

# Bulletin

RUNNYMEDE'S QUARTERLY

No. 332

DECEMBER

2002

## The Year of Cohesion

If there has been a key word added to the Runnymede lexicon in 2002, it is cohesion. **Rob Berkeley** reports on 12 months of testing the effectiveness of such a multi-layered concept as a framework within which to promote positive social attitudes among UK citizens of all ages.

A year on from publication of the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, the Cattle, Denham, Clarke, Ouseley and Ritchie reports moved cohesion to the forefront of the UK race debate. It has been a major focus of our work at Runnymede and the past year has seen a number of activities designed to get to the bottom of the concept and its usefulness in delivering the key aim of a successful multi-ethnic polity in Britain. However, cohesion remains a slippery policy construct, its grounding in social action difficult to ascertain and its significance in forging a progressive path towards racial equality and harmony in question. Yet this is the way it must be if cohesion is to be used as a policy framework to deliver real change.

If, a year ago, it was thought that it was simply a matter of defining cohesion and re-focusing activity around the concept, then we should be disappointed. That cohesion is more complex and difficult to deliver than this should not be a surprise. It is a fundamental concept within any polity, tackling core issues which

have been the basis for debate among political philosophers for centuries, impacting on daily behaviours and attitudes, calling for compromise, negotiation and constant imagination and re-definition.

It has become clear over the past year of Runnymede's (and others') activity around the concept of cohesion that within the common-sense definition of the term there also needs to be a focus on creating a sense of belonging, combating racisms, enabling cultural exchange and discourse, and a denial of essentialist approaches to 'race' and community. For cohesion to work as a policy framework it has to appeal to the hearts and minds. In emotional terms a sense of belonging cannot be guaranteed by mere delivery of services (although it can be destroyed by failure to deliver those services). Cohesion cannot be guaranteed simply by the sharing of public spaces if such sharing is marked by hostility rather than an openness and willingness to engage and to change as a result of interaction. Cohesion cannot be guaranteed



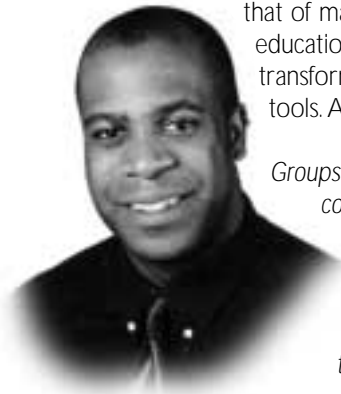
by imposing identities and presupposing responses, it must be responsive to the multiple identities and hybridity that are characteristic of complex late-modern societies. In political terms, the links have to be made between the relationships of people with the state as well as each other. Dissatisfaction (the riots of Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham in its most extreme manifestation) is not merely a result of 'not getting along' or 'parallel lives', but also of the pervasive nature of institutional racisms and political disenfranchisement.

Is it any wonder that the usual tools of central government social policy have appeared to flounder in the morass of cohesion, and that responses so often seem tokenistic or piecemeal. For cohesion to be delivered will take a rethinking, not only of histories, but also of our present and future

**The four keynote speakers at Runnymede's conference on Developing Community Cohesion [clockwise from top left]: Gary Young, Sharmila Gandhi, Beverley Hughes, MP and Ian Blair. Conference coverage continues on pp. 3-13 of this Bulletin.**



## MULTI-ETHNIC BRITAIN



**Rob Berkeley**

<sup>1</sup> I.J. Grand (1999) 'Cultural Identities and Practises of Community', *Futures* 31: 475–85.

<sup>2</sup> *Runnymede Bulletin* March 2002: 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Cohesion, Community and Citizenship* (2002) Edited Proceedings of a Runnymede Conference. London: Runnymede.

<sup>4</sup> Ash Amin (2002) *Ethnicity and the Multicultural City: Living with Diversity*, an ESRC and CITIES programme report, EIU, Liverpool John Moores University. Highly recommended reading.

<sup>5</sup> Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000) *The Parekh Report*. London: Profile Books.

<sup>6</sup> Ash Amin (2002) op cit. note 4.

relationships, sometimes outside of the usual confines of social policy instruments. The focus on single-faith schools and youth work in much of the post-Cantle policy activity is recognition of this fact. Young people are seen as the key because the state is involved in their lives to a greater extent than that of many adults – and education is seen as the most transformative of social policy tools. As Grand (1999) notes:

*Groups and communities coming together can be seen as places of emergence, creation and transformation.<sup>1</sup>*

Cohesion as societal transformation is a rather larger project than has been suggested by some of the cautious approaches to the policy currently emerging from government circles. Interest in the concept of cohesion has grown over the past year as practitioners and policy-makers have begun to recognise its importance.

In March 2002 Runnymede held a conference (with the Work Foundation), which began to unearth some of the emerging policy debates at which the then minister for community cohesion, John Denham, spoke.<sup>2</sup> At that stage, the debate was characterised by the need for a national debate about common values and the failures of local government policies. Other speakers emphasised local responses in terms of policing, housing and education which began to shed some light on the complexities of delivering cohesion and the necessary sea-changes that would be required in attitude. There was some question about how more people could be engaged in an agenda for which there appeared to be little enthusiasm.

In May 2002 Runnymede held a conference (with the LSE Centre for the Study of Global Governance) to provide some

much needed academic rigour for an agenda that had been developing apparently without a clear ideological or theoretical basis. A series of challenging papers were delivered, considering cohesion from wider European, American, as well as UK-based perspectives. These mapped out the terrain of different conceptions of cohesion, and made it clear that some conscious decisions had to be made about which of the models would be pursued as part of the UK policy framework.<sup>3</sup>

In October 2002 Runnymede held its largest conference on cohesion (with the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit), which was designed to allow different social policy disciplines to focus on what their work could add to the debate on cohesion. Coming two years after the publication of the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, it was also a timely reminder of the importance of cohesion in forming a vision for the future and transforming the UK polity to a successful multi-ethnic state. Further details of this conference are reported in this edition of the *Bulletin*.

During this period, the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit began to operate, and panels of practitioners met in order to inform government ministers of the key policy changes that pursuance of cohesion would require. They will report early in 2003. Their input will be welcome in adding more flesh to the bones of cohesion. While welcome, it is probable that their recommendations will not mesh to form a blueprint for cohesion. Given the complexity of the issues highlighted above this will be no reflection on their skill or commitment but an acknowledgement of the limits of central government policy-making.

Ash Amin argues for an 'agonistic' political culture:

*If common values, trust, or a shared sense of place emerge*

*they will do so as accidents of engagement . . . a politics of trust in emergent situations based on the process itself of democratic engagement. Open and critical debate, mutual awareness, and a continually altering subjectivity through engagement are the watchwords of agonistic politics . . .<sup>4</sup>*

This is not a political culture that will emerge simply from neighbourhood renewal or youth work but from a re-imagining of Britain. This is why the concept of cohesion will remain slippery and difficult. Changing a political culture is not an overnight enterprise and is not a process that fits into the language of quick wins or delivery because it is an ongoing process. It will come from the recognition that:

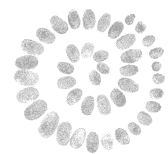
*People in Britain have many differences. But they inhabit the same space and share the same future. All have a role in the collective project of fashioning Britain as an outward-looking, generous, inclusive society – a community of communities and citizens.<sup>5</sup>*

Runnymede's continuing work will play a role in sharing this recognition as the route to true cohesion – challenging racisms through policy analysis and lobbying, rejecting essentialist notions of identities and communities, enabling cultural exchange and discourse, and advocating for the construction of a common sense of belonging. Amin argues for an emphasis on

*everyday lived experiences and local negotiations of difference, on micro-cultures of place through which abstract rights and obligations, together with local structures and resources, meaningfully interact with distinctive individual and interpersonal experiences.<sup>6</sup>*

[contd on p.28]

# Developing Community Cohesion: Issues and Solutions



MULTI-ETHNIC  
BRITAIN

The third of a trio of conferences on the subject of community cohesion organised in 2002 by Runnymede took place at London's Barbican Centre on 10 October. Vic McLaren describes how the event unfolded.

Timed to coincide with the second anniversary of the Report on *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*, the event drew over 200 participants to debate the implications of the Government's community cohesion agenda, from the perspectives of Crime; Neighbourhood Renewal; Health and Social Welfare; Arts, Media and Sport; Employment and Education.

Sponsored by the Home Office's Community Cohesion Unit, the conference attracted ministerial support in the form of Beverley Hughes (Minister for Asylum, Immigration and Community Cohesion), as well as an extraordinarily high calibre of keynote speaker: Lord Parekh, Deputy Metropolitan Commissioner Ian Blair, *Guardian* Journalist Gary Younge; and Bradford Vision's Chief Executive Sharmila Gandhi.

The Conference, chaired by Lord Parekh, aimed not only to get to grips with issues, but, through a defining and refining process, to arrive at plausible strategies for use by the CCU Practitioner groups as they seek to provide workable policy solutions across areas roughly compatible with those addressed at the conference.

## Presenters, Convenors and Advisers for mini-plenary and policy formulation sessions

Naseem Khan, Jennifer Edwards, Kate Gavron, Alveena Malik (Arts)  
Rakesh Chandar-Nair, Malcolm Tungatt (Sport)  
Nick Carter, Samir Shah, Trevor Phillips (Broadcast and Print Media)  
Martin Davis, Derek Benson, Sule Kangulec; David Faulkner, Matthew McFarlane (Crime and Safety)  
Chris Browne, Karl Oxford, Judith Hunt, Rob Berkeley (Neighbourhood renewal)  
Robin Richardson, Phil Green (Education)  
Linda Harris, Val Barker, Lord Chan, Richard Stone (Health and Social Welfare)  
Maggie Lee, Debbie Gupta, Peter Ramsden, Tony Burnett (Employment)

plenaries and policy groups,<sup>1</sup> but special thanks are due to all those who acted as presenters, convenors and advisers during the course of the day.

## Opening the conference

Two years ago, Lord Parekh reminded participants, publication of the Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain had met with a difficult birth. He was of the opinion, however, that the Report's content had been sufficiently sturdy to survive the impact of the initial trauma surrounding its reception, and its lasting value and impact would be judged by two significant criteria – its success in: (1) putting important issues on

**Audience members at the morning and afternoon plenary sessions**



Space does not permit us to report all of the conference speeches in full, nor to reproduce the copious notes and myriad ideas generated in the mini-

the public agenda, and (2) providing potential solutions to the issues addressed. Allowing for certain limitations, the Report had become a clear

success. It had added a number of important issues to the public agenda – issues which continue to occupy a pre-eminent place in our public life such as: social cohesion; the nature of racism and how to tackle it; how to combine equality with difference; plus the concept and reality of a sense of national identity, and what it means to be British.

<sup>1</sup> We anticipate that a full set of conference proceedings will be published in 2003.



## MULTI-ETHNIC BRITAIN

Lord Parekh then went on to address the issue of cohesion in greater detail, reminding conference delegates that the Report, which pre-dated the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, had some important things to ask about cohesion – at a number of levels.

1. What does cohesion mean: is it simply a metaphor?
2. What are the limits of cohesion: how cohesive can a society be and remain consistent with individual liberty and differences?
3. How should we go about fostering cohesion?



Ian Blair

In response to these self-same questions the Commission's Report had offered the following responses. A society is cohesive if its members:

- have a common commitment to the well-being of that community (in other words, we all feel we care for each other and the community enough to belong together a separate and independent community);
- are able to find their way around in it (in other words, if they know how to navigate their way through their society, and to understand its conceptual and cultural grammar, and, therefore, how to relate to each other);
- share a climate of mutual trust (and know that if they were to make sacrifices today for the wider community tomorrow, when their turn comes, society will take account of their problems).

Lord Parekh recognised that in a modern liberal society there would be limitations on the extent of cohesion, and the Report had made it clear that a cohesive society does not rule out three things:

- *differences*, because people have different moral and social

biographies;

- *disagreements*, because people are bound to disagree on very important issues about how our society should be organised, on the limits of government action, and so on;
- *disobedience*, since there may be points where differences are so significant that people feel they must make a stand.

When attempting to foster social cohesion the Report, he said, had made five things clearly desirable:

- Extend equal legitimacy to all citizens (all citizens are equally legitimate members of the community, and entitled to equal rights and equal life chances)
- Achieve equality. This is a complex concept, and cannot mean uniformity. (Different people have different needs, different biographies, different aspirations, different conceptions of life, and therefore, equality must be reconciled with difference.) The Report had grappled with how to integrate the demands of equality with difference.
- Eliminate that which stands in the way of equality of treatment – namely, racism in its various manifestations.
- Foster common values, shared symbols, shared ceremonies, etc.
- Ensure that public institutions and public services embody those aforementioned principles. (People must feel in their day-to-day lives a sense of belonging, and that they belong to some community. This can only be achieved if public services are delivered so that all are treated equally, their differences are recognised, and a common sense of community and commitment is built amongst them.)

Lord Parekh expressed the hope that *The Future of Multi-Ethnic*

*Britain* would serve as a starting point for discussions on community cohesion. He paid tribute to the Home Office for being prepared to welcome independent and critical thinking, and to Runnymede for seeing the Report as a starting-point rather than a terminus.

He went on to highlight aspects of Runnymede's work agenda for 2003 which emanated from the Report: to examine issues around government leadership; audit, inspection and regulation; plus a large body of questions raised by devolution.

### Ian Blair on 'Policing a Multi-Ethnic Society'

Formerly Chief Constable of Surrey and currently Deputy Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Ian Blair began by saying he wanted to examine policing as a contributor to community cohesion. Particularly, he said, he wanted to look at policing as an exemplar of organisational change and impact in relation to the issue of diversity.

He identified the Stephen Lawrence Report as a seismic event which, he claimed, had changed the operating culture of the Metropolitan Police. Mr Blair cited Sir Robert Mark, the former Metropolitan Commissioner, who 25 years earlier had written that

*'...the Police are an anvil on which society beats out the problems and abrasions of social inequality, racial prejudice, weak laws and ineffective legislation.'*

There could scarcely be a better simile for the culture of the police, he argued.

