



The Duty to Integrate: Shared British Values

On 8 December **Tony Blair** gave a speech in Downing St to an invited audience. The event was organised by Runnymede though it was part of a series of statements on 'Our Nation's Future.' The text of the speech is reproduced below, and later in the Bulletin there are responses from some of those present as well as the introductions given by Runnymede's Director and three students from a London school.

We should begin by celebrating something. When we won the Olympic Bid to host the 2012 Games, we presented a compelling, modern vision of Britain: a country at ease with different races, religions and cultures. This was not the stuffy old Britain that used to be sent up in the comedy sketches of the 1970s but a nation proud, willing and able to go out and compete on its merits.

So for all the things we still have to do and which we have been reminded of this morning, the ethos of this country is completely different from thirty years ago. The courts recognise racial offences in a way that was inconceivable then. We have the most comprehensive panoply of anti-discrimination legislation in the world. We have tough laws outlawing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, religion, race, gender and disability. The Human Rights Act

provides basic protection to all minorities and lays down minimum standards. It is a matter of some pride to me that it has only been Labour governments that have introduced anti-discrimination legislation. Though I accept entirely that there is still more work to be done.

Our public culture is also completely different. We now have more ethnic minority MPs, peers, and Ministers though not enough. We have had the first black Cabinet minister. The media are generally more sensitive, and include ethnic minority reporters and columnists. Racism has, for the most part, been kicked out of sport. Offensive remarks and stupid stereotypes have at least been driven out of public conversation. The basic courtesies, in other words, have been extended to all people.

Trevor Phillips said recently that Britain was by far the best place to live in Europe, if you are



not white. Others might dispute that; but it was interesting he could say it so confidently. Recently, MORI updated a poll they have run over many years, about attitudes to race and ethnicity. It kind of shows you how far we have come but it also shows how far we still have to go. Only 25% of British people say they would prefer to live in an all-white area – so it's still 25%. In some European countries it's over 40%. Only 12% of whites would mind if a close relative married a black or Asian person; those who would not mind were over 50%. Just five years ago the figures were 33% minding and just 22% not minding.

It didn't happen easily. Most of us grew up in an era when action against discrimination was condemned as political correctness. But from Roy Jenkins' seminal and brave speech in 1966 to the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants

Students from Lillian Baylis Technology School in Kennington outside Number 10 after the lecture. (Unless otherwise stated, all photos in this issue were taken by Benedict Hilliard.)



THE PM ON INTEGRATION

'People want to make sense of two emotions: our recognition of what we legitimately hold in common and what we legitimately hold distinct'



The Prime Minister at the podium on 8 December.

The speech can be read and heard on-line at www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page10563.asp

onwards, fair-minded people brought about the change we can justifiably celebrate in 2006.

The day after we won the Olympic bid came the terrorist attacks in London. These murders were carried out by British-born suicide bombers who had lived and been brought up in this country, who had received all its many advantages and yet who ultimately took their own lives and the lives of the wholly innocent, in the name of an ideology alien to everything this country stands for. Everything the Olympic bid symbolised was everything they hated. Their emphasis was not on shared values but separate ones, values based on a warped distortion of the peaceful faith of Islam.

This ideology is not, of course,

indeed, in order to harm us.

I always thought after 7/7 our first reaction would be very British: we stick together; but that our second reaction, in time, would also be very British: we're not going to be taken for a ride.

People want to make sense of two emotions: our recognition of what we legitimately hold in common and what we legitimately hold distinct. When I decided to make this speech about multiculturalism and integration, some people entirely reasonably said that integration or lack of it was not the problem. The 7/7 bombers were integrated at one level in terms of lifestyle and work. Others in many communities live lives very much separate and set in their own community and own culture, but are no threat to anyone.

But this is, in truth, not what I mean when I talk of integration. Integration, in this context, is not about culture or lifestyle. It is about values. It is about integrating at the point of shared, common unifying British values. It isn't about what defines us as people, but as citizens, the rights and duties that go with being a member of our society.

Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other faiths have a perfect right to their own identity and religion, to practice their faith and to conform to their culture. This is what multicultural, multi-faith Britain is about. That is what is legitimately distinctive.

But when it comes to our essential values - belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage - then that is where we come together; it is what we hold in common; it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British. At that point no distinctive culture or religion supercedes our duty to be part of an integrated United Kingdom.

Others warned me against putting the issue in the context of 7/7, of terrorism, of our Muslim

community. After all, extremism is not confined to Muslims, as we know from Northern Ireland and fringe elements in many ethnic groups.

But actually what should give us optimism in dealing with this issue, is precisely that point. It is true there are extremists in other communities. But the reason we are having this debate is not generalised extremism. It is a new and virulent form of ideology associated with a minority of our Muslim community. It is not a problem with Britons of Hindu, Afro-Caribbean, Chinese or Polish origin. Nor is it a problem with the majority of the Muslim community. Most Muslims are proud to be British and Muslim and are thoroughly decent law-abiding citizens. But it is a problem with a minority of that community, particularly originating from certain countries. The reason I say that this is grounds for optimism, is that what the above proves, is that integrating people whilst preserving their distinctive cultures, is not impossible. It is the norm. The failure of one part of one community to do so, is not a function of a flawed theory of a multicultural society. It is a function of a particular ideology that arises within one religion at this one time.

Yet, because this challenge has arisen in this way, it is necessary to go back to what a multicultural Britain is all about. The whole point is that multicultural Britain was never supposed to be a celebration of division; but of diversity. The purpose was to allow people to live harmoniously together, despite their difference; not to make their difference an encouragement to discord. The values that nurtured it were those of solidarity, of coming together, of peaceful co-existence. The right to be in a multicultural society was always, always implicitly balanced by a duty to integrate, to be part of Britain, to be British and Asian, British and black, British and white. Those

whites who support the BNP's policy of separate races and those Muslims who shun integration into British society both contradict the fundamental values that define Britain today: tolerance, solidarity across the racial and religious divide, equality for all and between all.

So it is not that we need to dispense with multicultural Britain. On the contrary we should continue celebrating it. But we need - in the face of the challenge to our values - to re-assert also the duty to integrate, to stress what we hold in common and to say: these are the shared boundaries within which we all are obliged to live, precisely in order to preserve our right to our own different faiths, races and creeds. We must respect both our right to differ and the duty to express any difference in a way fully consistent with the shared values that bind us together.

So: how do we do this?

Partly we achieve it by talking openly about the problem. The very act of exploring its nature, debating and discussing it doesn't just get people thinking about the type of Britain we want for today's world; but it also eases the anxiety. It dispels any notion that it is forbidden territory. Failure to talk about it is not politically correct; it's just stupid.

Partly the answer lies in precisely defining our common values and making it clear that we expect all citizens to conform to them. Obedience to the rule of law, to democratic decision-

making about who governs us, to freedom from violence and discrimination are not optional for British citizens. They are what being British is about. Being British carries rights. It also carries duties. And those duties take clear precedence over any cultural or religious practice.

Asserting the duty to integrate can also be done by way of practical and symbolic measures that underscore what that duty entails. I want to set out six elements in policy to do this.

First, we need to use the grants we give to community racial and religious groups to promote integration as well as help distinctive cultural identity. In a sense, very good intentions got the better of us. We wanted to be hospitable to new groups. We wanted, rightly, to extend a welcome and did so by offering public money to entrench their cultural presence. Money was too often freely awarded to groups that were tightly bonded around religious, racial or ethnic identities. In the future, we will assess bids from groups of any ethnicity or any religious denomination, also against a test, where appropriate, of promoting community cohesion and integration.

Second, we stand emphatically at all times for equality of respect and treatment for all citizens. Sometimes the cultural practice of one group contradicts this. We need very clear rules for how we govern the public realm. A good example is forced marriage. There can be no defence of forced marriage on cultural or any other grounds. We set up the Forced

Marriages Unit in 2005 and they now deal with 250-300 cases a year mainly relating to people of South Asian background. We have also changed immigration rules raising the age at which a person can obtain marriage entry clearance to come to the UK to 18. We consulted on whether a specific offence should be created, but, in the light of the responses received, chose not to pursue this. We will however return to the matter if necessary and will also consult on raising the age for entry clearance

further, a point made strongly and well by Ann Cryer MP.

One of the most common concerns that has been raised with me, when meeting women from the Muslim communities, is their frustration at being debarred even from entering certain mosques. Those that exclude the voice of women need to look again at their practices. I am not suggesting altering the law. But we have asked the Equal Opportunities Commission to produce a report by the spring of next year on how these concerns could be practically addressed, whilst of course recognising that in many religions the treatment of women differs from that of men.

Third, we must demand allegiance to the rule of law. Nobody can legitimately ask to stand outside the law of the nation. There is thus no question of the UK allowing the introduction of religious law in the UK. Parliament sets the law, interpreted by the courts. All criminal matters should be dealt with through the criminal justice system. There may be areas where, in civil proceedings, parties consent to arbitration by a religious body. But these are



THE PM ON INTEGRATION



Darra Singh, Chair of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, addresses a question to the Prime Minister.



Alistair Stewart, in the invited audience, makes notes as he prepares to interview the Prime Minister after the main speeches.



THE PM ON INTEGRATION

'Asserting the duty to integrate can also be done by way of practical and symbolic measures that underscore what that duty entails. I want to set out six elements in policy to do this'

arrangements based on consent and, in all cases; parties will have recourse to the UK courts.

Fourth, there has been a lot of concern about a minority of visiting preachers. It would be preferable for British preachers to come out of the community rather than come in from abroad. Where they are recruited internationally, we will require entrants to have a proper command of English and meet the pre-entry qualification requirements.

Overseas nationals can come to the UK in a public speaking capacity as business visitors or as visiting religious workers. However, the Home Secretary may exclude from the UK any person where he judges that their presence here is not conducive to the public good. We have published a list of certain unacceptable actions that would normally lead to the exclusion of a person from the UK. The publication of that list makes it clear that we will not tolerate those who seek to create an environment in which terrorism and radicalism can thrive.

Fifth, we have a very established set of rights that constitute our citizenship. We should not be shy to teach them. That is why citizenship became part of the statutory national curriculum in secondary schools in 2002. The national curriculum needs to stress integration rather than separation. The 1988 Education Reform Act states that religious education in all community schools should be broadly Christian in character but that it should include study of the other major religions. There is currently a voluntary agreement with faith schools on this basis.

Faith schools also naturally give religious instruction in their own faith. It is important that in doing so, they teach tolerance and respect for other faiths and the Education Department will discuss with the faith groups how this is achieved and implemented, according to new national

guidelines. These will be based on the pioneering work done in this area by Charles Clarke when Education Secretary. As he said in his recent and excellent Royal Commonwealth Society lecture on Faith, such policies 'will rightly increasingly marginalize those very small numbers who want to teach religious education in a way which misleads and misrepresents other faiths.' We will also encourage all faith schools to construct a bridge to other cultures by twinning with schools from another faith.

There have been concerns about some Madrassahs. The DfES is working to bring together a host of voluntary groups to form a National Centre for supplementary schools. It will recommend best practice to try to encourage tolerance and respect for other faiths by, for example, establishing links with other schools. There can be no excuse for Madrassahs or indeed anyone else not meeting their legal requirements and they will be enforced vigorously.

Sixth, we should share a common language. Equal opportunity for all groups requires that they be conversant in that common language. It is a matter both of cohesion and of justice that we should set the use of English as a condition of citizenship. In addition, for those who wish to take up residence permanently in the UK, we will include a requirement to pass an English test before such permanent residency is granted.

