism of their own religious beliefs. There were of course differences. Spanish and Portuguese colonialism required religious conversion as a gateway to acceptance as a subject, while the French notion of egalitarianism was so central that one became a citizen through the act of subjugation, religious conversion or not. So, the most which can be said about the Irish situation in terms of difference was that religion, rather than some other feature, became the *dominant* signifier.

Part of the reluctance to name the exclusion of the Irish as racism rests on the belief, itself fundamentally racist, that the Irish could not have been racialised because they are not black. Admittedly, there is a marked difference between the colonisation of (white) Ireland by (white) Britain and that of, say, (black) Congo by (white) Belgium. However, we know enough about racism now to realise that it is not a natural outcome of skin colour differences, but a social process that selects skin colour or some other real, exaggerated or imaginary characteristic as the mark of difference. As a racial indicator, religion in Ireland acquired the rigidity which skin colour has had elsewhere. Catholics were deemed to be inherently lesser – lazy, unintelligent, violent and rebellious – while the coloniser bore none of these characteristics. Because these assumed traits were ultimately racial, they could not be changed by the apparently simple act of conversion: Catholicism was not just a belief system or even a way of life, but an ontological condition. The native Irish could no more change their nature than Africans their skin colour.

Naming sectarianism a racism has not been common in recent analysis of the Irish conflict. Early race relations theorist Robert Moore insisted that 'the Northern Ireland conflict is truly race conflict',[5] and, for *Race & Class,* conflict in the north of Ireland has consistently been understood within the paradigm of Black and Third World liberation struggles. But, while anti-Irish racism is generally accepted as a by-product of British imperialism in Ireland, relationships between Protestants and Catholics are generally regarded as sitting somewhere else, as 'different'. That difference is because of religion.

Yet the analysis should not be that difficult. Anti-Semitism is firmly rooted in the religious (and other) identity of its victims and yet is easily accepted as a racism. More recently, the rise of Islamophobia has been easily recognised as a racism albeit defined in terms of religion. In fact, sectarianism in Ireland now looks *more* like other contemporary racisms than ever. In truth, the religious element in sectarianism in Ireland is much *less* definitive than in much anti-Muslim activity, for

example. Thus, what we are proposing is nothing more or less than an extension of such an analysis to include sectarianism as a specific form of racism, one which characterises social relations between Protestants and Catholics in, or with some relationship to, the interface between Irishness and Britishness. There is no longer any point or function in regarding sectarianism as somehow different from racism.

One possible retort is that, from the position of people of colour in Northern Ireland – already vulnerable and under attack – there is logic to avoiding the collapsing of the terms racism and sectarianism. Arguably, this prevents them being dragged into a continuing conflict between two predominantly white groups, both capable of racism against people of colour. This reason, however, is largely redundant given the loyalist assault on black people in Northern Ireland over recent years. The fact that the loyalist paramilitaries responsible for so much sectarian violence have been central to new forms of racist violence demolishes the notion that black people can be shielded from the dynamics of sectarianism.[6] In practical terms, it is no longer possible to separate racism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland even if it were tactically sensible to do this.

Moreover, acknowledging sectarianism as a racism frees us to apply insight from the analysis of racism elsewhere to an understanding of the north of Ireland. Foremost among such wisdom are the following two generalisations; first, not only is the state not above racism, but the survival and replication of racism in its most fundamental and structural sense is entirely dependent on the state; second, the state's role in the reproduction of racism is neither constant nor fixed, but mutates to suit wider geopolitical and economic developments. Specifically, the general question of the extent to which the racist state can be anti-racist has particular relevance in relation to the reformism of the Northern Ireland state in the aftermath of the GFA.

The Northern Ireland state: the consolidation of sectarianism

It is impossible to understand the post-GFA state without some understanding of the origins of the state itself. It is by now axiomatic that the decision to draw the border between the two states of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State in 1921 was based solely on the unionists' concern to guarantee 'the largest possible area within which the Protestants could expect to maintain a safe majority'.[7] Ronald McNeill, a leading unionist, put it clearly at the time:

> [T]he inexorable index of statistics demonstrated that, although unionists were a majority when geographical Ulster was considered as a unit, yet the distribution of population made it certain that a separate parliament for the whole province would have a precarious

existence, while its administration of purely nationalist districts would mean unending conflict'.[8]

The establishment of the state was thus the first and overarching sectarian act from which the other sectarian institutions, relations and practices flowed. The state formation itself was gerrymandered – and this is the state formation that obtains in the post-GFA era. Two consequences followed: first, partition ensured that the 'administration of purely nationalist districts' would produce unending suffering for nationalists trapped in the new state. Thus, gerrymandering was necessary to ensure unionist electoral majorities. The emigration of nationalists was also an essential tactic in ensuring a continuing unionist majority. And of course naked repression – whether in terms of a police force which was in effect an armed militia for the unionist government, or 'emergency' laws which were in fact permanent (a powerful signifier of the potential precariousness of the state) – was never far from the nationalist experience.

Secondly, sectarianism was rewarded in many ways, large and small, in the sectarian state. Firms which practised unfair employment practices flourished. Orange marches could dominate the streets of towns and cities while nationalist cultural or political expression was confined to private spaces or exercised furtively. Even newly arrived institutions such as the BBC were quickly sectarianised and 'unionised'.[9]

It bears emphasis that this new state formation was a uniquely different entity from what went before. The Six Counties wasn't just the bit of the British state in Ireland that continued as before while the rest disappeared off into the Free State. The whole reconfiguration of the legitimacy of the state involved a radical reworking of class and political forces – with disastrously negative consequences for Catholics and nationalists who shifted overnight from being part of a growing and confident Irish majority to a disempowered and brutally repressed minority.

In short, the racial inclusion/exclusion dynamic was radically reworked. Arguably from Catholic Emancipation (1839) onwards, the imperial state had accepted the possibility and even the desirability of the use/co-option of Irish Catholics by the state in Ireland. Catholic recruitment to the British army and Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) are classic examples. In 1881, when the Irish constituted 15 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom, 21 per cent of the British army throughout the Empire was Irish.[10] In a century, Irish Catholics had clearly come a long way from a time when seventeenth century Penal Laws forbade their carrying weapons, to the point where they were armed and disproportionately involved in running someone else's empire.

With the formation of the Northern Ireland state, the trend towards

Catholic incorporation was reversed with apartheid-like totality. The state reappeared in hyper-sectarian forms. One sign of this was the famous two-thirds Protestant, one-third Catholic quotient for the newly formed police force, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). This is usually read as a kind of pre-echo of the system put in place after the GFA as a result of the Patten Report, positive discrimination for Catholics that was never delivered because of IRA perfidy. In reality, it was designed to sectarianise policing in a completely new way and prevent members of the overwhelmingly Catholic RIC dominating the new force.

In other words, despite continuities in colonial relations, there is a stark break between the situation in Ireland before and after the establishment of the Northern Ireland state. The newly formed state lent a new and radically different specificity to sectarianism. After 1920 the Northern Ireland state formation became the key defining structural context. Similar state formations emerged in South Africa and Israel in the twentieth century; there, two forms of exclusive *herrenvolk* 'democracy' created new, more brutal, settler-colonial state regimes, dependent on but also relatively autonomous of British and US imperialisms. The 'state' – as much as broader phenomena like colonialism or imperialism – became the defining element of racism.

In the case of Northern Ireland, therefore, we see a continuity in relation to sectarianism that is attributable to the nature of the state itself rather than the politics it contains. This was maintained through massive changes in the methodologies employed by the British state both to maintain and contain Northern Ireland: through fifty years of hyper-sectarian unionist hegemony at Stormont (1920–72) and twenty-five years of reformist 'direct rule' from Westminster (1972–1997). More importantly in terms of our present discussion, it obtains in the post-GFA 'reformed' Northern Ireland.

The Good Friday Agreement as the 'end of history'

This reading of the *continuity* of the Northern Ireland state pre- and post-GFA sits uneasily with the optimism that accompanied the Agreement. For pro-Agreement unionists and anti-Agreement republicans, the GFA was a final stabilisation of the state; for anti-Agreement unionists and pro-Agreement republicans it was a stepping-stone to dismantling the state and reunification. The GFA was sold to both constituencies on the basis of 'constructive ambiguity'. The substance behind the spin is elusive and requires careful scrutiny and unpacking.

There are opposing views specifically on Sinn Féin's involvement in developments. For dissident republicans, Sinn Féin has sold out and is now administering British rule in the occupied part of Ireland. For Sinn Féin itself, the GFA allows it the space to advance its goal of a unified

Ireland; committed to the long view, it sees it as a stepping-stone to later advances. Whichever view one takes, there is one clear conclusion: for the British state, republicanism is no longer the problem.

Consequently, we have a range of developments in the post-Agreement statelet that were unthinkable under direct rule. A whole new cast of Catholic-nationalist-republican actors has been brought into the machinery of the state – not just Sinn Féin (briefly) in government.[11] Permanent secretaries of Stormont departments, the police ombudsman, the vice-chair of the Policing Board – where unionism formerly could not tolerate a Catholic about the place, clearly now they are getting in everywhere. Nor are these people token nationalists in otherwise unionist institutions. People like Denis Bradley, former vice-chair of the Policing Board, and Father Alex Reid, a key link person in the peace process (as indeed he was during the republican hunger strike of 1980), have been centrally involved in political developments, with the blessing of the British state. Bradley is called on almost daily by the media and others to pontificate on a wide range of issues far beyond his role in the Policing Board, while Reid was one of two independent witnesses called on to attest to the world that the IRA had disposed of its weapons in September 2005. How bizarre it would have been thirty years ago to imagine that a Catholic priest would be seen as the appropriate person to sell republican decommissioning to a *Protestant and unionist* audience!

Where the direct-rule state was reformist, albeit rooted in a counter-insurgency rationale, the post-GFA state is post-reformist. Where the direct-rule state sought to manage republican resistance, the post-GFA state is in itself seen as the solution to republican resistance. It is Northern Ireland's own version of the end of history. Now the key project for the state is to sell that solution to unionists and Protestants. This is to be done in a number of ways: suppressing republican and nationalist enthusiasm for change, blunting the harder edges of the human rights and equality agendas so as to soften the blow for unionists, and enticing unionists and loyalists through special funding initiatives.

If the unionist state was hyper-sectarian and the direct-rule state reformist, the post-GFA state is now post-reformist. New Labour 'hit the ground running' no less surely in Northern Ireland than it did in Britain. And for a brief *and transitional* moment it intensified the reformist interventions of direct rule. It reactivated a peace process that had ground to a halt under John Major. And even before the GFA, it set about the reform of a range of institutions, from policing to human rights and criminal justice. Within a short time, it became clear that the British state believed that it had matters under control; many of the old grievances of the past – such as employment discrimination – were presented as solved. 'The imbalance between Protestant

and Roman Catholic participation in the overall workforce, which was evident in the early nineties, has largely disappeared', announced Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission, at the launch of the Commission's fifteenth annual monitoring report in December 2005.[12]

In this scenario, those grievances that are still in existence are seen to be in the process of being solved. However, the available evidence flies in the face of this wishful thinking. The GFA did not usher in an era of instant peace. It is not merely that sectarian division and practices live on; the apparent paradox is that both have been exacerbated in peacetime. There is more residential segregation now than there was a decade ago[13] and, although it ebbs and flows, interface violence in key areas of Belfast and Derry is frequent. New, euphemistically named, 'peace walls' have been built or built higher since the GFA was signed. The captain of the Northern Ireland football team has been death-threatened into international retirement because he is a Portadown Catholic who once played for Celtic.[14] Children travelling to their Catholic girls' primary school in a predominantly Protestant area have been subject to mass protests involving sectarian abuse and assault with bags of urine and faeces and blast bombs.[15]

In addition, sectarian murders persist. Thus, on 8 May 2006, a 15-year-old Catholic boy, Michael McIlveen, died in hospital after having been beaten with baseball bats when cornered by a group of Protestant youths in his home town of Ballymena the previous evening. Such high profile incidents are the tip of an iceberg of everyday sectarian violence in many parts of Northern Ireland.

The official response to sectarian attacks is usually one of sympathy and condemnation – although not always. Thus, Roy Gillespie, a DUP councillor from Michael McIlveen's home town of Ballymena, offered the following opinion: 'As a Catholic, he won't be going to heaven unless he has been saved. If he did not repent before he died and asked the Lord into his heart, he will not get to heaven. Catholics are not accepted into heaven.'[16] Such sentiments are not aired publicly as frequently as they once were. Much more common is the rush of politicians to condemn sectarian murders. Yet there is little in such a reaction that helps explain why such attacks continue in peacetime, much less a serious attempt to suggest viable policy responses. Thus, after Michael McIlveen's murder, Ulster Unionist Party leader Sir Reg Empey said the killing illustrated 'the distance we have still to travel as a society to what could be described as normality'. Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain said it was 'a sickening sectarian attack' which dragged Northern Ireland 'back to the dark days of the past'. Conservative Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary David Lidington said 'such naked sectarianism and savagery can have no place in any civilised society'. What all these sound bites fail to acknowledge is

that sectarian attacks are a product of a sectarian *present* rather than a blighted past, that they are in fact an integral part of the *normality* that is Northern Ireland, and that they can happily coexist with all the other aspects of Northern Ireland society which make it as *civilised* as any other advanced society. Sectarianism is alive and well in the post-GFA era; it is that fact which requires explanation and which forceful policy initiatives must address.

Reconstituting sectarianism

Much of what passes as official comment and indeed policy in relation to sectarianism is based fundamentally on a denial of the magnitude of the problem. Representing sectarianism as 'mindless', inexplicable or atavistic is a form of denial. Sometimes denial is more direct. Thus, during a series of sectarian attacks on nationalists in the County Antrim village of Ahoghill in August 1995, Deputy Chief Constable of the PSNI Paul Leighton, reduced the campaign of attacks to the level of a village squabble. In a confused press briefing, he denied that loyalists were involved in a campaign of 'ethnic cleansing'; something 'much more serious' was afoot, he said. While there was an element of sectarianism involved, he added, the trouble was due to 'people not getting on with each other'. He later retracted, writing to a local councillor: 'There is no question the attacks are all of a sectarian nature and only in some do other, lesser factors, feature.'[17] But it is telling that his first reaction was to deny the occurrence of 'attacks', which involve an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim, in favour of an explanation based on mutual and reciprocal antagonism.

The GFA promised citizens the 'right to freedom from sectarian harassment'. In reality, however, the GFA and, more particularly, the new state formation that emerged from it, was a reworking rather than a transcending of sectarianism. It engendered not so much a society 'free' from sectarianism as one in which sectarianism is *institutionalised in new forms*. At the same time the state seemed to take responsibility for directly confronting sectarianism. But in reality, what appeared as confrontation often ended up as institutionalisation.

Take the arrangements for voting in the Assembly elected after the GFA. Each political party must designate itself as either nationalist or unionist and no vote can be passed by the Assembly unless a majority of *each* 'camp' is in agreement. The move is a clear attempt to avoid any return to the days of unionist majoritarianism, with its concomitant hyper-sectarianism, by ensuring that no party can derive policies without the backing of the minority. Worthy as this approach may appear in terms of combating sectarianism, it represents simultaneously a formalisation of sectarian relations at the heart of democratic politics which is entirely new.

The reform of policing provides another example. There were many reasons to reform the old police force, the RUC, not least the fact that when the GFA was signed 92 per cent of its members were Protestant.[18] Concerned that 'natural wastage' and recruitment for the new PSNI would not lead quickly enough to balance, the Patten Report[19] advised government to establish a rigid sectarian headcount in relation to recruitment. Much to the chagrin of the unionists, particularly the DUP, the government agreed, so that from the establishment of the PSNI in 2001 and for a decade thereafter, recruitment is on a strict 50:50 basis: equal numbers of Protestants and Catholics must be recruited. Again the move to reform has led to a formal embedding of sectarianism that was new to the state.

In short, it is untenable to suggest that the post-GFA state is 'post-sectarian'. On the contrary, it has reconfigured sectarianism – institutionalising and constitutionalising it in new forms. Again there is an immediate comparison with post-liberation South Africa; it seems unlikely that anyone would contest the argument that state racism was transformed in the transition from apartheid to the post-apartheid state formation. Insofar as the current South African state continues to reproduce inequality between whites and blacks, however, it remains racist. Of course, the Northern Ireland state has never had a liberatory moment like that in South Africa – the state formation was less reformed and less transformed by the peace process and the GFA. Even in a prima facie sense, we would be more than surprised to find that sectarianism has disappeared instantaneously in a context which had, for so long, been defined by sectarian violence. It would therefore seem bizarre to suggest that there is no sectarianism at all in Northern Ireland since the GFA and only slightly less bizarre to suggest that there is no sectarian inequality. Yet this is precisely what the state has begun to do. Most dishonestly of all, it has begun to suggest that racism has 'replaced' sectarianism in terms of 'significance'.[20] This developing analysis does nothing positive in the struggle against either racism or sectarianism.

The rise of racism in Northern Ireland

Racism has risen exponentially in Northern Ireland in the years since the GFA. It is now common for academics, journalists and others to uncritically refer to Belfast as 'the race-hate capital of Europe'.[21] While some of this commentary smacks of hyperbole, it does speak to the grim new reality for people of colour, refugees and migrant workers in Northern Ireland.

Awareness of racism has also risen markedly over this period, not least at the level of the state which had previously resisted acknowledging the evidence of racism against people of colour and Travellers in

the north. Up to the 1990s, the state denied the existence of racism and the need for anti-racist legislation.[22] It was 1997 before the Race Relations Order (broadly parallel to the 1976 Race Relations Act in Britain) was made law in Northern Ireland and only then as a result of sustained politicking from the human rights and community sectors. But once discovered, the phenomenon has been seized upon with gusto by the state.

It would be wrong to completely 'blame' the GFA for this rise in racism but it did help create the context in which new levels of racism were to flourish. A number of factors were significant. First, 'peace' made Northern Ireland a more attractive place to live and work for people of colour as much as anyone else. Second, peace enabled a level of economic growth and labour shortages that began to be filled by migrant workers. Third, these new migrants, as well as refugees and asylum seekers, tended to move into the cheapest available housing stock which is disproportionately in loyalist working-class areas. (This results from the fact that nationalist working-class areas are overcrowded partly because of loyalist pogroms in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the subsequent assassination campaigns of loyalist paramilitary groups, while the population in unionist working-class areas has been depleted as a result of deindustrialisation.) Fourth, the Agreement created a degree of loyalist 'alienation'. The political gains of republicanism were not matched by loyalist political parties. Whatever the reality, there was an undoubted perception that loyalists had somehow been sold out by the Agreement. Finally, the peace process involved a constant attempt to bring loyalists 'in from the cold'. In this context, there was a reluctance to address anything that might further alienate loyalists – even their involvement in the racist violence. So post-GFA, new communities of colour found themselves situated in the midst of this volatile situation and became key targets for loyalist rage.

It was to this new reality that the state turned with its 'good relations' paradigm. Racism became seen as the 'close ally' of sectarianism and both were condemned as the products of 'ugly minds'. The conjoining of sectarianism and racism would seem to be a progressive move and one entirely in line with the theoretical analysis we presented earlier. But the state's purpose here is not to radicalise analyses of sectarianism with a necessary shot of anti-racist praxis, but rather to de-radicalise both anti-racism and anti-sectarianism. For example, despite the 'race hate capital of Europe' sobriquet, the state has, to date, failed to prosecute or convict *anyone* for racially aggravated violence.[23] Belfast is, of course, not – or not yet – Paris or Bradford. Yet the focus on the city as leaping suddenly from fourth to first division in relation to racism fits a facile but superficially enticing logic which goes thus: there is a finite amount of hatred in Northern Ireland

and now, given the dying throes of sectarianism in the wake of the GFA, racism has increased. There are numerous errors in this assumption. For a start, people are perfectly capable of being both sectarian and racist. Moreover, as the concentration of racist attacks in loyalist areas reveals, being sectarian is an advantage in being racist. But the state's approach to racism fails to name the problem, avoiding the obvious and problematic correlation between loyalism and racism to focus on the problem being that of two generic camps: 'them' and 'us'.

From Community Relations to 'Good Relations'

In 1969, the British government responded to the emerging violent conflict with the establishment in Northern Ireland of a Community Relations Commission. Its prime aim was to bring Protestants and Catholics together. Overall it was a rather bland and, considering the magnitude of its task, remarkably under-funded institution, marked only by a relatively imaginative programme to encourage community development. One of the first acts of the brief power-sharing government of 1974 was to disband the Commission.

Community relations was removed from mothballs by the Thatcher government (at the same time as it ratcheted up its 'shoot to kill' policy) and integrated into government with the establishment of the Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU) at Stormont in 1987. A Community Relations Council was also established in 1990. Despite work with community-based groups and other organisations, the Council did not have the same focus on community development which the Commission once had. Instead, its purpose was to 'assist the people of Northern Ireland to recognise and counter the effects of communal division'. This paradigm played no role whatsoever in the negotiations around the GFA and was not mentioned in the Agreement itself – which was dominated by commitments on security, equality and human rights. We might have expected, therefore, in the post-GFA era, that community relations would be consigned to the dustbin of history as a failed strategy of the direct-rule state.

Instead, community relations was rebranded as 'good relations'. The ground was prepared by Section 75 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: 'a public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.'

Thus 'race' was very firmly inserted into a paradigm from which it had been almost totally missing before. The key distinguishing shift therefore was that while community relations had been about sectarianism, good relations was about sectarianism *and racism*. The new 'good relations' paradigm very consciously and deliberately colonised

anti-racism. This also, however, *excluded* most of the other Section 75 categories that had entered the GFA equality agenda discussions – such as gender, disability and sexual orientation.[24] By default, therefore, the state regards equality as something that is needed for a whole range of constituencies but 'good relations' as only relevant to 'religious belief, political opinion and racial group'.

The pre-GFA Community Relations Commission had said and done almost nothing on racism. The CCRU did slightly more work with minority ethnic groups although it continued to support the government line that the existence of racism was not proven. Certainly neither organisation was part of the coalition of forces that finally brought anti-racist legislation into force in 1997. Neither offered any positive contribution in the tortured 'community relations' between Travellers and other communities that had defined early manifestations of racism in Northern Ireland.

Despite this, the Community Relations Council (CRC) managed to position itself with a key responsibility for addressing the rising levels of racism in Northern Ireland.[25] In 2004, for the first time, it announced its integration of anti-racism and anti-sectarianism with evangelical zeal:

> Promoting *Good Relations* is about pursuing the vision of a new society. This involves going beyond the legal requirements and asks fundamental questions about the way we manage and run our organisations and services . . . Northern Ireland has suffered the impact of sectarianism for many years and racism has fast become its close ally. These are uncomfortable realities for everyone to face, but the promotion of good relations gives us an opportunity to confront them in a strategic way.[26]

Disturbingly for those who might have seen this as a useful intervention in the context of rising racist and sectarian violence, the document began with the admission that: '*An agreed definition for the promotion of good relations does not currently exist.*'[27] Despite the lack of any intellectual coherence, however, the promotion of good relations proceeded apace. When the state's good relations strategy appeared fully-fledged in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) document, *A Shared Future: policy and strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland*, in 2005, racism and sectarianism appeared in tandem throughout and the good relations synthesis was complete.

This document marked a key point in the state's articulation of its new-found purpose. If 'community relations' was definitive of the British state reformism of the direct-rule state, 'good relations' emerged as the dominant theme in the lexicon of the post-GFA state. There was

a straightforward continuity in some of this intervention. Thus 'good relations' adopts much of the fairly shallow analysis of the community relations industry.[28] The watchwords – diversity, equity, interdependence – did not change at all. While the concepts of interdependence and diversity are fairly innocuous, the reference to *equity* is far more problematic. 'Equality' is regarded as too radical; it was bad for 'community relations' and it is now bad for 'good relations'. Tellingly, a word which was central to the GFA is excised from the lexicon of 'good relations' in the post-GFA state. Moreover, this term is now imposed upon anti-racism; people of colour, like Catholics, can now only ask for equity because to demand equality might somehow generate 'bad relations'.

'Good relations' and 'diversity' breathed new life into the community relations industry. The CRC was given core responsibilities in relation to conflict transformation not envisaged in the GFA. It became one of the key funding bodies dispersing millions of pounds of peace money from the European Union from 1995 on. The 'good relations' paradigm enabled the state to import policies learnt in relation to 'race relations' on the home front without any attempt to tailor them to local needs. Metropolitan discourse has been uncritically overlaid on the existing social formation. Northern Ireland has suddenly discovered 'multiculturalism', 'diversity' and race awareness training. The belief is that 'them' and 'us' as negative can be transformed into a positive.

There are of course scathing criticisms of this approach in Britain made by Sivanandan[29] and others which are no less relevant to Northern Ireland: the focus on interpersonal relationships rather than structural inequality, the presumption that racism is confined to the working class and the failure to derive a robust programme of anti-racism rather than its more bland cousin, tolerance. But the approach has added negativity in Ireland. Most obviously, it is a way to ignore the more established, in the Irish context, phenomenon of sectarianism. Thus, there are now countless seminars and conferences on 'diversity' where the focus is solely on minority ethnic groups and the issue of sectarianism is never raised. This approach both derives from and contributes to the assertion that racism is the real problem because sectarianism is on its way out and therefore needs no explanation. Sectarianism has become the elephant in the living room.

By 2005 this had gone so far that it was possible for research commissioned by the OFMDFM to ask if sectarian violence was 'no longer a problem'.[30] Increasingly, state intervention moves away from the subject at all. To even mention sectarianism or inequality or injustice becomes anathema to 'good relations'. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland corporate plan 2003–6 mentions sectarianism

once and good relations four times; the *Shared Future* strategy mentions good relations 120 times and sectarianism twelve times and anti-sectarianism not at all. This is the post-GFA, post-reformist, 'good relations' statelet in action. It is a state formation that repudiates racism and sectarianism as 'evil' but is completely unwilling to acknowledge either as an endemic part of the post-GFA statelet.

Sectarianism: the elephant in the living room

The reality bears emphasis. There is no area of social life in Northern Ireland which is not sectarianised, or structured in some way by sectarianism. The correlation between political party and 'perceived religion' is as absolute as it ever was. Sectarianism continues to profoundly structure where people are born, where they go to school, where they live, where they work, where they socialise, what sports teams they support and where they are buried.

In relation to employment, a few statistics reveal continuing division. The Secretary of State for Defence employs 3,288 Protestants and 155 Catholics (or 95.5 per cent and 4.5 per cent) while the Northern Ireland Policing Board employs 1,372 Protestants and 296 Catholics (82.3 per cent and 17.7 per cent) and the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland 8,319 Protestants and 1,168 Catholics (87.7 per cent and 12.3 per cent).[31] We are not suggesting that these outcomes persist simply because these institutions refuse to employ Catholics, as some of them did in the past, but the fact that they persist in some of the most contested areas of state employment is clear evidence of the ridiculousness of the claim that employment patterns in the north are very fair and of the implication that sectarian inequality in 'no longer a problem'.

The GFA deal held the promise that the state actually would (and could) become 'post-sectarian'. In reality, little has been delivered. Rather, the state project has shifted away from acknowledgement, often reluctantly conceded, of profound sectarian inequalities. State discourse has changed from the pre-GFA insistence that it was *capable of reform* to the post-GFA insistence that it has been *reformed*. The target of intervention consequently shifted from structural inequalities that can be measured – unemployment differentials, relative poverty between communities, incidence of hate crime – towards the unquantifiable straw people of the 'twin evils of racism and sectarianism', confined, incidentally, to an unreconstructed working class. All critical and structural analysis flies out the window since these 'twin evils' are only explicable as the product of 'destructive and ugly mindsets'. This has involved a bold finesse by the state. It means that people need to be persuaded that almost all injustice and inequality have been removed and, more importantly, that state culpability for any

inequality and injustice, which is by definition residual, has been completely removed.