Mr Blair went on to cite a speech he himself had made, in 1999, which acknowledged that the police had been seeking to serve a multicultural and modern Britain with a traditional and homogeneous working culture.

*'The [Police] Service has been like one of those sleeping industrial giants which didn't notice change in the marketplace, like IBM refusing to accept the onset of personal computers, or Chrysler rejecting the notion that Americans might like small cars...'*

He went on to describe changes in the Metropolitan Police over the past 3 years. Digressing briefly to praise Lord Scarman's astute analysis of what underlay the Brixton and Toxteth riots of the early 1980s, he drew attention to the comments from a contributor to the Macpherson Inquiry who talked of minority ethnic communities being under-protected and over-policed, and nothing having changed from Scarman's time.

Mr Blair felt the problem had been that the Scarman Report had been interpreted by the White Establishment as being about treating everybody the same – if you treated everybody the same you were treating everybody fairly. However, taking the composition of the Establishment into account, it was hardly surprising that Lord Scarman's messages went unheard: Now, still:

Of 50 police chiefs in the UK only one is non-white  
 Of the 250 members of ACPO there are only 4 who are non-white  
 Of 1200 district judges only 12 are non-white  
 Out of 559 circuit judges only 5 are from minority backgrounds  
 Out of 102 judges of the High Court all are white  
 Of the Lord Justices of Appeal all are white  
 No mainstream newspaper nor TV channel has a black editor or black proprietor  
 There are only 3 non-white bishops in the Church of England

And yet:

At the 1991 census, 5.5% of the population of the UK were from minority ethnic backgrounds;  
 Of the 32 London boroughs, 5 have minority ethnic populations of 30%, or above.

Returning to the Macpherson Report, Mr Blair stated that though it made horrifying reading, the Report found no evidence of deliberate discrimination – the investigating officers were requiring the Lawrences to behave as they expected white working-class people to behave, and refusing to make allowances for the black community's different experiences and expectations of policing.

Ian Blair acknowledged that Macpherson had delivered a devastating report, which had shaken the very foundations of the Metropolitan Police, with the prevalence of institutional racism detectable in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping.

According to Mr Blair, the Met's response has been to recast itself as an organisation.

John Grieve, the first Head of the Race and Violent Crime Taskforce, had made clear his job was to make arresting racists as significant a cultural commitment in the Metropolitan Police as arresting armed robbers and terrorists.

The results according to Mr Blair include:

- o Reporting of racist incidents up by 400%
- o 300% growth in the number of arrests for racist crimes

- o Community Safety units in each borough dealing with race hate
- o New methods of family liaison training (500 officers trained)
- o Critical Incident training for senior managers
- o Advisory Groups on Race and Diversity
- o Staff Associations for different ethnic and religious groupings
- o Race and Diversity training for 30,000 staff
- o Changed operational practices (including keeping families of victims properly briefed)

The moral, but also a business imperative, of this – because at 40,000 staff the Met is London's largest single employer with a responsibility to provide a working culture that enables people to work to the best of their ability – is that only if staff were treated fairly would that fairness be apparent to the



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**Mini-plenary sessions, before lunch, were structured to feature expert presentations and group participation**





## MULTI-ETHNIC BRITAIN



Sharmila Gandhi

Police's customer base.

Ian Blair acknowledged the challenges ahead:

- How was the Service to ensure a properly representative police service?
- How does the Service get all communities to declare and take on ownership of the police?

Certain positives were identified. The Service now has a reasonable representation of officers from African-Caribbean, Indian, Sikhs and Pakistani backgrounds (although barely any representatives of the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities), and signs were that police cadets and community policing support officers were broadly representative of London's present ethnic composition.

However, Mr Blair acknowledged that many problems remained – including a disproportionality in stop-and-search,<sup>2</sup> but he also called for influential figures from all communities to come forward to say that crime is a problem for the community and not just for the Police.

Issuing a challenge to the conference for delegates to take forward the issues raised within the sphere of race relations into the broader realm of diversity, Mr Blair ended by returning to the theme of social cohesion:

*'Nobody should underestimate the enormous implications of policing well done for social cohesion, as well as the enormous implications of policing done badly...'*

Mr Blair fielded a number of questions and was praised by Lord Parekh for his openness, and for the sensitivity with which he had tackled the prevalent issues.

### **Beverley Hughes on Cohesive Communities**

Beverley Hughes's speech is reported in full on pp. 8–9. The

minister answered a series of questions, some of them highly critical of Government policy on Immigration and Asylum, with a stout defence of the Home Secretary's policies, arguing that left and centre-left politicians cannot afford to ignore the 'distortion' of the Asylum system by economic migrants.

In thanking the minister for her response to audience questions, Lord Parekh commended her frankness.

### **Sharmila Gandhi talks about Bradford**

Next on the platform was Sharmila Gandhi, who described how many people had approached her over the lunch period to ask what exactly was the 'Bradford Vision' of which she is Chief Executive? Her response, that this was Bradford's Local Strategic Partnership, appeared to further confound people until she explained it was simply the name given to the over-arching partnership of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, plus community representatives, tasked with providing Bradford with a long-term economic strategy that had social cohesion at its heart.

Sharmila spent some time outlining the composition of Bradford District, its racial make-up, and its physical and cultural diversity. However, she concentrated on Lord Ouseley's report, jointly commissioned by Bradford Council and Bradford Vision prior to the 2001 disturbances, and the efforts of all parties to implement key aspects of that report in the wake of those disturbances, whose immediate impact had produced, variously, feelings of anger, disbelief, frustration, powerlessness and shame, and, for a short period at least, a feeling of mass bereavement.

Sharmila went on to highlight some of the developments of the past 12 months:

- A Women's Forum had emerged.

- Faith representatives from the City's Inter-faith forum had become involved with the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Communities were now agitating for their voices to be heard within the LSP structure.
- Business Interests (initially demoralised by the riots) were forming a new network, 'Manningham Means Business', to work alongside other interests in regenerating the area.
- A Council Scrutiny Committee had been established to oversee the implementation of Lord Ouseley's recommendations from his 'Community Pride – Not Prejudice' Report.
- The Council had committed to address representation of minority groups within its workforce, particularly at all levels of management.
- The Police were establishing an Open House Forum to identify tensions, and to keep the Public abreast of policing strategies.

Finally, Sharmila outlined the role of Bradford Vision in developing the District Community Cohesion Plan around four themes:

1. *equality* of access and outcomes for all communities in relation to public services.
2. *civic pride* and participation in public life – not only Lord Ouseley's report, but other national reports such as those provided by the Inter-Ministerial Group (the Denham Report) and by Ted Cantle's team, all highlighted significant levels of alienation and exclusion from public life (particularly amongst young people) and the need to remedy this situation.
3. *healthy communities* with positive relations – with the object of reducing tensions and mistrust, and ensuring that the different communities are not constantly competing

<sup>2</sup> This speech was delivered a month before the Government published figures showing a significant rise in the numbers of people from visible minorities being stopped relative to white people.

with each other for scarce resources.

- 4. a safer district - recognising the need to tackle anti-social behaviour, violent crime, hate crime, drugs-related crime and public disorder.

In order to deliver the above, a multi-agency Community Cohesion Task Force has been set up by Bradford Vision, with each agency identifying a lead officer, and the council agreeing significant Neighbourhood Renewal Funding to aid in the delivery of community cohesion within the district. The key challenges ahead are identified as:

- Mainstreaming successful pilot projects (including 'schools twinning').
- Ensuring that all of the various communities are engaged and valued.
- Successfully reintegrating offenders from last year's riots back into the community.

Sharmila Gandhi highlighted the centrality of the bid to secure the title of European Capital of Culture 2008, using the advertising slogan "One landscape, many views" (taken from David Hockney's photo-montage 'Pear Blossom Highway').<sup>3</sup> Sharmila convinced her audience that Bradford's adverse press publicity notwithstanding, the city now had a vision and a sense of direction which over the next 20 years would succeed in revitalising its environs both economically and socially.<sup>4</sup>

Lord Parekh thanked Sharmila Gandhi for her 'moving' presentation, and remarked, by way of tribute, that the Conference photographer had been so absorbed by her speech that he had forgotten to take pictures. Fortunately, that was not entirely true.

**Gary Younge on the media**  
Gary Younge's speech, reported



Lord Parekh thanked everybody for their attendance, and the assistance their ideas would give to Runnymede in formulating policies in 2003/4. He also reminded participants that Home Office representatives had been present



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in full on pp. 10–13, was a tour-de-force, and a fitting finale to what had been an excellent conference. By turns amusing and chilling, Gary made the point that if you want to take the racial temperature in Britain you would be better off examining the reactions to the Commission's Report, rather than the Report itself. Lord Parekh, paying tribute to Gary Younge's great moral seriousness, tempered as it is by wit and irony, nevertheless took a more upbeat view. Whilst the initial reaction to the FMEB Report (from certain quarters) had been truly shocking, indeed scandalous, he argued that the Report had weathered the initial storm, was in robust good health and was being taken seriously by ministers. Not only that, but it had so far spawned 22 major articles in academic and other journals; two PhD theses; plus a £25,000 research project investigating the media and other reactions to the Report. Interest in it had clearly not abated.



for the duration of the Conference, and would be taking full cognisance of the various policy suggestions. □

Discussions are going on with the Community Cohesion Unit with a view to Runnymede producing a fully comprehensive report of these conference proceedings for publication in 2003. All keynote speeches would be reproduced in full, and plans include inviting presenters of the mini-plenaries to prepare discussion papers based on their sessions. Some additional material would also be commissioned.

**Members of the Home Office Community Cohesion unit were present throughout the day (above)**

**Animated discussion in the afternoon policy formulation groups kept session chairs busy**

<sup>3</sup> Sadly, a week or so after the Conference, it was announced that the Bradford bid had not made the final shortlist, despite the wit and ingenuity of opening an Embassy in London to extol the virtues of the City (an initiative widely reported, not least in the *Bahreïn Tribune*).

<sup>4</sup> Runnymede has invited Sharmila to write an article on the progress of Bradford's local strategic partnership in 2003.

# Facing the Challenges of Community Cohesion: One Town, One City, Many Cultures

Beverley Hughes, MP, Minister of State at the Home Office, speaks to the Runnymede conference on Developing Community Cohesion, 10 October 2002.

I would like to begin by thanking the Runnymede Trust for hosting this conference. I am delighted to be able to join you.

Runnymede has had a long history of promoting race and community relations in Britain, and it's very important that we have independent organisations such as Runnymede, working in this area of policy. It's a difficult area. It's sensitive. There is inevitably a range of deeply held views about the issues involved. And so informed debate, critical discussion, and the establishment of a culture in which that dialogue can take place are crucially important. Runnymede fulfils all of those functions and more.

If we are to tackle the root causes of conflict, and help develop cohesive communities, it will take a long-term commitment and determination from all – in government, in public bodies and among voluntary and community organisations. And a commitment above all to keep talking and keep demanding progress.

## Contributing to the debate

The Parekh Report made an important contribution to the debate on national identity, equality and diversity, as well as creating a vision of a modern, multi-cultural Britain. It highlighted the challenges that remain if we are to create a more equal society, free from racial inequality and discrimination – the continued need for tackling:

- racial and religious discrimination
- educational inequality and disadvantage
- health inequality
- labour Market disadvantage and
- political exclusion

The recommendations of the report are extremely valuable to Government both in terms of the race relations agenda as well as community cohesion. Many are already Government policy.

Geoff Filkin (who has day-to-day responsibility for race relations) will be considering the Trust's updated recommendations and using them to inform our thinking as we implement the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

## Conference issues

As you would expect, then, the conference is addressing some of the issues most critical to promoting community cohesion:

- employment
- neighbourhood renewal
- community safety and crime reduction
- housing, education, policing
- the role of the media

Two years on from the publication of the Parekh Report, we are faced with further challenges in race and community relations in our country, most notably from the disturbances last year in some of our towns and cities, compounded as they were by the aftermath of Sept 11th.

## Disturbances:

Last year's disturbances took many of us by surprise. The period that followed them began to demonstrate just how much we all need to do to address the problems that lie behind the conflict and hostility in some of our most hard-pressed communities. Since then, central government, local agencies, voluntary organizations and local people have been trying to work out how best to meet the challenges of nurturing greater cohesion in communities.

And in one sense this isn't rocket science. The theory isn't difficult. But the practice is. And there isn't a lot of well-developed practice wisdom about. In any case, whilst there are common principles, they have to be applied in different ways in different localities, because each has its own unique set of characteristics and factors, its own unique population.

*I want to talk to you about:*

- the core principles and themes behind community cohesion;
- our commitment to having an open discussion on citizenship and shared values
- the practical action we all need to take if we are to create more cohesive communities; and
- our policies and proposals to tackle the root causes of conflict in some of our communities.

But let me say first why this is so important. It is not only essential if we are to avoid the kind of disorder that we saw last year. It's also crucial to so many of the objectives we all have for helping people, especially young people, young people from all backgrounds, to reach their potential, to do as well as they can in school and in work, and, through that, to foster strong families, strong communities, a strong economy and a strong, inclusive society. So it is linked directly with the most fundamental objectives of this Government.

It starts with a concern for people, but one which recognises the mutuality, the interdependence, of individuals, families, communities and the wider society. People will not achieve what they are capable of, will not have the chance of a good quality of life, if their community is isolated, divided from other communities, feels excluded, under siege and disconnected.

## So what are the principles behind community cohesion?

Community cohesion is about building safe and strong communities and this is not easy. There isn't a long-standing body of knowledge of how to do this. Building community cohesion must be based on:

- creating real equality of opportunity;
- creating a common vision and shared sense of belonging, rightly identified by Bhikhu Parekh in his opening chapter to the conference report published today;<sup>1</sup>
- Creating a positive and inclusive notion of citizenship and identity;
- Opening up education, social and economic opportunities for every section of the community;
- An absolute commitment to tackling poverty and deprivation in all our communities;
- And an uncompromising challenge to racism in all its forms.