I do not, in any of this, ignore the social and economic dimension to extremism. Deprivation is a bad thing in itself and it can create the conditions in which extreme ideologies of all kinds can flourish. But it cannot be permitted as an excuse.

The best way to deal with this is to do what, for a decade now, we have done: systematically to tackle disadvantage. The causes usually have nothing to do with ethnicity - they are low educational achievement and

poor skills. But many ethnic minorities have been beneficiaries of the New Deal, the neighbourhood renewal strategy, the minimum wage, Sure Start and so on. As our young people reminded this morning, we may have made progress in certain areas, but we still have much to do.

We have begun a national programme aimed specifically at under-performing Muslim pupils in 2004. In June of this year it was doubled in size. In 2000, 29% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi children achieved 5 good GCSEs, against a national average of 49 per cent. This year 51% of Pakistani and 56% of Bangladeshi pupils did so. The national average was 58%. In 2003 only 33% of Black Caribbean pupils achieved 5 good GCSEs. 44% did so in 2006.

The New Deals have helped more than 200,000 ethnic minority people into work. Jobcentre Plus have specifically targeted wards with high ethnic minority populations. Ethnic Minority Outreach was introduced in 2002 to offer help from people from ethnic minorities who were struggling to get back into work. Thousands of people have been helped.

We will continue to do all we can, in the name of equality, to provide hope, opportunity and the chance to aspire, to all our communities, in this case specifically the poorer Muslim communities, at risk of being left behind.

As one of our young speakers reminded us earlier today, every time through inequality we waste an opportunity for people to develop their talent and potential we waste an asset not only for themselves but for our nation.

None of these things in and of themselves will solve the problem we face. But then, there is no simple action by government that can solve it. It requires an act of collective leadership from us all and, in particular, from the leaders of the main religious and racial groups that go to make up the

diverse identity of the modern British nation. I believe inter-faith dialogue has a vital role in all of this. Again let us not be foolish in our desire not to cause offence. Of course the extremists that threaten violence are not true Muslims in the sense of being true to the proper teaching of Islam. But it's daft to deny the fact that they justify their extremism by reference to religious belief. The more understanding there is between religious faiths, the more knowledge and the less ignorance, the better the prospect of mutual respect and

tolerance. Forgive me for mentioning, in this connection, and in a spirit of humour, the woman whom I saw on TV in Turkey, protesting about the Pope's recent visit, whose poster read: "Jesus was a prophet but not the Son of God", elevating the placard to an altogether higher plane of theology.

Most Christians are hugely surprised to be told that the Koran reveres Jesus as a prophet. Many Jews, Muslims and Christians are entirely ignorant of the rich Abrahamic heritage we share in common. I recall at the

special service in Parliament in the year 2000 to mark the millennium, all three religions plus those of the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian faiths and others, coming together, giving their readings and marvelling at how similar were the sentiments and how close the values underpinning them. Religious bigotry is inconsistent with most true religion. Part of the battle is indeed in religious instruction, where those qualified to present the true theology should gird themselves up and defeat those that pervert it.



**THE PM ON
INTEGRATION**

Three students from Lilian Baylis Technology School made these brief statements before the Prime Minister spoke:

Senaria Karim, 14, on diversity

I was born and raised in London. My parents are from Iran.

At school I have a range of friends from all over the world including Africa and Asia. My best friend has a totally different background to me. She is Chinese. Through her I have discovered and learnt about another culture which I would not normally have found out about.

As part of the next generation I believe that understanding diversity is a positive thing. It will help to wipe out racism and allow us all to understand the world from different points of views. This will make Britain a better place for all of us to live in.



Michelle Nicholson, 15, on challenging inequality

I live in South London and I was born in Jamaica.

I want people in the UK to know that inequality affects everyone - the young and the old. I believe that I sometimes have to work harder than white young people to succeed because I come from an ethnic minority. This can sometimes make it harder for me to be enthusiastic about working hard. It also sometimes stops me from aspiring to be the best I can be.

I want to tell you about a recent personal experience. A few weeks ago I went into a shop with a group of friends who are also black. There were several groups of white girls already in the shop. Although we were very well behaved the security guard decided to follow me and my friends around the shop. We all felt we were being treated like criminals because of our ethnicity.

My school has an equality policy. We are all treated the same, regardless of our colour, religion or gender. This means we are all able to succeed.

I believe that inequality is a major problem in the UK. If things do not improve the UK's thriving economy will start to slow down. This will be because we cannot appreciate the diverse backgrounds of people in other countries who we are trying to work with or sell things to.



Babatunde Adedayo, 15, on opportunities

My family are from Nigeria. I was born and raised in the UK.

I do not think that there are enough opportunities in Southwark and Lambeth for people of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds to mix. I get the opportunity to mix with young people of different religions and ethnic backgrounds through my basketball team. I have learnt a lot about diversity through playing basketball with people from different backgrounds.

If young people from diverse backgrounds do not mix we will not know about different religions and ethnicities and will not respect each other. It is therefore vital that there are more opportunities for people of different backgrounds to mix together, for example youth clubs which encourage young people to come together.





THE PM ON INTEGRATION

The Prime Minister was joined on the platform by Runnymede's Director Michelynn Lafleche and Chair of Trustees Dr Samir Shah, OBE. The text of Michelynn's podium speech (below) appears on pages 7-8.



We should also take heart from the fact that we are not alone in having this dilemma. This debate is ricocheting round the international community today with some force. We are familiar with it in Europe, where in France, Denmark, Holland and Belgium - just to name a few - such public discussion has been, as occasionally here, fraught and intense. In Germany, Interior Minister Schaeuble recently held a Conference on Islam where he said 'Muslims in Germany should feel like German Muslims'. Italy's Giuliano Amato has just set up the 'Consulta Islamica' to advise on common Italian values and their interaction with Islam.

But perhaps less well-known is the strength of the debate in Muslim countries. In Turkey, there has recently been a fierce controversy over the Muslim headdress of women. In Tunisia and Malaysia, the veil is barred in certain public places. I know it is not sensible to conduct this debate as if the only issue is the very hot and sensitive one of the

veil. For one thing, let's be clear, the extremism we face is usually from men not women. But it is interesting to note that when Jack Straw made his comments, no less a person than the Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt made a strong approving statement; and it really is a matter of plain common sense that when it is an essential part of someone's work to communicate directly with people, being able to see their face is important. However, my point is this: we are not on our own in trying to find the right balance between integration and diversity. There is a global agonising on the subject.

In fact, if anything, the UK is better placed than most to conduct the debate sensibly and to settle it sensibly. I think it is great that in British politics today - and probably for the first time in my lifetime - no mainstream party plays the race card. It is not conceivable, in my view, that this leader of the Conservative Party would even misuse the debate on immigration and that is both a

tribute to him and to the common culture of tolerance we have established in this country today. There will, naturally, be debates about the rules for migration - what they should be and how they

are enforced. But I don't believe in this country there is any appetite for turning such a debate into an attack - explicit or implied - on immigrants.

On the contrary, we know migration has been good for Britain. We acknowledge the extraordinary contribution migrants from all faiths and races have made. We are a nation comfortable with the open world of today. London is perhaps the most popular capital city in the world today partly because it is hospitable to so many different nationalities, mixing, working, conversing with each other:

But we protect this attitude by defending it. Our tolerance is part of what makes Britain, Britain. So conform to it; or don't come here. We don't want the hate-mongers, whatever their race, religion or creed.

If you come here lawfully, we welcome you. If you are permitted to stay here permanently, you become an equal member of our community and become one of us. Then you, and all of us, who want to, can worship God in our own way, take pride in our different cultures after our own fashion, respect our distinctive histories according to our own traditions; but do so within a shared space of shared values in which we take no less pride and show no less respect. The right to be different. The duty to integrate. That is what being British means. And neither racists nor extremists should be allowed to destroy it. □



Integration and Diversity in Multicultural Britain

Runnymede's Director, **Michelynn Laflèche**, prefaced the Prime Minister's speech with these comments and observations.

The UK is a remarkable place for the way in which it has been successful in supporting the development of a multi-ethnic society – despite many challenges. We too often forget the great advances that are helping to make our society more inclusive of people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, that have rendered overt racism widely unacceptable, and that give more people the capacity to contribute to our society on an equal footing.

Runnymede was founded nearly 40 years ago to shed light on racial injustice and to provide research to help improve both policy and practice in this regard. We remain ambitious: for greater justice, for greater understanding, and for an end to inequality based on the colour of a person's skin, their ethnic origin or their faith background.

And so we should be. The successes we have gained so far are due to the efforts of many people, Black and White, from the slavery abolitionists to the anti-fascist movements, from the campaigns of the trades unionists of Grunwick in the 1970s to the grief of the Lawrence family in the 1990s. Yet real and urgent challenges remain. We are still some way from our goal of a successful multi-ethnic society:

1. Inequalities persist

- last year only *four* African Caribbean undergraduates started at the Prime Minister's alma mater, Oxford University
- Muslims reported levels of ill health twice that of Christians
- Black Caribbean young people were three times as likely to be unemployed as White people of the same age
- Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women experienced higher unemployment and a lower glass ceiling than white women.

2. Not all our citizens are committed to sharing the benefits of diversity

- we know, thanks to better reporting, that over 7000 people were attacked last year because of their ethnic background
- we also know that there are people willing to undertake terrorist actions to attack our multi-ethnic and multi-faith society.

3. Many people feel excluded from that elusive common sense of belonging, with Black and minority ethnic people

- less likely to vote
- still underrepresented in our boardrooms, in parliament and in our council chambers
- yet overrepresented in our prisons and on our mental health wards.

So, there is much left to do. That is why we are pleased that the Prime Minister has decided to include the issues of integration and diversity in this series of lectures, and that he asked us to host this one.

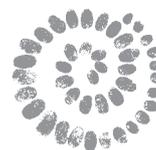
We welcome the steps that this government has taken to improve legislation and practice – in particular, through the Race Relations Amendment Act and the duty that it places on all public services to promote race equality and good race relations. And we welcome this government's emphasis on alleviating poverty, on improving education, and on the regeneration of inner cities – all of which can support the greater inclusion of people from minority ethnic communities.

Yet legislation is not enough to make a real difference in people's lives. We must also ensure that policy reforms lead to real change at the ground level. We have recently researched two of the government's flagship policies – Respect and Choice – and we found that their impact on race equality may not be entirely appreciated nor the outcomes entirely positive:

- the potential for a disproportionate impact on BME groups of measures promoted under the Respect umbrella, such as ASBOs, is not at all understood, but the programme rolls on nevertheless
- educational choice reforms may be having the effect of leaving our schools more ethnically segregated than our neighbourhoods, but the concerns of Black parents have yet to be adequately considered.

These are just two of our research findings that reveal how policy sometimes has unintended outcomes and fails to benefit all groups in society. So, when driving through its reforms to our public services, the government needs to be mindful of the impact public services can have in delivering improved race equality – but this is not yet occurring right across government.

