



EMBARGOED UNTIL: 00:01 22 JANUARY 2009

The white working class; Britain's forgotten race victims?

*The Runnymede Trust publishes a new study today on the white working class and ethnic diversity in Britain. ⁱⁱ In response to Hazel Blears' call for white working class voices and grievances to be heard, leading thinkers on race and class consider the relationship between social class and race equality. They conclude that **the white working class are discriminated against on a range of different fronts, but they are not discriminated against because they are white.** ⁱⁱⁱ*

After a decade of being ignored, class inequality is making its way back onto the political agenda. There are legitimate inequalities to be discussed and debated. Britain remains blighted by class division, and economic background is still the best predictor of life chances. Class is central to how people see their place in Britain today. Returning to the issue of class inequality and social mobility is therefore long overdue.

Various commentators have recently put forward the idea that white working class communities are losing out, while minority ethnic groups and immigrants are the winners at the direct expense of the white working class. The report disputes these claims and suggests ways of discussing class which can lead to greater solidarity rather than further division. It argues that the current way class is used puts it in opposition to efforts to promote race equality, rather than creating a means of pursuing increased equality for all.

Rob Berkeley, Director of Runnymede, said:

“There is an urgent need to ensure that a re-emergence of class onto the political agenda will not feed divisions, but promote equality for everyone. The way in which the debate has been framed so far hasn't been particularly constructive. The message from this publication is that it's possible to have a progressive debate on race and class in 21st century Britain that can lead to better outcomes for all.”



NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. The report is part of Runnymede's Perspectives series, the aim of which is to engage with government – and other – initiatives through exploring the use and development of concepts in policymaking, and analysing their potential contribution to a successful multi-ethnic Britain.
2. Rob Berkeley, Director of Runnymede, is available for interviews and comment. To arrange an interview, please contact Rob Berkeley on 020 7377 9222 during office hours or 07764 935 770 outside of office hours.
3. The report will be published online at 00:01 22 January. Preview copies are available for press by contacting Runnymede on 020 7377 9222.

ⁱ The Runnymede Trust is an independent policy research organisation focusing on equality and justice through the promotion of a successful multi-ethnic society. Founded as a Charitable Education Trust, Runnymede has a long track record in policy research, working in collaboration with eminent thinkers and policymakers in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Since 1968, the date of Runnymede's foundation, we have worked to establish and maintain a positive image of what it means to live affirmatively within a society that is both multi-ethnic and culturally diverse. Runnymede continues to speak with a thoughtful and independent public voice on these issues today. For further information visit www.runnymedetrust.org

ⁱⁱ 'Who Cares about the White Working Class?' is available for download without charge at www.runnymedetrust.org from 00:01 22 January 2009.

ⁱⁱⁱ The list of contributors is as follows:

Foreword

Kate Gavron

Introduction: The White Working Class and Multiculturalism – Is there Space for a Progressive Agenda?

Kjartan Páll Sveinsson

1. Class in the 21st Century

Wendy Bottero

2. Education: The Numbers Game and the Construction of White Racial Victimhood

David Gillborn

3. Making Sense of White Working Class Educational Underachievement

Diane Reay

4. Beyond the Pale: Chavs, Youth and Social Class

Anoop Nayak

5. Haunted by the Spectre of Judgement: Respectability, Value and Affect in Class Relations

Beverley Skeggs

6. Home Truths: The White Working Class and the Racialization of Social Housing

Steve Garner

7. Moving Representations of the 'Indigenous White Working Class'

Ben Rogaly and Becky Taylor

8. From Housing to Health – To Whom are the White Working Class Losing Out? Frequently Asked Questions

Danny Dorling