## Belonging, citizenship and identity

I'd like to dwell a little on these issues, because all of the places I have visited where community cohesion is a live issue have concluded that they need to generate open discussion in their communities about shared values, rights and responsibilities, a common sense of belonging and identity. In my view, this also needs to happen at national level. The territory can be difficult, but it is of paramount importance that such a discussion begins and is not quashed.

- Debate needs to be unambiguous and categorical in its rejection of racism and religious hatred.
- There needs to be a clear recognition of the enormous benefits that immigration has brought, and continues to bring to our country.
- For all communities, rights must go hand in hand with responsibilities.

The way in which the debate is conducted will vary. How we engage people at local level will be necessarily different from a debate such as today, on the national stage. But of one thing I am clear: the **terms** of the debate have to be framed around identifying what are the shared values that define our identity and inculcate that common sense of belonging. A debate fuelled by a drive to preserve prevailing institutions, narrowly based on territory and history, is both irrelevant and doomed.

<sup>1</sup> Cohesion, Community and Citizenship, Proceedings of a Runnymede Conference, May 2002. London: Runnymede Trust.



We have to press for the terms of the debate to be modern, open and based on the centrality of diversity as a positive defining characteristic of Britain both historically and for the future. Such a debate needs clear and inclusive leadership at every level.

- That means a willingness to challenge and lead public opinion where necessary, when it is the right thing to do
- It also means challenging communities – all communities – when they need to change or start to think differently
- It means creating a positive narrative of what we are as a country, with diverse communities:  
One country, many cultures.  
One town, one city, many cultures.

I am all too aware that, at national level, we need to get political and civic leadership right as much as we do at a local level. We need to recognise and ensure that at all levels politicians have a responsibility to help bridge division and hostility between communities. So the debate is important, but so is action on the ground. And I think we have to understand that action on the ground, learning by doing, is a fundamental characteristic of the endeavour we have set ourselves.

### Locality, particularity, commonality

Tackling community cohesion issues does require commitment, policy and resources from the centre, and the stimulation of ideas and thought from conferences like this. But it can only be put into practice at local level and each locality is different. The process, then, has to be evolutionary and rooted in locality but there are existing mechanisms in place at local level that we can harness.

For a start, we have to bring a focus on race equality and community cohesion into all our mainstream work:

- Build community cohesion into local community plans;
- Build community cohesion into neighbourhood renewal strategies; and
- Make community cohesion central to local strategic partnerships.

Second, begin to forge and develop a collective vision for local areas with all communities – and communicate that vision widely.

Third, encourage partnership working. An over-used word perhaps, but not yet an over-used practice. Whether in local authorities, police, other public bodies or the voluntary sector, effective partnership between key local agencies and local people is critical if we are to get service delivery right.

The task of analysing the issues faced in each community, agreeing a strategy to tackle them, and systematically implementing that strategy has to be done locally. For different areas some of the issues will be common, such as:

- tackling the root causes of prejudice and hostility
- fostering co-operation
- focusing particularly on young people, and
- reducing the sense of neglect and isolation.

However, the particular issues, the priorities you afford them, and the best ways to tackle them, will be different in each area.

### Government policy

The policies we adopt at central government level are also important.

In government, we are working across departments examining our policies on education, housing, regeneration, youth policy – to name just a few. And we will change policies to promote community cohesion, where this is necessary.

There is an absolute commitment at the centre to challenge and reform those policies to ensure we build community cohesion.

We have established a Ministerial Group from across government whose role is to ensure that community cohesion is built into the work of Whitehall departments.

We have established the Community Cohesion Unit within the Home Office to ensure we get government policy on community cohesion right, to co-ordinate policy across government and to mainstream community cohesion in all our work.

- We have also established an independent panel of experts – the Community Cohesion Panel, chaired by Ted Cantle. The panel will act as a critical friend of the government and oversee as well as produce ideas for promoting community cohesion.
- The panel has established 12 groups of experienced practitioners from a wide range of disciplines. They come together to look at policy solutions to some of the core policy areas related to community cohesion – including housing, policing, education, faith, the voluntary sector, health and social welfare, political leadership, to name a few.

So we now have an infrastructure through which to develop policy and practice, and action at national and local levels.

### What are we doing to meet the challenges of community cohesion?

In government, we have sought to initiate both some immediate action as well as a longer-term programme of work to build community cohesion into our policies.

As an immediate measure and in response to the disturbances in 2001, we made £7 million available to fund summer activities. We released further funding for a similar and extended programme for this year including additional activities in those areas with high levels of street crime.

We are funding a programme of community facilitation to encourage dialogue and tackle local grievances or misunderstandings that threaten good community relations.

Also, in recognition of the need to build cohesion into the agenda of local government, we recently announced that community cohesion would be one of the key themes of the Beacon Council Scheme.

We are also working with the CRE, LGA and ODPM to produce draft guidance on community cohesion for Local Authorities. We have received over 80 responses which are overwhelmingly positive. The final guidance will be published in December 2002.<sup>2</sup>

### Guidance is only a start.

- Community cohesion has to be built into the incentive structures for local authorities to ensure it is a part of their core work.
- So, I welcome the support and co-operation of the Audit Commission and am delighted that community cohesion is an issue which they are looking at as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Since the summer of 2001, a lot of good work has been done. Already, there are many examples around the country where local authorities, partner organisations and local communities are working together to overcome common concerns. So the potential is there – to be built upon.

To complement that work we have put in place sources of practical help in the form of guidance, seminars and conferences. What is clear, however, is that in many areas the foundation has yet to be developed, and the benefits are yet to be fully felt. Our challenge is now to turn that commitment into immediate action.

In order to help further embed community cohesion at a local level, I am pleased to announce today that we will be establishing a new Community Cohesion Pathfinders programme, with an investment of £6 million over two years. The programme, which will run in 15 local authority areas, will support local authorities, the voluntary sector, and communities themselves to build local solutions to local problems.

At the end of the 2 years, we should have 15 very real-life examples of local areas that have successfully put community cohesion at the heart of everything they do. Disseminating this knowledge widely – both during and at the end of the programme – will help all areas across the country. To get the pilots up and running as early as possible, it is my intention to write, by the end of the month, to all local authority Chief Executives setting out in detail the purpose of the programme and to invite expressions of interest.

### Conclusion

This is not a short-term, quick-fix agenda and there are no easy solutions. Nonetheless, we recognise the urgency of the situation. Our strategy has three strands:

1. To support local authorities and other public bodies in implementing their short-term goals to tackle immediate problems.
2. To help address the longer-term challenges of really integrating community cohesion into mainstream policy and practice.
3. To work with you to develop and disseminate the knowledge, experience and growing expertise that is essential.

This is challenging work in difficult territory. It is complex, multi-faceted, risky and at times may feel thankless. But we know the stakes are high, and that the cost of ignoring the issue and pretending it will go away would be paid by generations in the future.

So we all have to grasp the nettle and resolve to do our very best. The future for so many people, and for so many of our communities, as well as our wider society, depends on it. □

<sup>2</sup> Launched by the Minister herself on 11 December at Local Government House, Smith Square.



MULTI-ETHNIC  
BRITAIN

# Words, wounds – and Wagner?

Gary Younge took the platform for the final session of the Runnymede Conference on Developing Community Cohesion. His theme was the power of the media – something he observes and experiences as a journalist, and occasionally encounters as an object of press attention in his own right as a prominent black opinion-former.

I was reading *Media Guardian* a few weeks ago, on a Monday morning, and Paul Dacre says:

*The old Daily Mail, I will be the first to admit, was slightly racist, but we are not now, and Stephen Lawrence was a turning point on that. It was a pivotal moment and, not that we did it for those reasons, we now have a lot more Black and Asian readers, and by God, I would like more of them. Racism appals me, and I wish I could get more Black and Asian reporters working for us but they don't come into journalism....*

The same day Paul Dacre, who is the Head of both the *Mail* and the *Evening Standard*, fired three Black and Asian reporters from the *Evening Standard*. All of which is to say there is a lot of nonsense and hypocrisy, and obfuscation that surrounds discussions of race in the media, and I just want to unravel some of them within the context of the work of the Runnymede Trust.

So the first thing I think we have to accept, or understand, is that the media is not an island. It is rooted in our institutions, and to an extent, and only to an extent, it reflects the prejudice that we see and hear around us, to the same extent that it reflects prurience, occasionally positive images and everything else. Clearly, if a sufficient number of

people found the *Sun* outrageously racist in the 1980s, then they wouldn't have bought it – in the same way that, for example, people from Liverpool stopped buying the *Sun* after its coverage of the Hillsborough disaster. And the same is true, in different ways, of the *Mail* and other papers.

But we are choosing easy targets when we talk about the *Sun* and the *Mail*, and far more tricky targets when we start talking about the *Independent* or the *Guardian* or the *Times*, in terms of either acts of commission, or omission, when they present a view of society that might not be one many black and Asian readers recognise, or that many others of us would not accept as being either fair or reasonable.

## Power in and of the media

But the media also reflects power relations to an extent, and there is a truth in the fact that minority ethnic communities are poorer, less well represented and less engaged with crucial networks and civil society than many of their white counterparts. So, in America, a boycott of a newspaper or a TV station carries with it very clear financial reprisals for that organisation, because of the size of the African-American middle class, because of the number of African Americans, and the very crucial commercial difference their support, or lack of it, can mean.

Let me just compare for you the response to a journalist (I am not going to mention his name because it would be invidious)... a

columnist on the *Guardian*, who also worked for the BBC, who had written about how white people shouldn't feel guilty or really responsible about Africa; that the people who are widely believed to have killed Stephen Lawrence were innocent; and that England was too small [sic]. I raised this at a *Guardian* conference. Somebody said he was just being controversial. I said: 'well you see the thing about racism, it's not controversial; ... trouble is that it's very mainstream'. But then this person wrote a piece about the Countryside Alliance, and suddenly all hell broke loose. The *Telegraph* wrote a leader about it and, before you knew it, he was forced to choose between writing for the *Guardian* or retaining his very prominent place in the BBC. And, interestingly, he chose the former.

Here the point is that black and minority ethnic people don't have the power of a *Telegraph* leader writer, and the BBC, unfortunately, doesn't fear us in the same way that it might fear the leader writer of the *Telegraph*. And I don't talk about fear in any very dangerous sense; rather that to incur the wrath of the black community is regarded as quite often an occupational hazard of being in the media, rather than something that should be taken seriously.

All too often, the power of the media can be exaggerated. In a sense, one of the lessons this Government hasn't learned in over 5 years is that sometimes you have to go with what you know, or what you want to do, rather than what the media says might or might not be right. I think the media can help or hinder progressive change and a whole lot of other things, but I don't think it can arbitrate, and I don't think it is the decisive factor; but it is a key and primary source of where many people get

**'...to incur the wrath of the black community is regarded as quite often an occupational hazard of being in the media...'**

their views. Nonetheless, when those views run up against people's experience in the real world, usually the real world wins; so the reflection to some extent does need to be either faithful or plausible.

Interestingly, the *Mirror*, after Peter Mandelson was ousted, ran a big phone-line number at the bottom of its front page, encouraging a response to the following:

Do you think that Britain is being run by a gay mafia?

Are there are too many gays in the cabinet?

Vote this number if you think 'yes' and this number if you think 'no'.

And alongside it was an article saying, basically, yes it is, and they called on the Great British Public to have their say. And the Great British Public said 'no, no we don't think that', and interestingly enough that issue just faded into the distance, because a whole load of things had gone on around people – it may well have been personal relationships, but also gay characters in *EastEnders* – so there was a far greater familiarity with the issue of sexual orientation than the *Mirror* had given its readers credit for.

### **Chairman Gary and the plinth**

Similarly, and briefly, I am going to describe my very bizarre experience at the hands of the *Mail*, because it is instructive in this context, and very much related to the Runnymede Trust's treatment in the press when the Parekh Report was published.

I am the Chairman of the Commission that helps decide what is going to be exhibited on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square. I thought this was a very innocent thing to be doing. I have an interest in it, and when someone asked for a volunteer to chair this committee, I said fine. Imagine my surprise when, about three months later, the *Mail* splashed 'The thoughts of Chairman Gary' over a double-page spread. Someone (Simon

Hughes, I think) had suggested that the Queen Mother should be put on the plinth and the *Mail* were wanting to make a feature out of that suggestion.

Now the fact that it's an equestrian plinth and the Queen Mother didn't ride a horse didn't matter. The fact that she would either be minuscule, or that, unusually, her handbag would be the size of a human torso, didn't matter either! The fact that the Mortimer Commission had already decided that this plinth should exhibit works of art in rotation, and we were really just dealing with how those artworks should be commissioned; none of that mattered. The fact was that the *Mail* took a look down the list of people who were on this Commission (in an advisory capacity to the Mayor), spotted that, lo and behold, it had a black Chairman, and went crazy, really crazy. It was like seeing your head (and I think those members of the Runnymede Trust who were involved in bringing out the Report a couple of years ago can identify with this) grafted onto someone else's naked body, and this image splashed all over London. It had nothing to do with me and yet I could recognise a likeness in it.

There was quite a funny moment, when, on the first day, they couldn't find a picture of me, and so they had to quote the title of my book in full, because it said *No Place Like Home: A Black Briton's Journey Through the Deep South*, and that was the only way they could get across – without being overtly discriminatory – that this person was someone you should be worried about. This was one of the many things that were bizarre about it; but another was that it was very intense for two days and then it died off. And the reason it died off was because they called on the good people of the *Mail* to write in and call in and call their MP and say: 'we want the Queen Mother on the plinth'. But they didn't, because they didn't want the

Queen Mother on the plinth! I had no idea how it would go on from there. And then it just kind of faded into the background.

But it also asked the question (again very relevant to the Runnymede report) about Britain. It said that the saga of the empty plinth is another example of the yawning gap between the metropolitan elite hijacking this country and the majority of ordinary people who simply want to reclaim Britain as their own.... Quite a sinister remark, I think, and heavily racially connoted.