I want to raise another important issue because it is so often discussed in the context of integration and diversity – and so often misplaced in that context. We are all threatened by people who deliver hate and carnage in the name of faith or, indeed, nationhood. All of us – Black, White and Asian, Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Jew – are threatened by extremism, and we must work together to discredit extremists. We do so by



**RUNNYMEDE
ON
INTEGRATION**

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RESPONDING ON INTEGRATION

expressing our common humanity and shared purpose for a *just* society. The public debate we are having on this issue of extremism tends to link it to integration or, more accurately, a failure to integrate on the part of some. And in doing so, the tone of the debate often feels like it is attacking all Muslims, or blaming all immigrants, or even demonising entire ethnic groups – we see this often in the media. This limits our ability to counter extremism as we focus on the wrong targets. If the debate continues on these terms, we further exclude already marginalised groups and force people into taking sides. By imposing difference where difference does not exist

we create divisions in our society along the lines of faith and race when the division should be between the just and the unjust.

When we published the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi Ethnic Britain at the turn of the century, we re-asserted our belief that the key to a successful multi ethnic Britain was the balance between cohesion, equality and diversity. We believe this still holds, even under the current stresses. It takes leadership at the highest levels to deliver change and progress in such a crucial area for the future success of our multi-ethnic and multi-faith nation. □

We asked some of those present for brief written responses to the Prime Minister's speech. The first is from **Nicola Rollock**; the second is from **Edie Friedman**.

Beyond education for 'tolerance'

Tony Blair said in his speech that New Labour has made 'very good progress' on education.

By way of example, he highlighted the implementation, in 2004, of a programme aimed at 'under-performing Muslim pupils', and the improvement in educational attainment of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades at GCSE in 2006 compared with previous years. He also encouraged faith schools to twin with those of another faith and to teach 'tolerance and respect' for different faiths. However, far from encouraging successful integration within education, his analysis of the issues may in fact fuel greater tension, confusion and discontent between ethnic groups.

First, it is not clear why educational attainment by faith or religion has become an area of educational policy concern or intervention. The focus on Muslim pupils along with the explicit disregard of other faith groups detracts attention from the complex relationship between ethnicity, gender and social class in affecting educational attainment. It adds to the already over-saturated discourse of stereotypes and pathologising within both media and government policy that situates Muslims – be they school-age children, mosque-visiting young men or *niqab*-wearing women – as an omnipresent threat and cause for concern. The fact that subsequent television and newspaper coverage of the speech focused mainly on Muslims demonstrates this very point.

Second, the notion of 'good progress' in relation to educational attainment very much depends on which set of statistics are reported, with whom (and when) the comparison for improvement is being made and, crucially, the ultimate defined level at which progress can really be deemed to be 'good'. So, for example, if we consider that there was a 6% increase in the percentage of all pupils in England

achieving five good GCSEs between 2003 and 2006 (see DfES 2003, 2006) then actually Black Caribbean pupils made gains of only 5% rather than the 11% that Blair presented as evidence of 'good progress'. Also, while improvements must of course be recognised and applauded, it makes little sense to compare what has been the now well-established persistent and historic low attainment of Black Caribbean pupils with what continues to be their well-established present low attainment. This merely reduces the analysis to a comparison of low and unacceptable with low and unacceptable, when the reality is that Black Caribbean pupils are still attaining below the national average and below their white British counterparts. Progress and hence equality can only be proclaimed when Black Caribbean pupils (and other low-attaining ethnic groups) reach at least the national average, otherwise we are in danger of regarding as acceptable lower and different levels of attainment for different ethnic groups.

Finally, the notion of twinning schools of differing faiths, though proposed with the well-meaning aim of encouraging understanding of various cultural practices, echoes a 1970s multiculturalism as it inadvertently highlights and exoticises difference (in

Dr Nicola Rollock (opposite and LHS with Debbie Weekes-Bernard at the Downing Street event) is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Education at London Metropolitan University and former Research & Policy Analyst for Education at the Runnymede Trust.



this instance by faith) and ignores the wider practices and structural processes in society that ultimately shape not just pupils' views and experiences but those of school staff as well. These are the practices that result in certain Black and minority ethnic groups being more likely to be excluded from school, to be identified as having special educational needs, to be less likely to achieve five 'good' GCSEs than the national average and their white British counterparts. They are the same practices that shape their access to and success in higher education and employment and are related to the feeling of Michelle Nicholson, one of the school students who spoke, that despite her school's commendable race equality policy, she has to work harder than her white peers to succeed. Effective integration would

seek to understand and address such experiences and to eliminate different educational outcomes for different ethnic groups.

Runnymede's *Achieving Race Equality in Schools* teacher training programme begins with an exercise which encourages teachers, who often say they do not know how to engage with issues of cultural diversity and race equality, to think about their own identities and experiences and the way that they can use themselves as an effective starting point for teaching about cultural diversity. Perhaps it is time to turn the debate on integration on its head and ask not what Black and minority ethnic groups must do to integrate but also what leaders within British society must do themselves to facilitate successful integration. □



**RESPONDING
ON
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Them, us, and the elephant in the room

I must have heard a different version of Tony Blair's speech from the one reported on the Friday evening news. Although he had much to say about what Muslims need to do to 'fit in', he also emphasised the value of multiculturalism and Britain's proud tradition of instituting anti-discrimination legislation. But such is the state of public/media discourse today that the very mention of the word Muslim means that other aspects of the debate disappear from our radar.

The elephant in the room was of course Iraq. No mention was made of the impact of the continuing war on people's sense of Britishness, an effect not only felt by Muslims. Furthermore the government might note that talk of British values is a double edged sword. As one member of the audience commented, the best of these values are not the property of any one group or nation. On the other hand, British values have been used in the past to support colonialism and slavery.

So, what did the Prime Minister say? The onus was on 'them' to change in order to fit into 'our' club as demonstrated by his six policy proposals to underpin 'the duty to integrate'. These ranged from English language acquisition (which invites the question of how accessible English classes are for many) to the need for faith schools to teach tolerance and respect for other faiths and construct a bridge to other cultures by twinning with schools from another faith.

Stressing the need for faith schools (a major plank of the government's education policies) to be more outward looking is to be welcomed, but his proposals for doing this were inadequate to say the least. Does he really believe that such simple measures are enough to bridge the many divides which separate young people? These proposals go almost nowhere towards helping faith schools to develop, integrate and implement rigorous anti-racist/race equality provision into the school curriculum.

The PM's speech was also short on commitment generally to combat racism. Although he did talk

about the role of deprivation and poverty, these were not given the importance they deserve. The same rigour and resources which the government devotes to tackling extremism need to be directed at tackling institutional racism, as well as poverty and deprivation.

He could have used the occasion to re-affirm the government's responsibilities to influence public opinion in a positive direction, particularly in response to the demonisation not only of Muslims, but also of asylum seekers and refugees.

The talk was another missed opportunity to expand the many important suggestions put forward by the Runnymede Trust's Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. Much of what is in that report needs to be resuscitated in order for us to have a mature conversation. It is crucial for the government to take the lead in helping us to develop a shared understanding of much used but rarely defined terms, such as diversity, inclusion, citizenship and even multiculturalism itself. □

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Editorial: Redefining racism as cultural difference, again

W.E. Dubois, the great African American intellectual, wrote in 1903 that the problem of the 20th century would be the problem of the colour line. In terms of colonial and post-colonial world politics, as well as American and British domestic politics, he was right. The 21st century is shaping up to be one of ethnic and religious division.

Chris Gaine, who has guest edited this issue, is Professor of Applied Social Policy at the University of Chichester. His particular interest is 'mainly white areas' where he has researched the experience of minorities and the attitudes and policy responses of the majority. He has written several books on the educational aspects of this and devised the innovative website *Britkid*. Chris is seated next to Tariq Ghaffur, Assistant Commissioner with the Met Police, in the photo below.

I.T. Modood (1992) *Not Easy Being British*. Stoke-on-Trent: Runnymede Trust with Trentham Books.



I do not say this in support of Huntingdon's much quoted clash of civilisations thesis, but more in line with Tariq Modood when he distinguished a shift in racism and people's responses to it from what he called the 'mode of oppression' to the 'mode of being'. Briefly, he sees the former as the crude way in which people are categorised and oppressed in terms of colour (and may come to define their struggle against oppression in the same terms) and the latter as a move towards defining themselves. The mode of oppression has more to do with colour racism, and the mode of being has more to do with ethnicity, faith and self-definition. He outlined this in 1992¹ and particularly (with prescience) in relation to Muslims, but it is true of other groups too. In some ways this has echoes of an old distinction between structure and culture, the overlap and interaction between apparently cultural differences and economic inequalities. It all points to increasing complexity. Colour is becoming less important as the primary axis upon which racism turns, yet it is still there. It inflects Islamophobia though by no means defines it.

I'd like to link these ideas with the two major elements of this Bulletin (the speeches by Tony Blair and Trevor Phillips) as well as with other contributions.

The similarities between the two speeches are that both are at times upbeat about Britain's multicultural society and hopeful for its wellbeing. Both refer to the 7/7 bombings, both acknowledge the distance yet to be travelled, both allude to the CRE poll showing increasing acceptance of friendships and relationships, though Phillips dwells more on the segregation still evident in people's social lives. Both refer to the febrile atmosphere about immigration (though it has to be said that the media coverage of Blair's speech simply added to it).

Whereas Blair gave us his six point plan for how things could get better, Phillips stuck to three questions addressing completely different concerns. Blair's points reflected his title: *the Duty to Integrate*, and referred to caution on funding for 'separate' organisations, to forced marriage, to common allegiance to the law, to extremist preachers, to faith schools teaching common citizenship values, and to an insistence on citizens and residents learning English. The sub-text here is obvious and to be fair was acknowledged by Blair: it's about Islam. Phillips asked about tackling stealth racism (proposing a change in the law to allow more positive action), about

widening the concerned circle of the race relations community, and about how politics can help create a society at ease with its diversity.

Blair's six points show how *perceptions* of a group's mode of

being – faith, cultural organisations, language – can become ways in which they are oppressed. As someone said at the Race Convention, 'Islam is the new Black'. There were some unstated subtleties in the PM's speech, indicative it seems to me of widespread implicit assumptions. While he recognised the settled and British born minority ethnic population in what he said, there was considerable emphasis on British values and the obligations upon *newcomers*, and an implicit message that ethnic minorities still somehow need to demonstrate their right to belong. He mentioned that the BNP, just as much as Islamist terrorists, operated outside widely held values, but it was his strictures to ethnic minorities that insisted they should 'integrate', there was no implied message that if the BNP and their supporters didn't like it here they should go elsewhere. On another of his points, I have no axe to grind on behalf of forced marriage, but neither have I much patience with parents who refuse their dying children blood transfusions. This is arguably a practice just as much outside shared values, but are they called un-British?

On values, Blair recognised that while Britain can justifiably claim to be more racially just than it was, we aren't there yet, the past is uncomfortably close, and things are fragile. On the other hand he says a few lines later:

"For the first time in a generation there is an unease, an anxiety, even at points a resentment that our very openness, our willingness to welcome difference, our pride in being home to many cultures, is being used against us; abused, indeed, in order to harm us."

He acknowledges that progress has been hard won (and rightly gives credit to the Labour Party for passing all the UK's race equality legislation) but talks as if the battle is largely over (while noting the comments from the school students present that 'no, it isn't'). He doesn't refer to the legal and other battles Phillips chronicles. Here he is facing three ways at once, needing to address a (white) wider constituency and not alienate them, restating the old clichés about basically what a 'tolerant' country Britain is, while recognising that many people have not experienced that toleration for themselves while *also* trying to tell those who have 'misinterpreted' Islam that extremism, bigotry, closed-mindedness, treating people as outsiders or unworthy of respectful consideration are somehow profoundly unBritish.