Our argument is that sectarianism continues to pervade the post-GFA state and wider society. It is *everywhere* in contemporary Northern Ireland and it is a function of the present post-GFA state, not a 'throwback' to anything that has gone before. Thus, there are real possibilities for policy initiatives that could challenge sectarianism, but many of these are missed by the state or only half-heartedly pursued because of the 'good relations' paradigm. For example, such is the segregation in education that the vast majority of schoolchildren are educated in classes where all or most of their classmates are of the same religious/ethnic background as themselves. A popular movement for integrated education began in the early 1980s and eventually achieved state support. For a while it was relatively easy for groups of parents to set up an integrated school and within two years receive full state funding. To date, fourteen primary schools and four second-level schools have transformed. In addition, there are currently fifty-eight integrated schools catering for approximately 5 per cent of the north's pupils.[32]

But a falling school population has meant that occasionally new integrated schools were being built in areas where established state schools (where the vast bulk of pupils and staff are Protestant) were starved of funding for repairs or new-build. The state's response to this pressure has been a policy shift based on persuading existing schools to transform into integrated status rather than to fund new integrated schools. There are two problems. First, given the opposition of the Catholic Church to integrated education, the only schools which have transformed or are likely to in future are in the state sector. Second, the threshold for integrated status in the transformed sector is lower than in the integrated sector. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, the independent body advocating and supporting integrated education, urges schools to work on a 40:40:20 basis – 40 per cent of children from each of the two main traditions and 20 per cent of others. The state's threshold is lower, with questions being asked if the number of pupils enrolled in a school from whichever is the minority group (Catholic or Protestant) falls below 30 per cent. For the transformed sector that threshold starts at 10 per cent of the first year intake; given that an annual intake of primary one students is less than 30, fewer than three pupils in the class, and by extension in the whole school in its first year, need to be from whichever is the minority tradition to enable the school to be considered integrated. It is expected that overall the transformed school reach the same threshold as the integrated school – 30 per cent of pupils from whichever is the minority tradition – within a decade. The least that can be said is that there is a relative lack of urgency in the policy overall.

The lack of urgency is even more stark in relation to teacher training. There are two separate teacher training colleges in Northern Ireland, with the bulk of students at Stranmillis being Protestant and those at St Mary's Catholic. Although there were suggestions in the 1980s that it would make sense, not least in financial terms, to amalgamate the two,[33] the state has never faced down the opposition of the established churches to amalgamation. A Catholic or Protestant can thus be schooled at primary and secondary level, attend training college and get a job as a teacher for life without having left the comfortable company of their own religious affiliates.

Bringing loyalism in from the cold?

As stated earlier, one of the key successes of the GFA has been the fact that republicans have gone along with political developments. The small number of dissident republicans opposed to the GFA have not, or at least not yet, come up with an alternative politics which can win widespread support in the republican community. For the state, the major problem in selling the GFA derives from unionism, which has been at best ambivalent about political developments, and its militant partner loyalism, which has an inbuilt propensity to equate progress with surrender. Selling the GFA to loyalists in particular is problematic.

Nationalists, relegated by partition to living in a state they neither sought nor freely accepted, and expecting, with endless evidence that their expectations were realistic, that the state would do little to help them, learned to rely on themselves. The growth, strength and confidence of the community sector in nationalist areas during the three decades of the conflict are proof of how successful they were in this regard. For their part, loyalists came to see their communities as the state writ small. The state supported, tolerated or turned a blind eye to what loyalists did in their community, whether it was painting murals, marching, intimidating nationalists out of loyalist workplaces or residential areas, or organising defence groups. Loyalists saw these practices as not only their right but a vital part of maintaining the state. Thus, loyalist paramilitaries viewed themselves as an extension of the state's security forces, able to target nationalists in ways which state forces, their hands allegedly tied by laws and political niceties, were unable to do. Given the extent of collusion between state forces during direct rule, that view was far from unrealistic.[34]

In short, nationalist and republican communities were 'communities of resistance',[35] while loyalist communities were locked into a relationship with the state which gave them little independence. That differential relationship has continued and been transformed in the post-GFA state. Nationalists continue to organise for themselves, the difference

now being that they tend eventually to be supported, especially in financial terms, by the state. True, developments such as Irish language schools, and major cultural events, such as Féile an Phobail, the West Belfast Festival, succeed in organising impressive services and events which have been consequently denied state funding on the grounds that the services and events are 'narrow', 'non-inclusive' and 'sectarian'. But there is nothing in their rationale or constitutions which makes them exclusive to the nationalist community, with the result that the state eventually reneges and funds them. This tends to incorporate the groups in many ways into a state-determined agenda. At the same time, the groups continue to have a healthy scepticism of the state and carry on making demands of it.

Unionists, used to and expecting the state to act on their behalf, are less adept at community development. As the state no longer needs loyalists as shock troops as it once did, loyalism has now neither state nor community on which to rely. This has led to official concern about the marginalisation of unionist communities. Take former Secretary of State John Reid's concerns: 'The Catholic community today breathes confidence, coherence and dynamism . . . At the same time the unionist community's confidence has declined . . . Northern Ireland must not become a cold place for Protestants.'[36] He seems to miss the profound irony involved in seeing the majority as beleaguered while those who have borne the brunt of discrimination are viewed as victors.

The solution is for the state to step in and, as in the past, do it for the loyalists. Where loyalists in Belfast seem impervious to requests that they desist from burning countless car tyres on the night before the July 12th celebrations of the Battle of the Boyne, thus polluting the city for days afterwards, the city council steps in with a grant of £100,000 for family-friendly bonfires.[37] The Northern Ireland Office supplies a further £100,000 to the Orange Order to allow them to explore turning the annual July 12th parades into a cultural festival, 'Orangefest'.[38] And the Department for Social Development makes £3.3 million available to the Arts Council for a community arts scheme, £1 million of which is for a programme of painting over loyalist paramilitary murals.[39]

Grant-aiding loyalist culture is not the same as engaging loyalism in a dialogue about where it can fit in the new political dispensation and what needs to change for it to do so. Rather than confront loyalism on its reticence, the state has preferred to entice it into the peace process in various ways. The rationale is that loyalism is to be killed with kindness. In counter-insurgency terms, a killing by any means is acceptable. However, this choice of method avoids confronting loyalism head on. This is not to suggest the pursuit of a solely military response, such as was tried and failed in relation to republican insurgency; this would be a recipe for abuses and denial of human rights on a large scale. Rather,

there is a need to name loyalism for what it is, a need to confront its innate sectarianism (and, more recently, racism). The state does not do so.

But this is neither here nor there in the state's consolidation of its legitimacy in the north of Ireland. It now takes responsibility for 'sanitising' spaces that once belonged quintessentially to non-state or anti-state actors. The 'good relations' paradigm has allowed the state to attempt to colonise a whole series of areas that were formally 'free' – loyalist murals, loyalist bonfires, Orange parades, republican prison protests, féileanna, fleádhanna, Irish-medium education – as it has other aspects of society – human rights, equality, political parties. This is the characterisation of the new state formation; it has penetrated all these spaces, communities, politics that were unreachable in the state formations of Stormont and direct rule. Internationally, the Six Counties has shifted from being a key symbol of anti-imperialist struggle to one of the success stories of the new Anglo-American imperial orthodoxy. It was no accident that Hillsborough castle provided the backdrop to the cynical attempt to spin the war against Iraq in the Bush/Blair 'war and peace' summit in 2003.[40] The stabilisation of Northern Ireland had become a shining example of the new imperialism – a foretaste of what was to be achieved in Iraq and proof that Bush and Blair were not 'warmongers' but rather peacemakers. While the peace and democracy for Iraq that were promised at Hillsborough have disappeared off the radar, it is likely that the 'good relations' model will soon figure as the Blairite solution to the 'sectarianism' in Iraq that was unleashed by the occupation.

Conclusion

We have characterised the new post-GFA Northern Ireland formation as the 'good relations' statelet. This suggests that the way the new state has chosen to manage racism and sectarianism is its *defining* feature. Its response – and more importantly its *non-response* – to racism and sectarianism is cloaked by the good relations paradigm. This is the way that it distinguishes itself from its previous incarnations; this is the era of the 'shared future' which has replaced that of a 'Protestant parliament for a Protestant people'. Equally, however, the promotion of good relations is the way in which we trace the continuity in the state management of conflict.

Ostensibly the recent moves by the state to integrate its response to racism and sectarianism are a breakthrough. Fifteen years ago we would have been delighted to have recognition by the state that racism was a problem at all. Moreover, as we have seen, anti-imperialist analyses have long insisted that sectarianism should be integrated into broader analyses of colonialism rather than dismissed in terms of reli-

gious extremism or Irish intractability. But this new good relations synthesis is good for neither Catholics nor people of colour. It offers nothing in the analysis of why racism and sectarianism exist in contemporary Northern Ireland and nothing to the struggle against racist and sectarian violence. We have no analysis of institutional racism or state racism or the police or the criminal justice system, just endless appeals for the need for good relations between communities. Put simply, good relations gets the colonial state off the hook.

The state must be put back at the very heart of the equation if we are to engage seriously with racism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland. While we have traced the dynamics of sectarianism through the history of British colonial engagement with Ireland, this analysis has emphasised the continued need to focus on the analysis of the Northern Ireland state formation that emerged in 1920. As with the Israeli state and apartheid South Africa, the novel state formation that emerged out of centuries of colonisation and racism in 1920–22 assumed specific new forms. In all three formations the establishment of the racist state generated forms of hyper-racism where other social forces, including, crucially, capitalism, were profoundly structured by racism. For all the hyperbole associated with the 'peace process', the Northern Ireland statelet did not escape this legacy with the GFA. A formation definitively based on racist and sectarian demography cannot escape this birthright so easily.

The Northern Ireland statelet cannot be but sectarian – and this holds even for the shiny post-GFA edition that currently obtains. Moreover, the new racisms that have emerged and intensified in Northern Ireland over recent years are also intimately connected to this state formation. A core part of the struggle against racism and sectarianism in Northern Ireland therefore involves recognising the need to dismantle the racist and sectarian state. This is not, of course, to suggest that there are simple solutions in a United Ireland context – older anti-imperialist and republican orthodoxies have dissolved in the context of an expanding European Union and a globalising world. But the vexed question of how to share space between different religious and ethnic and race groups can only *begin* to be definitively answered once the sectarian state is dismantled. As with apartheid South Africa and the current Israeli state, reconciliation between peoples is impossible in the context of a state formation that has as its defining logic the reproduction of inequality between those peoples.

The *raison d'être* of the Irish Republic was the commitment to 'cherish the children of the nation equally'. Of course, it is easy to pay lip service to an aspiration like this and equally easy to debase it in practice. This has been confirmed by the recent performance of the Irish state in its racist denial of citizenship to 'children of the nation'

whose parents happen to be asylum seekers. Nevertheless, in the Irish context, post-GFA, a stark choice still remains between an anti-imperialist space and an imperialist one. There is little elbow room for anti-racism and anti-sectarianism in a state formation that continues to have as its *raison d'être* 'the largest possible area within which the Protestants could expect to maintain a safe majority'. Catholics and minority ethnic people continue to pose a genuine threat to this founding principle and the state has responded accordingly. Instead of the promised post-GFA future 'free from racist and sectarian harassment' and grounded in human rights and equality, we find a state formation responsible for – and incapable of dealing with – frightening levels of racism and sectarianism. In terms of both racism and sectarianism, the Northern Ireland state, despite all its post-GFA gloss, remains part of the problem, not part of the solution.

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Integrationism: the politics of anti-Muslim racism

ARUN KUNDNANI

Abstract: It has long been the contention of those on the right of British politics that cultural diversity is a threat to national cohesion and security. However, cultural diversity has been attacked equally vigorously by liberals and by those on the centre left, especially since 2001. The new conventional wisdom is that a national story of Britishness must be promoted in order to bind the nation together around a set of core values, to which minorities must assimilate. This integrationism draws on a wider anti-Muslim political culture associated with the 'war on terror', in which the focus is on 'self-segregation', alien values and forced assimilation, rather than on institutional racism. But, it is argued here, there cannot be one national story of Britain. Nor can one set of 'British values' be imposed as a condition of citizenship. Instead, an integrated society can only be built out of universal values of human rights, justice and democracy – the very values the 'war on terror' tends to undermine.

Keywords: British National Party, Britishness, citizenship, diversity, feminism, institutional racism, integration, Islamophobia, multiculturalism, nationalism

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Speaking at a Fabian Society conference in January 2006, Gordon Brown announced that he would make the re-articulation of 'Britishness' the guiding idea of any future premiership. In the past, he argued, Britishness could be taken for granted as an authentic feeling of belonging. But now it needed the state to intervene to positively produce a new sense of nationhood. Being sure about what it meant to be British would help the nation 'champion democracy' globally and be a 'beacon' for freedom, while domestically it would allow a better response to the issues of asylum and immigration and improve community relations. The 7/7 terrorist attacks, he added, highlighted the need for more integration in British society. Britain, therefore, needed to rediscover from history the 'golden thread' of shared values that binds it together: liberty, responsibility and fairness.[1] There needed to be a new emphasis on this national story in the teaching of history in schools and a Britishness day should be introduced in which these shared values should be celebrated. Behind the podium from which Brown delivered his speech, a flag pole held up a Union Jack.

Of course, an enthusiasm for symbols of Britishness has certain advantages for a Scottish politician looking for support in middle England but Brown's speech reflected a far wider concern. The noun 'Britishness' has only entered the political lexicon relatively recently but it has come to be seen as central to the future of the centre Left, a fact reflected in the Fabian Society's decision to dedicate a conference to the subject. British nationality had historically been complicated both by the absence of a clear idea of what it meant to be a citizen of the British state and by the fact that it was a state made up of multiple nations (England, Scotland and Wales). The English resolved these difficulties by conflating an emotional belonging to England as a nation with a contractual belonging to Britain as a state; the myth of an ancient English *ethnos* thereby filled the space where a British constitution ought to have existed, while the Scottish and Welsh were left on the margins. But New Labour's politics of national identity harboured no genuine ambition to reform Britain's obscure sense of citizenship through the introduction of a codified framework of rights and obligations. Neither could national identity any longer be, as conservatives had traditionally held, a reflection of a singular unchanging ethnicity. Rather, the new conventional wisdom is that a set of 'core values' is the glue that must hold Britishness together. According to this 'third way on identity', it was now vital that a 'national story' be developed by the state to bind the nation together.[2] That national story had to show how a set of core values were embedded in what it meant to be British and new symbols were needed with which the state could celebrate Britishness defined in this way. These core values would also be the mechanism by which limits could be set on multiculturalism, while allegiance to these values would be a factor in assessing the

merits of different categories of migration as well as a necessary condition for the settlement of immigrants.

The rise of integrationism

It has long been the contention of those on the right of British politics that cultural diversity is a threat to national cohesion and security. For the New Right ideologues of the 1980s, a non-white presence in Britain was conditional on its assimilating to a national culture, which they took to be an unchanging set of norms running through the history of English political life. It was no surprise to find right-wing newspaper columnists advocating a new emphasis on assimilation after 7/7, calling on the government to 'tear into those Muslim ghettos'[3] and to 'acculturate' Muslims to 'our way of life'.[4] Like many others, Melanie Phillips in the *Daily Mail* blamed a 'lethally divisive' multiculturalism,[5] while Anthony Browne of *The Times* thought that political correctness had 'allowed the creation of alienated Muslim ghettoes which produce young men who commit mass murder against their fellow citizens'.[6]

However, since the riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in the summer of 2001 and the 9/11 terrorist attacks shortly afterwards, cultural diversity has been attacked equally vigorously by liberals and by those on the centre left. They have argued that an over-tolerance of cultural diversity has allowed Asians in northern towns to 'self-segregate', resulting in violent tensions on the streets of Britain. They have argued that public confidence in the welfare state is being undermined by the presence in Britain of immigrants of a different culture. And they have argued that multiculturalism has encouraged Muslims to separate themselves and live by their own values, resulting in extremism and, ultimately, the fostering of a mortal home-grown terrorist threat. As the leading liberal commentator Hugo Young wrote, soon after 9/11, multiculturalism 'can now be seen as a useful bible for any Muslim who insists that his religio-cultural priorities, including the defence of jihad against America, override his civic duties of loyalty, tolerance, justice and respect for democracy'.[7]

Since 2001, therefore, the existing right-wing critics of multiculturalism have found new allies from the centre and left of the political spectrum; all agree that 'managing' cultural diversity is at the root of many of the key problems facing British society. Furthermore, in the cacophony of voices that make up this new media-driven 'integration debate', it is Muslims who are routinely singled out: it is their cultural difference which needs limits placed on it; it is they who must subsume their cultural heritage within 'Britishness'; it is they who must declare their allegiance to (ill-defined) British values. By 2004, the liberal intelligentsia as a whole seemed to have abandoned its earlier tolerance of cultural diversity and adopted this new 'integra-

tionism', which redefined integration as, effectively, assimilation to British values rather than, as Roy Jenkins had stated in 1966, 'equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.[8] A coterie of New Labour-friendly intellectuals and commentators – such as David Goodhart of *Prospect* magazine and Trevor Phillips, the then chair of the Commission for Racial Equality – acted as outriders for this new position. After 7/7, integrationist demands reached a new intensity. Trevor Phillips spoke of Britain as 'sleepwalking to segregation'. Tolerance of diversity, he argued, had led to isolated communities, 'in which some people think special separate values ought to apply'. The response to 7/7, he added, ought to be a reminder of 'what being British is about'.[9]

It mattered little that segregation, in those parts of Britain where it existed, such as Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, was not the result of a liberal over-emphasis on diversity but an interaction between industrial decline, 'white flight' and institutional racism.[10] After 2001, that history had been forgotten and its causality reversed so that it was 'Muslims' who were held responsible for refusing to mix, while 'multiculturalism' was blamed for allowing their 'self-segregation'. A new doctrine of 'community cohesion' was introduced which focused on the need to integrate Muslims. Thereafter, individual and institutional racisms, which remained the principal barriers to the creation of a genuinely cohesive society, received little attention.[11] The integrationists made much of the need to correct the errors of an earlier politics of ethnic difference. But rather than challenging the underlying assumptions of that politics, they merely reversed its one-sidedness. Whereas the politics of ethnic difference held that any kind of solidarity automatically diluted ethnic identity, the politics of integrationism held that any kind of ethnic identity undermined solidarity.[12] Both shared the dystopian and dangerous New Right assumption that there was a necessary trade-off between solidarity and diversity and neither could imagine how solidarity and diversity could co-exist.

The same assumption encouraged the thesis of a slippery slope from segregation to extremism to terrorism, which was widely accepted despite its inconsistency with the actual biographies of terrorists. Of those involved in terrorism who grew up in Britain, most have lived lives that involved a large degree of interaction with people from other backgrounds and seemed to have been comfortable in the mixed neighbourhoods where they lived. Mohammad Sidique Khan, the leader of the 7/7 bombers, was a graduate who mixed freely with fellow teachers and students from all backgrounds at the primary school in Leeds where he worked; friends described him as 'Anglicised'.[13] Khan's accomplice, Shehzhad Tanweer, used to help his father in his fish and chip shop in a mixed area of Leeds. Omar Khan Sharif, who attempted to detonate a bomb in a Tel Aviv bar in

2003, was educated at a private school in Derbyshire. The most plaus-ible explanation for these individuals' actions is a sense of injustice that morphed into an apocalyptic and pathological form through the ideology of global *jihad*. There is no doubt that part of the appeal of that ideology is its Manichaean vision of a 'them and us' militancy. However, those whose lives are rigidly divided on racial or religious lines do not seem to be any more or less susceptible to it than those whose lives are more mixed. There is no reason to believe that the reach of this ideology is somehow linked to ethnic segregation.

The assumption that the nation could only be held together by a core of cultural sameness also led to a normalisation of the anti-immigrant racisms that emerged in the 1990s. Integrationists, such as the influen-tial New Labour pundit David Goodhart, saw in the hostility directed at asylum seekers a legitimate concern with the dangerous presence of alien cultures that threatened the homogeneity of British values.[14] Resentment towards asylum seekers was regarded not as an expression of a new form of racism but as a natural psychological reaction against 'strangers'. It was not a reflection of a social system of exclusion but was a normal part of human nature. Cultural similarity, then, was taken to count for more than formal membership of the nation. When British subjects from the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia came to Gatwick Airport, having been exiled by the British government in the 1960s to make space for an American military base, they were left homeless and destitute as if they were 'illegal immigrants'. They were what Goodhart called 'stranger citizens'; their Britishness only existed on paper.[15] On the other hand, foreign citizens from Australia and the US, who came to Britain to work, did not induce the same 'fears'. The whole language of 'bogus' and 'illegal' was not applied to the large numbers of Australians working without proper documents in London (or for that matter the large number of Londoners working without documents in Australia). Conversely, whatever their skin colour, asylum seekers were never really 'white' in a cultural sense; the perceived alien cultures of Roma, Kurdish and Kosovan asylum seekers meant that their presence was regarded as threatening. They were only deemed white when their whiteness was needed as an alibi for racism, at which point it provided a convenient means of denial. But was it possible to separate this concept of cultural belonging from a more general racism? Hostility to 'asylum seekers' tended to merge with racisms against established non-white communities and the label 'asylum seeker' – which came to mean no more than 'unwanted foreigner' – was the means by which a whole host of immi-grant groups that had long been the object of racial ideas in the British mind, such as Africans, Asians, Roma and Arabs, were demonised.[16]

In short, a whole raft of problems to do with segregation, immigra-tion and terrorism have been lumped together and misdiagnosed by the

integrationists as resulting from an 'excess' of cultural diversity. This integrationist agenda is now increasingly not only a preoccupation of New Labour but also of David Cameron's Conservative Party. 'We need to re-assert faith in our shared British values which help guarantee stability, tolerance and civility', Cameron said in 2005. He added that history teaching, especially in relation to empire, should avoid politically correct criticisms of empire so that all children are taught to be proud of British history and values.[17]

The fault line of this new agenda is the perceived incompatibility between British society and Muslim communities in which supposedly alien values are embedded. While the anti-terrorist legislation of the 'war on terror' institutionalised anti-Muslim racism in the structures of the state,[18] integrationism has normalised an anti-Muslim political culture. This anti-Muslim discourse in Britain preceded 9/11 and emerged, in particular, in the wake of the Rushdie affair. It was the same discourse that Edward Said spoke of as based on 'an unquestioned assumption that Islam can be characterized limitlessly by means of a handful of recklessly general and repeatedly deployed clichés'.[19] Since 9/11, however, it has become a regular refrain from high-profile 'muscular liberal' columnists such as Rod Liddle, Niall Ferguson and Melanie Phillips, who harangue Muslims for a supposed failure to share in the values around which Britishness is thought to coalesce: sexual equality, tolerance, freedom of speech and the rule of law. Unless this fact is faced up to, they suggest, Europe faces a gradual 'Islamicisation' as increasing Muslim immigration creates Islamic ghettoes across the continent.[20] The new integrationists of the Left rarely challenge such views and start from the same point – the perception that there is a threat from Muslim values embedded in 'alien' communities. Their only difference with the Right is that, whereas the Right is pessimistic about the possibilities of absorbing this alien population into modern Britain, the Left integrationists feel that Muslims can be assimilated through suitably aggressive policies.

This anti-Muslim political culture has very little to do with the ways in which Muslims actually live their lives or practise their faith. The complexity of faith identity and the different levels on which it operates, comprising belief, practice and affiliation, tend to be erased. Nor is there a recognition of the multi-faceted identity that a British Muslim citizen of Pakistani heritage, for example, holds, in which faith, heritage and cultures are separable and potentially conflicting. Instead, to be 'Muslim' in the 'war on terror' is to belong to a group with common origins, a shared culture and a monolithic identity that can be held collectively responsible for terrorism, segregation and the failure of multicultural Britain. The 'Muslim community' becomes, effectively, an ethnicity rather than a group sharing a religion.[21] Politicians and journalists often confuse religious and ethnic categories by

referring to relations between 'Muslims' and 'whites', as if one is the opposite of the other. At the same time, anti-Muslim sentiment rationalises itself as no more than criticism of an 'alien' belief system – hostility to religious beliefs rather than to a racial group – and therefore entirely distinct from racism. But such distinctions are undermined by the fact that religious belonging has come to act as a symbol of racial difference. The new official language of 'faith communities' largely takes faith to be, like race, a destiny set at birth and something that someone can observe about you from your appearance. There is a truth to this of course: faith is not just a matter of private contemplation but also to do with belonging to a community, which, more often than not, one joins at birth, and which one can identify with through distinctive forms of dress. But, in blurring the distinction between faith and ethnicity, the already impoverished language for describing racial, ethnic and cultural differences is further deprived of substance.

The model for this kind of racial ideology is modern European anti-Semitism. The anti-Semites of twentieth-century Europe hated Jews, not because of their lack of Christian religious beliefs, but because they were, like Muslims today, regarded as an alien intrusion into the national homogeneity that modern Europeans sought. No matter how much they integrated themselves into gentile society, they were still perceived as a threat to a cohesive national identity because their affiliation to a trans-national religious identity had become the marker of a racial difference. Today, a similarly exaggerated dividing line between an 'alien' Islamic identity and modern Britishness serves as the basis for dividing communities into fixed, immutable 'natural' identities – the hallmarks of a process of racism.[22] Those who were once abused as 'Pakis' are now also abused as 'Muslims'. What had before been interpreted as a problem of Asians living in separate *cultures* has, since 9/11, been taken to be a problem of Muslims living by separate *values*. That the solution to these problematic values is always found to lie in the use of coercive force by the state, indicates that they have been made into symbols of racial difference and that those groups who are perceived as holding them are not being accorded their own rationality and citizenship.

The role of the state's own policies and pronouncements under the banner of the 'war on terror' is crucial in legitimising this anti-Muslim racism. While the state's official language of race relations prohibits hostility to persons defined by their (say, Pakistani) ethnicity, the language of the 'war on terror' legitimises hostility to the same persons defined by their Muslim faith. Similarly, the official discourse against asylum seekers legitimises hostility to the same persons in another way, if they are labelled 'asylum seeker'.[23] What are being produced in these ways are new stigmatising discourses that bypass and undermine existing strictures of official acceptability. The shift in perceptions

brought about by this process has been felt intensely and immediately by British Muslims in their everyday interactions, not just in terms of an increase in physical and verbal abuse but also in the way that a whole set of mistaken integrationist assumptions about their very presence in Britain is now aired publicly.[24] People who had been British citizens, occasionally labelled 'coloured' or 'black' or 'Pakistani', are now an 'enemy within'. All Muslims in Britain have come to be perceived as potential terrorists and have had to explain themselves to the rest of the country, as if what happened on 9/11 was somehow their doing. Ultimately, the impact of this stigmatising discourse is measured in the numbers of racially motivated attacks. Reported racist attacks on Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim increased six-fold in the weeks after 7/7[25] and, in all, eight Muslim men have been killed in racist attacks in Britain since 9/11.[26] The anti-Muslim dimension to such attacks is often overt: the gang of youths who murdered a Pakistani man, Kamal Raza Butt, in Nottingham just days after 7/7 taunted him with the word 'Taliban' during the attack.

Attacking cultural diversity

The origins of integrationism lie in the government's response to the riots in northern towns in the summer of 2001 and to 9/11. The White Paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: integration with diversity in modern Britain*, published at the beginning of 2002, first indicated that integrationism was to be the new framework of race and immigration policy, with community cohesion and managed migration as the goals.[27] The death knell of the old consensus of cultural diversity and zero immigration had been sounded. In the foreword to the White Paper, then Home Secretary David Blunkett argued that 'the tensions . . . which flow from the inward migration of those arriving on our often wet and windy shores, must be understood, debated and addressed'; it was 'confidence, security and trust' that 'make all the difference' in this process; and 'we need to be secure within our sense of belonging and identity'.[28] In order to create this sense of identity, the government was to promote a set of shared values that made up Britishness; citizenship tests, language tests and ceremonial oaths of allegiance to the Queen for those becoming British citizens would symbolise this new focus on national identity. So, too, would the unprecedented power to strip UK citizenship from people with dual nationality if they acted in a way that was 'seriously prejudicial' to the UK's 'vital interests'.[29] This, along with tough new asylum and immigration measures, was meant to provide the necessary 'confidence' among the public that their fears were being understood and addressed. At the same time, and within the limits set by the need to maintain a core of shared values and

identity, 'managed migration' policies made a significant break with the earlier aim of maintaining zero immigration.