### **Asylum seekers**

One of the reasons why asylum seekers can be so easily targeted is because so few people know them, so few people ever meet them. Asylum seekers as a major problem in British society are, I strongly believe – not that there isn't an issue about immigration which must be discussed – an entirely concocted and constructed media phenomenon. I dug out some figures from the *Guardian's* database about the number of times the words 'asylum seeker' were mentioned in stories and I got:

1994–5 = 135 times,

1995–6 = 456 times;

2001 = 3784.

Now, asylum seekers have been around for a very very long time, but they have been around in the media as a major force and a major issue only since the media decided that they would be a major issue.

When I was doing a story about asylum seekers, I called the hostels 'Bantustans', but really I was writing about a hostel they are trying to build for gathering together asylum seekers in a certain place in Nottingham. The local people were demonstrating against it. I asked them: 'What do you know about asylum seekers?' They replied: 'Well we know about Sangatte... we know what we see on the television, and we don't like what we see.'



## **MULTI-ETHNIC BRITAIN**

**'...the Mail  
...spotted  
that, lo and  
behold, it had  
a Black  
Chairman  
and went  
crazy, really  
crazy'**



## MULTI-ETHNIC BRITAIN

**'...if there were no media there would still be an issue of racism in Britain...'**

Clearly the media can create an issue. And it doesn't just reflect; it can also reinforce. The truth is that if we want to challenge racism in society then we must take it on where it exists, which is also in our workplaces, our homes, our schools, our streets, our pubs and clubs. If we do that successfully – and it's difficult because we are challenging a racism that comes partly from the media, but not wholly from the media (if there were no media there would still be an issue of racism in Britain) – I believe then, hopefully, we will reach a point where there is an intolerance of that kind of propaganda. So while the power of the media shouldn't be exaggerated, it shouldn't be underplayed either; and just as it may reflect, it can also reinforce and challenge; as it misinforms, so can it inform; and as it describes, so can it distort.

### **What about the workplace?**

I am just going to touch on some of the issues that I think are key here: one is employment. Now I have a job, so I'm not asking for more work for myself, but there are all too few black and Asian journalists, and they are usually misused or abused wherever they find themselves. Quite often what you discover in the media world is that they have twigged only two things that can be done with, or by, a black journalist – to write about race, or never to write about race. So, either you deny or you embrace; but what you can't be is a multi-layered person for whom race is one issue that you are interested in among many others; and that is a genuine battle people in the media do face.

There is also an interesting (and particular) emphasis on what I would call 'front-of-house' staff, which is that when organisations do employ black people they like to promote them in certain ways. I'm not saying that they over-promote them, far from it; but you are

more likely to see a picture by-line for a black journalist, than for someone who works in an editorial capacity, deciding what is going to go on which page, and who is massively involved in the internal dynamics. They like to show the world the handful of people they have (regardless of the amount of power they represent within that institution).

The most obvious place for that is television. When you watch the news you would think that black people are over-represented; but when you look at who is deciding what is going to make the news, and what kind of stories are going to be featured, very few black and Asian people will be there. An interesting comparison or way of looking at this is if you take the difference between the 'Today' programme on radio, and any of the news bulletins: there are no black presenters on the 'Today' programme, and I can only assume that is because they think nobody can see them, so it doesn't matter! Not realising that there is an entire body of knowledge and experience that comes from black and Asian journalists. And they would never even think of trying to get away with that on a TV news programme.

Another incredibly peculiar and difficult development is the way race has become a touchstone for modernity itself. Probably the most obvious place to look at this just now is the Conservative Party, where currently there is an emphasis on ethnicity, that we need more black and Asian people. Now, there is no notion that black and Asian people are going to rush to actually vote Conservative, but what it does suggest is that somehow they are a modern party. Race is being used (and at other times different things have been used in this way as a tool to suggest that you are forward-looking as opposed to backward-looking). I think it's not a good thing, because you think you're talking about race, but

actually you are talking about an entire baggage-load of preconceptions and prejudices that people hold.

The most blatant example of this in the media, as taken up by the *Mail*, was just a month after Sir John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, conceded that he might have to look abroad for black and Asian recruits, because he couldn't recruit them in Britain. A photo in the *Mail* said this is a picture that reflects changing times and attitudes within the Police Force:

*The exclusive picture of Scotland Yard's employees shows Forces are beginning to reflect the racial mix of the community they serve.*

(and they had lots of people from many different races). Ethnic minorities make up 25 percent of the Capital's population, but only 4.5 percent of the Met, and it was an example of how equal opportunities are really being shifted into photo opportunities.

A similar thing happened when Teresa May was appointed (as Conservative Party Chair). They had corralled a group of people behind her – Asian women, young people (some of whom were on work experience, many of whom hadn't been there very long) – in order to suggest change where no change had actually taken place.

The most blatant example of this was in when George W. Bush was standing for President. At the Convention, Condoleezza Rice was doing one prime-time news slot, Colin Powell did another. A political analyst in Washington said what the Republicans were doing was aimed at white Americans. Moderates don't want someone who is negative on race, so it says something significant about America as a whole. Really they were targeting women voters, and the message was: 'if we can be good to black people we can be good to anyone!' When race becomes a touchstone in that

way, the media first of all can either run with it or they can question it, but secondly it becomes a tool within the media game. It's a way of playing the media game and I think we've seen a lot of that recently.

### The press and the report

Finally, I want to concentrate just for a while on the response to the Runnymede Trust's Report just two years ago, because it was breathtaking... it really was staggering. And remember this happened in a completely different time to the one that we are in now – this is pre-September 11th, pre-uprisings in Bradford and Oldham and Burnley and elsewhere. It was actually at quite a hopeful time. And when you look at the common sense that was being suggested in the Report and then you gauge the response on the front page of the *Telegraph* saying: 'This group have said that Britain is racist'. Also noteworthy was the blustering bafflement exhibited in other pieces (talking about your good selves, Lord Parekh):

*They would have schools, the police and all public authorities treating everyone differently, according to their ethnic origins.*

As though this is something bad! And then:

*Yet what is black British history? What is British history if not the story of a group of islands and the way in which the multifarious people who have lived on them through the ages have rubbed along with each other?*

No mention of colony, of Empire, of Ireland, and a staggering, breathtaking lack of self-awareness that, all of a sudden, forced the authors of this report into some peculiar place where they were called upon to defend things they hadn't said, and to support things that they didn't believe.



And the notion which the media found particularly troublesome was that it was possible to discriminate between people without discriminating against people! The idea of difference floored them completely, and so rather than try to come to terms with their own ignorance, they lashed out, not just the *Telegraph* but the *Mail* as well.

I seem to remember the *Mail* carried mugshots of all of you (the Commissioners) as though in a police line-up, with a little bit of blurb about the crimes that each of you have committed on our great nation. The *Telegraph's* front-page headline read 'Straw wants to re-write our history!' – begging two questions: What do they mean by 'our'? And precisely what version of history are they talking about?

I wrote a response which ended up being a response not so much to the Report, but to the media response to the Report. I said, if you really want to take the temperature, the racial temperature in Britain, you would be better off examining the reactions to the Report than the Report itself. Not that the Report wasn't brilliant in all sorts of ways, but the reaction to it really showed us how much we've had to do; and what has happened since has shown how

fragile some of the victories that we thought we had made have been!

### My country

One of the responses that I got to my piece was from a man called Michael Henderson, who sent me a letter that had within it a piece by Paul Johnson from the *Mail*. I recognised this piece because someone else had already sent me the article; and the person who had sent it to me previously was a friend of the person who did the Brixton and the Brick Lane bombings, someone who has since been arrested for sending a number of prominent black people racist hate mail. It was the same piece!

And this is what Mr Henderson said: 'You clearly know nothing about your country' – well at least he thinks it's my country, that's a start. 'This piece may set you on the road to partial knowledge,' he says. He also advises me to buy a decent recording of the *Meistersingers* by Richard Wagner. Wagner, he acknowledged, wasn't English, but he did know something of how the past informs the present, unlike some people I could mention!

The letter was on *Telegraph* headed notepaper. Michael Henderson is a cricket writer for that paper. □



**MULTI-ETHNIC  
BRITAIN**

**Lord Parekh and  
Gary Young  
bring the  
Developing  
Community  
Cohesion  
conference to a  
close on 10  
October 2002**

All conference  
photos were  
taken by Rod  
Leon

**'And the  
notion which  
the media  
found  
particularly  
troublesome  
was that it  
was possible  
to discrimi-  
nate between  
people  
without  
discriminating  
against  
people'**



# Monitoring Parliament

As a consequence of the number of requests we receive here at Runnymede for information on the progress of certain debates and bills through Parliament, we've asked **Omar Khan** to provide Bulletin readers with information periodically on how government is legislating for race equality-related matters. This article lays the foundations for what will become a regular series of parliamentary monitor reports.

Without public knowledge of parliamentary debate and bills democracy does not fulfil its function. Since the advent of the Internet, Government is better placed to provide relatively accessible and comprehensible information for anyone wishing to examine the form and extent of parliamentary activity. Indeed, the [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) website offers full texts of current and past bills as well as Hansard's records of debates and minutes of committee meetings. Furthermore, there are some helpful explanatory files that offer guidance to the intricacies of parliamentary rules and procedures.

Despite the comprehensive material on the government's website, it can be difficult to unearth material of particular interest. The sheer volume of information provided often makes it difficult and frustrating to keep on track, except when researching the specifics of a particular bill.

For the purposes of this first contribution to the Bulletin, I decided to look at the Committee system, where some of the more important decisions about legislation are made, and to list most of the current standing and select committees. Second, I've summarised some important issues in two pieces of legislation introduced at the end of November, namely the Courts Bill (Lords) and the Criminal Justice Bill (Commons). While both have received some attention in the media, they have far-reaching

implications for the future of the law in Britain, even if the full consequences remain somewhat unclear.

## The Committee System

Committees are important to the passage of legislation: bills are seriously scrutinised by these small bodies, which have various powers of recommendation and amendment, before they are returned to Parliament. While the committee stage can undoubtedly improve the specification and consistency of a bill, their workings are often opaque. What follows is some clarification of how they function, based on an examination of Committee websites, information files for [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) and responses from the House of Commons information office.

There are two sorts of committees: Standing Committees and Select Committees. These are quite different bodies and their membership, rules and procedures differ as well. Standing committees (with membership drawn from amongst Members of the House of Commons and from the House of Lords) are usually assembled when a particular bill is being considered, and exist only for the duration of that bill. Select committees (HoC membership only), on the other hand, are chosen for the duration of Parliament and usually track the 'form' of a particular government department. For example, the Home Affairs Select Committee examines issues considered by the Home Office,

while the Foreign Affairs Select Committee shadows the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

## Select Committees

As stated in the Government's own publication: 'Select committees are investigative committees which mostly proceed by taking evidence and making reports on their findings' – i.e. they interview outside experts as well as Government Ministers, and their minutes and reports are regularly updated on the relevant website.<sup>1</sup>

Members receive no additional payment for their Committee time. They will usually hire an outside (paid) specialist to act as an advisor and to support the chair in running the committee. The first stage of gathering evidence begins when the chair, in consultation with the advisor, decides whom to ask for evidence – usually relevant experts or organisations. The public is allowed to submit evidence at this stage, as advertised on the parliamentary homepage. Although not all submissions earn similar consideration by all committees, this stage offers the British public an opportunity to contribute to legislation, and should probably be taken up by more of us.

Government Ministers, Private Secretaries and Official Opposition spokespersons are not allowed to be nominated to Select Committees, presumably limiting the amount of bias. The work of select committees is well described in the government factsheet:

*A [select] committee selects a topic or series of topics for inquiry. It may begin by having private briefings and taking specialist advice. It then embarks on a process of information gathering, taking oral and written evidence. Normally, Government Ministers and officials will give evidence at some stage. The oral and*

<sup>1</sup> See the government website factsheet at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

written evidence is published (sometimes omitting material on the grounds of confidentiality). In addition, most inquiries lead to the committee making a report to the House which usually includes recommendations, most of which will be addressed to the Government. The Government is expected to reply to a report within two months of publication.

This explanation is complicated by the fact the Commons and the Lords have separate select committees, reflecting the different divisions in governmental duties. To further complicate matters there are also six 'joint select' committees with membership drawn from both Houses.

#### Standing Committees

Not only do most standing committees consider only a single

piece of potential legislation, they proceed more like a debate in Parliament, with Government and Opposition benches facing each other. (Remember, too, that there are no standing committees in the House of Lords.) Since it is early in the life of this Parliament, no standing committees have been established to consider public bills for the 2002/3 session. Below are some of the committees from the 2001/2 Parliament:

#### Bills before Parliament

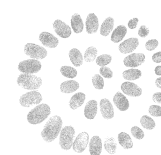
Parliament's website maintains an up-to-date list of bills currently before the Commons and Lords. The list on p.16 is taken from early December 2002, and further information can be found in the Weekly Information Bulletin:

While it is important for legislation to be precise and effective, it is also vital that in a representative democracy citizens

understand the decisions taken on their behalf by politicians. As an example of some of the material available on the website, and to demonstrate the importance and utility of examining these bills carefully, I have considered the Courts Bill (Lords) and Criminal Justice Bill (Commons). This has also been an area where Runnymede has made recommendations in the past.<sup>2</sup>

#### Courts Bill

The Courts Bill in the House of Lords presents some changes in judicial matters and primarily implements many



## GOVERNMENT

<sup>2</sup> Such as Runnymede's response to the Home Office on the RR(A) Act (15 May 2001; and covered to some extent in the Runnymede Bulletin no. 326, June 2001) and the proposals contained in the Parekh Report (2000: 133-9).