No, they aren't. The substance of much of Phillips' speech and some of the content of Blair's own belies this. He himself makes the point about the distance Britain has travelled so it is absurd to celebrate 'our openness, our willingness to welcome difference, our pride in being home to many cultures' as if these things have always been there, and just bizarre to say that 'for the first time in a generation' there is unease, anxiety and resentment about cultural difference. One of the striking things about the speech and some media reactions to it was how much of it could have been said 40 years ago, maybe in less measured tones but still. ... □

How far have we come?

On 27 November the CRE held a two-day Race Convention to mark its 30 years of existence. **Trevor Phillips** opened the convention with a wide ranging speech, some key elements of which are reproduced here.

In three days I will no longer be the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality. I know that this will be a cause of grief to some; of rejoicing to others. For me, though these have been four of the happiest years of my working life, I am delighted to be standing here to begin this review of the last 30 years in race equality and race relations; to consider how we can do what we do better; and to debate the hardest question of all, where do we go from here?

Are we, as a nation, better off than we were 30 years ago? Are we, the race relations community, serving the nation as well as we should? And if we truly want to create a nation at ease with its diversity – are we all facing up to the challenges of the future?

We should not mistake the scale of those challenges. As a nation we face two great issues this century. One is the toxic bundle of issues arising from climate change and environmental degradation. The other is that, in a world where people are asserting their right to have their own heritage and identity recognised, how we cope with the rising frictions between people of different races and faiths. In short: how do we live with our planet and how do we live with each other?

This is not some global change taking place above our heads. It will be our real life everyday experience in schools, colleges and workplaces. By 2011, only 20% of Britain's workforce will be white non-disabled men under 45. It will mean that those workplaces must change. Ordinary people can already see the importance of what's coming, and they are worried.

For this conference, the CRE commissioned a major quantitative and qualitative survey of Britain, boosted with a supplementary poll of ethnic minority Britons. For the first time in the history of such surveys, race and immigration shows up as the single most important issue for the British people, ahead of crime, the NHS, education and terrorism.

Many in the political and media classes have yet to catch up with the people of course. They still regard race as a marginal issue, secondary to the latest piece of Westminster soap opera. Others only take an interest because they see ethnic minorities as valuable voting fodder. Some are terrified that anxious white voters will be drawn to extremists if their party doesn't convince those voters that it's thinking what they're thinking. Yet others are only interested if they can pose as saviours of the poor, sad, voiceless victims of racism.

Thirty years ago my predecessor Sir David Lane

worried in his annual reports about issues that still preoccupy us today. For example he writes of 'the frenzied atmosphere in which the debate on immigration has been conducted' and the fact that 'some sections of the mass media continue to sensationalise race incidents'. He highlighted the deteriorating relationship between police and West Indian Youth – for which we can today read police and young Muslims; he pointed to continuing racial violence, the strength of the far right, minority disadvantage in education and employment.

But many things are different, not least because of what the CRE itself has achieved. Let me start with what I suppose to some will be a controversial statement: Britain is by far – I mean by far – the best place in Europe to live if you are not white. In our MORI survey we asked about where people would prefer to live. Just 25% of Brits say they would prefer to live in all white areas. This is too high, but set that against the 44% in Greece, 42% in Belgium 39% in Portugal and 37% in Denmark.

We are not strangers to police brutality and violence, but I don't think that our cities are as tense as those of France; nor do I think we would expect these days, our football fans to do what French football fans did this week which was to mount a sustained assault on Jewish fans of an Israeli club, Hapoel Tel Aviv. The anti-Semitic attack was so ferocious that a French policeman had to open fire in defence of one of the Hapoel fans – a black police officer by the way. Belgium's capital is controlled by a coalition led by an avowedly anti-immigrant party. In supposedly liberal Holland, a racist party won three quarters of a million votes out of a possible 12 million. The new government threatens to ban Muslims from wearing the *burqa* in the street.

Here I think things are still different. Our courts now recognise racial offence in a way that would have been unthinkable in 1976. Sir David Calvert-Smith, who chaired the CRE's formal investigation into the police, last week sentenced a man to jail for 15 months for spitting in the face of a Muslim Asian woman. Good.

Public attitudes have changed radically. In our MORI poll the proportion of white people who said they would mind if a close relative married a black or Asian person fell from 33% to 12% over five years; those who would not mind rose from 22% to 54%.

And you will have your own everyday small signals



**RACE
CONVENTION**

'Britain is by far – I mean by far – the best place in Europe to live if you are not white'



RACE CONVENTION

of change which you see in your own lives. For me in the past week it has been seeing a huge wedding party in Hampshire for a young Asian couple in which all the women, including the large number who were not Indian, wore saris – the feeling that at last this wasn't a clumsy, faintly patronising gesture, but was a natural, very British thing to do. It has been the sound of turning on the whitest radio station in the world – BBC Radio 3 – and hearing at 8 o'clock in the morning, the sound of classical Arab music – and the fact that nobody felt they had to remark upon it.

Unlike its predecessor bodies, the CRE was given substantial powers to enforce the law and to bring legal proceedings where appropriate. And we have used them: over the 30 years of its existence, the CRE has assisted most of the 36,000 applications for help that it has received. But times have changed. Today we take fewer cases to the courts because people know that this is a dangerous game for them to play. In 1976-77, the CRE took on 1,122 cases. We won about 360. The highest settlement was £825, the median level was just £30, the total compensation around £10,000.

This year the value of settlements recovered in compensation for victims of discrimination by our lawyers is already in excess of £2 million. These cases covered a range of sectors and – for those who doubt our willingness to act against government – included cases against the Ministry of Defence for its disgraceful treatment in refusing compensation to many of those held in Prisoner of War camps in the Far East during the Second World War; and against the Labour Party. Right now we are preparing to contest the use of racial profiling to off load British Muslim passengers from a British aircraft.

Since 1976, the CRE has carried out about 70 formal investigations into a range of organisations, from shopping centres to taxi companies, restaurants, employment agencies, trade unions, local councils, education authorities and hospitals. More recently we have carried out in-depth investigations into the prison and police services, local authority treatment of Gypsies and Travellers. And our formal investigation into the policy of regeneration is due to report at the end of 2007. Together, these investigations form the single most important body of information about racial discrimination in Britain. And they have real effect. The formal investigation into the Police started as a result of the *Secret Policeman* film, but led amongst other things to a ban on BNP or NF membership among officers. I hope that other public services will take this path too.

Our campaigns have made a difference. When people talk about the CRE's public profile being too high, they perhaps forget that it was that same public profile that fuelled the Commission's campaign against racism in football – at a time when many politicians wouldn't touch it. Thirty years ago there were hardly any black footballers in the top flight,

and the few there were, were treated with vile racism, both by the crowds and by their fellow professionals. Today, just over a third of the Premier League's footballers are from ethnic minorities. The CRE's campaign, *Let's Kick Racism Out of Football*, launched in 1993, helped to transform football grounds from places where racist chanting and comments were routine, to one where such behaviour is now rare.

Stephen Lawrence's name will live for ever as an historic wake-up call to our nation. His killing and the extraordinary campaign led by his family, resulting in the Macpherson Inquiry, changed Britain. But we are a country in which we see episodes of vicious racial violence – the more recent murders of Anthony Walker, Kriss Donald, Zahid Mubarek and Johnny Delaney stand as grim testimony to where racial hatred can lead.

Our MORI survey shows that though the objects of our prejudice may change, bigotry still remains a strong feature of British life. We may have become used to black and Asian Britons, but we are still intolerant of refugees and asylum seekers, we still treat casual abuse of Gypsies and Travellers as acceptable, and we still have deep unease about Muslim Britons.

And the prejudices we have can no longer be described in simple black and white terms. 61% of white Britons think we have too many immigrants; but so do 54% of ethnic minorities. There's a reason for this of course. British people in general think that 22% of those who live in the UK are from ethnic minorities. Amongst ethnic minorities that figure is even higher – ethnic minority Britons think that 32% of people living in the UK are non-white. The real figure is around 8%.

And there are major problems we aren't even close to cracking. The continued disproportion in stop and search, increasingly transferred from black to Asian young men. The underachievement of black boys, and the over activity of the criminal justice system in pursuit of them has left us with a situation where a black boy is more likely to end up in a prison cell than a university lecture hall. The failures of government departments to comply with the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act – which we think will very shortly lead to the first court action under the Act against a government department.

Then there are problems we have yet to find the tools to crack, and where we may need to go beyond the reach of the current law. For thirty years, the CRE has dealt with thousands of complaints which are serious but not justiciable, because the discrimination operates subtly and without an obvious perpetrator. But that doesn't mean it isn't happening. Stealth racism is costing the nation billions in the wastage of talent and capability. But it won't be addressed by more training and more slogans. Frankly, some areas of employment will never stop

**'Stealth
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being all-white without new kinds of positive action, including I believe, giving employers freedom to exercise what you might call a community integration preference.

Some months ago I pointed out that both our police forces and our security services clearly need, in today's environment, to accelerate the integration of their staffs. White men who only speak one language do not make successful undercover agents when tackling the Eastern European or Chinese traffickers who terrorise and exploit their own communities. Clean shaven Essex boys won't be too convincing when it comes to infiltrating cells of violent extremists falsely operating under the banner of Islam. Polish communities should be policed by at least the odd Polish copper. I believe that we have to consider whether when there is a clear public need we must allow our institutions, even if only temporarily, to take special measures with the aim of integrating their workforces faster than would otherwise be the case.

In politics, contrary to all our hopes, the far right has not gone away. Though 72% of voters actively dislike the BNP nearly a million people voted for them in the 2006 local elections. Earlier this year the CRE commissioned ICM to conduct polls of BNP supporters in Barking and Dagenham, and Sandwell, in the aftermath of the May 2006 local elections, where the party recorded their best ever result. What we found was alarming.

- 1 Their vote was not a protest vote. A quarter had voted for the BNP before. Most of the remainder were either people who hadn't voted before or had voted Labour in the 2005 General Election.
- 3 The people who voted BNP knew fully what they were voting for – they were not being duped - 74% of BNP supporters said they understood and agreed with the policy platform presented by the party.

The BNP is on the verge of moving from political pariah to being viewed as a 'legitimate' political party – a journey that the National Front never made. And despite their clearly racist policies they are not shunned in the public sphere. Surely the time has come to follow the example set by police forces and to question whether BNP members can truly carry out the role of public servant?

And then there are the problems we frankly just didn't seem prepared for:

The CRE has over the past two years drawn repeated attention to the risk of increased polarisation and segregation in our society. We have not done this for the sake of it, but because we truly believe that this is the great threat to a truly diverse, multiethnic society.

As a nation we are becoming more ethnically segregated by residence; and inequality is being amplified by our separate lives. Let me repeat that: this is not just about being nice to each other – separation increases inequality. It is true that some

areas are more integrated, but only in the sense that if I join an all-white tennis club it is more integrated. The real crisis lies in the areas which the middle-class minorities are leaving behind; areas which are becoming more and more ethnically concentrated and exclusive. The public education system - which should be teaching our children to live together - appears to be doing the very opposite.

We know that there is a mix of reasons why segregation takes place, and this is not the choice or fault of ethnic minority communities. There are social, cultural and historical reasons. And there is the need for protection. For Jews who came a hundred years ago, Asians who came forty years ago and even the Eastern Europeans arriving now, all of whom may be subject to abuse and violent assault by a minority of their neighbours, there is safety in numbers.