The White Paper shattered the framework of official tolerance of cultural diversity that Roy Jenkins had inspired with his 1966 definition of integration. The Jenkins formula had been based on a balancing act between integration (defined as equal opportunity and cultural diversity) and immigration, in which the existing non-white population was to be peacefully integrated while potential new 'coloured immigrants' were to be excluded.[30] For most of its life, this formula had been made to work by not allowing the official endorsement of tolerance for 'ethnic minorities' from getting in the way of the barely concealed racism that underlay immigration controls against non-whites. With a degree of separation introduced between race and immigration, an important concept of being black British or British Asian could emerge. In the normal course of events, race policy was discussed as a separate area from immigration policy; home secretaries could be outspoken in their toughness on immigration and, at the same time, adopt a tone of multicultural tolerance with regard to settled non-white communities. Of course, that contradiction was always precarious – it was family members of the existing non-white population who bore the brunt of state racism in immigration controls – but, nevertheless, it made possible a society in which it was unlawful to exclude Asians and blacks from pubs but essential to exclude them from the country. The state licensed one form of racism while nominally outlawing the other.

However, the 2002 White Paper blurred the separation between race and immigration policies, and with it the distinction between unwanted immigrants and tolerated 'ethnic minorities'. Thereafter, immigrants were themselves to be divided into categories of wanted and unwanted according to market needs (managed migration) while 'ethnic minorities' were to be ranked – and expelled – according to their perceived assimilation to British values (community cohesion). The response to the rioting of young British-born Asians in northern towns (a 'race' issue) was to be found in immigration and nationality policies, such as 'citizenship tests', oaths of allegiance and English language tests, that were normally directed at integrating new settlers, as if a lack of controls on who could become a British citizen was responsible for the violence in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford. Young people, who had been born and bred in Britain and spoke English with broad Yorkshire and Lancashire accents, were implicitly addressed as 'aliens' in need of assimilation. Practices such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation, Blunkett argued, had been tolerated in Britain because of an over-emphasis on 'cultural difference' and 'moral relativism', arising from the *laissez-faire* multiculturalism of the past.[31] Asians, Muslims in particular, became a specific target for

a series of public pronouncements demanding they make greater efforts at conforming to 'British values'. In the days after the July 2001 Bradford riot, Keighley MP Ann Cryer claimed that the principal cause of the disturbances was the practice of arranging marriages with foreign spouses (as it led, she thought, to poor levels of English and consequent under-achievement).[32] The White Paper repeated the call for the number of arranged marriages with overseas spouses to be reduced.[33] Later in 2002, Blunkett argued that if Asians spoke English at home, it would help them 'overcome the schizophrenia' they experienced.[34] It was, of course, true that forced marriages and genital mutilation could not be permitted under the guise of multicultural tolerance and that a knowledge of English would be an advantage in British society. But what was being implied now was that not just new settlers but also British Muslims would be scrutinised for their allegiance to a set of 'core values' and their acceptance as fellow citizens was conditional on their satisfying a 'British values' test. A fragile sense of belonging to Britain, that had been built up in previous years, was unseated.

Only three years before the White Paper appeared, a very different portrayal of non-white communities had briefly gained currency. The report of the public inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, chaired by Sir William Macpherson and published in February 1999, had, for the first time, given official recognition to the existence of institutional racism in Britain.[35] The outcome of years of campaigning by the Lawrence family and their supporters, the inquiry hearings were turned into a genuine public forum where evidence was accumulated of widespread racial violence and a police force that, by virtue of its own racism, compounded the problem. Crucially, the inquiry had the effect of broadening discussion of race relations from questions of managing cultural differences between communities to questions of the political relationships between non-white communities and the state. The implication was that the fight against racism was not just against personal prejudices but for human rights, justice and accountability. It was this that made the inquiry so troubling to right-wing columnists, who hoped, with Stephen Glover of the *Spectator*, that its recommendations would be emasculated so that 'race relations will stumble on, gradually getting better, sometimes suffering setbacks, and the politically motivated Macpherson report will be remembered as an ill-conceived piece of sophistry that, for a week or two, drove us crazy'.[36] They would soon find the concept of institutional racism, which they so objected to, being replaced by the new language of integration, community cohesion and diversity management. Indeed, the rejection of 'institutional racism' by government was already under way at the time of the report's publication. David Blunkett, the then education secretary, called it a 'slogan' that 'missed the point'.[37] The Macpherson report had recommended that a programme of anti-racist

education be introduced, but Blunkett had felt that such an approach would undermine national culture: 'We have tended to downplay our culture and we need to reinforce pride in what we have.'[38] From the summer of 2001, when Blunkett became home secretary, he rarely attended meetings of the steering group set up to monitor the implementation of the Macpherson report, even though he was its chair.[39] By then, Home Office schemes to tackle institutional racism were playing second fiddle to the new integrationism with its emphasis on reinvigorating national identity. The focus shifted from the state's upholding of human rights to the responsibility of 'Muslims' to integrate themselves into the shared values of Britishness.

The concept of racism was turned on its head. It was no longer a question of the ways in which society systematically excluded particular groups and thus set in train a process of ghettoisation. It was supposed, instead, that non-white groups themselves refused to integrate and so made themselves strange to whites, some of whom then became hostile. Racism was no longer 'institutional' but defined instead as a prejudice arising from unfamiliarity. It was to be understood as an outcome of segregation, not its cause. Not only did integrationism reverse the causality of racism, it also implied a fatalistic depoliticisation of the processes by which racism came into being. The often hostile reaction of what was now being termed the 'host community' to those with 'alien' values (Muslims and asylum seekers) was taken to be an inevitable outcome of the rate at which the cultural make-up of Britain was changing. The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, for example, suggested in 2003 that it was the numbers of asylum seekers coming that was 'leading inevitably to social unrest' rather than the way in which those numbers were interpreted by a racist society.[40] Similarly, the government's panel of advisors on community cohesion wrote in its 2004 report that the 'pace of change' was too great and that the 'identity of the host community' was being challenged.[41] The role of the state and the media in creating a climate of racism was ignored and hostility was normalised as a natural reaction to the excessive mixing of different cultures. The state itself was seen as playing a benevolent role in making possible new national identities based on assimilation to core values. After 9/11, a number of centre-left academics offered rationales for this approach, all of whom started from the position that diversity was threatening to social stability. One was the Harvard political scientist Robert Putnam, who was repeatedly invited by Downing Street to give seminars to civil servants on diversity. Putnam argued that there was an inevitable trade-off between ethnic diversity and strong communities. He regarded the correlation of higher levels of diversity with lower levels of 'social capital' (a measure of community spirit, or the degree to which there are networks of co-operation based on shared norms or trust) as a social law, which he

illustrated in his presentations with a series of startling graphs. The responsibility of the state, he suggested, was to establish shared values which could ameliorate to some extent the flaws of a diverse society. Putnam's reliance on surveys and seemingly rigorous quantitative methods gave the impression of an evidence-based approach. But what his methods avoided tackling was cause and effect. His survey work showed that ethnically diverse communities in the US seemed to have high levels of untrusting, uneasy individuals. Whether this is caused by the fact of diversity itself, or whether it is a particular way in which people think about the diversity of their community in societies marred by racism, is a question Putnam avoids. In doing so, he leaves the impression that the presence of people from different ethnic backgrounds is itself the cause of social disharmony.[42]

Burying anti-racism

To argue that there is a mechanical relationship between diversity and social disharmony is also to airbrush over the possibility of an anti-racist politics coming out of communities which are themselves experiencing racism. Instead, 'anti-racism' is reduced to a conflict management exercise carried out by the state, which does not grasp the underlying causes of racism and leaves existing power relationships in place. Integrationists consider the essential problem to be those with 'alien values' living separate lives; the solution at a community level is therefore direct encouragement of more contact between different groups. In this, there is a revival of the belief that racism and prejudice are mainly to do with mutual ignorance. It is this 'contact thesis' that increasingly dominates the new 'community cohesion' agenda. In mixed areas where cohesion policies are implemented, schools with large numbers of non-white students are 'twinned' with schools that have large numbers of white students, and youth groups are encouraged to meet up with their counterparts across the colour lines of divided cities. There is also a return to the idea of the 'community relations' work associated with Community Relations Councils in the late 1960s. The 'community relations' approach encourages greater interaction between different communities by 'providing a meeting place for the exchange of views, and social intermingling'.[43] This kind of attempt to facilitate mixing is, of course, of some value but, on its own, it does not amount to a programme for challenging racism or overcoming division, which is why it was left behind by the anti-racist politics of the 1970s. Moreover, it is a notion of integration that is effectively one-sided, as it makes no efforts to encourage 'mixing' in the majority of schools in Britain that are almost exclusively white. Rather, the hope seems to be that social mixing will dissolve 'alien cultures' into a monolithic Britishness.

What is also at stake in the return to 'community relations' is the rolling back of the gains made by an anti-racist movement that traces its roots to the late 1960s: a politics that, influenced by Black Power and anti-colonialism, made black into a political colour. The network of grassroots community organisations produced by this movement provided the infrastructure for campaigns, such as that of Stephen Lawrence's family, which culminated in the Macpherson report. Whatever genuine community cohesion exists in Britain is largely the result of campaigns and movements such as these. But the integrationists feel little affinity for this legacy. Even the limited infrastructure of anti-racism associated with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has been swept aside. Its taking up of discrimination cases under the 1976 Race Relations Act has been reduced in favour of the duty in that Act to 'promote good race relations' – which is now seen increasingly in terms of encouraging social mixing. It seems unlikely that the merger of the CRE into a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights will revive anti-discrimination casework. At the same time, the integrationist agenda has been boosted with the formation of a Commission on Integration and Cohesion. Equally, the integrationist agenda is hostile to independent community organising and grassroots campaigns for racial justice. With the new integrationism encompassing the entirety of the government's race relations strategy, the landmark recognition of institutional racism in the Macpherson report has been diluted and police racism has not been examined as a factor in the 2001 riots. In another significant example, the Home Office did all it could to block the attempts of the Mubarek family to obtain a public inquiry into the circumstances that led up to the racist murder of Zahid Mubarek in Feltham Young Offenders Institute in March 2000. In the new climate of the 'war on terror', notions of justice and accountability are treated as impediments to state control of the criminal justice system. That Blunkett as Home Secretary was eventually forced, after a defeat in the House of Lords, into initiating a judicial inquiry into racism in prisons, is testimony to the tenacity of the Mubarek family's years of campaigning and the importance of direct community-led challenges to racism.

Yet the integrationists claim that it is the promotion of a national story of British values, 'the reshaping of a civic British national mythology', to which Muslims and immigrants ought to be assimilated, that is the best way of combating racism.[44] They argue that, without such a national story based on values, it will be impossible to create 'public confidence' in the secure sense of identity necessary to forestall racism. What underlies this strategy of reassurance is the New Right myth that Britain is facing a national moral crisis caused by multiculturalism – an idea that is now deeply entrenched in Britain's political culture.[45] Prior to immigration, it is argued, there was an unspoken

ethical base to British society which provided for its social stability. That moral consensus is thought to be shattered by multiculturalism and the diversity of values it introduces. The possibility that the saliency of this narrative in political discourse might itself normalise new forms of racism is ignored by the integrationists. They tend to equate racism solely with support for the extreme-Right British National Party (BNP) and believe that racism is combated by offering potential BNP voters an alternative, even if that alternative shares the same New Right assumptions about national identity and therefore serves to legitimise an anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant political culture. With David Blunkett at the Home Office from 2001–2004, this strategy of reassuring whites that their identity was intact was raised to the level of a veritable philosophy. While the emphasis on values as the basis of national identity was new, there is a long and dishonourable history of similar strategies in the Labour Party's approach to race and immigration. Often, the Labour Party has protested strongly against racist policies when not in government, only to endorse those same policies, or worse, when in office and confronted with opposition.[46] Its failure to maintain a principled opposition to racism was always justified on the grounds that a small amount of pandering to prejudice in the short-term was necessary to clear the ground for a progressive future. On every occasion, the strategy has failed and served only to encourage a worsening climate of racism.[47]

The result of New Labour's strategy of nationalist reassurance has been effectively to narrow the gap between its message and that of the BNP. The BNP's anti-Islam and anti-immigrant programme has been implicitly legitimised and its ambition to be seen as a 'legitimate' political party now seems close to being realised. The threat from far Right politics in Britain has reached an unprecedented level. The BNP's open pursuit of an 'all-white' Britain garnered 800,000 votes in the 2004 European elections; in the 2005 general election, it won 4.3 per cent of the vote across the 116 seats that it contested. At the time of writing, the party has around fifty councillors. In Labour's traditional heartlands, it presents itself as the true representative of the white, working class and its message, if not the party itself, appeals to a significant number of voters in 'white flight' areas, for whom immigration and asylum have become symbols for failures in housing and education.[48] The sense of shame that once attached itself to support for the BNP has eroded and the party's near control of a local authority today provokes little outrage. Compare this to the situation in 1993, when Derek Beackon became the BNP's first elected official, winning a council by-election on the Isle of Dogs in east London. His victory prompted a massive united campaign against the BNP that removed him from office within a few months. Today, the situation is entirely different. That is hardly surprising given the shortening distance

between the far Right and the centre Left on issues of immigration and diversity. At its most effective, campaigning against the far Right has targeted not just far-Right parties but also the wider racism from which they drew support. But nowadays that wider racism, in an updated form, is widely accepted. Official reports endorse the view that there is a rationality to the 'blame the immigrant' sentiment. Amidst a conformist and populist political culture, few are willing to say loud and clear that Britain's housing problems, for example, cannot be blamed on immigration. And still fewer attempt to build unity in working-class areas by tackling shared problems of deprivation. At the same time, the Labour Party has little to offer the working-class voters whom it has left behind, except empty words about choice, respect and responsibility.

Modernising values

The belief that, before multiculturalism, British civility rested on a set of core values implies that conflicts between incommensurable values are a recent social problem. But core values, such as freedom, are 'essentially contested concepts' that have always been battled over by divergent political interests. For some, freedom means freedom from the interference of the state, even at the expense of other values, such as fairness. For others, freedom is the absence of restraints imposed by poverty or by empire. Values that are today thought of as defining British society, such as freedom of speech and gender equality, had to be fought for (and still do) and often conflict with one another. How values are expressed, how they are balanced with one another in a specific framework of social norms and how they are organised into a 'story' that gives them shape have always been mediated by a range of political, cultural and class differences. This means that there will always be significant disagreement about social norms and there cannot be one national story in a democracy.

By the same token, values such as freedom and fairness have an element of universalism that allow them also to be the basis for uniting culturally diverse communities, even where those communities have different 'stories' about the meaning of those values. This cannot be done unless shared values are found through an equal dialogue across the cultural horizons of different groups. Commonalities cannot be imposed artificially by demanding that a minority deemed 'backward' be absorbed into the professed values of a 'progressive' majority in what is regarded as a process of modernisation. Nor can one group claim ownership of a set of shared values and arrogate to itself the right to interpret what the meaning of those values is. Moreover, the idea of a shared set of core values that all do or ought to subscribe to is misguided unless it is accompanied by institutions that

attempt to codify those values and provide formal mechanisms for their elaboration in particular contexts and cases. In doing so, the existence of conflicts over the meaning of values is not eliminated but methods are established for their negotiation. It is only in this way that values can be universalised so that their meaning is clear enough to be the basis of a consensus. The primary institution for codifying values at a national level – and thereby sharing them across society – is the law and an open and accountable system of justice.

However, the integrationist pursuit of shared values is nothing to do with seeking common values across the cultures of different groups. The domestic logic is the same as the global logic – that Muslim societies need to be forced to abandon 'their values' in what Blair calls wars of 'values change'.[49] For integrationists, the values of Muslims are not only sealed off from modernity but have nothing to contribute of their own. Nowhere in this picture is there anything that resembles a genuine development of mutual integration on a level playing field. There is no sense here of an equal exchange across different cultural horizons.[50] The necessarily contested nature of values is reduced to a simple dichotomy between the superiority of (supposedly homogeneous) British values and the alien threat of Muslim values. Rather than allowing all citizens to participate democratically in a debate about values, acceptance of Muslims as fellow citizens is taken to be conditional on their prior acceptance of British values. Integrationists argue that Muslims forfeit their citizenship if they call into question the basic tenets of British society. Trevor Phillips's declaration on the *Jonathan Dimbleby* television programme on 26 February 2006 that, if Muslims advocate alternatives to the British parliamentary system, they should live somewhere else, was typical of this attitude. Such comments are no longer idle threats. With the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2005, the state accrued to itself the power to strip British citizenship from individuals even if they were born in Britain. This new power allows the home secretary to remove British citizenship from dual nationals if it is considered by him to be 'conducive to the public good'.[51]

The new meaning of citizenship can also be gleaned from the naturalisation process that is required of would-be British nationals. The handbook that the Home Office has published to assist those preparing for citizenship ceremonies makes it clear that Britishness remains inseparable from imperialism. The 'national story' it regards as essential to being British includes an account of the British Empire in which it is related how 'for many indigenous peoples in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and elsewhere, the British Empire often brought more regular, acceptable and impartial systems of law and order'. Furthermore, 'disparate tribal areas' were united through the spread of the English language and public health and access to education introduced.[52]

There was nothing in this 'British national mythology' of the countless massacres and abuses committed under British colonialism, some of which would be living memories for those seeking naturalisation.[53] After all, Gordon Brown had announced in March 2005 that Britain should not apologise for its history of empire.[54] What is meant to be symbolised during the citizenship ceremony is not an equal exchange of one nationality for another but initiation into a superior civilisation.

Such thinking sets up a hierarchy in which different communities are ranked according to their inherent distance from British norms of civility. While that distance is perceived as greatest in the case of Muslims, all groups seen as 'alien' by virtue of their culture are caught up in it. The clearest example of this is the way that Islam has been singled out for its negative treatment of women. British values with regard to women are construed as exclusively 'modern' while 'Muslim values' are essentially backward. The fixation on the veil as an inherent symbol of women's oppression reflects this dichotomy. What is striking here is the confidence with which this 'integrationist feminism' obliterates any complexity to these issues in an effort to present British society as naturally liberal and Muslims as naturally sexist. The very sexism which is still widely seen by British men as 'natural' is now regarded as part of 'their' Islamic nature in contrast to 'our' inherent liberalism.[55]

Thus, for example, the epidemic of domestic violence which infects all sectors of British society, and includes two women every week being killed by their partners, receives less media attention than the problem of 'honour killings' carried out by Muslims.[56] It is right that the specific justifications which Muslim men use to legitimise violence against women is exposed. But this should not be done in such a way that combating violence against Muslim women is seen as fighting against a culture, while combating violence against white women is seen as a fight for rights. Domestic violence is always a matter of human rights. Integrationists assume a simple correlation between the Islamic faith and the oppression of women, ignoring the complexities of culture, underdevelopment and migration. But there is no great sociological chasm between Muslim and non-Muslim women's oppression. And, indeed, to focus solely on Islam effectively allows other communities to conceal their own oppressive practices and hide the various forms that patriarchy can take.[57]

Additionally, integrationists have no sense that Muslim women have long been fighting for their rights within their own communities in struggles that have rarely received solidarity from mainstream liberals and the centre Left. Integrationists have no affinity with the myriad women's groups in Asian communities that have been dealing with issues like forced marriage for decades. In their rush to cast Muslim communities as reservoirs of alien values, 'internal' differences, conflicts

and struggles are overridden. Nor were these groups welcomed as part-ners by New Labour when it began to invoke forced marriage as a target of its 'core values' campaign. Instead, solutions were sought in tightening up immigration controls; those trying to escape abusive mar-riages faced the threat of deportation rather than support and protec-tion. As Hannana Siddiqui of Southall Black Sisters points out, immigration controls have been 'blown out of proportion' as a solution to forced marriage and 'diverted attention from the real issues'.[58]

When values to do with women's rights are seen as inhering only in western cultures, then their universal relevance is undermined; in this view, liberation for Muslim women means not autonomously trans-forming their own culture but assimilating into a different culture. Renunciation of one's identity becomes a pre-requisite for emanci-pation and a new kind of superiority is entrenched in the name of feminism. State coercion is then justified as a possible means for bring-ing about this 'emancipation'. Such thinking underlies not only the use of immigration controls to prevent transcontinental marriages but also attempts to justify war in the name of women's rights, as in Afghani-stan. Behind this 'integrationist feminism' lies the tendency to regard the West as the sole bearer of enlightened progress and the European Enlightenment, not as one particular expression of universal values, but as the only possible expression for all time.

As already argued, human rights and democracy have roots in all cultures.[59] Yet, by rooting these values as unique to British history and making them the instrument of a particular identity, the British state can both obscure its own violations of these values (because we are British, we know when to ignore our values) and legitimise the exclusion of others from the nation (because they are not British, they are a threat to our values). The core values of human rights have been hugely undermined by New Labour in the 'war on terror' at the same time as it uses 'British values' to legitimise war and racism. Crucially, as the executive seeks to bypass the courts and reach beyond the rule of law, disregarding principles of human rights in the process, the legal institutions that are a necessary part of sharing values across different communities are undermined. The state today knows only two values: the value of the market and the value of state violence. It is little wonder, then, that the government prefers to cast around for a mystical Britishness to bind society together, rather than find common denominators in values of human rights and democ-racy, codified by law. The effect of this is not only to trample over the rights of vulnerable communities but also to undermine the very pro-cess by which communities can come together with shared values enshrined in law and democracy.

What is being produced is the opposite of an integrated society as young Muslims, and others whose values are deemed 'alien', become

disenchanted with national institutions that are all too mixed up with a culture of supremacy. With official thinking based on the assumption that alienation from Britishness is a sign of extremism and a step on the way to terrorism, this vicious circle looks set to intensify.[60] Yet, the more the state has degraded values of human rights and democracy, the more that young Muslims (and non-Muslims) have also sought to reclaim both human rights and democracy in their own political movements and see in them the basis of what connects them with global movements for radical political change. It is in such shared political struggles that the potential for true integration lies.

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Racism, liberty and the war on terror

Abstract: On 16 September 2006, the Institute of Race Relations held a conference, 'Racism, Liberty and the War on Terror', at Conway Hall, London, attended by over 250 participants, including human rights activists, community workers, lawyers, students, radical academics and solidarity groups. Following keynote speeches by Gareth Peirce and A. Sivanandan, the conference split into panel discussions. In a special extended section, we publish here both keynote speeches, extracts from the panel discussions on the impact of the 'war on terror' internationally and in the UK, the future of multiculturalism, and the closing address by Salma Yaqoob.

Keywords: anti-terrorist legislation, Birmingham, Bradford, extraordinary rendition, Guantánamo, intelligence services, Islamophobia, multiculturalism, racial violence, segregation, surveillance

The global context

By A. Sivanandan

This conference is the end-product of a series of lunchtime seminars held at the Institute of Race Relations, to discuss the impact of anti-terrorist legislation on civil liberties and race relations with particular reference to refugees, asylum seekers and the Muslim community.

Hence the subjects under discussion at this conference and the discussants themselves arose directly out of those seminars, which showed us that a unity of purpose could be achieved despite a diversity of struggle, if we will only give ear and heart to each other's causes and not enclose ourselves within our own.

We may disagree about ideology, belief or political line. But this, above all, we have in common: a common, visceral hatred of injustice, all sorts of injustice. That is the highest common factor that binds us.

And now globalisation, with its free-market system and imperial ideology has thrown up the objective circumstances which, in showing the relationship between our struggles, demand that we connect them. The way that globalisation has altered the role of the state, for instance, from welfare state to market state and so altered so many aspects of our lives. Or globalisation and the displacement of whole populations leading to forced migration and the consequences of that; globalisation and its racisms and their fall-outs; globalisation and the creation of unending poverty in the midst of growing prosperity, globalisation and imperialism – and war.

Hence, the struggles against globalisation and its ills are not separate struggles. The globalisation that throws up our several ills is also the globalisation that connects our resistances. In fighting our specific causes, we need also to be aware of the common cause they spring from and address ourselves to both at once – and so forge the alliances we need to win the battle. For globalisation is a complete system and unravelling one strand of it at a time does not unravel the whole. Single issue struggles may usher in piecemeal reform, but not radical change.

That will do for the evangelical stuff. Now for the analysis that makes that evangelism material.

Take a look at the issue of immigration, for instance, and the different groups tackling the different problems thrown up by immigration laws and asylum policies – from incarceration and detention and deportation to deprivation, destitution and death – organisations such as JCWI, NCADC, BID, Black Women's Rape Action project, Schools Against Deportation, Medical Justice Network, Campaign to Close Campsfield, the Yarlswood Campaign, Statewatch, ILPA, CAM-PACC, Stop Political Terror, Inquest, regional refugee networks and

asylum-seeker led campaigns – almost all of which are represented here today. But they all address issues which originate in or derive from the policies of the government and strictures of the state. And the state in the global era is no longer, primarily, a nation state working on behalf of its people but a servitor of the global economy run by multinational corporations and the market. We have moved, in other words, from the welfare state of late industrial capitalism to the market state of global capitalism. If the nation state was the vehicle of industrial capitalism, the market state is the vehicle of global capitalism. It is the market, for instance, that sets the agenda for government policies on immigration and decides who are needed for the economy and who are not. And on that reckoning, asylum seekers are considered so much disposable waste and treated as such. Whereas the real waste is the waste of their talents and education.

But what has landed refugees and asylum seekers on these shores is the displacement of whole populations caused by the marauding incursions of global corporations into Third World countries in search of new markets, cheap labour, raw material, natural resources. *Oil*. ('Blood is thicker than water', a wag once remarked, 'but oil is thicker than both'.) To be successful, however, such incursions need the backing of friendly regimes in these countries. And what induces these regimes to be friendly is, first, the soft-soaping aid and development packages offered to them by the World Bank and the IMF, and the expertise and advice that come with their programmes, such as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS) – which require the withdrawal of state subsidies for education and social services in favour of debt repayment (sops for SAPS). All of which ties the dependent countries into further dependency. If that doesn't work, there is always regime-change – through assassination or economic sanctions, effected this time by the government of the United States and its satraps as agents of the multinationals. Or, failing that, through bombing the hell out of the offending regime and its people in pursuance, ostensibly, of a mission of mercy to save them for free elections and democracy. If, however, they, the people, fail to vote-in a friendly regime, they'll be bombed out of existence again, to make sure they understand that their liberators are our terrorists, and get it right the next time round.

That, in sum, is the trajectory of American-British imperialism today. Claiming to be democracies, however, and needing therefore to obtain the sanction of their electorates for their actions (often after the event), the American and British governments spin out false information based on faulty or twisted intelligence within a fundamentalist philosophy of good and evil, resurrecting a culture of primitive racism (we good, them evil) surrounded by a politics of spurious fear promoted on the back of the real fears of 9/11 and 7/7 and braced by anti-terrorist legislation. (That's a long sentence, but I put it like that

to show the circuits of power.) All of which leads, on the one hand, to the degradation of British values that the government so hypocritically upholds, and signifies, on the other, the Islamic war cloud hanging over your heads and the Muslim terrorist in your midst, squeezed in the tube train next to you.

Already immigration legislation had selected out asylum seekers for indefinite detention without trial, and summary deportation. Now anti-terrorist legislation is extending the same treatment to those who have already obtained the right to remain – and even to settled Asian communities. And the convergence of the two – the war on asylum and the 'war on terror' – one, the unarmed invasion, the other, the armed enemy within, has produced the idea of a nation under siege, and, on the ground, a racism that cannot tell a settler from an immigrant, an immigrant from an asylum seeker, an asylum seeker from a Muslim, a Muslim from a terrorist. All of us non-whites, at first sight, are terrorists or illegals. We wear our passports on our faces – or, lacking them, we are faceless, destitute, taken from our children, voided of the last shreds of human dignity.

But more insidious still is the damage done to the whole fabric of society and to the fundaments of democracy – constraining freedom of speech and assembly, undermining the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, threatening the separation of powers and the conventions of an unwritten constitution, and Magna Carta. And then there is the increasing concentration of power in central government accompanied by the weakening and dissipation of local government – which is the closest thing there is to direct democracy, giving people a say in their own lives and engaging them in the political process. Finally, there is a whole range of laws (3,000 new criminal offences since the government came into power – i.e., one a day) which penalise anything from minor anti-social behaviour to demonstrating within a kilometre of parliament, thereby treating largely social problems to criminal solutions and ignoring the distinction between crime itself and the social causes of crime – which you'll remember was the avowed position of a government that once was Labour.