#### Standing Committees (SCs) from 2001/2 Parliament (now disbanded)

|  |
|--|
| British Overseas Territories Bill [Lords] (SC D)     |
| Civil Defence (Grant) Bill (SC E)                    |
| Commonwealth Bill (SC C)                             |
| Divorce (Religious Marriages) Bill (SC D)            |
| Export Control Bill (SC B)                           |
| Football (Disorder) (Amendment) Bill (SC A)          |
| Homelessness Bill (SC A)                             |
| Housing Benefit (Withholding of Payment) Bill (SC B) |
| International Development Bill [Lords] (SC D)        |
| Justice (Northern Ireland) Bill (SC F)               |
| NHS Reform and Health Care Professions Bill (SC A)   |
| Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill (SC E)      |
| Police Reform Bill [Lords](SC A)                     |
| Proceeds of Crime Bill (SC B)                        |
| Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Bill (SC A) |

#### HoC Departmental Select Committees

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Culture, Media & Sport            | Northern Ireland Affairs                    |
| Defence                           | Science and Technology                      |
| Education and Skills              | Scottish Affairs                            |
| Environment, Food & Rural Affairs | Trade and Industry                          |
| Foreign Affairs                   | Transport, Local Government and the Regions |
| Health                            | Treasury                                    |
| Home Affairs                      | Welsh Affairs                               |
| International Development         | Work and Pensions                           |

#### HoL Select Committees

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Animals in Scientific Procedures Select Committee                                  | EU: Environment, Agriculture, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Sub-Committee D) |
| Committee for Privileges   | EU: Law and Institutions (Sub-Committee E)  |
| Constitution Committee   | EU: Social Affairs, Education and Home Affairs (Sub-Committee F)                      |
| Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform   | Liaison Committee   |
| Economic Affairs Committee   | Procedure Committee   |
| EU Select Committee  | Religious Offences Committee  |
| EU: Economic and Financial Affairs, Trade and External Relations (Sub-Committee A) | Science & Technology Sub-Committee I  |
| EU: Energy, Industry & Transport (Sub-Committee B)                                 | Science & Technology Sub-Committee II   |
| EU: Common Foreign and Security Policy   | Science & Technology Select Committee (Sub-Committee C)                               |



recommendations made in Sir Robin Auld's Review of the Criminal Courts in England and Wales (Oct. 2001), which the Government accepted in the White Paper Justice For All (17 July 2002).

The bill is in nine main parts, as

**Selection of Current Bills before Parliament**

Arms Control and Disarmament (Inspections) Bill [HoL]

Courts Bill [HoL]

Crime (International Co-operation) Bill [HoL]

Criminal Justice Bill

European Parliament (Representation) Bill

European Union (Implications of Withdrawal) Bill [HoL]

Extradition Bill

Local Government Bill

Public Services (Disruption) Bill [HoL]

Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill

Voting Age (reduction to 16) Bill [HoL]

described in the Overview:

1. Maintain the Court System
2. Justices of the peace
3. Magistrates' Courts
4. Court Security
5. Inspectors of court administration
6. Judges
7. Procedures, rules and practice directives
8. Miscellaneous
9. Final provisions

As in the Criminal Justice Bill discussed below, there is great concern for streamlining and efficiency, and the bill is expected to 'deliver decentralized management and local accountability within a national framework of standards and strategy direction'.

Much of the bill explains the provisions for hiring members of the courts system, whether they be justices of the peace, magistrates, security guards, inspectors or judges. This is an area where monitoring by ethnicity could contribute to improved interaction between the criminal justice system and black

and minority ethnic Britons. The Lord Chancellor is given a great deal of power in determining the standards for all of these appointments under clause 2(1): the Lord Chancellor 'may appoint such officers and other staff as appear to him appropriate to the purpose of discharging his general duty'.

The ultimate arbitration of the Lord Chancellor is further affirmed in clauses 4, 10, 14, 16, 17, 21, 31, 39, 46, 53, 58, 67, 73, 79, 97 and in the additional schedules, often referring specifically to the provisions in 2(1). While it is undoubtedly important that qualified individuals familiar with the law are employed in sensitive positions, observers concerned with race issues will be familiar with the tendency for unspecified conventional hiring practices to exclude black and minority ethnic people. Unfortunately, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act excludes 'judicial and quasi-judicial bodies' from many of its requirements, but it seems likely that the results of such practices will at least be informally monitored, on behalf of the Lord Chancellor and the Courts.

Runnymede, in its response to the Home Office Consultation on the RR(A)A,<sup>3</sup> of course called for this body to be included in the list of public bodies required under the general duty to monitor for ethnicity, and this remains a key position for us.

**Criminal Justice Bill**

This bill has received far greater attention than the courts bill and contains a number of measures that will be immediately familiar to much of the British public. Like the Courts Bill, Lord Auld's Report and the White Paper Justice for All played a large part in the drafting of this bill, as did John Halliday's 2001 Report Making Punishments Work: report and review of the sentencing framework of England and Wales.

Although the Government has suffered defeats in the Lords in its

attempts to limit trials by jury, this bill retains a commitment to reducing abuses of the jury system by repeat offenders. The following quote indicates the broader perspective of the Government on the very popular public issue of crime and punishment:

*[The bill] 'aims to improve the management of cases through the courts by involving the CPS in charging decisions, by reforming the system for allocating cases to court, and by increasing magistrates' sentencing powers so that fewer cases have to go to Crown Court ... [the bill is] designed to ensure that criminal trials are run more efficiently and to reduce the scope for abuse of the system... It will ensure the wider involvement of the community as a whole by reforming rules on jury service, allow hearsay evidence where original source cannot be present or where the judge would otherwise consider appropriate. [from www.parliament.uk website]*

The bill is divided into 14 parts, and a selection of some of the specific bills will indicate the shape of reform. In part 1, 'Police and Criminal Evidence', the bill asserts the need for new provisions for stop and search as well as the use of street bail. There are also new provisions for warrants to enter and search as well as an extension from 24 to 36 hours as the limit to detainment without charge. All of these provisions, particularly stop and search, should be further monitored to consider their potentially discrepant impact on black and minority ethnic Britons, especially given concerns raised about racial bias in stop and search procedures in the past.

Part 2 concerns 'Bail', which recommends that all detainees who test positive for class A

<sup>3</sup> Op cit. note 2.



drugs and refuse drug treatment be denied bail. It also introduces the concept of 'street bail'. In parts 3 'Criminal Cautions' and 4 'Charging, etc', the draft bill recommends that the CPS and DPP be more involved in deciding standards in these instances.

The 5th part, 'Disclosure', demands that accused give more detailed defence statements but also that prosecutors disclose any relevant information. Specific provisions are laid out regarding how and why procedures may be made in parts 6–8: 'Allocation and Transfer of Offence', 'Trials of indictment without a jury' and 'Live Links' (i.e. through television). While defendants are presently allowed the right to appeal, prosecutions are not – a situation that is altered in part 9, 'Prosecution Appeals'. All of these provisions will have an impact on defendants, who may need additional information on the criminal justice system to understand their rights. The possibility that bail, cautioning, disclosure, trial by jury or prosecution appeal reforms put undue burdens on specific community members should be assessed through specific monitoring, including by ethnicity.

Public discomfort with double jeopardy has always been balanced with a sense that justice may not have been realised in certain cases. In part 10, 'Retrial for Serious Offenders', the bill makes the fundamental and presumably popular change to allow retrial of serious offenders, namely for cases involving murder, manslaughter, rape or firearms, but not for common law offences. The bill suggests that this consideration will be made only in cases carrying life sentences. It may provide a means for reopening the Stephen Lawrence case if new and compelling evidence is brought to light.

At present, certain statements are inadmissible as evidence in a court of law. Section 11, 'Evidence', lays out grounds

where it would be possible for an individual's 'bad character' to be examined by the court. The report on the Damilola Taylor case and the review chaired by Dr John Sentamu, bishop of Birmingham (both published in the week of 9 Dec) concur on the need for a fresh approach to how evidence is taken and transmitted. The DPP report recommends: allowing juries to hear evidence of a kind currently excluded; the defence to reveal its evidence to opposing barristers before trial; professional assessment of the reliability of evidence; and ensuring that in cases where media cash rewards are offered the evidence is not compromised. The Sentamu report criticises the trial process rather than police errors. Will the criminal justice bill deal squarely with the issues raised in both these timely reports?

The final substantive section, 'Sentencing', states that in the past reasons have not been provided for the size of sentencing. The bill lists four main reasons for the first time:

1. punishment
2. public protection
3. crime reduction
4. reparation

Significantly, racially motivated crimes are listed among those that can impact the length of a sentence. This section also spells out new provisions on community service and allows courts to suspend custodial sentences. While it asserts minimum terms for dangerous offenders, recent moves in the Lords have also limited the power of the Home Secretary to establish such sentences. The final sections 13 and 14 deal with 'Miscellaneous' and 'General' issues, including giving further support to help anti-social youth.

Runnymede and other organisations have often noted that black and minority ethnic individuals are treated differently at every stage of the criminal justice

system, from initial cautioning, to arrest, to bail, to charging, at plea-bargaining, through the courts, to appeals, to sentencing, and finally regarding the duration of time served. Although it is impossible to determine the effects of all of these new provisions on black and minority ethnic Britons, it is important that the criminal justice system remain as neutral as possible. The individuals who staff the system should also be accountable for their decisions. As with the Courts Bill, Runnymede would like to see monitoring done at as many stages as possible in order to make sure that well-intentioned changes do not lead to discriminatory consequences.

### Readers' Responses Requested

In the next Bulletin we would like to investigate the activities of various committees, including the reports they put out, that are directly related to race equality issues. We will also begin to examine how community organisations can involve themselves more in lobbying at the appropriate stages. We would like readers to contact us at Runnymede with your views on what you would like us to cover in this Parliamentary monitor section. □

### One Scotland, Many Cultures

Subtitled 'A small country, not a country of small minds', this media campaign by the Scottish Executive ran from September into early November 2002. Founded on research which showed the majority of people in Scotland believed themselves not to be racist, but with reported racist incidents in Scotland continuing to increase, the campaign aimed to raise public awareness of racist attitudes and behaviour. Through TV, cinema, radio and billboard advertising the campaign's message, launched by First Minister Jack McConnell and Margaret Curran, Minister for Social Justice, promoted the idea of 'a modern Scotland of many cultures' in which there is 'no place for racism' 'We all have a duty to challenge racism and prejudice, whatever form it takes ... to make Scotland a better place', said McConnell. CRE Scotland were closely involved in the development of the campaign.



## CONFERENCE REPORT

*'Back then they demonised the "coloured" immigrant. Today they demonise the "asylum seeker"'*

Mary Dines, Nezlin Sterling and Ann Dummett (L-R) at the opening plenary session, with Trevor Phillips in the chair

# Crossing Borders

On 15 and 16 November the London Metropolitan University, at its Holloway Road campus, provided the venue for a conference to mark the 40th anniversary of the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962. **Wayne Farah** shares his impressions of the event.

'Crossing Borders: The Legacy of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act' covered a lot of ground in the 2 days for which it ran. Organised jointly by the Runnymede Trust, the JCWI, UKREN, 1990 Trust, London European Research Centre and the Institute of European Migration and Transformation at the London Metropolitan University, this conference brought together activists and practitioners from many anti-racist and migrant rights organisations, with academics, politicians, and opinion formers to debate the impact of 40 years of immigration control on British and mainland European society.

### How the conference came about

The conference had its origins in the 'London – European City of Immigration' seminars organised by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and London European Research Centre (LERC) at the University of North London in March 2001. These seminars had demonstrated the range of people who were prepared to engage in a radical reassessment of immigration and asylum policy. However, it wasn't until a year later that the ideas for the

Crossing Borders conference were

first discussed.

Without the fuel of our enthusiasm to bring this event into being, I am sure someone would have pointed out that organising a conference on such a scale is a huge task and that we had no money. Such considerations were overridden by the strength of our shared determination to both mark and reflect upon the historical significance of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act (CwIA), a major turning point in the development of UK immigration and race relations policy by its defining of the ideological context in terms of the danger posed by 'coloured' immigrants. Today, although the terminology has changed, the perceived threat posed by the 'alien' immigrant remains an abiding concern for policy makers across Europe.

Our vision was for a broad-based event where all stakeholders in the contemporary immigration and race relations debates could come together to review their experiences and perspectives. The conference structure and organisation therefore sought to facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach that maximized opportunities for the exchange of ideas. In four plenary sessions, some key figures from the migrants' rights and anti-racist movements of the last

40 years explored some of the lessons of our history and the challenges ahead. Their observations were

discussed further in seminars where activists, academics and policy makers were able to debate the issues in detail.

Much of the important work of the conference took place in workshops led by community organisations that gave participants the opportunity to engage and network with some of the groups at the forefront of the anti-racist and migrant rights struggles. With hindsight we may have been guilty of trying to do too much because I am sure I was not the only one who found it difficult to choose between the seminars and workshops available, or wished speakers could have been given more time to take questions from the floor.

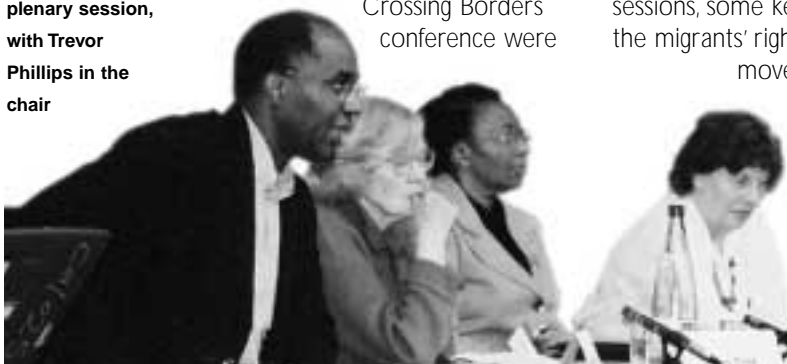
Our aims were to identify the dominant political themes that have conditioned immigration and race relations discourse since 1962, explore the prospects for radical reform at a national and EU level and to promote an anti-racist perspective on contemporary immigration debates that supports refugee and migrant rights. The question that we put to the conference was:

Back then they demonised the 'coloured' immigrant. Today they demonise the 'asylum seeker'. What can we do to change the terms of the debate?

### Conference highlights

In 2003 a full conference report will provide a detailed analysis of the main speakers' contributions, but I would like to comment on a few personal highlights.