MORI asked people if they had met anyone of a different ethnicity to themselves in the past year, and if so where. The most common encounter, cited by 62% is in a shop; and I think we can guess what's going on there. Far fewer – 49% - work with people of a different ethnicity – which means that a majority of people work in all-white, all-Asian or all-Black workplaces.

But most disappointing is that though there is clearly the opportunity to make meaningful relationships across the lines of race and religion, 70% of us, more than two out of three, hardly ever choose to meet someone of a different ethnicity in our own homes. Even amongst ethnic minority communities there are some substantial differences. Four fifths of black people mix monthly with someone from a different race in a home environment; but only 58% of Asians and 27% of whites can say the same thing.

About half of black Britons mix with people of different races through hobbies and sports, a low enough number given that most black people live in mixed areas; but just a third of Asians spend their leisure time with non-Asians, and only 30% of whites mix during sports or hobbies. This isn't just, let me emphasise, a social or cultural issue. Higher segregation is associated with lower employment, lower earnings, lower education participation and higher levels of deprivation.

And if we are to confront the threat from the far right it is here that we will win or lose. Our latest findings show clearly that the secret of good relations between different races is face to face contact. But it's not just meeting that matters – it's the quality of interaction that counts. People were asked if they agreed that we should do more to learn about the systems and cultures of different ethnic groups. There was a clear difference of view between those who mix socially and those who don't. Amongst those who mix socially away from school or college 71% said yes, we should learn more about each other. Amongst those who don't mix socially that figure was just 58%.



RACE CONVENTION

'We know that there is a mix of reasons why segregation takes place, and this is not the choice or fault of ethnic minority communities'



RACE CONVENTION

The full text of this speech can be found on <http://www.cre.gov.uk/media/statements.html>

For the first time, more than half of all ethnic minority Britons are British born. But even more significant is the astonishing rise in the numbers of mixed race Britons. In 2001 they numbered 674,000. New projections based on the census suggest that this number will grow to 950,000 in 2010, and 1.24m in 2020. By the end of that decade they are almost certain to overtake those of Indian origin to become the single largest minority group in the country.

I welcome this, but as with all the changes we face it is not an uncomplicated prospect. The mixed race Britons are young, and they show the highest employment rates of any minority group. But they also exhibit the highest rates of lone parenthood and family breakdown, in some cases three times the average. They suffer the highest rates of drug treatment. We don't yet know why this should be so, though many people talk now of identity stripping - children who grow up marooned between communities.

In talking about change I could equally have cited the rising levels of failure amongst white young men in education and employment; or the task of integrating the new workers from Eastern Europe.

For every two emigrants in this country today only one returns. For every two immigrants, only one

leaves, and that means the composition of our population, if not its actual size, is changing quite rapidly. Today, there are 42 communities of more than 10,000 people of foreign heritage in London alone. This kind of rapid change alters the composition of the population significantly. In practice we notice the new faces in the High Street, the new accents in the shops. But the change isn't just one of sheer numbers. It is also characterised by a new fierceness with which people express the aspects of their identity – heritage, ethnicity, faith – that make them different from their neighbours. That is why we now need to talk of our aim being a society at ease with all kinds of diversity

So how should we be addressing this challenge?

First of all, how do we tackle the new variant on our oldest problem; how do we expose and eliminate stealth racism?

Second, how do we widen the circle of the race relations community? If we want real change we have to go beyond the circle of the already committed and clued up.

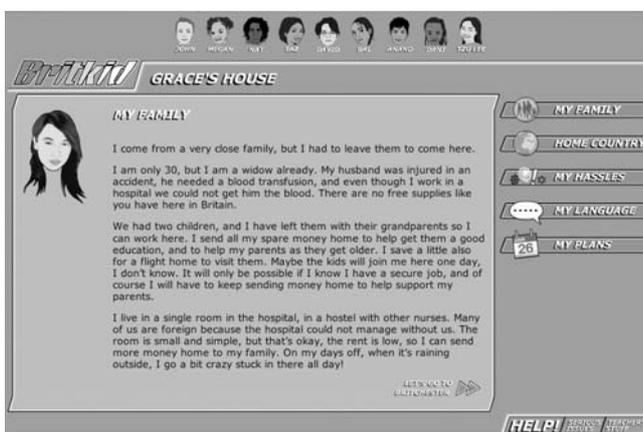
Third what role does the heart of our democracy, our political framework play in our aim of creating a society at ease with its diversity? □

Explaining immigration and diversity to school students

Following the completion of *What's New About New Immigrants in 21st Century Britain?* - written by Runnymede staff and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, there was a strong wish to make the information and arguments within it accessible and intelligible to young people. A cost-effective solution was found by adding new material to **Chris Gaine's** existing and very successful *Britkid* website, since it was written with young secondary students expressly in mind and is free to schools.

Up to now the site has featured nine fictionalised teenagers, British born but from various ethnic backgrounds. They inhabit an imaginary town and in locations around the town (their school, a shopping centre, a café, on a bus, etc) they debate and argue amongst themselves and with others aspects of diversity and their responses to racism. The site also contains parental experiences and reflections from the past, some discussion of faith differences, and factual information pages about the law, real numbers of refugees, Islamophobia, some history, the far Right, and so on. A final key element of the website is pages for teachers, with National Curriculum links and lesson suggestions.

Adding new material to the site involved creating three new locations: a vegetable farm, a hospital, and a refugee support centre. In the first of these the farm manager explains the economic impact of Eastern European immigration and in particular deals with the 'they're taking our jobs' myth. A Polish worker also says how he sees things. In the hospital, users meet a Filipina nurse and a Czech canteen assistant, and in the refugee centre they encounter an old Vietnamese former refugee from the 1970s, a teenager like themselves who escaped from the Congo, and a Rwandan woman. New dialogues and arguments have also been added elsewhere on the site. □



Anti-Semitism in France

In an invited article, **Jean-Yves Camus**, Research Associate at the Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques and Lecturer at the Institute of Jewish Studies Elie Wiesel (Paris), comments upon the apparent rise in anti-Semitic incidents in France, and their meaning.

What is commonly referred to as the wave of anti-Semitism in France began immediately after the start of the Second *Intifada* in autumn 2000, and peaked in 2004. That year, according to the statistics of the Ministry of the Interior, 950 anti-Semitic acts were recorded, against 601 in 2003. However, the rise of anti-Semitism is only part of a more global phenomenon, that of an increase in the numbers of racist and anti-Semitic acts: once again, 2004 was a peak, with 1,513 recorded incidents, against 833 in 2003 and 1,313 in 2002. This phenomenon is not developing in a straightforward way: the last months of 2004 witnessed a sharp decrease in the number of anti-Semitic incidents, while the number of anti-Arab or anti-Black incidents remained steady. The Ministry of the Interior statistics show that 41.97% of the racist and anti-Semitic in 2004 took place in Paris and its suburbs, closely followed by the Rhône-Alpes and Provence Côte d'Azur regions. When it came to anti-Arab incidents however, including what can be named Islamophobic incidents such as the daubing of mosques or attacks on imams and veiled women, the Alsace region came second. Eastern France in general, including Alsace, is also where most desecrations of Jewish cemeteries took place, and the area is a hotbed of skinhead/neo-Nazi activity. The island of Corsica was characterized by an unusual number of racist attacks against Moroccan immigrants and citizens of Moroccan descent.

Other figures one needs to keep in mind are that in 2004,

307 individuals were questioned by the police because of their alleged involvement in a racist or anti-Semitic act, 182 being specifically questioned regarding an anti-Semitic action. The increase in enforcement as well as the first anti-Semitism convictions were certainly pivotal in slowing down this wave of anti-Semitism. Most of the controversy around those events had to do with the alleged higher than average involvement of Muslims. While figures on this matter cannot be exact (under French law it is forbidden to mention an individual's ethnic origin in police or judiciary statistics), it has been estimated by the police that, out of 209 of those questioned about anti-Semitic incidents in 2004, 104 were Muslims.

A survey conducted by CEVIPOF (Centre de Recherche de Sciences Po, Paris), a scholarly research centre in political science, concluded that 39% of practising Muslims showed anti-Semitic stereotypes, as against 18% in the overall French population. However, this can only be properly interpreted in the context of a low rate of religious practice within the Muslim community, generally estimated at around 15-17%. Therefore, while Islamism and even radical Islam have made significant progress in the last decade, especially among the youth, it is impossible to conclude, as many proponents of the 'clash of civilizations' theory have, that the French 'Muslim community' is intrinsically anti-Semitic, or that it adheres to radical or political Islam. The anti-Semitic prejudice shown by part

of the immigrant population, far from being grounded in the Muslim faith, is often of a cultural or political nature. In the same way, anti-Semitism is also used as a weapon against Israel and what is described as the 'Zionist lobby' worldwide, by the Arab nationalist movement and the State-controlled media in Arab secular countries.

Why has this 'wave of anti-Semitism' caused such a trauma within the Jewish community? I see four reasons. The first one was that there is a wide belief among Jews that anti-Semitism was dead after 1945 and the Shoah. The horrors of the Second World War were such that it was assumed the anti-Semites were so shameful they were silenced once and for all. Therefore, any upsurge of anti-Semitism was denied in the first instance, then was interpreted as a 'resurgence' of the past with the significant difference being that the anti-Semites of today are not neo-Nazis, but 'the Muslims'. In other words, most Jews do not believe in the classical Zionist theory that anti-Semitism is a cyclical phenomenon which is as old as the Diaspora and will last as long as the exile of the Jewish people¹.

The second reason is that many Jews feel betrayed by the French Government, which at first took the rise of anti-Semitism lightly, dismissing it as a mere consequence of the Middle-East conflict and avoiding taking the necessary steps to fight it.

The third reason is that anti-Semitism has changed in nature, moving from a classical racial, or



ANTI-SEMITISM

1. But they have also rejected the traditional Jewish belief that anti-Semitism is a phenomenon which is theological in nature, a rebuttal of the Jewish spiritual message and will only end at the end of time.



Photo supplied by Jean Yves Camus.



ANTI-SEMITISM

2. *Le Socialisme des imbéciles*, Editions La Table Ronde, 2005.

3. It needs to be remembered that the level of anti-Semitic attacks during the riots was much lower than in the otherwise quiet year 2004. The riots did not specifically target the Jewish communities. Besides, it was neither masterminded by Muslim fundamentalists, nor organised as a guerrilla movement such as it is the case with the Palestinian *Intifada*.

Christian theological, prejudice to the more subtle form of radical anti-Zionism, which can be defined as the position which denies the Israeli State the right to exist, or/and which denies the Jews the right to live in this State or emigrate to it. Because the overwhelming majority of the Jews who are active in communal life are strongly pro-Israel, and even consider that the Jewish State is at the centre of their Jewish identity, they see radical anti-Zionism as the ultimate enemy. This is felt especially strongly because French Jews of today, being predominantly Sephardi, see the current situation through their past experience of fleeing the newly independent countries of North Africa. The rationale behind their fear is that 'they' (the Muslims) have driven 'us' out of our country (Algeria, Morocco or Tunisia) in the past, and they will now try to drive Jews out of France. There is clearly a fear of being outnumbered by the Muslims, thus of being worth less attention from the authorities. A significant part of the Jewish community even shares Bat Ye'or's theory that Europe, having disconnected from its Judeo-Christian roots, has become 'Eurabia', that is, a continent colonised by Islam and thus a territory lost forever for the Jews. As a consequence of this position, the number of Jews who emigrated to Israel rose to an all-time high of 2,980 in 2005. However, such emigration is an option chosen mostly by observant Jews who already have family in Israel and besides, the number of those who later come back to France, although not accounted for in the Israeli statistics, seem to be high.