It is that adamantine resolve to deny the connection between cause and effect that has also prevented the government from seeing that, in the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the systematic dismemberment of Palestine, it is they and their American bosses who have declared jihad on Muslims the world over and given sustenance to terrorism. And having refused to acknowledge it, they have no choice but to stir up more and more fear, in order to pass more and more draconian legislation that further erodes our liberties.

And in the interstices of an increasingly authoritarian state sprouts the culture of nativism, white ethnicity, in search of a flat, colourless, etiolated homogeneity, built on the shifting sands of assimilation and

based on shifty British values. Inevitably, multiculturalism, which to me means simply unity in diversity, and which this country uniquely achieved in the '60s and '70s in the course of anti-racist struggles, has been ditched in favour of assimilation, meaning absorption of the lesser into the greater. But to make the term palatable, the government and the media have taken to substituting the word integration and/or cohesion for assimilation. The precise meaning of integration in practice, however, was set out as far back as 1966 by Roy Jenkins, an enlightened Labour Home Secretary who defined it 'not as a flattening process of assimilation but equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.

As for British values of tolerance, fair play, individual freedom – where, one might ask, do they count in the practice of government and its ministers? And one could reply with Gandhi, when asked what he thought of western civilisation, 'it would be a good idea'. Why, besides, have the principles of the Enlightenment – liberty, equality, fraternity – not been extended in their fullness to the non-white peoples of the world? Surely, what we should be addressing in the era of rule by global corporations is not British values but universal values – embodied in human rights. Yet, it is this government which is making every effort to withdraw from the Human Rights Act, to which, in a moment of old Labour conscience, it acceded.

In the final analysis, though, all this talk of British values, social cohesion and individual responsibility is meaningless, given the government's commitment to the free market system, the *sine qua non* of globalisation. The market speaks to profit, not to values, to social control not to social cohesion, to personal greed not to individual responsibility. Its life-blood is privatisation not public ownership; its heart beats to the tune of giant corporations. It pauperises the Third World and feeds them scraps from the imperial table; it pauperises a third of its own people and feeds them scraps of social reform. It weighs up personal relationships in a balance-sheet of profit and loss – till we no longer listen to each other or hear the pain of the world. The market corrupts, and the free market corrupts freely.

That is what I mean when I say that globalisation is a complete system, and unravelling one strand of it does not unravel the whole. But the ills it throws up are so clearly connected – and overlap – that our struggles against them demand to be connected too. The fight against racism is connected to the fight against immigration laws, asylum and anti-terrorism, anti-terrorism to racism (anti-Muslim racism in particular), asylum and immigration, and so on. And they are all related in one way or another to the erosion of civil liberties, imperial foreign policy and the rise of the authoritarian state.

Or let me come at it from the other end. Let's leave the big picture for a moment, look at the enormity of the little everyday things that

are happening to us. An old man, a life-long member of the Labour Party is muscled out of the party conference just because he heckled the foreign secretary. (An individual error, maybe, but where does the authority come from?) A 47-year-old is asboed and sent to prison for sixty days because he sang too loud in his Housing Association flat. Two Asians are taken off a flight because passengers found they were wearing too much clothing and speaking Arabic. (It happened to be Urdu.)

On another level, when did you ever hear of a neighbouring country kidnapping and imprisoning your elected MPs just because it didn't like the colour of their politics? The sheer arrogance of it is mind-boggling, and yet Britain's ethical foreign policy closes its eyes to it because Israel is the cornerstone of American-British imperialism in the Middle East. Not only is Britain moving towards an authoritarian regime; it is promoting authoritarian regimes elsewhere.

Wherever you look, there is something rotten gnawing at the vitals of a free society. But it is hidden behind a façade of fake prosperity, lies made feasible by fear, and empty talk of democracy and values. But values come out of rights. And the rights that the struggles of the industrial working class won for us, and the values they bred, are under attack. It is up to us campaigners, dissidents, insurgents, as custodians of those rights and values, to connect with each others' struggles and take up the fight.

But how do we make the connections in practice and how do we turn that into a movement? Of course, there's no strategy that is valid for all of time. But my experience in the Black, anti-racist struggles of the '60s and '70s – when we made Black the colour of our politics and not the colour of our skins – when we fought on the factory floor and in the community, as a people and a class, and as a people for a class – tells me that only in being involved and supporting each other's struggles can we forge an organic relationship between us, not just ad hoc coalitions.

We cannot let ourselves be bogged down in our particularities and miss the wood for the trees. We need to have an international perspective, even as we take on national or local issues. We need to move, in our thinking, from the particular to the general and the general to the particular, both at once. And it is then that we can successfully turn individual cases into social issues, social issues into civic causes, and civic causes into a national movement.

Thank you.

A. Sivanandan is a political activist and writer, founding editor of Race & Class *and director of the Institute of Race Relations.*

The historical context

By Gareth Peirce

Long after this conference was so carefully organised and timetabled, about three weeks ago, I received an invitation from a family to their son's wedding, not in London. I asked if it would be disrespectful if I arrived there late, in the middle, and I was told it would not. So, I offer my apologies for the fact that I will exit rapidly.

I thought as good a place as any was to start with the circumstances of the young man whose wedding I am going to today. His name is Shafiq Rasul and he grew up in Tipton, in the West Midlands. He was seized by the forces of General Dostum, a warlord in Afghanistan. And he was packed into a container which much later had bullets shot into its sides so that oxygen could get in. Shafiq Rasul survived the journey, as did his two friends, Asif Iqbal and Ruhal Ahmed. Several hundred others did not.

There were Americans observing that container as it was loaded up and as it was unpacked at the end. Whoever had a hand in dealing with that container should be facing a war crimes tribunal, should not be part of an administration, or part of 'coalition forces'; and should not claim to be bringing peace and justice and democracy to Afghanistan. Those same forces that had observed the loading and the unloading of the container then packed Shafiq Rasul, like an animal, drugged and hooded and manacled, on a plane to Guantánamo Bay, where he spent several of the best years of his life. Unlawfully interrogated, unlawfully tortured, unlawfully held deliberately outside the jurisdiction of the courts of America.

And for the purposes of this conference, we simply ask: what was our country, what was the United Kingdom doing, to fulfil its obligation under the UN's Convention on Torture – a treaty we have signed – to do everything in its capacity to bring an end to torture worldwide? Our intelligence agents interrogated Shafiq Rasul, manacled and tortured in Guantánamo Bay, throughout all of the time that he was there.

His brother, Habib Rasul, in Tipton, had studied contemporary history at university, including contemporary Irish history and, as a special project, he had done a thesis on the Birmingham Six. When told, not by the Foreign Office, not by the Red Cross, but by a Sunday newspaper staking out his house, that his brother was held in Guantánamo Bay, he made the connection with Ireland and sought help of a kind that he thought might have some comprehension of how to deal with injustice.

As a result of what Habib did, in time, the case of Shafiq Rasul against George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld went – after failure after failure – through the American courts to the Supreme Court. In

the case of *Shafiq Rasul* vs. *George W. Bush*, Shafiq Rasul won. And for all of history, Shafiq Rasul will have made the point that George Bush failed to understand, and our country fails to understand, that there is a law for all. And there must be justice for all that must be acknowledged.

But it seems to me that what Habib Rasul did, which has great value for this conference, is to realise that there are lessons to be learned from history, from the history of this country. Those lessons are entirely applicable to us now, as we see a suspect community, a community that is deemed disloyal. We need to consider: have we seen this happen before? What did we do? How did we react? And how did we fail?

The answer is, if we look at the thirty years of armed conflict in Ireland, in Northern Ireland, at what triggered what; what was reaction and what cause, we see some extraordinarily exact parallels with the Muslim community today.

When the civil rights movement, the mass movement, went on to the streets in Ireland in the late 1960s, it wasn't in itself a movement to acquire the self-determination of Ireland – that was rooted in Irish history, that was the ultimate historical context. But the immediate cause of the mass movement was the repeated, constructive denial of basic rights to health, education and housing. Without being a house-holder, you did not have a vote. You could not be a householder because the regime in Northern Ireland did not let Catholics have houses, did not allocate them houses. They did not have the same education. These were fundamental, basic rights. People took to the streets to ask for their basic rights.

And the state which had denied those basic rights reacted with violence. Those peaceful protesters were clubbed down, gunned down, incarcerated, interned indefinitely without trial. From then on, for thirty years, there was a reactive progression and escalation of violence, in which the state, throughout, always took the first, presumptive, proactive move.

The whole of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland came to be presumed disloyal, suspect. The ways in which the state denied any pretence of justice were repeatedly added to and constructed. There was a broadcasting ban – so that people, from a Republican Sinn Féin perspective, could not speak, they were banned from the airwaves. The Diplock courts were constructed so that there could be no jury trials. People were tortured. Tortured to make confessions, many then were deployed as supergrasses in court so that their evidence could be used against others. There was a shoot-to-kill policy, which, ironically, at that time was regarded as a crime. There were eventually investigations as to how it happened that a shoot-to-kill policy had been secretly operating.

But now, if we look at what we have recently constructed in this country and how we have ignored those lessons, we see a repeat perfor-

mance. The question that is often asked, in prisons, in households subject to house arrest and control orders, asked by people held in Paddington Green police station and their families, is: was it like this for the Irish? Was it? Yes, it was. Identical. But in some ways, the situation now is worse. We have not learned a single lesson from history.

We have constructed secret courts in the basement of the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC). Here an intelligence agent, witness A, hidden behind a curtain was asked, 'Do you use torture, evidence obtained from torture?'. The answer came: 'Yes, of course. The only question is what weight we give it.' A broadcasting ban? Not quite yet. But consider the offence brought in of glorification of terrorism and look at the definition of terrorism. 'Terrorism', our legislation states simply, is 'any opposition to any government, anywhere in the world, that could cause the destabilisation of that society.'

Look at the past five years and how we have fulfilled our pledge to participate in the 'war on terror'. There is the utter misconception and misreading of why people are involved, in either liberation struggles from countries from which they have fled, or in the simple proposition of trying to achieve justice, a semblance of justice, in those countries from which they have fled. Dissident refugees. We have chosen to retrospectively relook at every conflict, every deserving conflict where Muslims went to the aid of their brothers and sisters; Chechnya, Bosnia. We have reconstructed them, declaring that that constitutes terrorism. And we have locked up people indefinitely without trial for that. We are deporting people to the countries from which they fled, Algeria, Libya, Jordan, where they have been tortured. They have come from torture. We are now sending them back, saying that we can achieve an understanding with those regimes because it is all consistent with the 'war on terror'.

In SIAC proceedings, our government's lawyers say, repeatedly, these are men of honour. Men of honour! The Algerian regime, where 100,000 people have disappeared and died in the past decade. I know that the next set of cases coming up concerns Libya and an accommodation has been reached with Colonel Gaddafi. But it is fine, it is safe, because there is an independent monitoring organisation in Libya that will see these deportees are fine. It is run by Gaddafi's son and called the Gaddafi Foundation.

The same misconception and deliberate unwillingness to hear what was there to be said perpetuated itself in Ireland. There was the same failure to recognise that the violence was reactive; that the young men, who volunteered in the IRA in their dozens in 1972, did so *after* innocent civilians were shot on Bloody Sunday, and not before.

And now, if we have deliberately embarked on decisions wilfully, for economic and strategic reasons, to maintain, as allies, regimes that continue to persecute and torture; if we are feeding from the same trough,

that unlawful, disgusting, disgraceful trough, if we are condoning the use of torture and are complicit in it, then not only have we not learned a single lesson, but we have sown the seeds for a very, very long war.

The Muslim community in this country deserves an understanding of our history; it deserves explicit, overt, continuous public complaint and support. And if it does not have it, then we too, just as our government is to the US, we, too, are turning a very blind eye and are complicit in it.

Gareth Peirce is a human rights lawyer.

State policies and programmes in the 'war on terror'

Tony Bunyan: the EU in cahoots with the US

I am going to talk about what is happening at the European Union level, how the EU is cooperating with the United States on issues like databases, passenger name records and biometrics. But first I want to put it in context. There is little doubt in my mind that EU governments have cynically used 11 September to introduce many measures which have absolutely nothing to do with tackling terrorism. Documents in the past used to distinguish between terrorism, organised crime, serious crime and crime, i.e. any crime; now documents just say we need all this surveillance to deal with terrorism and crime; in other words new mechanisms of surveillance to tackle almost everything in the world where anybody breaks any rules.

On 25 March 2004, Statewatch produced an analysis of fifty-seven new anti-terror measures about to be adopted in the EU. Twenty-seven of the fifty-seven had little or nothing to do with tackling terrorism. Furthermore, while there have been and are lots of differences between the EU and the United States over the war against the 'Axis of Evil', the war in Iraq, Syria or Iran, there is little or no difference between them when it comes to the 'war on terrorism'. The language is different, the timing is different, but some measures are being introduced in the EU that George Bush would never dare propose in the US.

Since 11 September, an 'EU-US axis' has built up. Every six months there are forty-plus high-level meetings between the US and the EU on what is called 'Justice Home Affairs': policing, immigration, intelligence and customs. The US is even sitting in on Council working parties in the EU. When the minutes come, you get two versions: the

officially released version, which is called 'partially accessible', with lots of blank, deleted paragraphs; and then we get hold of the real document by the back door and find that everything that has been blanked out is the position and demands of the US. So, we are not even allowed to know the influence they are having on policy-making at the highest level.

It was quite easy to fall into the trap after 11 September to think that it was the real reason for all this new surveillance and all this new social control. In my view, it was a 'trigger' for the acceleration of a process that was already happening. Put in very simple terms, if we take our cue from those extraordinary analyses by Sivanandan in the 1980s and 1990s, we see that globalisation and globalism are the economic counterparts of the development of the state and state powers. And the 'war on terrorism', as a political ideology, has filled the 'gap' left by the end of the Cold War in 1989. So the political project and the economic project go hand in hand. Exceptional measures were brought in after 11 September, but 'exceptional' means temporary, time limited – now five years on they are the norm. The powers of the state, in the UK and EU-wide, to construct new databases, collecting everyone's fingerprints, have no end to them. They will be built on, inter-linked (be 'inter-operable' in the jargon) and data exchanged with few, if any, limits or accountability.

They are creating a system of surveillance to monitor everybody – black, white, Asian, Muslim. But, of course, within that they can then target the Muslims going to Pakistan one day, football supporters the next and protestors going to Genoa. I'll briefly explain some of the systems in place. The first big system they are setting up is the 'Visa Information System' (VIS). Under this, everybody who wants to visit the EU has to get a visa back in the country they come from and have ten fingerprints taken, which are put on a database in the EU. Except, even that's not quite right, because you only have your fingerprints taken if you come from the 126 countries on the 'black list' (not the twenty-six on the 'white list' who do not need visas, including America, Canada, Australia and Japan). And when these people come in, how do you check them? How do you know that this person is the real person? So they have got to be fingerprinted again. And as an individual moves around the EU between different countries, they will have to be fingerprinted every time and checked against the data.

The EU is now discussing at what age the children of people getting visas should be fingerprinted. They are discussing it as a technological, not a moral or political question, saying: 'Well, it must be twelve, and if any member state wants to do it for less than twelve, i.e. down to zero, they can do it.' (The current proposed standard is to fingerprint anyone over the age of six.) In secret papers, it's been revealed that Spain and

Lithuania are fingerprinting children at birth – at birth! And this proposal is being dealt with by a technical committee of the EU, not even being debated in the European Parliament.

When the decision was taken at the EU that everybody had to give their fingerprints to get a passport, it was barely reported in the press. It wasn't debated around Europe. I don't think most people in Europe know, including most people in this room, that when you apply for a passport after next autumn, you are going to have to physically present yourself at an enrolment centre, be interrogated for fifteen to twenty minutes to prove who you are, compulsorily have your fingerprints taken and a facial scan taken. That's two biometrics being taken from you for your record. For two years it will be voluntary, but by 2010, when you are given a passport, you will automatically, compulsorily be given an ID card at the same time.

The last point I want to make is about profiling. It is obvious at the moment that every country has got its own watchlist. There is not an EU-wide watchlist; there's a terrorist list, which is quite small. But the watchlists run into their hundreds and, in the UK – thousands. In July and August 2005, we got one example in Greece of how they work. It only came out because they abducted twenty-nine Pakistani men, held them for a week and threatened them. MI5 officers were present as part of those interviews in Athens. The men were released without charge. When the minister was asked about it, he said these twenty-five weren't on the list of 5,432 people given to the Greek authorities by MI6. What? Greece was given a list of Pakistani immigrants. The Pakistani population of Greece is 25,000; 1,100 of whom were brought in for questioning; they found six people with immigration irregularities and not a single terrorist suspect. If Britain handed over 5,000-plus names to Greece, how many did it give to Germany, to France?

A couple of years ago, ten Muslim men were arrested in Manchester, held for seven days and released without charge. A measure has been instituted throughout the EU that information obtained during such investigations must be circulated around the EU. So information on the ten men, ten men's families, ten men's friends, ten men's work friends – a circle that could include up to 300 people – can be seen by the whole EU. Yet there is nothing in the measure which says that if those men were released, as they were, or acquitted, as they might have been, all these names have to be removed from the databases of all the different agencies around Europe. This is how databases and watchlists can build up.

To conclude. For us here today, it is not just a question of bringing single issues together, connecting them to make a campaign. It is also about connecting and internationalising issues and making European struggles part of our national struggle. For the seeds of fundamental

change are being planted in Europe and, if we ignore this, it will be too late to stop them flourishing here.

Tony Bunyan is director of Statewatch, an organisation that monitors the state and civil liberties in Europe.

David Rose: the politicisation of intelligence

I want to start by talking about the use of intelligence in a different 'war on terror', namely the struggle against the Provisional IRA in the United Kingdom between 1969 and 1998. What happened? Gradually, intelligence services, MI5 in particular, became deeply involved and took the lead in trying to defeat the IRA. We saw this very clearly in the shooting, by Special Forces in 1981, of three men in Gibraltar, who were unarmed and who did not, as was first announced, have a bomb. We saw then what happens when intelligence services are allowed to run the show without any constraints from legal bodies or any kind of oversight to make them accountable. But by and large, that fight against the IRA was fought – albeit with some pretty large detours from ordinary due process – according to the rule of law and it ended with political settlement.

Here is Representative Peter T. King, Republican, of New York, speaking on 14 September 2006, chairing the House of Representatives Homeland Security committee:

> I just think John McCain is wrong on this. If we capture Bin Laden tomorrow, we have to hold his head underwater to find out when the next attack is going to happen. We ought to be able to do it.

Representative King was talking about McCain's attempt to stop the administration introducing Military Commissions constituted on a basis already struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional and, crucially, McCain's attempt to ban torture. McCain, a former prisoner of the Viet Cong for six years, thinks torture is undesirable. He is also, of course, quite possibly the next Republican candidate for president, but he is regarded by the administration as soft and disloyal. But what did President Bush have to say? Here he is speaking about the torture used by the CIA and other American agencies, in a press conference on 15 September: 'Were it not for this programme, our intelligence community believes that al-Qaida and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the American homeland.' A completely unprovable assertion, you may think. 'But the practical matter is that if our professionals don't have clear standards in the law, the programme is not going to go forward. The enemy has struck and they want to strike us again. And we'll give

our folks the tools necessary to protect the country.' This is a debate, then, about whether torture is to be enshrined in law in America, against all international and previous American regulations. For Bush says it's the tool necessary to do the job.

Under the Bush administration, we have already witnessed the politicisation of the judiciary (of which Victoria Brittain will say more). We are now seeing on both sides of the Atlantic, the politicisation of intelligence. It was very clear in the build-up to the Iraq war. But it is also a two-way process, and its other aspect is what you might call the 'intelligence servicisation' of politics. The end result is that intelligence and politics are becoming conflated. The casualties are democratic rights, the democratic process in general and civil liberties.

Let me try to explain. As a journalist covering crime, terrorism and all these issues, for twenty-six years now, I have heard spooks and police officers say, many times before 9/11, 'If only we could . . .'. And they would have a shopping list: 'If only we could question people without a lawyer, use hearsay evidence, admit phone tap evidence in court.' 'Then we could . . .', and they would tick, as applicable, 'win the war against drugs, win the war against the IRA'. And by and large, before 9/11, though not invariably, politicians in democratic countries exercised a power of restraint, saying, 'If we gave you unlimited power, you might be able to do the job. However, there are costs, and our job as politicians, with the media invigilating us and a public responsive at the ballot box, is to say, that is not where the balance between liberty and all this should lie.' After 9/11, on both sides of the Atlantic, that restraint disappeared. When the spooks, having long pushed their agendas, called again for permission to use forms of torture, the administration acceded. In Britain the argument is for evidence, drawn from torture in third countries, to be used in courts in this country. The aim is to expel those who might prove to be a danger, even though there is no concrete evidence. And this government also accedes; these are judged necessary powers. In this way, the intelligence services insinuate themselves into the political process.

As politics become transformed by intelligence and intelligence becomes politicised, we see the creation of an alternative world, which I call 'Planet Spook', which is where governments now seem to locate their response to terrorism. On Planet Spook, it's completely reasonable in a debate about torture to say, 'If we capture Bin Laden, we're going to hold his head underwater'. Of course in America, a week after the anniversary of 9/11, a lot of people are going to say, 'Ah, you've got a point there'. As we know, fourteen people, many of them allegedly associated with planning and executing 9/11, are being brought to Guantánamo. And it is reasonable to say, 'Well, we've got to try these people, we've got to bring them to justice'. But

on Planet Spook justice means using intelligence gained from water-boarding and other methods of torture, and now, in an exquisite twist, introducing rules that deny detainees access to lawyers, even ones with security clearance, because they might tell them how they were tortured. And that, on Planet Spook, is a state secret.

What will these trials look like? The administration wants to restore the Military Commission system, ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. It wants to use secret evidence, evidence gained under torture, and it also wants the powers to carry out that torture. The Military Commissions at Guantánamo now will not be the shadow-boxing seen at the various preliminary hearings so far; they are going to be the real thing; they are going to be trials with the *death* penalty, don't forget that.

Let us just take three of the cases. First, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed. According to the president, the only way you are going to get a confession out of him is to hold his head underwater. This is how hard it was to get Khalid Shaikh Mohammed to confess to being part of 9/11. In early 2002, somewhere in Pakistan, he gave a three-page interview to Al Jazeera TV and the *Sunday Times*, in which he spoke at great length about his role in 9/11. As did his fellow prisoner at Guantánamo Bay, Ramzi Binalshibh, who is of course the former flatmate of Mohamed Atta, the first 9/11 pilot. In fact, all kinds of evidence that, in an ordinary court of law, can be brought, already exists. For example, I have seen videos that were shot in the Al Quds mosque in Hamburg, where Ramzi Binalshibh made the most extraordinary speeches advocating terrorism. There are videos of him in Afghanistan in training camps, there are over seventy monitored phone calls between him and Mohamed Atta. While Binalshibh was still in Germany, Mohamed Atta was in America carrying out 9/11. There is an enormous amount of evidence that could bring these men to justice! The same is true of Abu Zubaydah, allegedly al-Qaida's former operations chief.

The extra powers the president seeks do not make any practical sense, according to his stated objective. They only make sense if you see the intelligence world and the political world merging at the expense of the democratic process and the normal methods of legal accountability. And to understand that, we have to see that this is an explicit, conscious project by leading figures who are within and support the administration. We see it palely reflected, but nonetheless cruelly enough for those it directly affects, in the UK, partly in the extent to which our government has gone along with the US, as over Guantánamo, the control orders, the Belmarsh detainees and all the rest of it.

Underlying it all is this: the abuse of intelligence. There is now a need, an urgent need, to depoliticise intelligence, to remove intelligence services as the driving force behind politics and to make them again

accountable. I do not deny for one second that there is a genuine threat in the West from terrorists. Nor do I deny that intelligence services have their part to play in trying to stop that happening. But at the moment there is simply no check at all on their activities, on the way that they operate. And we know that they are fallible: see the massive police raid on a Muslim home and family in Forest Gate, East London, see the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes. To me, this is now the greatest crisis affecting the relationship between the state and the individual throughout the West. It attacks absolutely the foundations of democracy, of the Enlightenment, of the rule of law.

David Rose is an investigative journalist and author of Guantánamo: America's war on human rights.

Victoria Brittain: *Guantánamo*

Guantánamo is the iconic illustration of the US 'war on terror', chosen for its Muslim prisoners by the Bush administration precisely because it provided a way of avoiding United States law – it has an ambiguous status outside US territory. I think the administration calculated that, in such a remote place, with virtually no access to the media, it would be easy for these prisoners to be conveniently forgotten. Probably no one would know where they were, so the administration's narrative of who they were, would prevail – the narrative that they had all been captured on the battlefields of Afghanistan: they were the 'worst of the worst'.

Moreover, Guantánamo has become the showcase of the US administration's claims to American exceptionalism. Here, on the president's orders, the Geneva Conventions did not apply; half a century of humanitarian law has been written off, just like that. These were not prisoners of war; they were something completely different invented by the Pentagon and called 'enemy combatants'. So, as a result, hundreds of men – there are still about 450 there – have been held for four years or so, without knowing what they are accused of, having no contact with their families except rare letters and with little access to lawyers. Worst of all, they have no idea if they will ever, ever be freed.

US exceptionalism is also illustrated by the administration's cavalier attitude to the use of kidnapping, the completely extraordinary procedure called 'extraordinary rendition'. The language used by these people is Orwellian. Exceptionalism is also illustrated by the American attitude to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Americans routinely prevent the ICRC from seeing various prisoners; there are even a number of so-called 'black sites', where they never

even admitted that they were holding anybody until two weeks ago. Then, they finally admitted they were holding fourteen people, who are now being brought to Guantánamo. But, above all, the most terrible thing about Guantánamo, Kandahar, Bagram and these other unknown places, is the way the Americans have routinely used torture. Numerous graphic memos, written in the Justice Department and the White House, have made it quite clear that, no matter how many times the president or Donald Rumsfeld says on television 'We don't torture, it's un-American', the actual procedures routinely carried out are torture. It is almost unimaginable that the most powerful country in the world, which talks nothing but democracy, in practice stands against all the international conventions on torture.

Now, the US administration has got away with all these outrageous practices, in large part, because the UK government has been complicit. For four years it has been complicit in ways that Gareth Peirce mentioned this morning, with UK agents participating in interrogations in the most disgusting manner. What the British government is doing is minimising what is going on in Guantánamo. Don't be fooled.

This week, the BBC and others made a tremendous fuss about Lord Falconer, the most powerful person in the British legal hierarchy, making an excellent denunciation in Sydney of the shocking practices at Guantánamo. But when he was asked about the eight British residents who are still in Guantánamo and about whether Britain has a moral obligation to bring them back, he did not have a clue who they were. They should use their own passports to go back to the places they came from, he said, completely ignoring the fact that these people have families here, their children are all British citizens and that, on the whole, they came here as refugees in the first place. That little example of the dehumanisation of the Guantánamo prisoners, and how our government has gone along with it, is an important part of this whole story. And, of course, it is part of what marks the government's attitude to civil liberties.

The other factor key to the Bush administration's having got away with all of this has been the unprecedented politicisation of the United States judiciary. From the Supreme Court down, the administration has appointed, time after time, ideological lawyers, not lawyers who were appointed for their brilliance in law. It is this perversion of the system which has allowed the ideological programme of this White House and its neocon allies to be carried through. It is this system that has allowed the Supreme Court case that Gareth Peirce referred to this morning, *Rasul* vs. *Bush*, to be won by Rasul. But from June 2004 till now, although the Supreme Court said that Guantánamo detainees should have access to the federal courts, not one single person has been brought before a court. Their lawyers have, over the last two years, been totally tied up in knots of appeals and counter-appeals,

all of which have been designed to make sure that the law has not been carried out. Behind this lies another unprecedented struggle, a struggle around the US Constitution.