In the opening plenary session long-standing women campaigners, Mary Dines, Ann Dummett and Nezlin Sterling, provided an historical and moral context for our discussions. Their withering critiques of the weakness, duplicity and hypocrisy of the politicians and opinion formers who failed to confront the racists of the late 1950s and early 1960s located the current Home Secretary in a long and ignoble tradition. Their emphatic



rejection of the proposition that there is a moral basis for immigration controls illustrated the fundamental contradiction between liberalism's claims to universalism and its actual particularism.<sup>1</sup> A contradiction that was examined further in the workshop led by the International League for Human Rights which explored how throughout Europe respect for human rights is hierarchical, with citizens at the top and asylum seekers at the bottom.

*The international consensus is that where immigration policy is concerned, a state looks to its own self-interest whereas in matters of asylum, it is the need of the applicant that is supposed to govern policy. Over the last 20 years, this has all got muddled up. A lot of people who count as illegal immigrants are fleeing situations just as desperate as those who are victims of systematic state persecution. Morally speaking, I agree that it is unjustifiable to have any control. Practically speaking, it is difficult for any one country to introduce this unilaterally. (Anne Dummett)*

I was particularly struck by the way in which they described how the ties of empire had infused the immigration debate in the 1960s, creating divisions in the political cast and the possibility of unity among the immigrants. Today, in the absence of such ties, no matter how paternalistic, and in the face of the fragmentation of the settled black communities and the quangoisation of the voluntary sector, the task of building an effective opposition is perhaps even more complex and challenging. Given that the political opportunism that sought to appease racists in the 1960s is now the populist consensus, we see ever more clearly how constant repetition of the myth that immigration controls promote good race relations

comes to define public debate.

The mechanisms of such elite discourses were considered in great detail in the seminar 'Lies, Damned Lies and the Media', which clearly demonstrated the benefits of our multi-disciplinary approach. Prof Teun van Dijk (of the University of Amsterdam and of Barcelona) explained that academic research had shown how racism is reproduced through elite discourses and how the media as an influential conduit of discourse and communication has abused its power and played a significant role in the reproduction of racism.

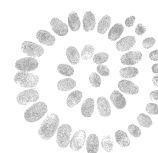
*The main problem of such biased and sometimes explicitly racist reporting (especially in the British tabloid press) is not that it is a form of discrimination and elite power abuse as such, but that it systematically affects the minds of the public at large. Definitions of the situation (so-called mental models), group attitudes, as well as general ideologies among the general public will tend to develop negatively around immigrants. This again will more likely lead to discriminatory actions (and discourses) against the Other, so that the vicious circle of racist-discourse, racist-beliefs and racist-actions is closed and re-opened, again and again. (Teun A. van Dijk)*

This analysis was supported by Arun Kundani from the Institute of Race Relations whose detailed discussion of the tabloid press traced the ways in which they have turned 'asylum seeker' into a term of abuse and 'made hostility to asylum seekers appear as natural, as common sense and in turn, this common-sense racism has served to insulate the bureaucratic terror of the asylum system from moral criticism'. Arun's call for the journalists and editors who collaborate in the

reproduction of racist discourses to be held to public account was endorsed by the columnist Yasmin Alibhai Brown. Her account of life inside the media exposed the extent to which racism and a lack of professionalism makes many of her fellow journalists willing collaborators in dehumanising refugees and stereotyping the black communities.

The opening plenary session of Saturday morning challenged us to look beyond the British experience and wrestle with the changing nature and functions of racism in the European context. Bob Purkiss, chair of the European Monitoring Centre, argued that EU policy was following a similar trajectory to that which the UK followed in the 1960s. Now, as then, politicians are pandering to populist racism for electoral advantage. The reconstruction of a white, Christian, European identity that defines the EU in terms of cultural values rather than democratic principles has been accompanied by the racialisation of immigration policy and increasingly restrictive immigration controls. The EU has also followed the British trajectory by separating immigration policies and anti-discrimination policies. Although, like Britain, the EU seeks to justify strict immigration control in the interest of good race relations, the separation of immigration policy from anti-discrimination policy drives a wedge between new immigrants and the settled black communities.

*We need to be aware of the inevitable limitations of anti-discrimination legislation in order to determine how to use it most effectively... one loophole... is caused by the separation from migration policies... This means there is an implicit distinction between newer migrants and settled communities. In continental Europe the nationality issue is likely to*



## CONFERENCE REPORT

**'...we see ever more clearly how constant repetition of the myth that immigration controls promote good race relations comes to define public debate'**

<sup>1</sup> Cole, P. (2000) *Philosophies of Exclusion: Liberal Political Theory and Immigration*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.



## CONFERENCE REPORT

**'...we had yet to define our own agenda to more adequately represent and defend those who suffer humiliation and deprivation'**

*affect the majority of black and minority ethnic people. The European Commission is well aware of this problem, and ... has proposed a Directive which would give long-term residents of third-country-origin... a kind of 'civic citizenship'... However, while all initiatives to curb irregular migration have sailed smoothly through the European Council, the attempt to ensure that third-country-nationals receive rights... is stalled in Council negotiations. (Bob Purkiss)*

Richard Howitt MEP provided numerous examples of politicians pandering to the extreme right, and the racist logic that drives not only EU immigration policy but, increasingly, trade, aid and foreign policy. Both Bob and Richard emphasised the significance of the 'cultural turn' in redefining the role and function of racism in Europe. This concern was echoed in the workshop run by the Forum against Islamophobia and Racism and the seminar on 'Racism and Resistance in Europe' where Bashy Quraishy, President of the European Network against Racism, argued that campaigning against the persistence of islamophobia and anti-semitism must be central to the concerns of the anti-racist movement.

*We see all over Europe a process of demonizing taking place that is not just to do with black and white. Even Swedish skinheads and French nationalists have stopped talking about the hierarchy of races and scientific racism and started*

*talking about cultures, civilizations, and religion... they know they cannot play the race card as they once did. (Bashy Quraishy)*

However, Tony Bunyan of Statewatch argued that it is not just the threat of cultural imperialism we must confront but the dangers of totalitarianism. In a searing attack on Fortress Europe that was chilling in its implications, he laid bare the entrails and agencies of the secret Euro-state legitimised in the name of the war on terrorism, and explained how they represented an attack on liberal democratic culture that could destroy civil society.

The scale of the threat described by Tony, was further explored in the seminar on Global Migration Management post 9/11. Don Flynn from the JCWI explained how, since 11 September 2001, EU and US state officials, driven by a gatekeeper mentality, are working closely together to construct a totally administered society; and Liz Fekete, editor of the European Race Bulletin, explained how the war on terrorism served to undermine the UN declaration on Human Rights and the Geneva Convention on refugees in order to promote a system of Managed Migration that serves the economic and strategic interests of the west.

### Ending on a high note

As I made my way to the final plenary session on Saturday afternoon, suffering from information overload and perhaps some analysis paralysis, I felt in need of clarity and inspiration, needs that were to be comprehensively addressed by Dipak Nandy and Dr A.

Sivanandan. We had, as Colin Prescod in his role as provocative rapporteur suggested, participated in 2 days of powerful analysis and reflection, but

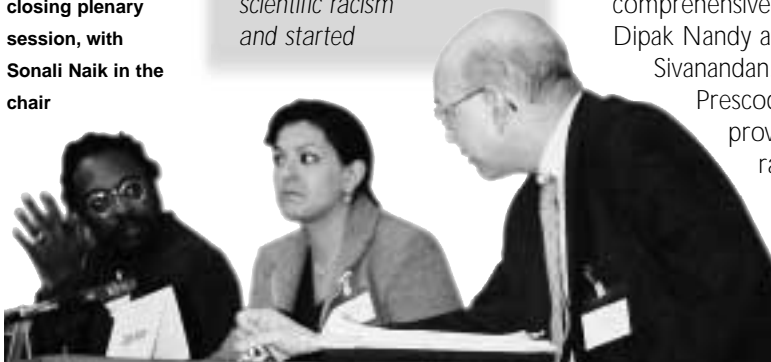
we had yet to define our own agenda to more adequately represent and defend those who suffer humiliation and deprivation.

*Those of us who remember our earlier, vibrant, grassroots and independent struggles around immigration and racism, we have to note that what we have now are lots of organisations but little sense of a movement which either supports or is mobilisable by these organisations. So we have to attempt again to build a new movement that joins activist analysis with analytical activism... a broad-based movement for rights and justice and for sanity and humanity. (Colin Prescod)*

To develop that agenda and strengthen the movement we need to understand the lessons of history so that they can inform our efforts to come to grips with the new realities that confront us. We are therefore I think duty bound to reflect on Dipak's clear and simple advice to those of us who, as he put it, 'have inherited as their legacy the manifold failures of my generation to achieve what we set out to do in race relations and combat the hysteria around immigration'.

*First is the importance of engaging with the enemy in the here and now... on the terms in which the problem presents itself to us. If we defer engagement with the enemy because the terms are not to our liking; if we pass up the option of a less than perfect possible in favour of the ideal; we in fact betray the people we represent. Second is the crucial importance of coalition building... We can either adopt the posture of the fanatical sect – the George W Bush formulation: 'he who is not with us is against us' – or we can take the view that says: 'He who is not against*

**Colin Prescod and Dipak Nandy (L-R) at the closing plenary session, with Sonali Naik in the chair**



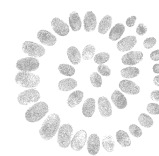
*us, is potentially with us' – making it our positive duty then to go out, build bridges... form networks that are more powerful than their parts. (Dipak Nandy)*

But we have also to understand the new realities that confront us. To understand why racism is no longer simply colour coded in the way it was in the 1960s and locate those changes within the context of the wider economic and social changes brought about by globalisation. And it was to these new realities and the opportunities for resistance that Sivanandan addressed himself.

*Globalisation has created a unified economic system and September 11 is engendering a uniform political culture. And together, through the*

*instrument of the market state, they are undermining civil liberties, degrading social relations and wrecking civil society ... But that very same globalism allows us to create a unified political struggle. Whether we are against war with Iraq, whether we are for fair (not free) trade, whether we are against the Ilisu Dam project, ... whatever the issue that we are involved in, you'll find that it is contaminated by other issues and that they all stem from... globalism and the market state. We need, therefore, not only to unite our struggles but unite our peoples, call our intelligentsia to account, put the technology that instigated globalisation to our own, insurgent use. ... Who we are is what we do. The political is personal. (A. Sivanandan)*

Ultimately, the success of the Crossing Borders conference will be judged by its contribution to the development of a broad-based movement for rights and justice. The scale of the challenges that confront us and the urgent need for an effective response to the rise of the far right, combined with the divisions within our communities and the weaknesses of our own organisations, provide no room for complacency. However, by the end of these two November days I felt strongly that we had begun to identify a community of committed academics, politicians, black, immigrant, and refugee community activists and representatives from institutions of civil society who were willing to work together and play an important role in the years ahead. □



## CONFERENCE REPORT

Wayne Farah is a research student at London Metropolitan University

### International Women's Week Conference

## 'Valuing Women's Voluntary Action' 13 March 2003

hosted by The Women's Resource Centre in partnership with the Women's National Commission and NAWO at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and Education Centre, London

Invited speakers and workshop leaders include:

**Sonia Davis**, author of 'Why do Black Women Organise?'  
**Diana Mills** from the Refugee Women's Resource Project  
**Allison Livingston-Whitton** of the Consortium of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Organisations  
**Ranjit Kaur** of Rights of Women, and  
**Shaharana Begum**, from the Women's Design Service

**Anni Majoram**, Women's Adviser to the Mayor and **Helen Edwards**, Head of the Active Communities Unit, have been invited to close the conference with their visions of the role women's voluntary organisations play within their respective governmental bodies.

Workshops will run throughout the day on a variety of topics including:

- Core funding for women's organisations
- Impact of IT for our work
- Employment rights and trade union activism in the women's sector
- Corporate community investment: benefits for both women's organisations and the private sector.
- Including the socially excluded in volunteer work
- Policy and research into the needs of the women's sector
- Work/life balance

Facilitators with expertise in these areas will engage and encourage discussion by participants, with the aim of providing 10 final Action Points for dissemination to policy makers, central and local government and funders.

Throughout the conference, speakers and workshops will focus on equalities issues. Over lunch, participants will be able to sample a number of alternative therapies including homeopathy and Indian Head Massage!

Booking forms can be downloaded from our website from January 2003 at [www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk).  
Alternatively contact us by phone (020 7377 0088) or email ([info@wrc.org.uk](mailto:info@wrc.org.uk)).



ARCHIVES

# The Runnymede Collection at Middlesex University

When Runnymede moved from its Aldersgate St offices to Spitalfields midway through 2001 there was no space to bring along the library of books and papers that had accumulated over more than 30 years, and survived a sequence of office moves only to a certain degree intact. The Centre for Racial Equality Studies at Middlesex University has taken on the task of restoring order and accessibility to the collection.

This specialist collection of reference material consists of books, serials, pamphlets, bulletins, official documents, working papers, journals and newspaper cuttings, all dating back to the establishment of the Trust in the 1960s.

Professor Heidi Safia Mirza, Director of the Centre for Racial Equality Studies said:

*Middlesex is very privileged to have this unique, historical collection at the University. We are committed to its permanent preservation and to making the best use of this exceptional resource for the benefit of students, national and international scholars and researchers, as well as Runnymede staff and associates.*

Middlesex University is committed to developing as a centre of

excellence in the field of British race relations. The Runnymede Collection complements other historical and uniquely specialist collections held by Middlesex University relating to issues of ethnic and social minorities: the Lesbian and Gay News Media Archive, the Black Theatre Forum Archive, the Bernie Grant Archive and the Notting Hill Carnival Collection.

The Runnymede Collection at Middlesex University is being housed in secure but accessible accommodation at the Bounds Green campus in North London and is already attracting a great deal of interest from all over the world – from students, scholars, researchers and individuals working in the field of race relations. Plans are being made to hold a series of conferences and workshops based on the historical study of race relations in

partnership both with Runnymede and with universities in the UK and overseas.