There is also a fourth reason why the rise in anti-Semitic incidents has traumatised French Jews: it is a consequence of the change in their political choices which can be summarised as a shift from the Left to the Right. While this is common to all

Western countries, in the case of France two factors are responsible. First, the Socialist Government of the former Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, did not immediately tackle the issue of anti-Semitism after September 2000 and in the months following 9/11, which were also those preceding the April 2002 presidential election. Second, the anti-Israel bias which was traditional within the Communist Party, the Green Party and the Far-Left parties (especially the Trotskyite groups which represented 7.22% of the vote in the last presidential election) was at the forefront of the political agenda. There are close ties between parts of the rising anti-globalisation movement and some Muslim personalities who are perceived here as being Islamic fundamentalists. This caused a widespread rejection of the Left, and even allegations that 'the Left' had become hostile to the Jewish community and to Israel. A conservative, non-Jewish columnist from the daily *Le Figaro*, Alexis Lacroix, went as far as writing, in a recent essay² that:

The Left is not becoming anti-Semitic. It is going back to its anti-Semitic roots. Today, anti-Semitism is at the margins of the Left, tomorrow perhaps it will be at its core.

In the meantime, the shift in the French foreign policy to a more pro-Israeli stand under the conservative governments of Raffarin and Villepin, the efforts of the Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, to fight anti-Semitism, coupled with his tough law and order and immigration policies, have convinced a significant part of French Jewry that the Right is its natural ally.

What is clear is that the Jewish community does not perceive the problem of anti-Semitic violence as merely a law and order issue. It is seen as a part of a much wider crisis of the French national identity, whose

consequence is, among others, the rise of Islamophobia and the use of veiled racist language not only by the extreme-right *Front National* party, but also by some backbenchers from the conservative parties. It is also noteworthy that the recent riots in the Paris suburbs were frequently described in the Jewish and non-Jewish media alike, as an '*Intifada* of the suburbs', thus suggesting that the revolt was caused by radical Muslims and that it targeted a Jewish enemy, in short, that it was the revolt of an intrinsically anti-Semitic population³.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the fact that the recent wave of anti-Semitism was certainly not the moment in recent French history when anti-Semitic discourse was used the most. The worst times were in 1982, at the time of the Israeli intervention in Lebanon, when even the mainstream media used stereotypes that likened the Israeli armed forces to the Nazis. What was new in the period 2000/2005 is that open anti-Semitism was supplanted by anti-Semitic violence, mostly targeting people who were obviously Jewish: children and their schools; synagogues and their worshippers; and individuals who wore a distinctive sign of their belonging to the Jewish faith. The fact that a significant part of the anti-Semitic violence can be attributed to a tiny minority of the overall Muslim population is also a big change from the time when the Jewish community was targeted mainly by traditional far-right groups. Two final points are worth making. First, although the situation is serious, there has been a constant decrease in anti-Semitism in France since 1946. Second, the communal structures of the Jewish community, its cultural and religious life, and the contribution of the Jews to the country's life are stronger than ever, thus making the picture much more complex than it may seem at first sight. □

Faith Schools and Community Cohesion

The debate so far is creating more heat than light. Government education policies are committed to increasing choice and encouraging the participation of faith schools and religious organisations in the state-maintained sector. At the same time, media and public opinion are calling for caution on the expanding role of faith in education given the climate of fear around inter-community segregation. **Savita Vij** sets out how the faith schools and community cohesion project is considering the ways in which faith schools prepare young people for operating successfully in a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society.

The key aim of this project is to create dialogue to help improve understanding of successful relationships between ethnic and faith communities and support schools in fulfilling their duties under the Race Relations Act. We will consider firstly how faith schools contribute to or detract from community cohesion, and secondly whether they impact upon ethnic segregation. Faith schools are defined here as those that promote a particular denomination/faith and offer compulsory education. There are 6,900 faith schools in the state-maintained sector making up 33% of all maintained schools; of which the Church of England has the largest representation with 4,657, followed by 2,053 Roman Catholic, 36 Jewish, 6 Muslim, 2 Sikh and around 82 from other Christian denominations. The project is also interested in the unspecified percentage of 2,500 independent schools that provide a full time faith-based education.

Although these schools have a long historical tradition in the UK education system the current government legislation marks a turning point. Since 2001, faith schools have been welcomed 'into the maintained sector where there is local agreement' (DfES 2001:45) and independent faith schools have been encouraged to acquire voluntary-aided status.

Academies, described as state-maintained independent schools aiming to make a difference 'in areas of disadvantage' through external business, charity and religious sponsors are also being introduced. Similar to this concept are 'trust schools', proposed in *The Government Education White Paper*, October 2005 and the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, which encourage religious

bodies to play a greater role in compulsory education.

However, following the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001, community cohesion based upon 'shared values and a celebration of diversity' has become a central policy initiative. It addresses concerns around growing divisiveness within local neighbourhoods. Schools in particular are identified as being central to breaking down barriers between young people. The question we raise is about the specific ways in which faith schools contribute to or provide challenges for everyday community cohesion. In other words, how are a common vision and sense of belonging, the appreciation of diversity, the provision of equal opportunities and strong community relationships negotiated through community interactions and practices? This perspective allows us to see the product of cohesion and the ways in which it is locally produced as active citizenship.

It is equally important to reflect on the obstacles to this. The concept of 'parallel lives' (Cantle 2005), that ethnic or religious communities can live within metres of each other without developing cultural or social bonds, has been highly influential in setting new research agendas analysing the impact of segregation. Sir Herman Ouseley¹ points to a 'virtual apartheid' between schools in his review of race relations in Bradford, arguing that it has led to polarisation, failure to prepare students for life in multi-ethnic society, and racial tensions within and beyond schools. We are exploring the lived experiences of ethnic segregation and the ways in which ethnic and faith identities intersect in faith schools. So what is the role of perceived contact and isolation

between and within ethnic communities? Our aim is to capture geographically varied snapshots of how barriers to inter-ethnic and inter-faith understanding are both created and contested.

The project will provide an opportunity for a learning dialogue to be established between faith schools, non-faith schools and community stakeholders, including young people. The learning dialogue will be principally developed through hosting a series of seminars (6 in total) which will enable teachers, educationalists, faith and non faith-based community organisations, education officials, pupils and parents to share their understandings and experiences of the role of faith schools in promoting community cohesion and challenging racisms.

Seminars will be held across England highlighting the range of experiences of ethnic diversity and capturing specific local and regional issues. In order to provide a balanced picture the seminars will take into account those areas that have particular profiles of faith-based schooling.

Over the next few months, we will engage with academic researchers, educationalists, faith bodies and government representatives to elicit their views and experiences. A collection of research papers will be used as the basis for the final report, drawing together the evidence, discussion and findings of the project. The report will contribute credible data – some quantitative, but mainly qualitative – detailing a wide range of lived experience, along with considered views on the opportunities offered and challenges posed by faith schools in fostering community cohesion and promoting good relations. □



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Dr Savita Vij is a Research Associate at the Runnymede Trust.

1. *Bradford Race Review* (2000) 'Community Pride Not Prejudice'. Bradford: Bradford Vision.



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Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard is a Senior Research and Policy Analyst leading Runnymede's education programme.

1. S. Burgess, C. Propper and D. Wilson (2004) *Will More Choice Improve Outcomes in Education and Health Care? The Evidence from Economic Research*. Bristol: University of Bristol, CMPO.

2. *The Sutton Trust (2006) The Social Composition of Top Comprehensive Schools*. London: The Sutton Trust.

3. Free school meal eligibility is one of the methods used by researchers and within the DFES to assess rates of poverty among a student body within a school.

What does 'choice' mean for Black and Minority Ethnic families?

Since September 2005 **Debbie Weekes-Bernard** has been exploring the nature of the educational choices made by Black and Minority Ethnic parents for their children when looking for secondary schools. An additional part of the research has examined the impact of the educational choice agenda - exemplified within recent educational reform in the shape of the *Education & Inspections Act 2006*, the White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, that preceded it, and indeed earlier reform - on ethnic segregation in schools.

We are due to report on these issues in early 2007 and will cover a wide range of areas pertaining to for example the discrepancy between choices made by parents and the schools BME children *actually* attend. What we have attempted to do with this research is explore the way choice may or indeed may not feature in the lives of BME parents and children. We wish to identify whether the concept militates against the possibilities for community cohesion in schools or can be used to support it.

An increase in choice, a notion which has extended right across public services sector policy to include housing and health as well as education, is at the heart of the educational choice agenda. The underlying suggestion within this policy direction is that the exercise of parental choice will vastly improve standards across all schools. In doing so it will benefit those from disadvantaged and/or BME backgrounds who have hitherto been unable to access the more popular schools in view of the effect that popular schools have on the local housing market.

However, there is little evidence that increasing choice, either through increasing the variety of schools available to choose from, or in expanding school places at successful schools as is planned under current reform, will impact positively on the experiences of BME parents and children. This is because very little is actually known about the existing operation of choice by BME parents, whereas the impact of educational policy upon middle and working class parental decision making, as well as the sorts of choices made by BME students when applying to university

has been explored certainly within academia.

It is also not clear what impact changing educational policies on choice and competition might have on ethnic segregation within schools. Increasing rates of segregation are largely related to specific BME groups, but where they exist, the wider impact on community cohesion both within those schools and the areas in which they are located, can prove problematic.

According to economic arguments, if increased choice is to truly benefit parents, they would need to have made their choice solely on the quality of teaching within any one school¹. Schools will compete on this basis and standards will rise. However it is highly likely that parents will base choice on pupil intake and this will benefit schools in which middle class children form the majority. For example, many aspirant BME parents consulted in our research chose schools on the basis of their position within examination performance or 'league' tables and even though high test scores do very much reflect high teacher quality, there is no escaping the fact that for many parents, choosing schools on the basis of test scores, merely illustrates the capabilities of a certain cohort of either 11 or 16 year old children who sat the test in that particular year.

Even more importantly, however, choice by its very nature may produce inequitable results – schools clearly vary in view of a variety of factors which extend simply beyond the quality of teaching available. The competition argument at the basis of this explanation for increasing choice, places a great deal of strain on those

schools which fail to compete effectively and has worrying implications for the achievement outcomes of the children educated within them. Who are those children likely to be found in schools that are failing to compete with more successful schools?

Research conducted by the Sutton Trust² has shown that the highest performing 200 schools in the country have below average numbers of pupils in them who receive free school meals (FSM)³ for example. There is no data as such on the numbers of BME children educated within these schools, but research also shows that the highest performing schools are located in residential areas which also have significantly below average numbers of young people who would be eligible for FSM. Therefore those schools which are failing to compete with these types of schools are more likely to educate young people from poorer families and as some BME groups are more likely to be found in lower socio-economic groups, it can be surmised that such schools will contain higher numbers of BME young people.

The increased choice model therefore pays little attention to the plight of those children educated within institutions that are unable for a variety of reasons to compete with higher performing schools. The nature of choice based reform also ignores the wide variety of reasons that parents may draw upon in making decisions as to where their children are educated.

There are a number of far-reaching implications of the above discussion for the children and parents we consulted as a part of our research. First, a number of schools from which

groups of our respondents sent their children to be educated were situated in fairly deprived parts of each authority and these parents, the vast majority of whom were mothers and housewives, and also for whom English was their second language, would engage in choices that differed from those BME parents who categorised themselves as professionals or as having attained a certain educational standard.