The point of all this has been to make the president above all law: international law, in terms of human rights and the Geneva Conventions, but also above US law. As the US Attorney General memorably said, 'If the President wants people to be tortured, it's not up to the Congress to stop him'. This kind of language is so staggering that again you think about Orwell. The lawyers who have fought, and are still fighting, against this, are among the most distinguished academic and retired military lawyers as well as, belatedly, in this last week, some congressmen, including some people in the Republican Party. So, the fight is not over, but it is a very, very tough and significant fight.

All of this is the background to the announcement, made last week, that those fourteen people in the 'black sites' would be brought to Guantánamo, tried and indeed be held under the Geneva Conventions. They are going to be charged with responsibility for September 11. But, of course, the Geneva Conventions that they are going to be held under, Bush wants changed. He doesn't want the Geneva Conventions agreed by everybody else, but a different type of Geneva Convention that will allow evidence to be used against the detainees that they are not told about. As some judges in America have said, what legal system in the world allows somebody to be tried, convicted and possibly sentenced to death, without knowing what the evidence against him is? But this is the reality.

Bush also wants the same Military Commissions to be held, that the Supreme Court, in another hearing four months ago, ruled illegal. He wants Congress to pass another law to allow those Military Commissions to hold the trials of the people. Of course, you also have to remember that, if these trials are ever held, using evidence that the accused don't know about, that evidence will be tainted by having been obtained through torture. So, the White House announcement that these fourteen notorious people were being brought to Guantánamo and held under a new regime was entirely a PR exercise. So many people have said in the past couple of weeks, 'Oh, isn't it great, they are being brought to Guantánamo, they are going to be tried under Geneva Conventions' that I want to hammer home this point. The announcement was timed to coincide with the mawkish anniversary commemoration of September 11 and ahead of the upcoming congressional elections. It is evident that none of these prisoners could ever get a fair trial of any sort in the United States. As far as these and the other prisoners held in Guantánamo are concerned, this cynical exercise is probably the last straw for any belief in western commitments to justice. A lot of the prisoners in Guantánamo no

longer want to see their lawyers. They feel they have been used in a cat-and-mouse game that is completely irrelevant to anything to do with justice.

I want to finish with some other Guantánamo-related cases that have resulted in complete disillusion with the legal process here in the UK. Families of the eight residents I have already referred to have had judicial reviews; they have tried to bring cases under European human rights law, to the effect that their families are being deprived of their human rights by the UK government's not asking the Americans to return them. The judicial reviews were held, the cases tied up lawyers like Gareth Peirce for months and months of work. Of course, they lost. An appeal was made, and lost. The way the legal system is used in cases like this as a kind of charade of legality is very dangerous and yet another example of dehumanisation.

Victoria Brittain is a journalist, playwright and author, with Moazzam Begg, of Enemy Combatant: a British Muslim's journey to Guantánamo.

Asim Qureshi: extraordinary rendition

The 'war on terror', if it wasn't so sad, would probably be funny, but unfortunately it's not. And people's lives are being destroyed.

One thing that is important is how words are used to the advantage of one side or another, so that people can present their own version of what is legal and what is legitimate. Take the term 'extraordinary rendition'. Now, for there to be an 'extraordinary' type of rendition, there would need to be an ordinary type; that somewhere within legal history a process of rendition took place. But, as a lawyer, I looked through all the legal texts I could find and the term never came up once, except through certain legal actions of the US. However these actions were only legitimate under US law and would not be considered so under any other jurisdiction. The rendition of Carlos 'The Jackal' to the US was an early example of rendition. Pre-9/11, there were very, very few examples. In terms of international law, there definitely isn't any precedent for it. There are only two legitimate processes for taking a person from one territorial jurisdiction to another: one is deportation and the other is extradition. These are the only two legal processes in the world right now for the transfer of individuals.

I am one of the authors of a report called *Fabricating Terrorism*, which looked at British complicity in renditions and torture. What we tried to do was to look at all the examples we could find of British people or those with British residency who have been taken from

different parts of the world, questioned at some point by MI5 or MI6, and who have ended up being rendered to another part of the world.

I am going to speak about Binyam Mohammed Al Habashi. Binyam's case, I think, is a microcosm for many different aspects of this 'war on terror'. He is a British resident who has been in this country for eighteen years. He was picked up in Pakistan, trying to make his way out once 'Operation Enduring Freedom' had started. He was trying to come back to the UK and the Pakistanis kidnapped him. When you are priced at $5,000 a head in Afghanistan, you don't really let that kind of money go just like that. So, perfect, a guy connected to Britain, let's send him over to Afghanistan and get lots of money for him. All of a sudden, Binyam finds himself in US custody in Afghanistan. They take him to the 'Dark Prison', which is a prison just outside Kabul.

I have never come across any statement regarding his time there – I know he has been wary of speaking about it in depth because that period of time in his life was so traumatic. But when you hear about the torture that he *was* able to speak about, you can only imagine the kinds of things that went on in the 'Dark Prison'. He was taken from there to Bagram, where he was interrogated by different officials. He had already been interrogated by the British in Pakistan. They knew of his existence and yet did nothing for him. So, he was interrogated in Pakistan, then again by the British in Afghanistan, and also by the Americans at every single point along the way. But then, for some reason, they decided, we haven't done enough with Binyam yet, we haven't put him through enough torture, we're convinced that there must be something on him – so let's send him off to Morocco. Why Morocco of all places? Because Morocco has a very good record of torture as far as these people are concerned. They sent poor Binyam to Morocco for a period, I think, of almost two years. There he went through some of the worst torture one could imagine – like having his penis cut for hours on end with a razor blade. They tortured him over and over again until he confessed that he knew José Padilla and that he knew such and such a person. There is a long list of people he allegedly knew. They tortured him until he signed whatever confession they wanted. And the funny – not funny, I shouldn't use that word – the saddest thing is that during José Padilla's trial, the courts completely rejected any connection to Binyam Mohammed. Yet they are still trying to say that Binyam knew José. This shows the kind of intelligence, or lack of it, these people have.

That part of Binyam's travels, before he was sent to Guantánamo Bay, highlights what the 'war on terror' is about. People talk about Guantánamo all the time as an affront to justice, as this disgraceful horror existing in the world right now. Let's be honest, Guantánamo

Bay is the most humane face of the whole 'war on terror', when you consider Temara prison in Morocco, Kabul, the 'Dark Prison' and so many others.

Right now, Cageprisoners and Reprieve are conducting research into something called 'ghost' or 'secret detention'. Between us we have highlighted something like fifty prisons that are being, or have been, used so far in the 'war on terror'. They make Guantánamo Bay look like a holiday resort, that's how bad they are. The fourteen who have been recently sent to Guantánamo Bay have been in these prisons. So, fine, we know that people like Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and Ramzi Binalshibh, more than likely, were behind the 9/11 plot. But their testimonies implicated people like Aafia Siddiqui, Saifullah Paracha and so many other detainees out there right now, whom we know to be innocent. We have clear evidence that they did none of the things that are alleged, were in none of the places alleged by the US at the time.

Just take Aafia as an example. They alleged that, in June 2001, she was in Liberia making purchases for al-Qaida. Her lawyer has evidence that, during the whole summer of 2001, she was running playgroups for nursery children in Boston. These facts are incontrovertible. She is somebody who has no connections to al-Qaida whatsoever, was just a Muslim community worker like any of the rest of us.

In 2003, she was picked up by the Pakistanis at Karachi airport, along with her three children. The next thing, all four had gone missing and have not been seen since. Two weeks after they were picked up, NBC published an article saying that the CIA had in custody and was interrogating Aafia Siddiqui, described as one of the 'worst of the worst' and al-Qaida's expert in biochemical warfare. But her PhD is in cognitive neuroscience, which means that she uses computer systems to study human behaviour. There was no medical or biological aspect to her work. She would not know where to begin building a bio-chemical weapon. So, their big biochemical weapons expert was some-body who didn't have as much of a clue about it as I do. A week after NBC's article, both the Pakistanis and the Americans said that they didn't know where Aafia was and didn't have her in their custody. Since then she has been missing. A week later, Aafia's mother was paid a visit by somebody on a motorcycle, who came to her house and said, 'If you ever raise an issue about your daughter's case, you will never see your grandchildren again'. Nobody has seen the three children since. I went to Karachi last November to look up the mother, only to find a guard outside her house who said, 'I'm afraid, you can't come in here'. Aafia's mother and sister have been under house arrest since 2003. Nobody can get to them even to begin ques-tioning exactly what might have taken place.

I believe, unfortunately, that Aafia is probably dead by now, because when the ISI pick you up in Pakistan, really there is only ever one result. It would be far too embarrassing for them to ever allow her to go free, because if she was freed, of course there would be huge public outrage, the kind that could possibly topple a government.

That is just one case; we have around 150 case studies, now, regarding people caught up in this whole process of ghost detention. Concerning the fourteen that were sent to Guantánamo Bay, President Bush said, 'We no longer have anybody left in our high-value detainee programme'. Yes, that's fine, you have this 'high-value detainee programme', but what about these other people you have? Human Rights First said that, in 2005, between 9,000 and 13,000 people were being held in secret detention. Our figures are far lower than that; they seem to have many more examples than we do. We know definitely of 150 who have gone missing in the 'war on terror' so far. And many governments are complicit – Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the US.

There have been suggestions that they have been using the British island of Diego Garcia, which is now a US naval base, as a possible detention base for many of these suspects. We've got to a stage now where the British have not only been complicit in sending people to different countries, even though they knew they would be tortured there, but are now willing to do this through legal means, through the Extradition Act 2003, which is quite simply rendition by another name. The British allowed people like Jamil al-Banna and Bisher al-Rawi to be rendered to Guantánamo Bay, because there was nothing on them in the UK. They had no evidence in the UK, so they would let the Americans deal with them. And in the same way, they allow Babar Ahmad and Talha Ahsan to be sent over to America, even though they have not committed a crime here in the UK.

We must convince the government that all these policies are an affront to justice, that they go against the rule of law, that they go against everything that we hold dear in terms of our values. And the British government must take responsibility for its complicity because we cannot allow things like torture to take place, we cannot allow any kind of involvement in rendition programmes. And we cannot allow arms to go through our airports, to be used to fight illegal wars in places like Israel, for example. This is how complicit Britain has become because of its close relationship with the US.

Asim Qureshi is a researcher for Cageprisoners, a human rights organisation formed in 2003 to raise awareness of the plight of detainees held as part of the 'war on terror'.

The war on terror's impact on the community

Anne Gray: campaigning against anti-terrorist legislation

The Campaign Against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC) was founded in early 2001 in response to implementation of the Terrorism Act 2000. We continued to campaign against internment under the 2001 anti-terrorism Act, and later against control orders and other house arrest powers, which are invidious forms of punishment without trial. Our campaign links lawyers, human rights campaigners, advocates for refugee and migrant communities and those targeted or affected by anti-terror laws. It provides practical support for those affected, e.g. through protest events, letters, bail surety and home visits to persons under house arrest.

We have opposed all anti-terror laws and their use as an unjustified infringement of civil liberties and human rights in this country. We defend the democratic freedom to dissent and to resist oppression, both nationally and internationally. We have campaigned against the banning of nationalist movements like the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Hamas under the Terrorism Act 2000, measures to make association, publication, fund-raising and so on into crimes, and the creation of the new offence of glorification of terrorism, which can become an excuse to criminalise free speech. The ordinary criminal law prohibits efforts to incite violent crimes or conspiracy to organise crimes anyway – and we should remember it was the older law of incitement to racial hatred that was used to convict Abu Hamza. The new 'glorification' offence seems designed to deter (or criminalise) merely verbal support for resistance against oppressive regimes. The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 also established a new crime of disseminating 'terrorist publications', presumably those which sympathetically portray any activities that the government classifies as terrorist, according to the excessively broad definition in the 2000 Act. In all these ways, the new offences are designed to stifle legitimate political and academic debate within the UK.

The definition of terrorism
We argue that terrorism is defined far too broadly in the UK measures and in EU legislation and in ways which criminalise legitimate political activity. The Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Human Rights has expressed concerns that the UK definition of terrorism is so broad as to be incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, especially Article 10 which protects the right to freedom of expression.

For the state to criminalise anti-state violence anywhere in the world negates the right to resist oppression. It is often asked whether Nelson Mandela or the anti-Nazi French partisans would have been declared a terrorist under current legislation. Even if the answer is no, it illustrates another problem; that terrorism is defined selectively, by reference to the foreign policies and sympathies of the government of the day.

The definition of terrorism under the 2000 Act includes not only violence but damage to property and threats of damage to property, if done with a political motive. Peace campaigners who cut fences or enter a military base then become terrorists. Even writing letters could become terrorism if they blocked a fax machine, because disrupting an electronic system is also defined as terrorism. And having coffee with people who do these things, or letting them use your fax machine, or sending them an e-mail, makes you a terrorist too. Having broadened the definition of terrorism, 'anti-terror' laws can then be used to deter, suppress and criminalise political activities of a non-violent kind.

Effects on publications, free speech, and charities
For example, the distributors of the Turkish-language magazine *Vatan* were harassed and, in December 2002, arrested on grounds that the magazine sales were promoting and financing a banned organisation. Entire shipments of *Vatan* to the UK were confiscated as 'terrorist property'. In the run-up to the trial, Special Branch officers visited over a hundred shops in north London and asked shopkeepers to testify in court against the defendants, for example that they had supposedly demanded money with threats. Eventually the prosecution was abandoned, but only on a technicality.

The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001 empowers the authorities to seize property or cash and to freeze bank accounts in cases of suspected 'terrorist' purposes. One effect of this has been to seriously impede the work of Muslim charities, some of whose bank accounts have been frozen. Although most Muslim charities that have been investigated by the Charity Commission for possible links to terrorism have been exonerated, they have suffered heavily from a loss of donations as a result of the stigma of being suspected of an affiliation with terrorism. This has been documented in a review of ATCSA 2001 from the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism, published in 2003.

Even the mildest opponents of New Labour have become the subject of threats made under anti-terrorism powers. Recall the treatment of Walter Wolfgang at the Labour Party conference in Brighton in summer 2005. A man walking in the street near the conference venue was also stopped and searched under anti-terrorist powers because he was wearing a T-shirt with an anti-Blair slogan on it.

Control orders and domestic prisons
I come now to punishment without trial and house arrest, which, since 2001, have become a hideous scar on the judicial landscape. Despite the Law Lords' ruling against internment, in 2004, detention without trial has been perpetuated and extended by other means, firstly, through the power to impose 'control orders' and, secondly, the power to detain individuals under the 1971 Immigration Act. Both powers have been used to turn homes into domestic prisons. Those given bail under the 1971 Immigration Act have conditions very like control orders, with similar restrictions on visitors and movement and allowed out only a few hours a day. Thus the 1971 Act has been used to create a parallel regime to that of control orders.

There are at least sixteen men, fourteen of whom are Algerian, who have been placed under partial house arrest under the Immigration Act as persons considered dangerous to national security. They have been in jail or under house arrest on bail for over a year now, waiting for the Special Immigration Appeals Commission (SIAC) to hear their appeals against deportation.

Individuals under control orders and similar measures have not been convicted of any crime, nor been charged with any offence. Yet they do suffer a real deprivation of liberty and so do their households. The punishment without trial extends to wives and children, and even to those providing accommodation, since visitors to the whole household are restricted by Home Office vetting arrangements. Friends and relatives of those under control orders are terrified to apply for permission to visit them. Even detainees' children suffer restrictions on their visitors. They can't use home computers for their school work, since the detainee is frequently barred from using a computer and that means none must enter the home. These are forms of collective punishment, which violates natural justice and international law.

Medical treatment can also be interfered with by house arrest restrictions. One of the men who has suffered internment, then a control order, then more jail under immigration law, then house arrest, is seriously disabled. He cannot walk due to polio; once he could walk a little but his physiotherapy was interrupted and delayed because his therapist had to be vetted to visit him, so he now cannot walk at all. He attempted suicide about a year ago.

Asylum revoked for Detainee Y
The body which hears the appeals against deportation of these supposedly dangerous terror suspects is SIAC. It operates without a jury and defendants are not allowed to know all the evidence against them – some of it is withheld, supposedly to protect intelligence sources and methods.

On 24 August 2006, SIAC rejected the first of these appeals against deportation. It effectively sentenced a hapless Algerian refugee – known only as 'Detainee Y' – to return to possible life imprisonment and torture in Algeria. Y had been granted asylum in Britain in 2000. He was sentenced to death *in absentia* for allegedly providing logistic support for two attacks that killed several members of Algeria's notorious special police force, which has been responsible for many cases of torture and illegal detention. The British government eventually accepted that these accusations – and the torture he suffered whilst awaiting trial in Algeria – constituted grounds for asylum, and gave him indefinite leave to remain. But in 2003, the Algerian government sought to extradite him on these same grounds – and the British government started to listen.

Y, at the time, was awaiting trial in connection with the much-publicised 'ricin plot', of which he was later acquitted. But in September 2005, along with five other acquitted defendants in the same trial, he was re-arrested and detained under immigration law, pending deportation as a 'danger to national security'. Since then he has spent five months in jail and seven months tagged and under partial house arrest. So there are six people who were actually acquitted of terrorism in the UK, yet they may now be sentenced to deportation as terrorists, which might mean torture when they get back to Algeria.

Those people facing deportation as 'terror suspects' illustrate the worst horror of pre-deportation detention (a situation also suffered by thousands of asylum seekers) – being detained without trial in Britain. It can go on for the victim's lifetime; there is no end in sight. British law allows the detainees to be jailed or under house arrest as long as deportation is being negotiated, perhaps for years. Even if deportation is blocked by an appeal, they could remain under house arrest indefinitely, subject to control orders.

For those awaiting deportation, the Human Rights Act gives no rights against imprisonment without trial – internment was abolished, but not for them. But even worse than the thousands of other deportations taking place, is the deportation that the fourteen Algerians face, with a 'terrorist' label around their necks. And this without any accusation proven against them in British law.

Two men who had been through internment, control orders, and then prison again as dangerous persons awaiting deportation, decided that they would rather return to Algeria and risk torture than continue to suffer their present conditions in Britain. These cases show the depths of injustice and despair to which British anti-terrorism measures are leading. CAMPACC continues to support these people by campaigning that they should either be released or have a fair trial before a jury and be allowed to know all the evidence against them. Some

of us visit them, we sometimes give them food or money, we try to give them and their families strength in whatever way we can.

We believe the attacks on civil liberties and justice under the Labour government rest on certain unjust principles: a presumption of guilt, punishment without a fair trial, and pre-emptive restraints on liberty. These principles lie behind not only the 'war on terror' but measures against asylum seekers, demonstrators and those subject to ASBOs because they are accused of 'anti-social behaviour'. By targeting individuals with these various forms of punishment without trial, the state persecutes and intimidates entire communities. All these measures have met overt defiance and everyday resistance. Indeed, to persist is to resist.

Anne Gray is a member of the Campaign Against Criminalising Communities.

Cilius Victor: a community organisation responds

I am Cilius Victor, a trustee of the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP). I am not a paid employee but, like many of you here, I get involved in various community projects. One thing that has not really been recognised in the discussion of the 'war on terror' is to what extent it is being used by a range of public bodies to inform general policing. There is a merging of processes which are sometimes badged as the 'war on terror', sometimes policing issues. In some instances, it's almost irrelevant to try to separate the two.

I'll explain it in terms of the Forest Gate raid in June 2006. Just to recap. 250 police, in the early hours of the morning of 2 June 2006, raided two adjoining houses in Lansdown Road during which one man was shot and wounded. First, most of you probably gleaned from the media that two homes were raided. But, in fact, three streets were effectively cocooned for ten days, affecting not just the two families but 300 people. They couldn't get to their houses without a physical escort from the police; residents had to show ID in order to get to their front doors. And you've got to remember that this was against a backdrop of the police running around looking for chemical weapons. It suggests imminent danger and yet no one was being evacuated.

The raid happened on Friday and, sometime in the early hours of Saturday morning, the police seemed to have stopped their search. They won't admit this publicly, but if you went down there, as I did, you would have seen them clearly packing up their weather suits and chemical suits. So what were they doing for the next nine days?

Maybe it was for the media, to show how seriously this was being taken.

The family at the centre of the raid were virtually incarcerated. The two brothers at the centre of the raid were taken away by the police. But the other members of the family, who weren't injured, got somehow spirited away. We used whatever networks we had to track the family down. This is exactly what happened to the family of Jean Charles de Menezes, after he was shot dead following 7/7. All four of his cousins were spirited away and quarantined, phones were cut off, virtually no access allowed to anybody. And it took a great effort to track his cousins and bring them back into some sort of support regime within the community.

The property at the centre of the Forest Gate raid was taken apart. That the family ought to be rehoused is another community fight; completely innocent people have been made homeless. Yet what you read in the papers is not this, but that families are being put up in big expensive Kensington hotels. First, they weren't expensive and second, who put them there? The family is under a great deal of strain. They don't like being there and the rooms are small. Meanwhile, the local authority is trying to wash its hands of its responsibility to rehouse the families.

When the raid took place, local agencies just melted away. Local councillors weren't around. The local policing team based in Green Street seemed to disappear – the sergeant was on holiday. Scotland Yard put its own people there. The Borough Commander admitted in public he didn't know anything about what was happening, including why people were not evacuated. Effectively, Scotland Yard took over.

The process by which information got out was also critical. Our organisation has had a lot of experience of dealing with the police and the media, but the situation we faced was quite new. Information was being managed in a new way. This came out even more clearly after a raid in Walthamstow a month later. A day after that raid, we were reading in the papers complete biographies of individuals supposedly involved in terrorism, including their life in Pakistan. Journalists are not that good, the information must have come from elsewhere. It felt as if everything had been rehearsed beforehand, that there was a package of stuff ready to be put out.

And there's another sinister element to the way the police now act when the 'war on terror' is in the background. It's always been the case that individuals (particularly young people) if caught on a minor charge, might be offered a reduced charge or have the charge dropped in return for information. But now the deal might involve information on supposed terrorists. And nowhere is this more crucial for the police than in east London, where they have to plan to control certain

communities because the area is to be home to the Olympic Games in 2012. They have a planning committee already in progress dealing with security issues. It is tracking the buying and selling of property in the area, tracking people moving in and out. This is one aspect of the supposed regeneration of this part of London, brought by the Olympics, that has not been publicised but that may have serious implications for local communities and their civil liberties.

And there is another challenge for community groups in the present climate; they can get co-opted. Now the police have their Gold Groups and Bronze Group for which they handpick individuals in the community to respond and front for them when something happens. This has been on the go for some time, but in the context of the 'war on terror', individuals now feel almost obliged to get involved and cooperate.

The 'war on terror' certainly presents new challenges to groups like NMP, which have had to learn how to adapt and develop strategies to meet new circumstances. But, ironically, the 'war on terror' can also be seen as an extension of abuses that members of the black community have long experienced. What happened to Jean Charles was in the context of terrorism but, actually, it could be viewed as just another violent death in custody involving the police – of which we have had hundreds. (It is not even clear yet whether he was killed under the specially created shoot-to-kill Operation Kratos.) We had, through community networks, been grappling for some time with the issues of how police use weapons, how they draw weapons and civil liberties. And we were beginning to make headway. But is the 'war on terror' going to be used as a new shield for the police, a way of providing another level of opaqueness, a means of undermining any notion of community accountability? Those are the issues now troubling us.

Cilius Victor is a trustee of the Newham Monitoring Project, a community-based organisation in east London.

Shobha Das: racial violence and the 'war on terror'

I have come from Bristol where I work in an agency called Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI) – a grassroots organisation offering specialist support to people suffering racial harassment. There are four ways in which the 'war on terror' has affected our work.

In terms of the first – racial harassment and violence – we saw increases in racial violence after 9/11 and 7/7. And there seems to be an atmosphere, where communities are encouraged to be suspicious of each other. I think the term used is 'alert', but it translates into suspicion as well. An offshoot is that sections of majority communities adopt a kind of vigilante approach in a display of partnership with

the 'war on terror' and act out prejudices and misconceptions, and that's dangerous. This idea of the 'war on terror' legitimises racist prejudice, it can even transform racist acts into acts of patriotism, like saying to a 7-year-old child in a school, 'Go back to Afghanistan because you've bombed our people', as has happened. The 'war on terror' is not about intelligent targeting but is becoming something that's quite vicious and diffused everywhere in society. It's the targeting of the 'other', people who are my skin colour. I'm not a Muslim, but that doesn't matter any more to people. It is a targeting of anybody who looks different, such as possibly happened in the Stockwell shooting.

This summer, over the past eight to ten weeks, we've seen an increase in violent attacks. We recently had, in Bristol, a 23-year-old Ugandan man who was punched on his way home from the Harbour Festival (a lovely little event half of Bristol goes to). He fell and went into a coma for about fifteen days, on the edge of death. Most people thought he wouldn't pull through. He did though and he's now walking, he's now talking. The medical establishment isn't quite sure how he's made this recovery, but he has. He is a black person, possibly not conflated with being Muslim, but the attack came from the same space in which racial hatred is legitimised. The comments always end 'go back to where you came from'. I spoke to a client yesterday who was saying that she had challenged a neighbour playing music very loud, very late at night, and the neighbour says, 'What are you going to do, bomb us?'. So there are these constant allusions to the fact that people who are of a different skin colour or a different ethnic origin are automatically somehow terrorists.

There's an increase in random attacks: people who don't know their victim attacking someone because they look different. It includes verbal abuse in schools, which we are seeing more and more. This can be quite heartbreaking because the effects are very intense, not just on the young person, but the family as well. Schools often are not confident about how to handle this and therefore often they do nothing at all, which just makes the problem worse. There are also people being targeted in their homes, where we return to feel safe at the end of the day, but for a lot of people, it is about waiting for the next brick to come through the window.

The other sort of racism that we are seeing is carried out by agencies against the very people who are suffering racial violence. The criminal justice system doesn't always understand what racism is. We still see police officers questioning why someone has reported something as racist. A lot of officers don't quite seem to have got the idea that we've now shifted to the Lawrence inquiry definition of a racist incident, which is based on perception – if victims or witnesses see it as racist, it is a racist incident. As you go up the criminal justice chain, the same is

still true. The CPS doesn't always understand, the courts don't always understand.

We see police targeting of communities, particularly the Muslim community. We recently had a case of an American white convert to Islam, dressed in traditional Islamic attire. He was followed for a while by the police and then stopped and asked for his documents. He was then followed home by the police officers, who came into his home, asked to see his bank statements, asked to see his passport.

My second point: since 7/7 we have been invited by agencies like the police to sit on things like 'Gold Groups', which are meetings which bring together top commanders and unit heads within the force to plan, implement and monitor responses to critical incidents. But there is the danger – and I think that it's something a lot of community organisations have faced – of being the 'token Asian' on these groups. So we've got to fight hard when we sit on these panels, actually to *be* challenging, *be* critical, *be* robust in our questioning.

Third, we want to hold up a mirror to agencies – to encourage better, more intelligence-led policing, rather than random stereotyping and/or the presumption that people who dress differently are terrorists. There is still a bit of that mentality, but what we are hoping is that the more we challenge, the more we will be able to root out this approach. Because we offer training, we do get a chance to help officers question their stereotypes.

The fourth challenge is to help communities with their own soul-searching. This is difficult because one of the things that the 'war on terror' does is to pit Asian against Asian. It can polarise communities. It is difficult for us and other community organisations to manage this process of questioning without asking Muslim people to feel guilty for being Muslim. This 'war on terror' also threatens to shift the focus away from other key issues for black communities, such as educational attainment, over-representation in prisons, women's issues, poor housing, etc.

One of SARI's future tasks is to get the establishment to talk to communities directly, not through intermediaries like us. Agencies like the police need to be directly accountable to the communities they serve, especially those they serve badly.

Shobha Das is team manager at Support Against Racial Incidents (SARI), Bristol.

Beena Faridi: the 'war on terror' and attacks on Muslims

I work at the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) and am going to talk about the level of attacks on Muslims, particularly

post-7/7. I am a caseworker, so I am the first port of call for people. They ring in and I try to log their incidents

In an IHRC survey in 1999, we found that 35 per cent of respondents had recorded some kind of discrimination. By 2000 this had risen to 45 per cent and by 2004, which is post-9/11, it was 80 per cent. If you look at figures released by the Crown Prosecution Service, in the year up to April 2004, 22 out of 44 religious hate crimes were against Muslims or people perceived to be Muslims.