Work has already begun on making the collection accessible. About 2500 books and pamphlets have thus far been entered onto Middlesex University's Library Catalogue (which can be searched via the Internet on

<http://library.mdx.ac.uk>).

Among this comprehensive collection of publications produced in the field of race relations over the last 40 years are over 200 types of periodical. These include newsletters, bulletins, newspapers and journals in which issues around race, migration, minority communities and education are debated. Many of the publications are the products of small local action groups in the 1970s and 1980s, reflecting the strength of grassroots activism at that time. There is also a revealing collection of right-wing and fascist publications from the same period.

Judy Vaknin is the Archivist in post, and she is working solely on the Runnymede Collection. She has also made a start on sifting through some 40 large boxes full of the various material resources used by the Trust for its research projects over the years. The press cuttings collection will also be an invaluable resource for researchers interested in the print media's treatment of race issues over the last four decades.

Funds have been raised for the purchase of additional archival boxes and files to ensure the long-term physical preservation of the press cuttings and working papers in the Collection. Runnymede will continue to transfer its non-current records and research papers as well as old press cuttings to the Collection at Middlesex while cooperation, communication and partnership continue between the two organisations.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Runnymede Collection at Middlesex is welcome to contact Judy Vaknin (by email: [j.vaknin@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:j.vaknin@mdx.ac.uk); tel: 0208 411 4933; or by post: Judy Vaknin, Archivist to the Runnymede Collection at Middlesex University, Bounds Green Road, London N11 2NQ, UK). □

**Heidi Safia Mirza and Judy Vaknin in the book stacks of the Runnymede Collection at Middlesex University**



# Equality, logic and culture – what justice requires

Brian M. Barry  
*Culture and Equality: An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism*  
Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001  
Pp. 416 £16.99 ISBN: 0-7456-2228-3 (pbk)



REVIEWS

Readers of the Runnymede Bulletin could be forgiven for believing that a concern for minority cultures stems from a commitment to equality. This is precisely what liberals such as Brian Barry assert when they insist that demands for cultural recognition are incompatible with equality, particularly economic redistribution. However, it seems more plausible to present demands of cultural recognition by black and minority ethnic groups in Europe and North America as complementary with aspirations for better social positions, of which economic advancement would be recognised as vitally important. Indeed the many examples of successful black and Asian Britons facing continued discrimination in the workplace – despite their status – suggests that economic opportunities do not immediately translate into equality of status. Whether the claims of culture and multiculturalism are therefore misplaced is not as immediately apparent as liberals such as Barry would argue.

Before addressing these questions, it is first necessary to understand the motivation and force of Barry's book. In fact, the reviewed text is merely the most complete and coherent account of a view that Barry has articulated in the past. Despite my disagreement with many of its premises and conclusions, *Culture and Equality* is a powerful statement of the liberal idea and is commendable for pointing out some of the inconsistencies in what has been labeled 'multiculturalism'. One of the virtues of the work, therefore, is that it demands that criticisms of liberalism be more precisely articulated and more aware of the potential difficulties that a defence of culture often entails. If multiculturalism has often been debated among somewhat like-minded individuals, Barry's liberal critique has the virtue of forcing multiculturalists to flush out their own premises and be more precise about the implications of their views.

What is it that Barry is attacking and what is it that separates liberal and multiculturalist thinking on equality? Liberals usually envisage the rights discourse as an adequate response to cultural pluralism. Formal and universal rights granted by the state to every individual are perceived as assuring that every citizen can lead an enjoyable life and participate equally in political society. Many liberals therefore allow cultural or religious forms to guide or govern the private lives of citizens, but insist that public discourse must be guided by the procedural legal rules and political culture of liberal democracies. Multiculturalists such as Bhikhu Parekh<sup>1</sup> have responded to such claims and in the process have presented the liberal state with an alternative vision of equality, one that permits cultural and religious forms and values to debate and engage with the mainstream in public. Not only does this seem to extend the reach of equality, but it also suggests that minority rights are more seriously

considered.

Barry is unequivocal about the inegalitarian effects of multiculturalist policies. He points out the logical impossibility of equally valuing every culture and is unabashed in his support of universalism. While his critique of legal exemptions for certain groups is more moderated than his assault on positive advantages for such groups, it is clear that his vision remains justice as impartiality. So when multiculturalists attack liberals for being 'difference blind', or underappreciative of group difference, Barry counters that this is precisely what justice requires. For Barry, certain practices are rightly condemned as illegitimate from the perspective of liberalism, and if they are unable to show proper understanding of ideals such as liberty and equality, then tolerance is not the appropriate answer. While his argument is considerably developed (the text exceeds 360 pages plus over 40 pages of footnotes) and he points out considerable difficulties for multiculturalists committed to equality, the philosophical sophistication of his argument is unlikely to grab the attention of readers not well versed in these arguments. Suffice to say that he thinks that current theorists have an exaggerated concern for culture which is detrimental to the pursuit of equality. Even if one has an overtly egalitarian framework, Barry is caustically skeptical about the coherence of affirming the equality of all cultures:

*[S]uppose... we affirm the value of their [Southern Baptists] views... about the sinfulness of homosexuality. But then how do we simultaneously affirm the value of a gay lifestyle?... it is not simply psychologically unattainable but logically impossible. We cannot simultaneously affirm everybody's culture. (271)*

It is difficult to deny that certain practices defended by cultural particularity are inegalitarian. Barry is undoubtedly correct to point out that no individual can possibly have an equal opinion of every culture, and he makes no bones about criticising those he thinks fall short of the liberal ideal. Further, the 'tendency to assume that distinctive cultural attributes are the defining features of all groups' (305) is clearly inaccurate (or 'bad sociology' as Barry often remarks). Yet, as Seyla Benhabib has also pointed out,<sup>2</sup> Barry is himself guilty of 'bad sociology'. He seems to think that self-seeking political entrepreneurs are the source of 'difference' politics

<sup>1</sup> In *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> In *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).



## REVIEWS

Omar Khan is now working on his PhD at St Antony's College, Oxford

and that philosophers such as Will Kymlicka and Iris Marion Young are the reason that such ideas have emerged. Both notions are clearly inaccurate. While Barry may disapprove of culturally based politics, the social movements of the 1960s–80s only articulated a critique of liberal ideals once it became clear that they were insufficient for practically realising the goal of equality. The contrast between Martin Luther King's notion of civil rights and the later development of black power and radical feminism was not due to misguided or collusive suggestions made by anti-liberal philosophers or politicians. Instead, the evident failures of difference-blind justice were empirical facts, not wispy notions; without such justifiable sentiments, the multiculturalist political theories of the late 1980s and 1990s would never have emerged.

To be fair to Barry, he recognises that liberal rights can only emerge in more egalitarian societies. He doubts that a caste society, for example, could ever provide fruitful ground for liberal egalitarianism. Yet this seems to suggest, rather unhelpfully, that more egalitarian societies are more likely to realise equality through liberal practices. Surely more egalitarian societies are defined by the greater presence of equality, regardless of political institutions. But of course political institutions do matter. We may ask why it is impossible to accept a certain form of cultural recognition in the context of liberal institutions. While Barry may argue that it is philosophically impossible to believe that all cultures are fundamentally equal, multiculturalists can accept this charge and still insist that equal justice requires more than liberal rights. In fact, this is precisely what non-white immigrants to Europe and North America have been asserting for over a generation.

To non-political philosophers, the palpable sense of irritation in *Culture and Equality* might seem baffling. Yet Barry's intervention is not as removed from practical concerns as might first seem. The failure of both the Clinton and Blair governments to alter taxation following a decade and more of shrinkage of the tax base by conservative administrations seems to stand in sharp contrast with their willingness to admit that the state has been discriminatory towards non-white populations. As Bernie Yack suggests in a forthcoming review (to appear in the *European Journal of Political Philosophy*), the anger that Brian Barry 'and many other egalitarians display towards multiculturalism expresses their frustration with how much easier it has been in liberal democratic societies, at least in recent years, to pursue cultural diversity than socio-economic equality'.

Whether black and minority ethnic citizens have in fact gained from this focus on multiculturalism is the object of some disagreement. Nevertheless, some of Barry's statements on merit and discrimination indicate why redistribution cannot be undertaken separately from a sort of recognition. Barry defines culture in such a way that it is difficult to defend the sorts of practices he criticises. However, he seems peculiarly insensitive to the culture of power and convention that often ostracises those from the wrong background. While these often include working-class individuals, such unspoken and informal conventions in the workplace incontrovertibly and disproportionately impact on black and minority ethnic groups. It is no good to assert the strength

of liberal rights when formal equality brings about profoundly unjust outcomes. Without due respect and recognition, procedures and laws in an hierarchical society clearly benefit the powerful more than the weak, and the universalistic pretensions of such rights might exacerbate such power relations by affording them increased legitimacy.

Both liberals and multiculturalists have been guilty of simplifying and vulgarising the opposing view. While Barry's book occasionally reads like a polemic, its substance and force cannot be discounted on these grounds; he has clearly thought hard and long about these issues and views the appropriate response as a matter of great political urgency. Furthermore, in defending liberalism, Barry attempts to disarm what he considers some of the more confused critiques of liberal thought, a service that is important for multiculturalists in clarifying what they think is wrong with liberalism. For example, his argument that 'it is a travesty' to associate liberalism with the view that the state must enforce autonomy is an important corrective to recent thinking on the issue (pp.118ff). Because Barry is so immersed in liberal thought, he is able to articulate more precisely what it is that liberalism seeks to achieve and how it might achieve it.

However, this intimate familiarity also diverts him from the forms of discrimination that non-white individuals and groups face in society. Sameness of treatment rarely achieves equality. If liberal theory is so capable of achieving equality and multiculturalism is inherently inegalitarian, why hasn't the rights discourse delivered the results in the past? Are black and minority ethnic individuals merely guilty of false consciousness when they seek greater recognition? For a philosopher who has emphasised the importance of universal equal citizenship, Barry's liberal theory is surprisingly unable to account for the prerequisites that might allow individuals to exercise their rights fully. More specifically, the liberal notion that individuals could equally exercise their rights seems to *assume* rather than *guarantee* equality.

If a liberal society were marked by severe and pervasive inequalities, disempowered individuals would be at a distinct disadvantage to actualise their rights relative to dominant members. The consequences are well known; dominant and subordinate members of the community are differentially able to realise their rights and social inequalities are often reinforced rather than undermined. Barry is too quick to reject the possibility that black and minority ethnic individuals and communities embrace recognition of their values as a way to reduce their subordination. The poor history of representation by women and ethnic minorities in liberal democracies further demonstrates the rationale for this strategy. Furthermore, there is nothing about recognition that undermines continued support for economic justice, though Barry is right that some writers of multiculturalism have paid insufficient attention to the issue of redistribution. Reformers might vary in the prescriptions necessary to achieve substantive equality, and in the standards by which equality should be realised, but they all insist that formal equality does little to assist the most oppressed members of society, those that equalisation should be aiming to assist. After all, a standard that benefits the powerful rather than the weak is usually associated with hierarchy and inequality. □

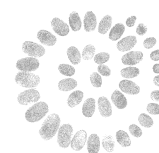
Omar Khan

# Negotiating the discrimination law maze

## *Discrimination Law Handbook*

Camilla Palmer, Tess Gill, Karon Monaghan, Gay Moon and Mary Stacey  
Edited by Aileen McColgan

London: Legal Action Group Books, 2002  
Pp. 1264 Price: £45 ISBN: 1 903307 13 9



REVIEWS

## Context

Equality is a fundamental entitlement, yet – as this Handbook makes clear from the outset – there is no general prohibition on discrimination in UK law. Domestic legislative provisions regulate discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, race (widely defined) and disability. The relevant statutes – the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975, the Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976, and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 – prohibit discrimination in the employment field, in education and in the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises. In addition, the RRA makes it unlawful for public authorities more generally and for private members' clubs to racially discriminate. Other domestic statutes and regulations and European Law make specific provisions for discrimination in various areas. A substantial body of case-law from domestic courts and from the European courts in Strasbourg and Luxembourg needs also to be taken into account in relation to protection against discrimination.

## Dealing with a complex body of law

The Handbook covers all aspects of UK discrimination law and offers a comprehensive treatment of the issues involved. Not an easy task to accomplish as the law regulating the various aspects of discrimination can be complex in the extreme.

Different standards of protection apply to the various grounds of discrimination, and conceptual definitions (such as 'indirect discrimination') vary between the different grounds as well as in relation to the spheres of activity. The confusion reigning in this area of law is well illustrated in the Handbook. Explicit domestic provisions regulate, for instance, the prohibited grounds of discrimination (i.e. sex, married status, gender reassignment, race and disability) with the following differences:

- Both direct and indirect discrimination only on grounds of sex, married status and race are regulated (in the case of married status, this is limited to the employment field).
- Only direct discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment is regulated (again, limited to employment and vocational training).
- Disability discrimination is defined very differently and includes less favourable treatment and some (but not all) cases of indirect discrimination.
- Definitions of indirect discrimination also differ between, on the one hand, employment-related discrimination on grounds of sex and marriage and, on the other, race discrimination and discrimination on grounds of sex and married status outside the employment context.

In addition, UK statutory provisions regulating discrimination

must be read in the light of relevant EC provisions. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as incorporated into UK domestic law by the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, is also of significance in interpreting the protection which applies to the different discrimination grounds, including those not yet regulated by domestic law.

## Structure

As UK discrimination law is such a massive and complex body of law and practice, organising the materials effectively must have been a daunting exercise for the editors. They have responded to the challenge with a book divided into 34 chapters.

The first 8 chapters offer an introduction to the field and explain the broader legal context and meaning of discrimination law. The reader is introduced to the legal structure and to general concepts in the discrimination field, such as direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, positive action and the grounds for discrimination. Disability discrimination is treated separately as it is different in concept from sex and race discrimination, providing disabled people with rights, rather than giving them a right to equal treatment regardless of disability.