For the most part parents for whom English was their second language and/or were recent migrants from Somalia, Pakistan or Bangladesh, would choose their local school as this enabled easier travel from home to school and was convenient given the lack of their own transport. These choices also related specifically to the larger sizes of their families.

Second, given the current political climate and the way that faith schools have been mooted by commentators as socially and ethnically divisive, it is not surprising that faith played a huge part in choice for many of the aspirant BME parents we spoke to and did so for varying reasons. For the African and African Caribbean parents consulted, many of their children had been educated in faith based primary schools and many were seeking, often unsuccessfully, similar faith based secondaries.

For the Muslim parents consulted,

as an integral part of their and their children's identities, faith was an area they wanted to be included within the way their children were educated in school. Thus the most desirable choice for these Muslim parents was for their children to be educated in voluntary aided, though not independent, Muslim schools. This reflected a desire for spiritual guidance for their children which would, in their view impact positively on Muslim pupil self esteem and ultimately academic achievement.

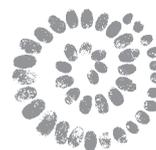
They echoed the opinions of African and African Caribbean parents who noted that in view of the low self esteem experienced by many African Caribbean children which occurred as a result of low teacher expectation in some schools and the educational disadvantage associated primarily with African Caribbean boys, schools in which Black History formed an integral part would for some be an ideal.

The fourth point to raise here however is that though many of the parents we consulted drew on a variety of reasons for choice – locality, faith, guarantees against BME pupil underachievement – many of their children were either being educated in schools where the number of BME pupils attending was above the national average, or in schools that were ethnically

segregated. Therefore not only did their reasons for choice not reflect those arguments often used for increasing it as highlighted above, but also – given that the large proportion of aspirant or middle class BME parents we spoke to were unhappy about ethnically segregated schools for reasons which spread from restricting pupil access to wider cultural and ethnic groups to the high pupil and teacher turnover at such schools and the negative impact of such movement on pupil achievement – their children were being educated in schools that they either had not, or would not choose ideally.

Importantly, therefore, our research on the complexities surrounding school choice, admissions, ethnic segregation and community cohesion for BME parents has noted that the lack of knowledge which currently exists about their processes of educational choice-making is problematic given plans to increase the abilities of parents to choose schools.

Ultimately, it is necessary for the views of BME parents to form part of an ongoing dialogue which contributes to the choice debate, to ensure that BME parents and children be considered, as with other groups, important stakeholders to be consulted in the development of educational reform. □



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Justifying Positive Action

At the Commission for Racial Equality's 'Race Convention' in November one of the breakout sessions explored positive action. **Omar Khan**, researcher at the Runnymede Trust and author of a report¹ on the subject mailed with the September Bulletin, opened the session. There were responses from: **Nicola Dandridge**, Chief Executive, Equality Challenge Unit; **Alan Baillie**, Referendaire at the Court of Justice of the European Communities; **Janet Paraskeva**, First Commissioner, Civil Service Commission; **Dawn Davidson**, Chair, Liberal Democrats Candidates Committee; **Ali Dizaei**, Chief Superintendent, Metropolitan Police; The panel was moderated by **Razia Karim**, Head of Legal Policy, CRE.

Criticisms of preferential policies are widespread. Much of this criticism, however, stems from a confusion about why preferential policies can be justifiable in principle, whatever their consequences in practice. The briefing paper is therefore careful to distinguish between three

different justifications for preferential policies, based both on theoretical disputes about the meaning of justice and on the words and actions of political actors in India. In considering policies such as affirmative action, we are too often constrained by our perception of their

implementation in the United States. Consideration of the situation in India allows us to think more clearly about the reasons for implementing preferential policies and in particular gets us away from disputes and confusions about the history and politics of race relations in America. For reasons of time,



I. O. Khan (2006)
*Why Preferential
Policies Can Be Fair.*
London:
Runnymede Trust.



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Omar Khan is a Research and Policy Analyst with the Runnymede Trust.

however, in this presentation I am going to focus directly on what I call 'democratic-distributive' justifications of preferential policies without reference to the Indian reality. I do want to register one caveat, namely that situations on the ground will of course impact whether or not the arguments that follow in fact apply to Britain and the rest of Europe.

Moral Justifications

The first point to underline is that the briefing paper and summary of the presentation focus on moral rather than legal questions. That is to say, I consider the ethical reasons why we might support preferential policies such as positive action. During the presentation other contributors discussed the legal challenges in pursuing positive action in Britain and Europe, and many of the questions focused on how to ensure that practice in Britain doesn't fall foul of the law. However, it is important to be clear about the justice-based reasons that allow us to defend preferential policies in the first place.

Consider the common view that positive action and quotas are controversial. At the same time, there is increasing agreement that such policies may be necessary to realise equal opportunities, as evidenced by comments from Trevor Phillips and Ken Livingstone, and by Labour's all-women shortlists and similar policies proposed by David Cameron. There is in fact a wider more global trend in viewing these policies as non-controversial. For example, when the US and UK governments approved democratic institutions in Iraq and Afghanistan, they accepted a form of quotas to ensure minimal representation of women in the parliaments of both countries. The result is that whereas Iraq and Afghanistan have female representation at 25% and 27% respectively, the figures for the UK are 20%, for the US 15%, and for France 12%. Indeed, all countries – from Sweden to Rwanda (both at over 48%) –

with high female representation have some sort of quotas.

Defining Preferential Policies

Preferential policies are defined as measures that treat members of certain groups preferentially on the basis of *unjust disadvantage*. The individual members of the groups in question therefore have a *valid claim* because of *current racism or sexism*. Although critics seem to forget this elementary point, preferential policies are only (and should only) be applied in circumstances where patterned forms of disadvantage prevent members of certain groups from achieving equal opportunities and from participating in important democratic institutions.

A good way of framing preferential policies and making their ethical justification clearer is by asking two related questions:

1. Who benefits?
2. What benefits do they get?

To my mind, there are three responses to these questions, namely

- (a) The sub-group of those individuals who get an increased chance
- (b) All members of a disadvantaged group
- (c) Everyone in society

Regarding the small numbers of individuals who are the main focus for criticisms of preferential policies, it is important to remind ourselves that the benefit is not a *guaranteed* position or place, but instead an *increased chance* for a position or place. But in any case, too much focus has been placed on the relatively small numbers of individuals who in fact get an increased chance for a job or position through preferential policies. Preferential policies were designed to benefit *every* member of a disadvantaged group, explaining why their moral importance is greater than sometimes recognised. If every member of a disadvantaged group is treated unjustly, they have a legitimate moral claim on the rest of us to ensure that they are treated fairly.

Four 'Democratic-Distributive' Benefits

So why or how does every member benefit when some individuals get an increased chance for a job or position through measures such as positive action? There are a number of different sorts of arguments, but in what follows I will focus on four 'democratic-distributive' benefits that every group member receives.

Equal Opportunity

In a society where individuals are unjustly disadvantaged, there is an unfair distribution of benefits and burdens. That is to say, some individuals are unfairly denied the chance to demonstrate their talents and skills (or have their skills and talents unfairly discounted), while others unfairly benefit by being presumed to be better placed for a job than members of disadvantaged groups. The main way that preferential policies respond to this unfairness is because the individuals who get a job or position can serve as *agents of integration* (see Anderson, 2002). Such individuals transmit knowledge and skills to their fellow group-members who have little experience of what works in job or university applications and examinations.

In order to clarify this and the following benefit, let me now explain how 'what we know' is compromised in a racist or sexist society. Where societies are patterned by unjust forms of disadvantage, it is difficult for people to understand what it is like to be a member of a disadvantaged group. In general we have a tendency to view the world based on our own experience, and to evaluate evidence and reasons partly on the basis of what fits our individual experience. This is not to say that we can never understand the interests and needs of others, but that it is difficult for elites to understand the needs of the voiceless, an issue hardly limited to minority ethnic persons.

Participation

The importance of participation is perhaps the most important justification for preferential policies. Here the idea is that all individuals should have the opportunity to participate in public institutions and the public sphere. The most obvious example and that at the forefront of most people's minds is Parliament. In a democracy, however, any institution with a public role is required to be responsive to the needs of every citizen.

The reason why preferential policies enhance the opportunity of all members of disadvantaged groups is linked to the claim that our personal background typically impacts our assessment of information, particularly in a society with structured inequalities. When members of disadvantaged groups participate in important public institutions, their actual interests and needs are represented. Again, this is not a broad claim that only Asians can represent Asians, but that in a society permeated with unjust disadvantage it is difficult for politicians to get access to the knowledge necessary for all citizens to participate as equals in public institutions.

Respect

There is a further way to explain why preferential policies enhance the capacity of all citizens to participate in public institutions. This is because when the rest of society sees people with disadvantaged backgrounds in important roles in public institutions, every member's standing or respect is increased. Public officials and public institutions no longer view members of certain groups as having limited or no competence to do certain sorts of tasks. Even if I myself reject my group, human resource managers may not consider my application fully because of their prejudiced view of the competences of various groups. The idea here is that 'people like her can do that job'; an example might be the way that Trevor MacDonald's success as a newsreader makes it more likely that white Britons will think that

black Britons have equal competences. A more forceful variant of this claim is that it is more important for blacks and Asians to have publicly important roles than for them to be represented in Olympic teams or football or as successful shop managers.

Value of Political Liberties

The most influential political philosopher of the 20th century, John Rawls, argued that a just democracy requires that all individuals have equal access to important political liberties (Rawls, 1971). He further argued that we require certain social relationships to provide us with the self-respect necessary to realize the 'fair value' of political liberties. In a racist society, however, members of disadvantaged groups cannot achieve the fair value of such liberties because dominant groups deny them the social bases of self-respect. If the argument here is intricate and complicated, the underlying idea is intuitively plausible: when we don't feel that society includes us as equals because of the colour of our skin or our gender then the value of our political liberties is less than that of our co-citizens.

Universal Benefits and the Function of Policy

It is worth indicating briefly how *everyone* in society benefits from preferential policies. We all benefit because our society and its institutions are more just than they were before the measures were implemented. It is a *public* good to live in a society where everyone is treated with equal concern and respect and we further benefit in knowing that our institutions are fair. We no longer have to cling to false beliefs about the meritocracy of our institutions and instead benefit from living in a more just society.

Before concluding, it is worth highlighting a final point. There is nothing wrong in identifying or targeting specific beneficiaries when designing public policy, even if such

beneficiaries belong to a certain 'group'. All policies target the class (or 'group') of citizens on the wrong end of inequality; public housing is built in areas where people lack adequate shelter; public transport is built in areas with commuter and tourist needs and even redistributive taxation targets individuals above and below a certain income threshold. In responding to unfairness in a society, we need to remember that individuals vary in the strength of their claim because they vary in their lived experience of disadvantage. Like the policies referenced in this paragraph, preferential policies are only applied to group members who in fact suffer from unjust disadvantage, a fact that is too often occluded by critics of the measures.