So what happened post-7/7? When Tony Blair spoke about his twelve-point plan after the 7/7 attacks, he alluded to some isolated, unacceptable acts of racial and religious hatred. But how isolated were they? From my own personal experience, I was getting about five or six cases a week; after 7/7, it rose to about a hundred a week. It could be Muslim women being spat on, women in the niqab not being allowed on a bus, women waiting at the bus stop having stones thrown at them; it could be that you've gone for an interview and you are asked strange questions like, 'What's your view on Iraq?'. It got worse, it got to criminal damage. A woman had her garage torched. We had a taxi driver, called to pick up people, when he arrived he was beaten up. Somebody was beaten up on his morning jog. In Watford, a gentleman, 65, was called 'Paki' – when he asked the youths why, they beat him badly, breaking several teeth. I think four mosques were attacked in Bristol, someone tried to set fire to a mosque in Bournemouth, in the Wirral a mosque was set alight and the cleric was trapped. In Leeds, gurdwaras were attacked.

And the worry is that there is a lot of under-reporting of attacks. The police quote a 600 per cent rise in attacks. But the reports I have show that the majority of people don't report an attack to the police. Firstly, there is the belief that the police, on the whole, are anti-Muslim. This is because of cases such as the 'ricin plot' and the Forest Gate shooting. There are cases like that of Babar Ahmad, whose house was raided. Police forced him into a prostrate position, allegedly saying, 'Where is your God now? And why don't you pray for help from him?'. That case has really affected the psyche of the Muslim community because Babar Ahmad is going to be extradited to America without the American government having to produce proper evidence in a British court.

Second, there are people's experiences when they do report crime to the police. Police are very slow to pick up the racial and religious element, never mind that they are very unwilling even to come out to your home. The woman whose garage was torched had to wait with her 4-month-old baby outside the police station, on the pavement, for over two-and-a-half hours. When she did get in, the police officer said 'Well, how do I know that it's a racial attack?'. There is a perception that this violence is not being taken seriously by institutions and

public figures. When over a dozen mosques were attacked, there was no attempt by any politician to visit a mosque and just say, 'this is wrong'.

Also, look at the sentences that people get. When Kamal Raza Butt, in the days after 7/7, was beaten up and killed by a group of youths allegedly shouting 'Taliban, Taliban!', his attacker only received an eighteen-month detention order.

I want to go into one case that illustrates all these points. A young gentleman who was over here, about to do his PhD, was waiting for a bus at Wembley, dressed in Islamic dress on his way to Friday prayers. Some youths came up, mocked his dress and began to spit on him. They found a broom and beat him so badly that he was in a coma for two months, he was blinded for ten and he is now paralysed on the left-hand side of his body. When his family went to the police, he was investigated for terrorism, which means his stuff was confiscated. When a friend of his was going on pilgrimage, they questioned the young gentleman at the airport. He was asked which mosque he attended. The authorities also confiscated something which they believed could be a bomb-making device. His friend had been stealing electricity via this device and he had taken it from him because he believed that stealing was *haram*, forbidden. Meanwhile, the family liaison officer kept making insensitive comments like, 'I'm not saying he's a terrorist, but . . .', The family were upset because only three assailants were charged. Of them, only one received a five-month prison sentence. And the racial and religious element was not recognised in that case.

Beena Faridi is a case worker and researcher at the Islamic Human Rights Commission.

The attack on multiculturalism: a discussion

Herman Ouseley: Bradford and the northern towns

My starting point is 2000, the turn of the millennium. That's when I started to work on a report with a group of local people to review the causes of developing communal tensions in Bradford. We had experienced previous inner-city disturbances and social uprisings in the cities, driven by racism, abusive policing and by the National Front (NF) during the seventies and later the British National Party (BNP). But it had become noticeable in Bradford that there were very clear signs of community fragmentation along race and ethnic lines. In the Review Report, we were quite clear in identifying the drift towards segregation and some of the causes thereof and were

explicit about saying this to the council when we delivered our report in April of 2001.

What we said, which is quite different from the debate that followed, was that one of the significant features that contributed to that segregation was 'white flight'. This pattern of outward neighbourhood migration of white households could be traced back to the settlement in the post-war period; of black people moving into a street. The closest neighbour moves out and can only sell to another black person who moves in. And more neighbours move out and it becomes a predominantly black residential street. We saw similar patterns emerge in youth clubs, in places like Brixton and Southall and other black settlements. You get one or two young black people going in and a few whites go out. Then, because more whites drift out, it gets to 50 per cent black; it then becomes 90 per cent, then almost 100 per cent and it becomes a black youth club, not by design, but due to white flight. This is a very important part of the phenomenon, in tracing black people's settlement into this country and the old and current debates about integration which seem to accuse black people of not wanting to integrate. Take the post-war settlement, when black servicemen and women came back to this country in the fifties. There were signs up in public places stating, 'No blacks, no coloureds, no Irish', so they had to find accommodation in the air-raid shelters in Clapham. When eventually they were able to get housing, it was more like renting a bed. You did the night shift while someone was sleeping in your bed; in the day shift, you swapped over. And that's how deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination manifested in the struggle for equality and justice. Segregation was not an option pursued by black people but was an instant reality to be experienced.

The issues arising in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, when they blew up in 2001, were the same as we pointed out earlier in our Review Report. Bradford Council didn't exactly like or agree with what we were saying. Essentially, in Bradford, community and local politics were gripped by fear. The big fear was people not talking to each other because they remained ignorant about each other, knew little about others and failed to engage. The post-war immigrant communities arrived in the UK and had to fend for themselves, settle where they could, find their own accommodation and were lucky if they encountered friendly and welcoming neighbourhood and community relations. There had been no process of helping people to settle. It was a *laissez-faire* situation and has only recently changed with the introduction of new citizenship requirements. You go where the jobs are, because, as Sivanandan would say, capital wants you there. Capitalism wants your labour and wants you to work for as long as possible, for as little as possible.

We said all these things to the local authority in Bradford: that there was poor political leadership and corrupt community leadership. So-called community leaders were imposing their own views and values within the political processes and decision-making system and not necessarily reflecting the actual views of the deprived black and white communities into the system. Those who controlled the political power dealt with community leaders who were unrepresentative and not directly with the people at the grassroots and in the streets. Misinformation was a big problem in the area; the rumour-mongering was based on stereotype, the demonisation of Asian youth, the Muslims and the blacks, all led to negatively held opinions which were never corrected by those in a position to do so, authoritatively. All the rumours about asylum seekers coming in to take over people's homes were never corrected, when untrue, by local politicians, in a context of scare stories, sensationalism and fear generated by national media coverage of asylum/immigration issues.

Bradford Council had had the report since April 2001 and decided to publish it on 11 July – but, of course, Bradford had already gone up in flames on the 7th. Just before Bradford went up, Oldham and Burnley had 'done their own thing' in similar uprisings. Now, there are a lot of major issues about why Bradford happened but the police's immediate response was to round up those who were seen as the criminals, who then got exemplary sentences. And that further alienated the community. The thinking was that these were criminals and their actions had nothing to do with social concerns. The government's response to the social uprisings in the northern towns was to introduce the concept of 'community cohesion' aimed at bringing people from different backgrounds together. This is where the debate starts to develop about segregation being created by Muslims choosing not to mix. It was allegedly the Muslims' fault in all the key commentators' reports. September 11 happened very soon afterwards to add to the tensions. Now there was a 'war on terror'. (Of course, Islamophobia is not new. It was developing throughout the nineties.) We saw a new climate being created, a new discourse in which the government, led by Tony Blair, was saying in so many words: 'It's for you, the Muslims, to sort this out. You have to go and find the people who are bad in your community. You have to solve that problem. It's not us, it's you.'

But throughout the period building up to 7/7 (the London bombings in July 2005), the issue of non-integration, and who was to blame for it, came up. And the finger was pointed very clearly at Muslims, as well as at migrant, non-white communities. And that's where the attack on multiculturalism actually started to mushroom, driven by a frenzied media and by very media-friendly people. Everywhere nowadays that

you hear about the issues of integration, segregation and multicultural-ism, there is always a quote: 'even Trevor Phillips of the CRE has attacked multiculturalism'.

The burden of their argument runs: 'It's all the fault of these people who are not like us. If they want to be like "us", they've got to dress like us, talk like us, eat like us, be like us.' Is that not assimilation? It is noth-ing like the Roy Jenkins model of integration that Sivanandan alluded to earlier this morning, 'equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.

It is being driven through our tabloid media. A study commissioned by the Committee on Standards in Public Life revealed that over 80 per cent of people do not trust our government ministers to tell the truth. And about the same proportion do not trust tabloid journalism to tell them the truth. But the scary situation in this country is that the same percentage of people say that they get their ideas and information – which form their views and influence their attitudes – from the very people they don't trust: politicians and newspaper journalists, among others.

And local politicians, if Bradford is anything to go by, have buried their heads in the sand. There are a lot of 'community cohesion pro-jects', in which all-white schools mix with all-Muslim schools, so that people can see each other and talk to each other, have fashion shows together and things like that. There is nothing wrong with that. But there is no debate about inequality, about racism and about poverty. And part of the disaffection of poor white people in those communities is that the whole issue about poverty is not seen as being *shared* by poor blacks and poor whites. It's about 'them' and 'us'. It's about what *they* get and what *we* don't get. That is the resentment created among the poorer communities right across the spectrum of our society.

Thus, the whole debate about the war on poverty, both internation-ally and locally, has failed to touch those who subsist in poverty and thus are trapped in conflict with each other, because of the resentment they feel about what each other may be getting from the state that is denied to them. This is, once again, fuelled by the media and not dealt with adequately by local politicians and leaders. And that's a very important part of the multiculturalism debate as well, because it is saying that those people have no right to be here, those people who are not integrating, who do not share our culture and values, they are not like us, and unless they integrate, they are undeserving of equal treatment and our hospitality.

Part of what Bradford is doing politically, and this is not necessarily a reflection on all the towns that are afflicted by the issues of cohesion and segregation, is based on the fact that, to attract funds in modern Britain today, you must not talk about racism; you must not talk about challenging inequalities. Not criticising the government enables

you to attract funds. But then, when you do attract funds, that so-called 'social inclusion' doesn't happen – because what you are actually engaged in is a kind of 'beauty contest' where you all compete for funds but only the ugliest wins! That's because you've got to articulate how your neighbourhood is much worse than the one next door. So, if you happen to be a poor white estate that's seeking improvements and see one that is predominantly Asian getting the dosh, then you think there is something wrong. And of course, the BNP, all suited and booted, come along and knock on your door, saying, 'Hey, they are not interested in you but we are, and we are not really racist . . .'.

We've got to recognise this as a part of the challenge. This week I was in Accrington, Lancashire, where too many people, from all the sections of the community, are living in, and working with, and afflicted by, degrees of relative poverty. What those communities are doing is recognising that, in their own small way, they have to come together to challenge collectively those injustices they face. Whatever is being done in their name has to benefit everyone. If social inclusion and community cohesion are to have any meaning, they are about all of us. It's by getting people to feel, whatever their circumstances, that they're a part of something that can impact on their lives. Where the good work is happening, it starts with the involvement of children in their earliest years – influencing their attitudes, such as in the 'Sure Start' programmes, and in the early years' environment throughout the entirety of the schooling process. This is a very important part of ensuring that education and learning overcomes ignorance, generates social interaction, removes fear of the unknown and provides a very clear vision, on the part of people, to recognise that they aren't in control of the levers of power, and who the decision makers are who allocate the resources and determine their fate.

The successful projects can generate a new mood which recognises that resentment, hostility and intolerance can only be reduced and eliminated when diverse communities all stay together, are all engaged in making the decisions and, however poor they are relatively, are contributing to making decisions that benefit everyone. That is contributing to building cohesion.

Salma Yaqoob: the Lozells experience

I've been asked to speak about a very localised experience: Birmingham's experience following the Lozells riots in November 2005. What I'm going to do is to try to unpack our local experiences in the context of the over-arching themes as Sivanandan outlined them – bearing in mind that backdrop of neoliberal attack and the 'war on terror'. What really made Lozells headline news was the fact

that ethnic minorities were fighting between themselves; this was how it was portrayed. We're familiar with the northern experience, which is about Asian and white people. What Lozells did was give an opening for the myth to be put about that multiculturalism really has failed because even the ethnic minorities themselves can't get along, with the segregated attitude that they have.

It was a serious matter because what happened was based on allegations, broadcast on various pirate radio stations, that a Jamaican girl had been raped by some Asians. Rumours went around and two young people ended up being killed in the violence; homes were destroyed and businesses attacked. So it was a very scary and intense experience and it was important to draw lessons from it. But within a few days of these violent clashes, a survey was carried out by Race Equality West Midlands, which, interestingly, reported that 'a substantial majority in each community, black, Asian and white, continue to believe that Asian and black people get on well together'.

So to view all these communities as totally polarised, with violence an example of that polarisation, was simply not true. The report's findings were at odds with the perception of Lozells as a neighbourhood hopelessly polarised along racial lines. The violence, it said, 'involved a minority of active participants on either side. The prevailing rhetoric of division is belied by the complex reality of daily lived relations in this neighbourhood.' This picture confirms what is generally true in Birmingham, which has a huge number of racially mixed neighbourhoods. Twenty-seven of the city's thirty-nine wards have highly mixed neighbourhoods. So, if the report gave an accurate picture of relations, of a general mixing that goes on and a lack of polarisation, what other lessons can be learnt about inner-city life?

I want to flag up two areas of concern. First, the single biggest reason for communal tension is poverty and competition over scarce resources. We can't say this often enough. It's not because people have an innate inability to live side by side together. Unemployment in Lozells stands at 22 per cent and there's huge deprivation in housing and on a range of indices. This has been compounded by the local political leadership that we have. Birmingham City Council is now run by a Tory-Lib Dem coalition, so the vast majority of councillors are from outer-city affluent areas. The *Birmingham Post*, a centre-Right newspaper, summarised it: 'Birmingham is ruled by a white, middle-class, mostly male, layer of councillors representing suburban seats.' So, when critical issues arise, they don't want to hear about poverty; they have no interest in inner-city areas. They don't want to hear about people's experiences. They come and wheel out the local community representatives, saying, 'oh, we all love each other, let's use words like "cohesion" and, really, you must go back and tell our young people to stop misbehaving themselves'. It then becomes an issue of

responsibility within the community and of blaming the lack of control within communities.

The issue of how community leaders behaved during the Lozells crisis is also crucial. We have talked about poverty and the economic aspect but anyone from a black or Asian background has to acknowledge that there are prejudices within our communities. What is important is how we handle them and how we address them. For example, within the Asian community, there are stereotypes of black people as lazy, not able to hold their families together, as responsible for their own lack of progress. Within the black community, some stereotypes of Asians – very publicly aired at the time of the Lozells riots – were almost the same as those that some people in white society hold about Jews: they're rich, they're parasitic and they're disrespectful. I'm able to talk about it now, but to talk about it then was very difficult because it was such a sensitive area.

That is part of the challenge of our anti-racist struggle: how to deal with these issues in a real, sensitive and constructive way. For example, one local black activist was quoted in the *Guardian* on 29 November 2005 as saying the following: 'We have a South African situation here. White on top, coloured Asian in the middle and African at the bottom. If you want a taxi – Asian. If you want petrol – Asian. Off-licence – Asian. Access to banks – Asian. Even Afro-Caribbean food – Asian. Our community feels trapped. The truth about integration is that we do not integrate with the Asians; we coexist. I applaud those who work 24/7. But [the Asians] have an unfair advantage: they came from Uganda and Kenya with money. I cannot condone what Idi Amin is supposed to have done – I stress supposed to have done – but the fact is that the Afro-Caribbeans were here first, then the Asians came and built an economy based on the millions they had made in Africa.'

But this kind of attitude actually comes from the ways that local authorities have, previously, almost encouraged people to compete with each other. We have to say, in so many words: 'We're worse off than you, we're bigger victims than you. We're more deserving than you.' People are pitted against each other, fighting for this or that scrap of grant money.

Instead of a cooperative approach, people try to establish that they're the real heroes of the black struggle, based on how much they can 'down' other communities. There's this belief that if you shout and scream loudly enough, you will benefit yourself politically as well. At some of the meetings that I have been at, most people present did not accept what such people said; they did not feel that these so-called leaders represented them.

On the Asian side, a similar attitude emerges in local elections. It was a great step forward that Asian people started to enter local politics and

it is an achievement that we have a few Asian councillors. But it is true that, at election time, there is what is called 'biraderi politics', family, 'clan' politics. Where you have large areas and large families you can count on a block vote, whichever party you end up standing for. This is corrupting of the political process and the political parties know this. They will give people a platform and encourage candidates according to who's got the biggest family reach. So there is no political discourse and, in certain areas in Birmingham, white voters' doors are not even knocked on, because they're not counted as important for the numbers in the voting game. So you see more and more people not bothering to vote, while a few communities are over-canvassed, as candidates compete for their vote.

This is important to discuss because, even though we are talking about the alienation of black and Asian people, there is an issue of white working-class alienation, of people who have been abandoned by New Labour. There is a bigger gap now between the rich and poor than in Victorian times; and we need to discuss this, together. There has to be only one way forward, with black, white and Asian people working together for economic equality and racial equality. All the other things that have been tried, all the other roads, have only led to more and more alienation, more and more division.

If we can't start winning this argument on the grounds of equality and on the grounds of economics, then we are doing something wrong as activists. It has to do with setting out the truth. When you hear people like Lord Ouseley or Sivanandan speak the truth, they just remove these illusions being peddled by politicians and media people with power and money behind them. That truth sticks.

I found it directly in my work in the anti-war movement. When we first started to say things like what this war is really about, people would say: 'Are you the conspiracy theorists?' But slowly you make a connection between the war, the profits, the oil, big business, what is happening, who's benefiting and why. The arguments are there to be made. That's also why conferences like this are vital. We have to provide a clear analysis of what's going on – an intellectual framework involving a battle of ideas. Because without that, we are without tools, buffeted every which way.

We are being beaten over the head with words like 'integration' and 'cohesion' right now. This is the Orwellian world that we have today where cohesion is really about division, and multiculturalism is being made into a dirty word – deliberately so, almost before the ink on the Macpherson inquiry has dried, to get rid of any positive findings, any positive implementation. They make out that for centuries Britain has been so tolerant, that these black and Asian people are just over-stepping the mark and that it's time for this monolithic assimilation

approach. What's suppressed is the fact that it was not so long ago that my dad was confronted with signs like 'No blacks, no Irish, no Pakis, no dogs'. And I am supposed to be really grateful that, as an Asian woman, I can have all these rights now. But that's not because they were handed down. It's because people struggled; there was a fight back.

A. Sivanandan: a few basic points

I had my say in the plenary this morning and I don't want to take up your time here. But I would like to make a few basic points about multiculturalism which have been missing from our discussion.

1. In itself multiculturalism simply means cultural diversity. But, in practice, that diversity can either be progressive leading to integration, or regressive leading to separatism.
2. The force that drives multiculturalism in either direction is the reaction to racism and, in particular, the racism of the state which sets the seal on institutional and popular racism.
3. The reaction to racism is either resistance (struggle) or accommodation. (Submission is not an option, nor is terrorism.)
4. Resistance to, or struggle against, racism engenders a more just society, enlarges the democratic remit and provides the dynamics of integration that leads to a pluralist society.
5. Accommodating to racism engenders a retreat from mainstream society into the safety of one's own ethnicity and leads to separatism.
6. Anti-racism is the element that infuses politics into multiculturalism and makes it dynamic and progressive. (Note that the Race Relations Acts of 1965, 1968 and 1976 were the result of anti-racist struggles of the '60s and '70s.)
7. Remove the anti-racist element and multiculturalism descends into culturalism/ethnicism. (Witness the post-Scarman settlement that reduced the fight against racism to a fight for culture and led to enthnic enclaves.)

Despite a few such enclaves, however, the tradition of a progressive multiculturalism is uniquely present in British society – which, if harnessed, can bring about the community cohesion that the government thinks it can impose from above by denouncing multiculturalism as divisive per se and demanding assimilation (which it euphemistically terms integration) signified by adherence to British values (as though they were unique to Britain).

Responses

Derrick Lynch, Race Equality Inspectorate
I wish to speak to the statement that 'whites, Asians and blacks' have to get together to solve the problem. If institutional racism is the same as white supremacy, then what is the benefit for a white person to go against the system of institutional racism which is white supremacist?

Clara Connolly, Women Against Fundamentalism
I'm reminded when I hear the speakers that this conference is organised by a group that calls itself 'Race & Class'. It is really encouraging and such a change to hear the issues of poverty, of scarcity of resources, those sort of economic issues, addressed. It is very seldom that you find forums where this is the case. I am sure that's one of the reasons why this conference is so packed. When you are talking about white resentment and the perception, fed by a frenzied media, that scarce resources are going to asylum seekers and ethnic minority communities, I'd like you to also address the issue of the impact of the 'war on terror' on government policy towards Muslim groups, towards promoting 'Muslim moderates' in order to encourage them to distance themselves from jihadists and so on. It seems to me that, at a time when women's refuges, for example, are desperate for resources, the money that used go to things such as youth clubs that were traditionally run by secularists is now being given to religious leaders, to run those sorts of organisations. And that is also a cause of resentment, it seems to me, not only in white communities, but in minority communities as well, particularly among their secular voices.

Pragna Patel, Southall Black Sisters and Women Against Fundamentalism
It's quite right that the questions of poverty, globalisation and imperialism are at the heart of any understanding of what we are facing today. And I also recognise immediately what Sivanandan says about the descent of British society into enclaves of culturalism and ethnicism; it's a process that's almost complete. But I feel that's just one side of the story. There is a silence about the rise of religious fundamentalism in our communities, which cannot solely be excused or ignored because we have to confront the 'war on terror', because religious fundamentalisms worldwide, in all religions, are also in the business of spreading terror and fear. In this country, multiculturalism is under attack, in the sense of its progressive aspect. But I feel that what we are witnessing, in terms of state official policy, is assimilation tied to multi-faithism, which I think is the real problem. And both the state and community leaders, particularly religious fundamentalists and religionists who have wormed their way into the heart of state policy in this country,

are reconstructing civil society along faith lines and faith communities, which is extremely dangerous because they are in the business of manipulating identity politics, manipulating the politics of victimhood, basically to exert control and power over those who are more vulnerable. And actually, they have had no interest, historically, in social justice, including justice for women and other vulnerable groups in our society. And it's that reconstruction of civil society along faith lines which is so dangerous. Secular progressive forces and spaces are being squeezed out. There are two battles going on, the 'war on terror' that we need to confront and all it implies that Sivanandan and others identified, and the war against religious fundamentalism – because they mirror one another.

Herman Ouseley
I think that the points in the last two contributions are fairly self-evident in terms of the ways in which we have to address how we come together to challenge those who have wormed their way into the system and, in a sense they answer, too, the first question about institutional racism. We see the pattern of religious leaders who became part of the Home Office set-up after 9/11 and before 7/7. It's a pattern that we've seen a lot of: black and ethnic minority people, who were in the struggle in the seventies and the eighties but who are now part of the system itself. They may not be running it, they may not be at the top of it, but they are part of that system. And some may have lost their way and some of them are now having to be the gatekeepers against other members of ethnic minority communities.

I have individual black and Asian colleagues coming to me now because they have gone to organisations like the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, but the help is not there because of a low priority in challenging the system and those in power in our institutions. They come to me out of desperation. Even some in the trade unions have abandoned them. Sometimes they seek my help to stand alongside them to get justice and fight the system, the very system that we fought for, to enable everyone to get fair treatment, it is often the case that the system has closed tightly against us. We sometimes come up against some black people who have lost their self-identity and consciousness. The system turns on them as well. I do not blame them. They have their mortgages to pay, have to compromise to the system to survive and I have an understanding of where they're at. But we're going to see that some of the 'faith' leaders have got in and are going to do exactly the same thing. And they will start to contribute to and support the notions about who is not integrating, who isn't contributing, who is more deserving of help, support, opportunities, access to information, job opportunities.

How are we going to stand together to start to break that down? The answer is through the initiatives on the ground that still exist, the sort of things where communities are still struggling to establish their right to challenge decisions about using resources in the wrong way. The example I gave you, of Accrington, is one where poor communities from all backgrounds, whether they have a faith or none, see that the way to go forward is together, in struggle, in decision-making and in listening to each other's concerns.

The last point I'll make is that this government, in terms of the 'war on terror' and the response to 7/7 among other things, is expecting the Muslim community to identify why people want to blow up themselves and kill other innocent people. But when the government hears a lot of people saying 'we don't like your foreign policy' (not, of course, that that condones suicide bombing), it says it has got nothing to do with foreign policy. So the reality is, the government is not listening and is not interested in views other than the ones that agree with it.

It's a big agenda that we have here. How we actually squeeze that into what we can practically do, still comes back to what our people on the ground are doing and what we are able to do to support them. Because the struggle *is* on the ground and the answers *are* with people on the ground. It's not in Whitehall, it's not necessarily in the town halls, it is on the streets, on the estates and in the communities.

The government is dealing with people who they consider as leaders, whether they are leaders or not, who are compliant, who are prepared to compromise. It doesn't matter whether they are black, brown, white, male or female, as long as they look 'diverse'. The people who are in their newly created Commission on Integration and Cohesion and the Commission on Equality and Human Rights are essentially the people the government *wants* because they will do what the government wants. They will go round with their tours and say, 'we don't want you to talk about foreign policy'. The point is that it doesn't matter whether it's an Asian or black male or female at the top of the organisation, an institution that is prepared to be racist is going to be sexist and it's going to be homophobic. It's going to be attacking, marginalising and keeping in their place poor people, whether they are black or white, because they know they can get away with it.

The important point for me is how we support people in a wide range of campaigns operating at a community level where they are impoverished by lack of information – or misinformation – and by people not communicating with them. They are not being supported to do things for themselves. The whole history of struggle tells us that we have got to help people to fight and challenge; not, as happened in Bradford, where they then got imprisoned, but to show their anger peacefully and not be complacent and apathetic, which is what Blairism invites. If we can get anything out of this event, it's learning how to

relate the experience we bring here today, as people who are concerned and active, to those out there – who feel as though no one is listening, no one cares and no one understands them. Because it is they who have to be empowered, enthused, inspired to be angry against injustices and poverty and to be challenging for effective positive change so that we can all benefit.

Salma Yaqoob
I think that just in those few questions some really important issues have been raised. We need to emphasise a politics of solidarity. All reactionary politics and communalist politics are based on enhancing that sense of 'what's in it for me' or 'let's do it against them'. Now, when we actively say we're going to act in a different way out of principle, I think that's a universal way; it's not about British values, Islamic values, Asian values, white values.

So, we are arguing for a politics of principle. Take the local elections in Birmingham. I represent Sparkbrook, where just over 50 per cent of people are from ethnic minorities. So, obviously, there is a large, significant minority of white people, almost 50 per cent. Going by the BNP's campaign (its candidates stood in every ward in Birmingham), it should have done well there, because Sparkbrook is a deprived area. Almost everybody is poor and then there was the asylum issue, the ethnic minority issue. Yet, what happened? We had one of the lowest votes for the BNP across Birmingham.

I think it's about going to every doorstep in that area, arguing our case and explaining why people are in the situation they are in. That's why it's so important to have a framework and why we have to work together. This is not about saying, 'let's all hold hands' and 'peace and love', in a kind of mushy sentimental manner. It's about a real strong alternative, an appeal to something more deep and principled. And it does mean winning a moral argument. Having the energy and the commitment to do that, I think, is our choice.

With regard to the other things raised, about religious fundamentalism and the rise of it, and how the government has appropriated it, I actually don't totally agree with what was said; it's too simplistic. There are aspects that are true, but I don't see it in terms of the trajectory that was outlined. For example, there is no way that the government is silent about Muslim religious fundamentalism. We hear it day in, day out, screaming out of every media outlet, to the point where most of us who you might categorise as Muslims, in our communities, are sick to death of it. In fact, we are all branded with it, we are all potential terrorists. We have to preface *any* discussion with: 'I'm not a terrorist, I'm not an extremist, honest. And I condemn those bombers.' There's a suggestion that the leadership hasn't condemned terrorism enough, yet that's all they do.