Chapter 9 provides a comprehensive examination of the extent to which international human rights law, in particular article 14 of the ECHR and the UK Human Rights Act, provides protection against discrimination. Chapter 10 expands on the European Union's legal requirements in the field of discrimination. It includes an overview of EC institutions and procedures, as well as coverage of the anti-discrimination directives adopted in 2001.

The core of the Handbook (chapters 11–27) is devoted to employment-related discrimination on a 'prohibited ground' (i.e. sex, race, married status, gender reassignment or disability). Discriminatory practices include bias in hiring, promotion, training, job assignment, transfer and termination. Specific chapters cover maternity and parental rights in employment, rights of part-timers, and equal pay and pension rights.

The various types of harassment, both inside and outside the workplace, are dealt with in chapter 28. Chapters 29 and 30 consider the relatively unexplored area of discrimination on a 'prohibited ground' outside the employment field, i.e. in education, planning, housing and the provision of goods, facilities and services. Chapters



## REVIEWS

31–33 cover liability for discrimination, procedures for bringing discrimination claims, remedies that may be awarded following a finding of unlawful discrimination, and enforcement action which might be taken by the three existing Equality Commissions. The Handbook concludes with a useful chapter on how to obtain financial help and legal advice in relation to bringing a claim for discrimination.

### Practical and accessible

In both a practical and accessible way, the Handbook provides a fully up-to-date picture of the state of this area of the law. A succinct, very helpful, introduction to the main issues involved is presented at the beginning of each chapter in the form of key points. It does not, however, provide a basic outline of the chapters by way of general introduction. This, together with an explanation of how the Handbook's materials are organised and directions for its use, could have aided considerably the orientation of the non-specialist reader, who has no choice but to make sense of the contents page at the start. Once a way through the Handbook is found, the plain language and clear detail of information is a solace to the general reader, and it succeeds in elucidating legal concepts in a non-technical style – one that is indeed accessible to non-specialists. It is easy to read and is not weighed down by over-referencing or sophisticated or nuanced arguments.

The Handbook attempts not merely to present information on relevant laws and standards but to provide ideas about potential strategies and tactics through court case summaries and practical examples. It will undoubtedly serve as an invaluable reference tool for practitioners, for organisations and advocates working on these issues and for anyone seeking guidance to respond to the many instances of discrimination that arise, particularly in the world of work.

One of these could be the question of workers' rights to time off for their religious holidays. Should employers take into account the special religious needs of workers in determining holiday leave? The issue would in principle fall within the not yet regulated ambit of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. However, the Handbook provides a positive answer by illustrating an important case which found

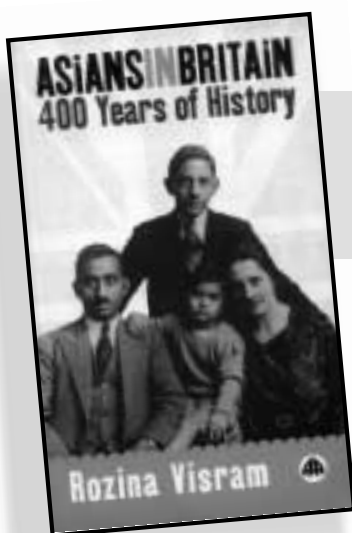
that a large number of Asian Muslim workers who had not been given time off for their religious holidays were indirectly discriminated against on grounds of race. While the gaps in existing legislation could not support a case for direct religious discrimination, the finding of indirect race discrimination was possible because of the significant overlap between those in the particular workplace who were Asian and those who were Muslim.

Another question that arises is the way the issue of dress codes in the workplace is regulated. There are in the Handbook various examples of case law indicating that, at the moment, different requirements between men and women are unlikely to constitute discrimination because, if such codes are different but 'equal', no less favourable treatment is established. Where a requirement, however, conflicts with a worker's religious or cultural need, employers' dress rules may be indirect discrimination on grounds of race. By way of example: a prohibition on the wearing of trousers by women workers will disproportionately disadvantage Muslim women and may constitute indirect discrimination against certain racial groups.

### Need for a unified and consistent approach

The nature of a handbook is to offer practical guidance, not to engage the reader in the public policy debate about the complexity of UK discrimination law. While concerns are increasingly being voiced, extensive research and studies on the subject have underscored the need for comprehensive and coherent reform which could be achieved by way of introduction of a new equality bill dealing consistently with all grounds of discrimination in all spheres of activity. Although the Handbook does not address issues of reform, it does convey a sense of frustration at the many inconsistencies, gaps and anomalies in the existing legislation. As new EU directives are paving the way for statutes and regulations on other strands of discrimination, more will be added to what is already a considerable and confusing patchwork of legislation. The sheer bulk of such a Handbook, running to over 1200 pages, in itself makes a compelling case for simplification in this area of legislation! □

*Anneliese Baldacini*



### *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* Rozina Visram

London: Pluto Press, 2002

Pp. xii+488

ISBN 0-7453-1373-6

In *Asians in Britain*, Rozina Visram offers a wonderfully detailed account of the history of peoples from South Asia in Britain since 1600.

The journey begins in the City of London, with the baptism of a young Indian child, in the presence of 'a distinguished gathering of the Privy Council, The Lord Mayor and Aldermen, and the Governors of the East India

Company... and a crowd of curious onlookers', and continues by examining how others from the Indian subcontinent made the often perilous journey to Britain. Visram portrays the fluctuating status of Indians who

were, initially, regarded as 'exotic' by many British and frequently employed as servants (on account of their cheapness compared with British servants) on return journeys from India. Their desirability was not slow to change, however, when their services were no longer required.

Also examined is the involvement of Indians in the first and second World Wars; and Visram concludes by providing an account of those who contributed significantly to British society up until the mid-1900s.

What is evident from this book is that the history of Asians in Britain is complex and rich, made all the more vivid by the descriptions of and the connections to familiar parts of London and Britain as a whole.

This is a well-researched book with a wealth of notes and (primary) resources for the avid reader to supplement their reading. It makes a compelling read and a much-needed contribution towards validating the presence of people of colour prior to the 1950s. □

*Nicola Rollock, Runnymede*

# Listening to teachers

*'What's wrong with you miss? Why are you always smiling?' the students at my black-majority school ask me. 'I smile because I see you,' is my habitual reply. But what I want to say is something like this:*

*'I smile to salute you, to salute all of the learners here, who continue to hold tight to their dignity and self-belief in the endless and ugly face of racism, rejection and poverty. I smile to salute our teachers who work more hours than there are, before and after school, in holidays and weekends, to struggle beside our students to try, through mentoring, after school classes, residential courses, to restore the balance and open the doors in a closed and unbalanced world' That's what I hope they hear in my smile.'*

*But even that ignores the poignancy of their question, their subtext that says a smile – respect, recognition, affirmation – is so unexpected as to be a symptom of illness, of deviance, their message that announces that there is nothing to smile about*

A respondent to the *Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (2000)

These quotes collected in evidence given to the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, highlight the importance of tackling racism and championing ethnic diversity in education. This remains a key focus of our work at Runnymede.

On January 20th we will be co-hosting a meeting of teachers from east London with the General Teaching Council for England (GTC). The meeting will focus on black and minority ethnic issues in teaching and learning. The GTC is committed to 'listen to and work for teachers'. One major way of consulting with teachers is through a series of meetings held throughout the country – giving teachers the opportunity to share their views and influence policy. This meeting will be the first to focus especially on ethnic diversity and racial equality within schools. Runnymede is keen to support the GTC in its emphasis on empowering practitioners to influence policy.

Alongside the imminent publication of *Complementing Teachers*, Runnymede will be developing a project to consider the issues facing teachers and

other staff members from black and minority ethnic communities in schools. This meeting provides an early opportunity to examine what those issues might be and form an agenda for positive change.

Regular readers of the *Bulletin* will be familiar with a lot of the concerns that will be raised during the meeting. However, you may still be interested in the contents of a short fact sheet which has been produced for participants to share some of the available research information. Regarding pupils, it includes information on the differential academic attainment of ethnic groups, exclusions from school, negative school effects, inadequate initial teacher training and good practice in multi-ethnic schools.

Considering the available data on the teaching workforce, the fact sheet highlights the failure to attract more graduates from minority ethnic communities into teaching, and the poor ethnic monitoring of staff. Drawing on research carried out by the Institute for Policy Studies in Education (IPSE) based at London Metropolitan University, the fact sheet notes the differences in age profiles of

*We had a black head who was tough but fair. You felt he really cared what happened to you. I went through a bad time. I was separated from my family, I was picked on and there was a lot of bullying. I wasn't able to express how I felt so I took matters into my own hands. I was suspended on a number of occasions . . . You need a range of role models in a school that show the complexity and diversity of people's lives. My headteacher was a positive role model for me.*

Refugee pupil reflects in a *Save the Children* focus group (2000)

teachers from different ethnic groups, the lack of retention of teachers from black and minority ethnic communities, and the unequal career progression of teachers from minority ethnic communities.

These issues will form the basis for further discussion at the meeting and the outcomes will be used to inform further research from Runnymede and policy activity by the GTC. □

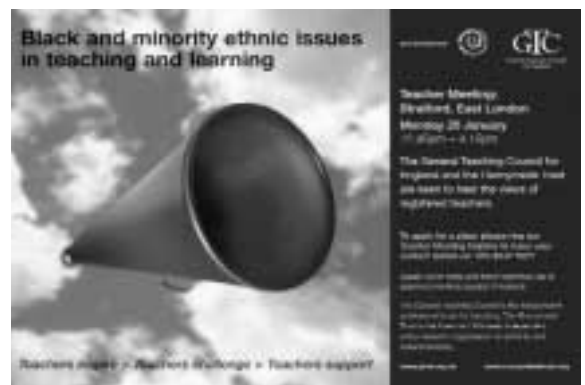


## EDUCATION

If you are a teacher in East London and would like to attend the meeting or would like further information about the work of the GTC please visit [www.gtce.org.uk](http://www.gtce.org.uk) for further information.

If you cannot attend, but would like a copy of the fact sheet see [www.runnymede-trust.org](http://www.runnymede-trust.org).

To contribute to Runnymede's ongoing work in this area, please contact Nicola Rollock at the Runnymede office.



### Minority ethnic groups in the UK Social Focus in brief: Ethnicity 2002

Office of National Statistics

#### Press release

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/meg1202.pdf>

#### Website links with interactive tables

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/product.asp?vlnk=9763>

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Bulletin No. 332, December 2002  
ISSN 1476-363X

*In 2003, The Bulletin, Runnymede's  
Quarterly newsletter, will be  
published in the months of March,  
June, September and December by:*

**The Runnymede Trust**  
The London Fruit & Wool Exchange  
Suite 106, Brushfield Street,  
London E1 6EP  
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Url: [www.runnymedetrust.org](http://www.runnymedetrust.org)

Annual subscription in 2003 is £25.00

*The Runnymede logo was  
designed by Four IV Design  
Consultants. Other design  
elements were originated  
by Four IV and developed  
by St. Richards Press.*

Typeset and printed by:  
St Richards Press Ltd.  
Leigh Road, Chichester,  
West Sussex PO19 2TU.  
Tel: 01243 782988



Runnymede's  
Activities  
Report for  
1999-2001 is  
available on  
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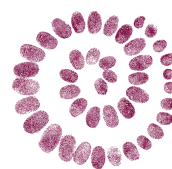
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## This is where I live 2003

Runnymede will be launching this innovative arts-based policy research project early in the New Year. It aims to gather the testimony of young people (11–25) from all backgrounds within the UK, to examine what informs their identity, defines their concept of nationality, and shapes their approach to living in a community of citizens and of communities.

A range of projects is already being planned. We are keen for the project to be as inclusive as possible. If you work with young people (or are one yourself) and have an idea for a project in photography, film, theatre, dance, music, website design or creative writing, and would like to contribute to this exciting national event, please contact Rob Berkeley at Runnymede. We would be especially keen to hear from groups outside of London, those in rural communities, or working with young people with disabilities.



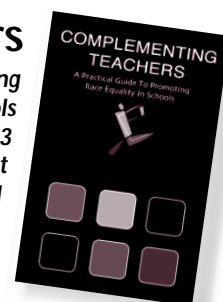
## Complementing Teachers

*A Practical Guide to Promoting  
Race Equality in Schools*

*Publication in March/April 2003*

*by Granada Learning for the Runnymede Trust*

*Pp. 160+ ISBN: 184085 9121*



This Runnymede title, offering teachers practical guidance on the promotion of race equality and cultural diversity within the classroom, will launch in spring 2003.

Priced at £30 + VAT it comes with a CD of the text and sample lesson plans for flexible use in classroom teaching.

For more information on launch plans, contact Nicola Rollock at Runnymede.

The usual sample copy terms apply from the publisher, Granada Learning. For a leaflet about *Complementing Teachers* or to order a sample copy, contact Granada Learning [phone: 0800 216 592; email: [school@lettsed.co.uk](mailto:school@lettsed.co.uk); website: [www.letts-education.com](http://www.letts-education.com)].

*[contd from p.2]*

Runnymede's work with young people in 2003 through the project 'This is Where I Live' has begun to look at cohesion from this angle. The narrative of everyday life and identity formation expressed through the arts and literature will, we hope, illuminate the transformative nature of the concept of community cohesion. We hope to also give further inspiration to the policymakers who will have a role in enabling the development of the community of communities and citizens, who have a stake in re-imagining the polity, in delivering a successful multi-ethnic Britain. □

*Rob Berkeley is Runnymede's  
Senior Research and Policy Analyst  
working on follow-up to The Future  
of Multi-Ethnic Britain.*

## safe haven? – immigration, asylum and HIV a health service planning conference organised by Naz Project London

17 January 2003

British Library,  
Euston Road, London

Bringing together professionals from health, social care services, policy-planners, care-providers, clinicians, legal advocates, human rights activists and service users to address the critical issues affecting people living with HIV with insecure immigration status or seeking asylum.

Conference organisers:

Yasmin Halima and Bryan Teixeira  
Details from: Naz Project London  
(tel: 020 8741 1879; fax: 020 8741  
9606; email: [teixeira@naz.org.uk](mailto:teixeira@naz.org.uk)).