Take the example of the Muslim Council of Britain. It was wooed at the start, as long as it didn't criticise the government. So we didn't see them at the first, national anti-war demonstration. Now, the MCB is itself under attack. We have had documentaries attacking it and now it is out of government favour, because it has criticised government foreign policy.

Take these roadshows that the government is putting on. Ministers, such as Phil Woolas, come along and talk about 'community cohesion' and so on. At the last one in Birmingham, just a few weeks ago, Woolas said that it is Muslims who must fight this extremism in our community and we must tell the government how we're going to work harder doing it. He said we could not talk about foreign policy and we could not talk about faith schools. Those two issues are off the agenda in any discussion or engagement with Muslim communities. This isn't pandering to Muslims. If anything, it's the opposite. When a Muslim woman said, 'what about foreign policy?', Phil Woolas reportedly said that her views were 'crap'. So the government is not interested in what Muslims have to say and they are certainly not interested in promoting an Islamic religious fundamentalism.

But there is a rise in fundamentalism around the world. In the United States, we have got George Bush and there is the Bharatiya Janata Party in India. But I would say that, in Britain, our local experience is that the Muslim religious extremists' argument is losing ground. Not only have all the leaders come out and condemned it, but at grassroots level they are marginalised. Despite the anger against foreign policy, there haven't been riots by Muslim youth. It's been peaceful, democratic protest in the anti-war movement. I thought we won the argument and I count myself in that. It's about being radical about dissent, in saying we can protest not just as Muslims but as equal British citizens. That has been a really important thing in Muslim community politics. We can't undervalue the contribution that has been made in actually tackling head-on the argument that just because you feel strongly that innocent people are being killed abroad, it justifies killing innocent people here. That's the politics of rage, helplessness, of no real political alternative; it is just about the lower self with a veneer of religion.

People talk about fundamentalism and extremism, but Robert Pape's research has showed that the vast majority of suicide bombings in Lebanon were actually not carried out by Muslims. Yet, we have got this idea that Islam equals terrorism equals suicide bombings. But it is not the case. These are political responses and I, as a political person, say they are counterproductive politically, morally wrong and Islamically without any basis.

New Labour is desperately looking for Muslims who will say 'politics isn't part of us'. The Home Office thinks that there would be less

terrorism as a result of certain groups being wooed. Now the Sufi Muslim Council is the new pal of the government, the new 'progressive' Muslims. I count myself as a progressive Muslim but, of course, I'm not going to be invited to those discussions because I oppose British policy abroad and I am against the neoliberal agenda here. They are looking for *their* type of Muslims. This is nothing new. We've had the 'Uncle Tom' thing; we had 'divide and rule'. And we have to be alert to it. I would challenge those in our communities to ask how we deal with this without engaging in an in-fighting which is going to be counter-productive for all of us in the long-term.

I think, going back to the point from Women Against Funda-mentalism, it's a slightly more complex issue. I'm against any kind of extremism and, even in my election campaign, I had guys saying not to vote for me because I am a woman. Well, I had to fight this in a very personal way. One of the visible features of our campaign was the number of women that came out on the streets, knocking on the doors; and this was a new thing in Sparkbrook ward. But, instead of progressive people saying, 'hey, isn't that great, Asian Muslim women out on the streets politically canvassing', they say that it was a victory for 'sectarian identities' and 'victimhood'. Those are the words Nick Cohen wrote after I won that election. So, no matter what you do, it'll get twisted by people with their own agenda.

A. Sivanandan

Salma and Herman have answered your question and there seems to be no disagreement in principle. Let me come at it from a different angle. Let me answer the first question about what interest whites have in combating institutional racism. I would have thought that we should be talking here about strategies and tactics. There is no disagreement with what Derrick has said but I think it is important for white people to understand that, the struggle against injustice is indivisible. If the system comes for us in the morning, it will come for you that night. That was the burden of my speech earlier – that under this government, all our liberties are in danger. So, I think it is important for us to tell white people not to fight for us, but to fight for themselves. If you go back to the history of black struggle in this country, there was a time – as Roy Sawh over there, one of the great fighters of the fifties and sixties would tell you – when one of the things we told white people was: 'Don't come and fight for us. Fight in your corner, for your rights, and it will redound to us all.' Whereas if you fight for us, you will end up telling us what to do, you will take over our struggle. In the same way as men have tried to take over feminists' struggles or western feminists the struggles of Third World women. I think that is very important to understand. I am talking about tactics here rather than principles.

As for the second issue, I have the same sort of answer. It's a tactical question. Of course, there is absolutely no disagreement about fighting sexism or homophobia wherever you find it, but we've got to get our priorities right. There are a series of fights and a whole lot of enemies. And as the Chinese say, we need to win over the many, isolate the few and defeat the enemy one by one. We can't take them all on at once or lose the support of potential allies. That would be to win over the few, isolate the many and defeat our friends one by one. Nor should we weaken our overall struggle through sectarian in-fighting or pulling rank over each other in an 'I am more oppressed than you' politics. That does not mean we can't criticise each other, but that we do so within a framework that will help to rectify our own oppressiveness without giving hostages to the enemy. We are all in the same boat. So rock it by all means, to get it on an even keel, but don't let's sink it. Let's criticise each other, fight with each others' oppressivenesses but only to make our politics more liberatory and our unity organic. Criticism, struggle, unity – as the old revolutionaries used to say.

We must, for instance, allow the Muslim community to fight their own battles in terms of their own problems and experience – and they are doing it. And we, as fellow travellers, whether we be secularist or religionist, feminist or gay – even if we have criticisms of the Muslim community or of Islam – we should give them all the critical support we can, so that the progressive struggle within the Muslim community can gain in strength from our understanding, a fillip from our support, and not feel besieged on all sides.

Reverting to some of the other issues that came up in our discussion, there are two I would like to comment on. The first is about how ASBOs appear to me to be part of a government strategy, conscious or otherwise, to close down on street culture and street politics – the politics of unemployed youth, and African-Caribbean and Asian youth in particular. And this, along with the other restrictions the government has placed on demonstrations (which I talked about this morning) limits freedom of expression and assembly and narrows the field of democratic politics.

And yet – and this is my second point – the government instructs us to live up to British values of tolerance, free speech and so on. Whereas it is us, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, merely by our enforced presence here – we are here because you are there – and the way we are treated, hold up a mirror to the government's betrayal of ordinary human values. We are not, as is alleged, the ills of society, we throw up, instead, like a barium meal, the ills of society.

Lord Herman Ouseley is the author of the Community Pride Not Prejudice *report on Bradford. Salma Yaqoob is a Respect Party councillor for Birmingham Sparkbrook.*

Linking the struggles

By Salma Yaqoob

A conference like this one is about a balance: a balance between out-rage and indignation at injustice, and optimism and heart.

As people involved in the anti-racist struggle, we have to be clear about what the big picture is. Why are we facing what we do? Unless we understand that 'why?', we will not be efficient in going into the 'hows'; how we tackle the challenges that face us. I put it to you, as Sivanandan did this morning, that without understanding how inter-twined racism is with imperialism and neoliberalism, our struggles will lose focus. Two parts of that relationship, between imperialism and neoliberalism, have been succinctly encapsulated by a very forth-right US right-wing commentator, Thomas Friedman. Many of you may have come across his regular articles. This is what he says, this is how brazen these apologists, these enforcers often are:

> For globalism to work, America cannot be afraid to act like the almighty superpower that it is . . . The hidden hand of the market will never work without the hidden fist – McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell-Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.

That's the summary of what we are all dealing with. This is exactly what is going on in the Middle East today. The United States military is prising open new markets and opportunities for big business – people like Halliburton and the like. And this new phase of imperialism, this new attempt by US power to remap the Middle East for its own strategic interests, needs a new ideological cover. Because while Fried-man has come out openly, Tony Blair doesn't say that. He says it's about the 'war on terror', it's about civilising the Middle East. When George Bush went to Afghanistan, do you know what his wife said? She said: 'The W in George W Bush is for women: we're there to free those poor, oppressed Muslim women.' It's news to me that the American army is on a feminist mission in Afghanistan.

And this is just a new form of old, old stuff. When the imperialists went into Africa in the nineteenth century, they said it was the white man's burden ('Poor us, poor white people!'). They went in there to civilise those 'backward, underdeveloped' people. They took their wealth, they took their resources, they took their land – and they even took their people! But, as you know, they did them a huge favour – just like they are doing a huge favour in the Middle East,

bringing democracy and western civilised values to those 'backward' Islamic nations.

In terms of current geopolitics, the threat of Muslim fundamentalism today is to White House propagandists what the bogey of communism was during the Cold War: a means to legitimise wars abroad, a mechanism to instil mass fear and to increase powers of governments over their citizens at home. It is imperialism, my friends, it is neoliberalism that brings our struggles together and that our struggles are ultimately aimed at challenging. Whether you are working to defend asylum seekers, whether you are working against climate change, whether you are working for civil liberties or the Guantánamo prisoners, what unites us, ultimately, is that we are fighting imperialism and neoliberalism.

And racism is the ideological cover. Yes, Muslims are at the frontline today. That is the new racism. But in the 1930s, it was the Jews who were demonised. They were the 'evil', the 'aliens' among western nations. After the second world war, we had the demonisation of black people, of Asian people. I remember, even in the 1980s, the 'young, angry black man', the aggressive stereotypes, 'this person could start a riot at any moment': this was the enemy within the British state. And now we have the Muslim, ready at any moment to carry out a terrorist attack, a Muslim woman who may have something under her scarf, the man with a rucksack . . . I tell you, when my husband goes travelling, I say, 'Don't you dare take a rucksack'. The *Evening Standard* published a survey that said one in three Londoners felt nervous and uncomfortable when a person of Asian or North African appearance was near them. Is this the great multicultural, anti-racist society that we have today? Is this the pinnacle of progressive struggle? Are these the kind of values that we want instilled in our children? Of course not.

What is the official response to this? It is to bring on more demonisation, to undermine even the gains that we have. I don't take for granted the precious rights that have been won, because of people, like yourselves, people who have struggled for decades. For what we have in England is actually better than a lot of what is going on in Europe. When I went to France for an anti-war rally, I was part of a panel discussion. Forget about the audience, the woman next to me started to bang her hands on the table, saying: 'How can we have a Muslim woman with a scarf on in our panel? She is oppressed and she is bringing oppressive practices into our hall.' That is the level of understanding engendered by this extreme backlash against any expression of cultural or religious identity. There have been arguments here about the nature of secularism and the role of religious believers' involvement in mass movements here, but due to decades of anti-racist struggles through which a precious space for visibly Muslim women

like me has been created. And this, my friends, is what is under attack now. It is under attack, shamefully, by people who should be leading the defence: people like Trevor Phillips, the head of the CRE, who is effectively saying that multiculturalism is dead, it should be put to one side.

So, there are many challenges ahead. We shouldn't be afraid because we have been through them before. I have outlined how the demonisation of Muslims is linked to a climate of fear. In Birmingham, we went through this in the 1970s, with the Irish community's experience following those tragic pub bombings. The demonisation was so great, resulting in mass arrests, a whole community in fear. Although they were of the same colour, they were afraid to open their mouths because of their Irish accents. We had miscarriages of justice like the Birmingham Six. There is a parallel here: the mass arrests, the psychological impact, a loss of confidence in the community, a loss of a feeling of belonging. It took almost thirty years before the Saint Patrick's Day parade became central to the cultural calendar in Birmingham. Now people come out in force. But for many, many years, the Irish community didn't feel confident. It is that kind of psychological erosion of confidence that Muslims are going through. I don't count myself as a shrinking violet, but it is in my mind every single day. It's something I have to wake up with, it's something I go to sleep with; it's there when I put my TV on, when I watch the news. It's a bit like when I used to watch the daleks on Doctor Who, you want to see it, but you're scared. That's how I watch the news because it's always about Muslims and what they've done now. Even when the Pope comes out with some statement, the news is not about what the Pope said, it's about the angry Muslim reaction.

But, my brothers and sisters, the reason I, the Muslim standing here today, have this strength to speak out, is because of the solidarity that I have experienced. In those days after September 11, I felt so isolated, so powerless against the rhetoric, the demonisation day-in, day-out in the news. Then I found some people who said openly what I felt in my heart, that the war in Afghanistan was wrong, that this was not the right response to the criminal terrorist actions of a few people; that collective punishment is not justice, it will not prevent more innocents being killed. That, in fact, it is a means of killing more innocent people. I heard that and I saw that, from white people. It didn't change everything, they did go into Afghanistan, it didn't stop that war, but I tell you, that brotherhood, that sisterhood, that feeling of being understood, that feeling that I was not all alone – that was solidarity. I needed that. And even now, when you look at all those great anti-war marches, culminating in 15 February 2003, the majority of people were white. The biggest demonstration in British history wasn't about a domestic issue. It wasn't about what we're going to

get here in this country. It was about solidarity with people who live thousands of miles away, didn't share their religion, didn't share their colour, didn't share any family links. It was about solidarity. So, while people across the world can look at what our government is doing – and it is our job as citizens to fight and resist that in every way we can – the message that we give out, when we turn up in force in visible ways, is that you and I are not alone. I have had calls from Palestine, from Iraq, from Afghanistan; letters, emails say, 'We see your demonstrations and it gives us hope that we are not forgotten'.

Moazzam Begg is here. Moazzam is from Birmingham and I knew him before his horrendous experience in Guantánamo. It was a shock, because we know what an articulate, gentle person he is. We know that because we know him. But when he was in Guantánamo, he wasn't forgotten. His picture was put on T-shirts. Thousands of people who never knew him personally were out there marching, demanding his release. I don't think for a second that Tony Blair would have lifted a finger to help Moazzam. It was the pressure, created by people who didn't know Moazzam personally but who, out of principle, out of solidarity, demanded his release. That is a success story, a very, very important one for us to hold on to. The power of demonstrating, the power of people on the streets.

I will just end with this. No struggle, no struggle, is without its fruits. I would dearly have loved the war in Iraq not to have taken place, but I don't see it as a failure of our movement that that didn't happen. Because of the gains, the space, the civil liberties that have been defended, the multiculturalism, the anti-racism, these are our new fight now. And this fight is part of challenging the neoliberal agenda. When we carry on these fights, we must always keep that framework in mind. This is our link with one another; this is how we support each other in our individual struggles. So please, if you take one thing away from today, keep your clarity; do not underestimate your own power in giving other people support and strengthening others in their struggles.

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Commentary

RACE & CLASS

Bristol: 'civilising' the inner city

By Matt Clement

Abstract: Although Bristol's inner-city districts of St Paul's, St Jude's and Easton are currently the subject of urban regeneration, the underlying socio-economic inequalities facing the black, minority ethnic and poor white communities that live there have been ignored. The legacy of Bristol's leading role in the slave trade, the institutional racism that led to the St Paul's riot in 1980 and the domestic Islamophobia accompanying the 'war on terror' have resulted in distrust between local residents and the authorities that claim to be revitalising their areas.

Keywords: Easton, inner city, riot, slavery, social exclusion, St Jude's, St Paul's, urban regeneration

Introduction

As cities modernise and populations change, patterns of social inequality shift, reflecting economic pressures and political agendas. Bristol is

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the UK's seventh-largest city, the regional capital of the south-west of England. Its population is around half a million, including the suburbs and outer estates. The city centre adjoins the Harbourside, the location of Britain's eighteenth century premier slaving interest, which is currently undergoing extensive remodelling to become a marina complex of luxury flats and corporate headquarters. Less than a mile away, along the River Frome, which flows into Bristol from the north-east but is today sunk beneath the tarmac of the spur motorway, live Bristol's inner-city communities in Easton, St Jude's and St Paul's. Since the 1950s these areas have been the home of various immigrant communities and their descendents, accommodated in post-war tower blocks and the old Georgian and Victorian terraces which have traditionally housed Bristol's working class.

Now the inner city is getting the 'Harbourside treatment' as a vast new shopping mall, parking and luxury flats are to be built on the derelict section of the Broad Plain in between the two neighbourhoods of St Jude's and St Paul's. This article examines the intersection of social policy, urban development and the labour market in a 'typical' UK city, and measures the costs of this 'civilizing process'[1] as differentially impacted on social classes defined by wealth, race and religion. Aspects of crime prevention, urban regeneration and employment policy illustrate the multi-dimensional nature of the configurations of social exclusion in the inner city.

Community policing

In 2003, Avon and Somerset police extended the boundaries of 'anti-social behaviour' to encompass a whole community. It became the turn of St Paul's to bear the brunt of a high-profile initiative to counter drugs crime, following the designation, in 2002, of Stapleton Road in neighbouring Easton as one of the nation's top ten crime 'hot spots' by Home Secretary David Blunkett.

Local District Commander Rowe announced there would be a two-week-long armed presence, day and night, on the streets of the neighbourhood, involving over 200 officers, with the specific aim of preventing clashes between feuding gangs contesting control of local drugs distribution networks. As well as press releases, a series of public meetings were held, both before and during the curfew period, to promote the benefits of this high-profile statement of intent of 'zero tolerance' of drugs crime. The police force had been much criticised by some local residents for failing to prevent open drug-dealing and associated violence in the recent past, particularly on a couple of nightmarish Bonfire nights when gangs fought mock street battles with fireworks and the police refused to intervene. As a result, there was a positive reaction from many local residents who felt that this was a welcome sign of civic

interest and active crime prevention, in contrast to previous neglect and indifference.

At a packed public meeting of around 300 people at the Malcolm X community centre in St Paul's in February 2003, Commander Rowe explained that the operation was not targeting locals, apart from recently released known offenders, but rather Jamaican 'yardies' who were believed to be preparing for a conflict with the previous 'local' drug dealers. He also assured the audience that this higher profile policing would be carried out politely and sensitively, in order not to antagonise the public it was there to protect. This assurance was met with some scepticism: one father explained how he had been stopped and questioned very aggressively by armed officers, 'and then, when they recognised my Bristol accent, they changed their tune . . . how can I persuade my son to treat the police with respect and obey the law when he sees them showing so little to me?', he wanted to know.

Overall the tone of the meeting felt guarded, as if many in the audience shared police concern over rising crime and wanted to believe DC Rowe's assurances, but their ability to do so was hamstrung by their own past experiences of institutional racism from the police and other civic authorities and the knowledge that the roots of drugs crime lie in the denial of equal opportunities in employment, education and housing to ethnic minorities in the city. In this instance, despite tensions among residents about police carrying loaded weapons, which came to a head at a later public meeting when a resident brought in a bullet he claimed police had discharged, the armed curfew passed off without incident and was considered a success. However, this was in part a superficial assessment as many locals predicted open drug dealing would simply relocate to neighbouring Easton, possibly to return after the fortnight.

When the discussion broadened out to discuss the type of conditions the neighbourhood required to become a better place to live in – e.g. successful locally-owned businesses, improved housing stock and higher educational standards leading to a more skilled workforce, there was greater scepticism. One businesswoman was adamant that the council had done nothing to help small businesses in St Paul's. Another speaker explained how their local housing co-op had been prevented from running social housing in the area, with the local authority insisting they did not have the expertise to manage a property that had been built to regenerate Ashley Road after the St Paul's riot of 1980.

Three years on, the litmus test of the current government's commitment to promoting 'active citizenship' and 'empowering communities' will be the degree to which inner-city residents feel included in the forthcoming massive shopping mall development to be built on their doorstep. How much of a say have they had in its purpose? How much local input has there been into its design, its business or the

personnel of its decision-makers? Any meaningful attempt to achieve these goals would mean overcoming the long-term legacy of racism and ghettoisation, symbolised in Bristol's slave-trading history and the post-war racial discrimination that led to the first of inner-city Britain's riots in St Paul's in April 1980.

Slavery, civilisation and resistance

Our multicultural UK is, in part, a product of the political consequences of the wave of inner-city riots in the early 1980s.[2] Black communities challenged openly racist practices, which had to change in the wake of the protests. The story of the St Paul's riot tells us a lot about racist attitudes in authority in the city. As various eye-witnesses recorded, it was sparked by a large-scale police raid on the Black and White Café in Grosvenor Road, right in the heart of the neighbourhood, on the 'front line'. The raid provoked resistance and outrage at the military style of the operation – which appeared to locals to confirm their pariah status in the eyes of the guardians of law and order.[3]

The police's overall duty to maintain civil order by keeping the peace should have suggested an orderly withdrawal from their raid on the café once it became obvious it was generating a situation likely to escalate beyond their control. But they were hamstrung by their institutionally racist assumptions, continually reinforced in the all-white *camaraderie* of their working lives, which resulted in an irrational over-reaction of ordering in riot vans and hundreds of officers in military formation. For the largely African-Caribbean residents of St Paul's, many of whom participated in the 'riot', their duty to be 'civilised' and 'respectable citizens' still drove their actions and reactions to events. People continued shopping, greeting neighbours and going to work throughout the riot; but their sense of injustice at the structured inequalities conferred on them by the city of Bristol, grew in magnitude as a result of the irrational fears and prejudices visited upon their community by the authorities.

West Indian immigrants were not clustered together in the run-down inner-city enclave out of choice but because they were treated as outsiders and systematically discriminated against in jobs and housing allocation. To be then descended upon by an occupying police force only confirmed their status as alien in the mainstream prejudices of the press and public opinion. The paradox of their position echoed Kenneth Clark's description of the rioters in New York's Harlem in 1964, who:

> [s]eemed deliberately to be prodding the police to behave openly as the barbarians that they felt they actually were . . . Paradoxically, [their] apparent lawlessness was a protest against lawlessness directed against [them].[4]

The revolt of African-Caribbean communities, alongside their poor white neighbours in inner-city Brixton, Moss Side and Toxteth in 1981, and London's Broadwater Farm Estate, Handsworth in Birmingham and Brixton (again) in 1985, were all sparked by police harassment. But there are other histories that figure when looking at social processes in the long-term. For all these communities, particularly those in Liverpool and Bristol, their protests also harked back further. They stand in the tradition of the revolt against slavery by their ancestors, which in turn evokes greater opposition to the institutions that fattened themselves on the profits of the slave trade.

In Bristol, the basis of the city's enormous expansion during its Georgian 'urban renaissance' was its connection with slave-trading and plantation-owning.[5] Even today it is a city whose civic authorities are anxious to play down the importance of the trade in turning the labours of slaves into the mansions of Clifton. There is still no exhibition to commemorate abolition or chronicle slavery in the city, although one is planned for 2007. And yet the city's main thoroughfare is still named after its biggest slave trader, Edward Colston, who can also boast a concert hall and two public schools still honouring him.

The continued existence of these monuments to Bristol's past did not escape the notice of the thousands of West Indian immigrants who were encouraged to settle and work in Britain's cities in the post-war boom and labour shortages of the 1950s. Even the jobs on the buses and in nursing that were advertised as opportunities for West Indians coming to Britain, were not easily obtained. St Paul's Elders Group member Princess Campbell recalls the wall of discrimination she faced to her becoming a sister in a Bristol hospital in the 1960s.[6] Bristol's famous bus boycott in 1963 was necessary to make the Bristol Omnibus Company employ non-white conductors.[7] Just as the echoes of these struggles were heard in the riot of 1980, so they resound in the current dilemmas of the city's ethnic minorities.

Regeneration since the riots

In 2004, the Black and White Café, where the 1980 riot initially broke out, was compulsorily purchased by the local authority as part of the long-planned, more permanent architectural eradication of the St Paul's 'front line' on Grosvenor Road. Opposite, a new Learning Centre and library has been built, undoubtedly a benefit to the community, although it unfortunately reduces the size of the green area where the annual Carnival takes place. These changes have improved the physical infrastructure of the area without addressing the social inequalities in employment. For example, despite a 'sustainable employment contract' being agreed between the local authority and building companies to use local labour, work on the construction of St Paul's Sports Academy

had to be halted temporarily in 2002 when it was discovered that there were no workers from ethnic minorities employed on site.

Fifteen years ago, the Labour-controlled local authority had also planned to use Bristol's Broad Plain, adjoining St Paul's, to build training workshops to increase local skills and social capital.[8] Now, the neo-liberal consensus has become so universal, so entrenched, that the only developments undertaken are those which create low-skilled employment and short-term profitability; typified by the minimum wage jobs and projected enhanced consumer goods sales at the new mall. When these 'decivilizing' processes[9] produce the very results they describe – communities dominated by low-wage working, the shadow economy and unemployment, the same consensus attempts to encourage a moral revulsion toward the anti-social *behaviour* and the *individuals* associated with it, rather than the anti-social conditions in which they are bred. This creates a degree of alienation and stress that is reflected in a diffuse bitterness in working-class localities across the city, with doubly oppressive ethnic and gender discrimination raising the bar between survival and 'sustainability' still higher.

One prominent example of rising intolerance and unequal treatment in the labour market occurred on the Monday following the 7 July 2005 bombings in London. Manak (not his real name) returned to work from a pre-arranged holiday in Punjab to find he had been sacked from his technician's post at a Bristol electrical company. He felt that he had been unfairly dismissed, in a more peremptory fashion than would have been the case with his white colleagues, and took the case to Bristol's industrial tribunal. His employers had claimed to be working within their equal opportunities policy, but when a copy of this was requested, it turned out to be literally a blank form downloaded from the internet! The firm's witnesses to Manak's misbehaviour didn't feel the need to justify their prejudiced opinions against him. As an example of Manak's 'misbehaviour' at work, a witness for the employer cited his refusal to remove his skull cap, despite the fact that, as a Sikh, he has never worn one! The employers' casual attitude towards any obligations they had to treat their employees fairly meant they didn't try very hard to justify their actions or even verify their complaints' authenticity. In November 2005, Manak's allegation of racially-aggravated unfair dismissal was upheld by Bristol industrial tribunal, which awarded him £20,000 compensation, sending a clear signal that Bristol's employers need to do more than pay lip service to equal opportunities.

These patterns of social exclusion and prejudice in the labour market condemn a rising proportion of the population to short-term jobs and relative poverty. Despite the city being 'work rich', recent research has found that 58 per cent of households in Bristol's inner-city Lawrence Hill ward rely upon welfare benefits for at least some part of their

income.[10] This makes the housing shortage in the inner city especially acute, as so few locals earn enough to buy their way into the available private housing, while the social housing stock is far too small to meet demand. For example, while the Broadmead redevelopment promises to revive 'city living' with over 200 private residences, only sixteen additional units of social housing will be built as part of it. These will be located at the rear of the mall's new car park, meaning they would have been hard to sell on the open market. As a result, the pull of the earnings from the informal and drugs economy still persists and in 2006 Grosvenor Road remains a 'sales point', albeit alongside many other areas of the city. Just yards from the Inkerman pub on Grosvenor Road, a former Department of Social Security building has been purchased by Richard Branson and converted into flats for sale at prices beyond the reach of local residents and their dependants. Rather than meeting a community need, such commercial ventures reinforce poverty and social exclusion.

Life in the 'Merchant's Quarter'

In between Bristol's inner-city communities of St Paul's and Easton sits St Jude's, a jumble of council tenements and car parks adjacent to the M32 motorway. Its aspect is currently being dramatically reconfigured to accommodate the new shopping mall, multi-storey car park and luxury housing development on the old Broad Plain car park. The area is largely home to elderly white tenants, many officially 'homeless' people living in Logos House, the vast Salvation Army hostel, and a growing Somali community. This 'social mix' has led to some small-scale tensions between the users of the Al Baseera mosque, previously a pub, and owners of a neighbouring car park, who have demonstrated their opposition to the mosque by a permanent display of Union Jacks and the location of a burger van advertising bacon rolls adjacent to its entrance. However, these antagonisms have not escalated and are not regarded as serious by local Muslims. Indeed, their regular presence as worshippers, particularly on a Friday when 200–300 attend, has changed the cultural mix of St Jude's, with Somali housing and training facilities springing up over the last couple of years.

As in the US, this 'magical urbanism'[11] – the process by which immigrant communities revive and reconfigure their environment – is proceeding apace, while coming into conflict with the neoliberal policies which restrict welfare access and stigmatise immigrants generally and Muslims in particular. Both the mosque and the hostel face directly onto the plate-glass rear of the new shopping mall currently under construction. Local campaigners against the development deplored the lack of community consultation, the minimal social housing commitments and the tokenistic community contribution allocation of

only £250,000 out of a total spend of £550 million.[12] The design of the mall literally turns its back upon St Paul's and St Jude's by placing all of its public entrances on the city centre side, while these neighbouring communities become new road conduits and car park overspills.

Despite some initial community opposition, the new development gained planning permission and is mid-way through its three-year construction programme. This year, the main controversy has been over its name. The 'Bristol Alliance' of local planners and businessmen came up with 'The Merchant's Quarter' – possibly reflecting the still-powerful influence of Bristol's former slave-trading conglomerate 'the Merchant Venturers' who still own much land in the city. Unsurprisingly, this led to a high-profile exchange in the local media, with many objecting to a title so redolent of Bristol's slave-trading past for a mall located in the inner city where many people have African roots.[13]

Conclusion

The social exclusionary aspects of this development have many dimensions. It has been devised without community consultation, let alone any leverage or decision-making powers; it is geographically exclusionary in its design, location and attitude towards the inner-city communities on its doorstep; its employment practices fly in the face of paper commitments to equal opportunities and sustainability; it meets only commercial and not social housing needs, while air quality, local transport links and public space are eroded through a process of ever-increasing commercial exploitation of the once public domain. At the same time, in government policy terms, it is judged to be inclusive – through its contribution to urban competitiveness. This 'public-private partnership' appropriates local authority land at the heart of the city in the name of 'sustainability'. Moreover, the economic regeneration of the inner cities – a process that was initiated in response to the institutionalised racism that provoked the riots – has become a commercial exercise in retail and property development that fails to meet its responsibilities to address poverty, ghettoisation and other anti-social conditions. Rather than combating rising economic inequality, it is contributing to it.

As the British state's imperial ambitions fracture domestic integration through discourses of Islamophobia, multiculturalism is now seen by government as part of society's problem rather than the solution. Hence, the government's interpretation of the causes of the riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001 was, as Sivanandan has written, 'not on the lines of "ethnic disadvantage", as Scarman had it, but of too much ethnic advantage, too much "multiculturalism", and not enough integration (read assimilation) or the more euphemistic

term "community cohesion"'.[14] To demand political conformity and religious quietism from Muslims is intolerable hypocrisy, given the government's crusading role in Islamic countries, and amounts to a remorseless turning of the screw, a process of intensifying alienation of the very people the policy is supposed to 'integrate'.

In France, in October 2005, the *banlieues* – the run-down outer suburbs of its major cities – exploded in a wave of protest against racist barriers in the labour market that kept young blacks and Muslims out of work. In the UK, politicians call increasingly stridently for assimilation and label immigrants as a pressure on scarce public resources. They are rolling back the gains of multiculturalism and deliberately unlearning the lesson that integration functions more effectively than enforcing monocultural conformity in an increasingly globalised, multicultural labour market. The compound of growing Islamophobia, persistent institutional racism and rising income inequalities is generating an incendiary mixture in the poorer parts of Britain's cities.

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Driven to despair: asylum deaths in the UK

By Harmit Athwal and Jenny Bourne

Abstract: The authors examine recent research from the Institute of Race Relations, which documents the deaths of over 200 asylum seekers and undocumented migrants who have lost their lives trying to reach the UK or in work-related accidents, as a result of racial attacks and, most often, as a result of self-harm, especially in detention centres.

No section of British society is more vulnerable than asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Forced by persecution and/or circumstances beyond their control to seek a life outside their home countries, they go on to meet institutionalised, systemic racism in Britain at every turn. That so many of these vulnerable people end up dead – on our streets, in our workplaces and in our prisons and detention centres – is a serious but, as yet, unrecognised indictment of our society. The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) has been documenting how 228 vulnerable people have met their death in the last sixteen years.[1]

First, anti-asylum laws prevent them from entering legally. Asylum seekers have to obtain visas before boarding a flight – a virtual impossibility in most cases. Official carriers – airlines, shipping and train companies – are fined up to £2,000 for each undocumented person they are found carrying. Little wonder, then, that so many would-be refugees resort to smugglers and try to enter stowed away in lorries, boats, the wheel-housing of planes or clinging to the sides or roof of Eurostar trains.

Our research reveals ninety-seven cases of those known to have frozen to death in plane undercarriages, asphyxiated in lorries, fallen off trains, been killed on roads as they left trucks, been electrocuted or drowned in attempts to enter the country since 1990. This figure is

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a tiny fraction of the number who have actually died. We rely initially on newspapers for cases, but these deaths of un-named, un-British, un-white men are not news.

Second, Britain's deterrent legislation means that they cannot work legally – however eager, skilled or needy they may be. They are forced into illegal work in sectors which are poorly paid and where conditions are bad, such as agriculture and construction, where they are un-protected by health and safety legislation and may not, because of language barriers, understand instructions or local conditions. Thirty-two people in the IRR's research died in work-related accidents – twenty-three of them Chinese migrants picking cockles from the mud-flats in Morecambe Bay, who drowned in a rising tide. Once again, the figure for work-related deaths is likely to be a gross underestimate (par-ticularly when the government intends to prosecute yet more harshly employers of illegal labour) as work-related deaths of those who are 'illegal' will often go unreported.

While you are awaiting a decision on your asylum claim – but only if you claimed asylum 'as soon as reasonably practicable', usually inter-preted as within three days of entry to the UK – you receive minimal financial support of between £34.60 and £40.22 (depending on age) for a single man, per week, and £62.07 for a couple. But once your claim is rejected and you are a 'failed asylum seeker', you have no recourse to public funds or to any but emergency hospital care – unless you are prepared to sign an agreement to be returned home. Unless you are taken in by friends or family, or find a charity to help you, you are destitute. At the end of 2004, Razgar, an Iraqi asylum seeker who had arrived from the Sangatte camp in Calais, was found dead in the thinnest of clothes in a disused West Bromwich factory. The coroner decided on the balance of probability that he died from hypothermia. Also in 2004, another asylum seeker, whose home had been a wheelie bin, set fire to himself in protest at his claim refusal and died. According to his hospital notes, destitution also probably played a part in the mental deterioration of West African Kenny Peter (see below), who eventually took his life in a removal centre in 2004.

Death and dispersal

The government's policy of removing benefits and switching to mini-mal support via the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was meant not only to deter asylum seekers by making Britain a less attrac-tive destination, but also to appease public opinion, which had been persuaded that the UK was a 'soft touch' and that bogus claimants were being supported by bona fide taxpayers. Dispersing asylum seekers, either away from the areas on England's south-east coast where they had landed or from major conurbations, was another

move to appease racialist public opinion. But dispersal had dire conse-
quences. It took asylum seekers away from communities where they
had kith or kin and access to support structures, including legal
advice, and deposited them in poor, often all-white neighbourhoods
where resentment was keen and legal advice often non-existent.
Eighteen asylum seekers have died at the hands of racists, many in
the areas to which they had been 'dispersed'. Firsat Dag, a Kurdish
asylum seeker dispersed to the Sighthill estate in Glasgow, was stabbed
to death in August 2001. His killer was sentenced to serve a minimum
of fourteen years for a 'shameful, cowardly and unprovoked attack'.
To compound his family's loss, the compensation awarded them was
halved because the authorities alleged that Firsat had used a false
name in his asylum claim. The August 2006 murder of Wei Wang,
another asylum seeker in the Sighthill area, is also being treated as
racially motivated by the police.

Dispersed asylum seekers find access to adequate legal help well-
nigh impossible. They do not have the money for fares to travel to
find decent representation and often find there are no legal aid solicitors
in their area with the necessary experience of the relevant field of law.
In addition, since 2004 a cap on legal aid, of five hours work for an
initial claim and three for an appeal, has been introduced. Apart
from this making it hard for asylum seekers to access adequate help,
get documents translated and expert information to back a claim, a
further result has been that many good solicitors' firms have gone
out of business or are not taking on legal aid work in immigration.

It is little wonder that asylum claims and appeals fail – in the third
quarter of 2006, 81 per cent of initial decisions were refused and
75 per cent of appeals were dismissed – that is what the target system
is meant to achieve.[2] And the swifter deportation of those now
deemed 'failed asylum seekers' has become a government priority.
Those who know they have no hope of remaining in the UK and yet
are terrified of being returned to the countries they fled, are increasingly
resorting to self-harm. Fifty-eight people have taken their lives as the
only way out, choosing death over deportation. And as the pressure
to meet deportation targets mounts, so do the suicides; they are cur-
rently running at one a month.

Yet again, that figure may be an underestimate. There is no official
tally available. Those who take their lives while trying to scrape by in
the community may not be accounted for. We know, though, of
Sirous Khajeh, an Iranian torture victim who hanged himself in a
Huddersfield home because he had been told, mistakenly, that he
faced eviction and deportation; of 18-year-old Nadim Hussaini, an
Afghan who fell from a bridge on the M60 motorway just days after
hearing his application had been refused; of Faizullah Ahmedi, 19,
who hanged himself in his Blackburn home because he was so anxious

about his asylum decision; of Israfil Shiri, a destitute and seriously-ill Iranian who poured petrol over his body and set himself alight in the offices of Refugee Action in Manchester after his claim was refused; of Zekria Mohammed, a trainee dentist from Afghanistan, found dead in a makeshift noose in his Glasgow flat and described by friends as 'ashamed and broken' and 'too proud to beg and scavenge for food'.

Ako Mahmood Ahmed, a Kurdish asylum seeker, jumped from a bridge in a Coventry shopping centre. His claim had been rejected and he had lodged an appeal but, because of legal aid limits, he could not find a solicitor to act and so faced destitution or deportation. Majid Rafieei, an Iranian asylum seeker, hanged himself from a tree in a Sheffield park after telling a GP and a mental health worker that he had been repeatedly imprisoned and tortured in Iran and would rather die than be returned. Limbaya Ndinga from the Democratic Republic of Congo, depressed at the refusal of his claim, hanged himself in the house he shared with his cousin. Nusrat Raza, a female asylum seeker from Pakistan, died from extensive, apparently self-inflicted, burns after losing her appeal. Babak Ahadi, an Iranian, also died from extensive self-inflicted burns after being depressed by an asylum refusal. Edmore Ngwenya, a Zimbabwean facing deportation, died after jumping into a Manchester canal. Naser Al Shdaida, a Syrian who was suffering from post-traumatic stress and was scared of being deported, jumped in front of a train in Streatham. The list goes on.

The pity of it is that, even when help is sought for the desperate, the system can fail them. Seife Habte Yimene was found hanged in the garden of a house opposite a hospital where his friends had sought help for him just hours earlier.[3] It emerged at his inquest that Seife, an Eritrean, had been taken to the hospital by two friends worried by the fact that he was talking about being followed by people trying to kill him and of taking his own life. During the inquest, witnesses said that Seife was seen by a doctor four times in the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department. The doctor claimed not to have been given any reasons for Seife's distress and agitation and decided that there were no obvious psychological problems, though she did offer him the option to 'come back when he was ready to talk'. Eventually a nurse called the police who escorted him from the hospital premises. The nurse told the inquest that she had called police to make sure he reached his YMCA hostel. The police, who interpreted their role as taking a troublesome person from A&E, merely escorted him from the premises. They were not 'in the business of taking people home', they told the inquest.

Seife's community refugee caseworker, commenting on the coroner's open verdict and the fact that crucial witnesses were not called to the inquest, said: 'Asylum seekers inhabit a parallel, but second-class

world on the margins of society. They rely on an entirely separate system of benefits, housing and, increasingly, health services to survive. If you do not understand this, then you will never know which questions to ask and to whom.'

Death and detention

Those asylum seekers not left to the vagaries of community benefice, those neatly locked up in detention or removal centres (of which there are ten, housing around 2,665 persons at any one time) would at least, one might think, benefit from a structured environment and from official standards of care established for those in state custody.

But they do not. The government's suicide prevention strategy for the prison service does not extend to detention and removal centres which, falling under the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, have separate procedures. Suicide prevention is, in part, being left to market forces. Private contractors, which run many of the centres, have to pay financial penalties for each 'successful suicide'.[4] But such disincentives are clearly not working. In the last five years, fifteen people in detention have died by their own hand.

Those who end up in the detention regime have committed no crime and have no way of knowing how long their 'sentence' will be. They may be asylum seekers from the set of countries deemed likely to generate 'unfounded claims' who are being fast-tracked, they may be from countries for which the right of appeal has to be exercised from outside the UK, or they may have had claims rejected and are now awaiting deportation – usually to the place they fled from. Clearly, many of these people have already been traumatised twice – first by experiences in their countries of origin (which caused them to seek refuge) and secondly by experiences of racism, rejection and refusal here. Knowing that they are to be deported back to the country and situation they fled (and now with the stigma of being known as someone who tried to flee) sends the vulnerable into depression, despair and panic. They need emotional support, mental health care and often medication for physical conditions precipitated by flight and fear.

Again, this is not forthcoming in detention. Health services in the centres have been repeatedly criticised by outside inspectors and, as with suicide prevention, health care is not even of the same (still inadequate) standard as in the prison service and it does not fall under the government's Healthcare Commission. Medical services in seven out of ten centres are contracted out. So concerned have some doctors become that, after a series of hunger strikes in Harmondsworth in 2004, the Medical Justice network was formed to campaign for and deliver better services to asylum seekers.[5] It calls medical services for

those detained as 'especially problematic', and describes a 'failure of clinical staff to investigate and appropriately treat or refer significant medical problems'. 'If you are lucky they will give you paracetemol, *otherwise they will think you want attention or if you had a removal* they will think you want them to cancel it so they will tell you to drink a lot of water', is how Patricia Mukandara described her experiences in Yarl's Wood and Colnbrook.[6]

A report by the Chief Inspector of Prisons into healthcare at the Yarl's Wood centre found that there was no means of systematically considering health when reviewing detention. Sarah Cutler of Bail for Immigration Detainees summed up the contradiction: 'Detainees are locked up on the basis of an administrative decision and there simply are not enough safeguards to ensure that they are safely or justly detained.'[7]

This was shown up starkly in the case of Kenny Peter, a West African asylum seeker, who had been taken, pending removal, to Colnbrook – a centre run by the company Serco which had contracted medical services to Primecare Ltd.[8] Kenny had obvious mental health problems, which were noted on his admission records. Nursing staff, who were told about his mental history and the fact that he had only recently been discharged from a psychiatric hospital and was on anti-depressants, gave him one tablet and removed the rest from him. He was not seen by a doctor within twenty-four hours of being admitted, as he should have been, and only saw a doctor after nine days, having requested to see one after suffering severe stomach pains for three days. Only then were his anti-depressants reinstated. The doctor found Kenny to be suicidal and decided that he should be referred to a psychiatrist. This and five subsequent notes on his records suggested he needed a psychiatric referral but this was not acted on by doctors or nurses (who were to place the onus on one another at the subsequent inquest). Kenny's notes from the local psychiatric hospital were never sought. He told guards about suicidal thoughts and, despite being classed as 'at risk', a week after attempting suicide by jumping from a landing, the risk was downgraded. Kenny then jumped again from a landing and died later in hospital from head injuries.

It emerged at his inquest that the fact that Kenny was considered at risk of self-harm was entered on neither his Colnbrook file nor his immigration case file, contrary to procedures. Nor was it known to the community organisation that was acting for him to get 'temporary admission' to the UK on health grounds. The inquest jury – unusually – issued a list of criticisms of what had occurred at the centre, deciding that the poor communication between general, medical and immigration workers and the obvious failure to access the necessary specialist mental health care had contributed to Kenny's death.

But such centres are sometimes more like places of punishment rather than of care. The largest immigration removal centre, Harmondsworth, close to Heathrow airport, has been compared by the Prisons Inspector to a high security prison, with those facing deportation victimised by staff and some strip-searched and temporarily locked in solitary confinement. Anne Owers described the culture as 'wholly at odds with its stated purpose', with custody officers, described as 'aggressive', 'intimidating', 'rude' and 'unhelpful', using a degree of force and rules and systems which 'would have been considered over-controlling in a prison, let alone a removal centre'.[9]

Manuel's choice

Caught between the horrors of detention, destitution and deportation, the choices that asylum seekers make are necessarily stark. But none more so than the ultimate choice made by Manuel Bravo – to orphan his son so as to give him a chance in life.[10] Usually those detained are single people, and mainly men. But there are families held at Yarl's Wood and Dungavel in Scotland.[11] In September 2005, Manuel Bravo was in Yarl's Wood with his 13-year-old son Antonio, awaiting imminent deportation to Angola. He was desperately frightened about such a return, which he felt would mean definite harassment and possible death. He was also extremely depressed, believing that all his remaining family members, including his wife, were dead. In the letter Manuel left for his son, he wrote: 'Antonio. I am really sorry. I don't [want] you [to] come to Angola to suffer.' He finished the letter with a father's exhortation, 'Be good, son, and do well at school', and then, as his son slept in their cell, he hanged himself with his bed sheet from a banister in the centre's stairwell. It was his thirty-fifth birthday. Manuel believed that if his 13-year-old son was an orphan, he would be allowed to stay in Britain at least until he finished his schooling.

Manuel's poignant story encapsulates many of the ways Britain fails asylum seekers. And it is worth noting that we have so many details of his story, as opposed to the many others who die in relative anonymity, because he had been befriended by a church group who were able to represent his 'interests' after his death.

In Angola, Manuel and his father had been arrested and imprisoned for six months because they were involved in the Association of Youth Democracy, which opposed the ruling dos Santos regime, fought corruption and campaigned for democracy. After Manuel's parents were killed in August 2001 and soldiers raped his sister during a raid, he left Angola clandestinely, through a tunnel and disguised as a woman. He later met up with his wife and children (one child, Antonio, was from a previous marriage) and travelled to the UK, where they

claimed asylum in October 2001. The family was dispersed to a tower block in Armley, Leeds. There, the family suffered racist abuse and were driven out by neighbours calling them 'niggers'. A local vicar managed to find housing for them close to his church; Antonio went to school and Manuel learned English at college.

'Manuel needed to work. It wasn't for the money – he was just so depressed and didn't want to sit in the house watching the walls. He was a bit of a broken man really', the local vicar told the *Sunday Times*. He believed Manuel's depression was brought on by the loss of his parents and sister in Angola. But these facts were not believed by those adjudicating his asylum claim, which was rejected in June 2004. Manuel had not been able to produce evidence to back up his story. 'In his broken English he was unable to convince the adjudicators to take him at his word.' He appealed, but his London-based solicitor failed to turn up at Bradford where the appeal was held. Manuel conducted his own defence, 'trying to present his evidence, but he [only] had scraps of paper everywhere and bits from websites'.

In October, his wife and younger son decided to return to Angola because his wife's niece had been orphaned and needed help. A month later Manuel received a fax to say that his wife was in prison and their child had disappeared. He began to slide into an even deeper depression. By December 2004, he knew he might be at risk of deportation and, in a Leeds library, wrote a one-sheet plea in his newly-learnt English to the immigration services: 'I live here about three years in half, my situation here have nor legalize . . . I don't have any representative, because I don't have money . . . this situation is very destressful for me, because I don't have life for live, I can't work, I can't do nothing in my life . . . have to take tablets during the day and nights for sleep . . . I want to die or kill myself . . . I can't return to my country, because is not safety for my son Antonio and me . . . we can be tortured . . . So that this not happen to me and my son, I prefer to kill my self here in England . . . If I am die, please I would like my son stay with the government or NSPCC . . . or other organization in the UK.'

No one seemed aware of how desperate Manuel had become. On 13 September 2005, two immigration officers paid a 'pastoral visit' to Manuel's home, ostensibly to check on his welfare. Manuel, who had still not heard about his appeal from the immigration authorities, was so worried that he hastened to yet another solicitors' firm, to whom he paid £300 to be told they could not help. Early the next morning a deportation team smashed down his door and burst in. 'The nightmare had come true', wrote the *Sunday Times*. The journalists wrote wryly but truly that the officers involved, 'seemed as concerned about the five pet goldfish he kept in a tank . . . They arranged for them to be left with a neighbour.'

No such care was given to Manuel and Antonio. On 14 September 2005, the vicar who had befriended them and accompanied them to their asylum hearings, received a letter notifying him of Manuel's asylum appeal refusal. Twenty minutes later he received a phone call from Yarl's Wood to say that Manuel was dead.

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2 Home Office, 'Asylum Statistics: 3rd Quarter 2006' (London, Home Office Research, Development and Statistics, October 2006), < http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfso6/asylumq306.pdf > . Tony Blair committed his government to ensuring that by 2005 the number of deportations would exceed the number of 'unfounded applications' each month. In November 2006, Home Secretary John Reid announced a plan to switch 440 police officers to immigration duties.

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11 The detention of children has not been without its critics. HM Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owers, has called for the 'complete overhaul' of the policy of detaining children in an 'intimidating environment' and Amnesty International has criticised the practice as a breach of human rights. See also Harmit Athwal, 'Mounting criticism of detention of asylum-seeking children', *IRR News* (9 June 2005), < http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/june/ha000005.html > .

Review

Community Cohesion: a new framework for race and diversity

By TED CANTLE (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 236 pp. Cloth, £45.00.

In the summer of 2001, a series of urban disorders, characteristically described as 'race riots', erupted across various northern towns and cities in England. Described as the worst incidents of their kind since the 1980s, there were some clear parallels. Like the outbreak of rioting in 1981 and the inner-city violence in 1985, the context of the 2001 disorders was set by localised histories of racism and deprivation, contradictory and aggressive policing practices and particularly punitive responses by the criminal justice system.

The 2001 disorders, predominantly involving Asian (generally Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim) youths fighting pitched battles against either the police or white people, were linked to the activities of the far Right, which played specific roles in the violence, through direct or anticipated activity. That the violence generally took place in some of the most deprived areas in the country was compounded, within the dominant explanations of the disorders at least, by a theory of communities leading 'parallel lives' divided primarily along lines of ethnicity. This theory of 'parallel lives' was articulated most succinctly by the former chief executive of Nottingham Council, Ted Cantle, who was commissioned by the New Labour government to conduct an investigation into the events of summer 2001. His response formed the basis of a significant shift in government policy and

thought, and heralded the formal introduction of 'community cohesion – a new framework for race and diversity'. This book, by the same name, sets out the rationale for such a policy movement. Roughly, this is achieved through charting a 'journey' to community cohesion contextualised by a historical discussion of 'race' and immigration; a critique of multiculturalism and 'difference'; the 'significance' of identity and core values; and the development of a programme for community cohesion. Throughout, the author reviews and discusses the policies that have already been enacted as part of the developing community cohesion agenda.

The premise behind 'community cohesion' is remarkably simplistic. The major cause of the disorders in 2001, so the theory goes, was that communities lived separate existences from each other in the same towns and cities. Meaningful interaction was virtually non-existent and, consequently, mistrust and misunderstandings were allowed to flourish. Moreover, these parallel lives were not only geographic but cultural. Segregation was said to be compounded by different communities having different identities and beliefs. From this explanation, then, the answer was to increase interaction, integration, shared space and shared values.

Since 2001, this account has become dominant in 'race relations' policy and led to significant changes. In official rhetoric, the disorders of 2001 have been clumsily cast as symbolic of the same 'clash of civilisations' that, for a time at least, was taken to be behind acts of terror both at home and abroad. Islam has been cast as the new folk-devil upon which a seemingly unending host of the world's ills can be blamed. Multiculturalism, as Sivanandan has wryly observed, 'has become the whipping-boy'.[1] And it is the debate on multiculturalism, following the trajectories of a body of academic work on the subject, which informs much of the analysis of Cantle's book.

Thorough coverage is given to a range of historical and modern analyses of identity and 'difference', from Emile Durkheim to the Parekh report. Following a long line of academic sociologists, Cantle sets out multiculturalism in terms of opposing values. If multiculturalism is assumed to lead to parallel lives (and ultimately urban disorder), the central question becomes: how much multiculturalism is 'too' multicultural? Cantle argues that it is the failure of earlier government policy to create a 'behavioural consensus' on this question that requires us to take the 'journey' to community cohesion: 'In a multicultural country there must be a clear political will to reach a consensus on what level of "difference" is accepted and which differences are acceptable.'

In some ways, this discussion of 'acceptable differences' covers ground well trodden by governments that have long been concerned with restricting and controlling immigration and 'diversity'. Yet, in

other ways, 'community cohesion' points in new directions. Cantle's answer to the question of 'acceptable differences' is that multiculturalism is limited by the need for a 'shared vision': a common set of values which to a '(limited) extent . . . could be homogenising' and 'a new national identity'. At the heart of such a programme is a series of judgements about what forms of diversity are acceptable. Cultural diversity is accepted within the boundaries of a national belonging and identity defined by strict limits on the diversity of values and mores. It is no exaggeration to say that this represents an attempt to (literally) re-articulate the relationship between citizen and state, through a discourse of 'Britishness' and citizenship. Drawing on a range of work, from communitarian theory (once described, aptly, by John Pilger as 'psychobabble'[2]) to Robert Putnam's development of social capital ideas, Cantle argues the need for a set of core values and morals necessary for the maintenance of 'cohesive communities'. In practical terms, this implies the requirement that would-be citizens swear oaths of allegiance to Queen and country, although the current arrangement is lamented for setting out values 'in only the most general of terms'. Likewise, the absence, in the towns and cities where the 2001 disorders took place, of a common vision and strategic direction is criticised.

In certain regards, the development of community cohesion policies tells us about ideological changes in modes of 'governance'. In an insightful passage, Cantle links the emergence of community cohesion as a policy agenda with a much broader political transformation within the Labour Party. Crediting David Blunkett with being a key driver in making this process clear, Cantle suggests that the '"old Labour" notion of collectivism had been radically changed into a "New Labour" concept of civic values and social responsibility'.

Thus, active citizenship forms a core focus of the book and formulating a 'common vision' is held to be a leading aspect of a suggested programme for community cohesion. Citizenship, Cantle tells us, 'implies more than simply bearing the status of a "national" and, first, places greater emphasis on the idea of social responsibility'. Community cohesion relies, not only on loyalty and swearing national allegiance, but also on participating in programmes of community service that attempt to develop 'a *political* identity, through active membership of the nation state, which regulates individual behaviour and provides for collective action' (italics in original).

Bound up with the aim of instilling values and morals is the underlying theme of superior civilisation, which, of course, also plays out on an international level in the Islamophobia of the 'war on terror'.[3] Moreover, it is through the interplay between race and class that community cohesion's 'civilising mission' can be viewed. As Cantle explains, community cohesion policies have 'placed a particular

emphasis on the need for the white host community to change'. Indeed they have. Yet the attempts to instil core values among the 'host white community' have been targeted at those who are viewed as lacking in moral fibre. Thus, it is through dynamics of race and class that the community cohesion policy agenda can be connected to, for example, the government's drive to instil a 'respect agenda' among 'feral' white youths. The methods are different but the core rationale is the same: the poor, the dispossessed and those perceived as potentially danger-ous, need to be 'civilised'.

Cantle's book leaves us with a series of questions and answers. That it tells us little about the kinds of cohesion among and between commu-nities borne out of resistance to state racism and war is unsurprising. For these are examples of cohesion which cannot be explained by tired sociological debates over multiculturalism that mistakenly pit diversity against solidarity. Nor can they be described by reference to a national 'value system' or analysis of social capital. What the book does achieve, though, is the setting out of the administrative rationale for a significant shift in 'race relations' policy that is, ultimately, depen-dent on nationalism. It contains a descriptive account of an agenda that aims to instil values which are salient to the neoliberal goals of the New Labour government. In doing so, it indicates that the dominant national race relations policy is not concerned with addressing the rupturing structural effects of these same neoliberal goals. Ultimately, it articulates the national face of what Sivanandan has described as a shift toward 'civilisational racism'.[4] And it sets out the coercive nature of community cohesion. For these reasons, it should be widely read.

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References

1 A. Sivanandan, 'Race, terror and civil society', *Race & Class* (Vol. 47, no. 3, 2006), p. 3.
2 John Pilger, *Hidden Agendas* (London, Vintage, 1999), p. 82.
3 A. Sivanandan, 'Race & Class – the next thirty years', *Race & Class* (Vol. 46, no. 3, 2005), p. 3.
4 A. Sivanandan, 'Race, terror and civil society', *Race & Class* (Vol. 47, no. 3, 2006), p. 2.

Notes to contributors

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