Conclusion

Liberal democracy was founded as a response to the unjust privileges of the *ancien regime* in France and was compromised but ultimately strengthened in the movement against slavery and racist separatism in US. This, however, has led people to hold too narrowly to an improper or misapplied standard of equal treatment. It is of course important to treat citizens as equals and to ensure that our public institutions do not discriminate unjustly on the basis of group belonging. But if there is existing unjust disadvantage, the individuals who suffer from such disadvantage have a legitimate distributive claim to improve their standing and realize equal opportunities. And in a democracy, there are further reasons to be concerned about the representative quality of public institutions, particularly where patterned forms of disadvantage hinder a certain class or classes of citizens from participating as equals. Where preferential policies respond to these unjust consequences of inequality based on race, ethnicity or sex they are an appropriate way of ensuring that every citizen is in fact treated with equal concern and respect. □



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'Even if I myself reject my group, human resource managers many not consider my application fully because of their prejudiced view of the competences of various groups'



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ASBOs and Race Equality

Over 80 guests gathered at the River Room in the House of Lords on 2 November to attend the launch of Runnymede's recent report *Equal Respect – ASBOs and Race Equality*¹. Lord Dholakia, hosting the reception, welcomed the report and supported the report's findings by stating that 'ASBOs should only be used as a final option but they are more frequently being used as an initial resort. Indeed, the broad definition of anti-social behaviour often means that there is potential for discrimination when they are issued'. Other speakers included John Hedge, from the Positive Approaches Alliance, and Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty. Below is the presentation given at the launch by **Sarah Isal**, Senior Research and Policy Analyst at the Runnymede Trust and author of the report.



1. The report is available on the Runnymede Trust website.

2. Youth Justice Board (2006) *Anti-social Behaviour Orders*. London: YJB.

Shami Chakrabarti speaking at the House of Lords reception hosted by Lord Dholakia (RHS).

Runnymede has, for almost 40 years now, tried to inform policy makers of ways that we can live in a society that is more cohesive and free from discrimination. In doing so, we feel it is important to look at different agendas that are currently driving policy and examine their impact on race equality. This is what we have tried to do with this research, in relation to the government's anti-social behaviour policy.

We decided at this stage to focus on ASBOs and try to assess two things:

1. Whether ASBOs are used disproportionately against black and minority ethnic individuals.
2. Whether they are used successfully to tackle racial harassment.

What we found, which we

highlight in the report, is that data on the ethnicity of ASBO recipients is not collected at central government level nor is it adequately monitored at local level, indeed they are struggling with the collection of accurate data on something as basic as total numbers of ASBOs. As a consequence there is currently no way to investigate whether black and minority ethnic communities are disproportionately represented. This is of serious concern given the widespread and increasing use of this instrument and what we know about over representation of black and minority ethnic communities in other parts of the criminal justice system. It is also in breach of race equality legislation.

We do know from the Youth Justice Board report² launched this week that 20% of young people receiving ASBOs are of black and minority ethnic background. This clearly shows a disproportionate impact, but comparable figures are not available for adults.

It's surprising that there isn't better practice in this area, given the government's formal recognition of institutional racism seven years ago. But our report should really be seen as part of a wider issue around the data collection, assessment

and monitoring of ASBOs generally. In this sense, our recommendations are quite straightforward:

We need better data collection to determine the ethnicity of ASBO recipients. When interviewing people in charge of implementing anti-social behaviour policy, most recognised that there was a need to collect the information, but they were struggling with how to do that technically.

We need better guidance from central government on how best to carry out the ethnic monitoring, using perhaps other areas of the criminal justice system where this monitoring is happening, such as stops and searches.

But more than that, we also need a thorough general review of ASBOs, how they work, what they are best suited for and how they are used for different behaviours. The last review of ASBOs conducted by the Home Office goes back to 2002. Most of you know that since 2002 there have been so many changes in legislation and practice around anti-social behaviour that we are now talking about a completely different instrument, and we know very little about its impact and workings. The Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons did produce a review of anti-social behaviour last year but it didn't provide a comprehensive review of ASBOs specifically. This is urgently needed.





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**Guests at the
River Room
Reception.**

And that relates back to the second question of our research around the potential use of ASBOs to tackle racial harassment. Again, central government does not monitor ASBOs by types of behaviour, so it's impossible to assess how much ASBOs might be used to deal with racism, whether they work in such instances and therefore whether we should advocate their use. Most groups

working with victims of racial harassment that we interviewed indicated that, because it can't be demonstrated that ASBOs are useful to victims of racism, and given that very little is known of their potential negative impact on black and minority ethnic communities, they are reluctant to advocate their use, which is problematic, especially if it turns out that they could be useful. So

again, there is an urgent need for better information.

I tried to give you a snapshot of the findings, and the report goes into much more detail about that but I hope that this issue will be picked up by the relevant agencies. We, here at Runnymede, will certainly keep mentioning it and pushing for things to change in that respect, hopefully with your help. □

The Vietnamese community in Britain

The Vietnamese are just one of the many ethnic groups in the United Kingdom that never quite make it into the public consciousness. Unlike the Chinese community, their perceived cultural ally, the Vietnamese community is very small. **Jessica Sims** has been undertaking a study of this largely un-researched part of Britain's diversity.

Despite the majority of refugees from Vietnam being in fact ethnically Chinese, there is a definite division between people of Vietnamese background and the Chinese community in the UK. The reality of the Vietnamese flight from Vietnam as political refugees is just one reason why the two communities might not see eye to eye. Mr Lê, who works in a Vietnamese community organisation, puts it this way:

"In terms of the Chinese, apart from having Soho, they also have a very strong business network. And because they are not refugees, they are immigrants mainly from Hong Kong; and there are also Chinese students. They have very close contact with the Chinese Embassy; last year for the New Year they had quite a lot of financial

support from the government. This is something that would never happen in the Vietnamese community."

Unlike the Chinese, who have a longer history in the UK, the Vietnamese are not monitored by the government as a settled minority. Any monitoring that does occur is often in the category of 'country of birth' which totally disregards the generation of Vietnamese born in the UK. So not as much is known about the Vietnamese community as one might expect, and the task of understanding them, and their place in wider British society, is enough of a challenge to qualify them as one of many 'less visible' communities in Britain.

Despite the majority of Vietnamese people having come to Britain nearly thirty years ago as refugees, there has been no large-scale study of their experiences here. Since the first



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RUNNYMEDE PROJECTS

influx of Vietnamese refugees, subsequent 'waves' of immigration have taken the form of family reunions, overseas students, asylum-seekers and undocumented workers. Yet this community remains largely overlooked. Arriving as refugees, the first Vietnamese migrated to the UK under unfavourable economic conditions. Most of them were from rural backgrounds, challenging social conditions and were largely completely new to the English language and British society and culture. Once in the UK, these refugees were forcibly dispersed around the country into what were effectively pockets of isolation.

Existing research into the Vietnamese community has concentrated on the first large wave of immigration, or the first refugees. This information gives us a picture of the Vietnamese as poorly educated, with few transferable employment skills and a debilitating lack of English-language competence – but the information largely stops there. From anecdotal accounts one could infer that, emerging from this disadvantaged background, the next generation have been seizing opportunities in education and employment in order to raise their position in society. But the lack of information we have on the Vietnamese makes it extremely difficult to isolate and address problems that segments of this population may be facing. Without knowing the barriers associated with engaging with the community, service providers will be hard pressed to deliver equitable service.

Not only is lack of information on the Vietnamese community a key issue that emerged from this research but also participation from this group. One cannot think of the Vietnamese community solely as the refugees who arrived nearly 30 years ago, and their British-born children. Nowadays the

FACTS AND FIGURES

Population and Geography

- As of the 2001 Census there were 22,954 *people born in Vietnam* in England and Wales; however since there is no explicit Vietnamese category, information about Vietnamese born in Britain is unknown
- Community organisations estimate there are at least 55,000 people from Vietnam in England and Wales, 20,000 of whom are undocumented migrants
- Community organisations estimate there are at least 5- 6,000 overseas students currently studying in the UK
- In England and Wales, 60% of the *people born in Vietnam* live in London; over 1/3 of whom live in the boroughs of Lewisham, Southwark and Hackney

Education

- Among the first refugees, it was estimated that 76% received education below secondary school level
- There is no Vietnamese category for ethnic monitoring purposes so educational achievement is unknown
- The 2001 Census reported among *people born in Vietnam* within greater London, 18.7% had higher level qualifications, 15% lower than the London average
- Within London Borough of Lambeth Vietnamese pupils, along with Indian and Chinese pupils, achieved higher results than other ethnic groups in the borough, with Vietnamese girls outperforming Vietnamese boys

Immigration

- First refugees came between the years of 1975 and 1981. Most of these refugees were from North Vietnam and ethnically Chinese
- Family reunification during the 1980s accounted for the second migration movement from Vietnam to the UK
- More recently migrants from Vietnam have come in the form of asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and overseas students

Employment

- Among the first refugees, most were uneducated with few transferable skills and experienced English as a language barrier
- Catering and nail industries are speculated to be the largest employment sectors of Vietnamese workers
- Within London, people born in Vietnam between the ages of 16 to 64 were among the groups with the highest unemployment rates (23.5%)

Housing

- A study by Refugee Action highlighted during the years up to 1993 Vietnamese people were concentrated in Local Authority housing and this housing tended to be overcrowded
- A more recent study on housing (Tomlins et al. 2000) cited overcrowding, 'told to leave home', 'health/medical' and 'relationship breakdown' as common stated reasons for housing associations to house people from South East Asian backgrounds

Health

- A PRIAE (2005) study of BME elderly showed there were high incidences of osteoporosis and memory problems among Chinese/Vietnamese elderly surveyed
- In 2004, the most common requested language for interpretation in Lewisham PCTs was Vietnamese
- The Vietnamese Mental Health Services have identified inability to speak English or understand its written form, unfamiliarity with the complex British health and Social Services system, lack of knowledge about relevant social welfare allowances, Vietnamese cultural beliefs, mainstream approach of services, lack of sympathy and support from professionals, and financial difficulties as all providing obstacles for Vietnamese gaining access to health services

Criminal Justice

- Media have reported the presence of Vietnamese gangs involved in the large-scale production of cannabis and human trafficking. What is not clearly evident is whether members of these alleged gangs are British Vietnamese or illegal Vietnamese immigrants

composition of the Vietnamese community is varied. The different subcategories that we assume make up a Vietnamese community – the first-generation refugees, the British-born Vietnamese, the undocumented migrants, the asylum seekers, the overseas students – each group will have their own set of pressing socio-economic issues. Equating the needs of the 'community' with the needs for every Vietnamese individual would be impractical if not contradictory. In order to attempt to understand the dynamics of the Vietnamese population in Britain today, some in-depth and long-term research would need to be done. What we are presenting here is an initial sample of the views of Vietnamese people we were in contact with via a range of community groups. Our report attempts to discuss obstacles to engaging with Vietnamese people as a group, such as language barriers, their perceived lack of confidence in accessing public

institutions, and internal divisions within the community.

The second section of the report explores the identity of British born Vietnamese (BBV) who are constructing their identities from the influences of their parents' more traditionally Vietnamese values and those of British society. This group, for whom language and familiarity with institutions do not pose barriers, focus more on cultural discovery and recognition. The issues surrounding the identity of the second generation provide insight on how small and dispersed communities, like the Vietnamese community, can transmit and perpetuate cultural traditions across subsequent generations and why this cultural identity is important.

Though small in scale this report aims to present the reader with a snapshot of the Vietnamese community in Britain, with particular focus on the London area. The principal use of this report will be to provide a general-interest briefing on one of

the many groups that make up multi-ethnic Britain, which will assist policymakers in their task of interpreting the key issues and barriers to inclusion that segments of the Vietnamese community face, and to some extent that second generation of Vietnamese themselves, who may be searching for commonality and belonging both within the Vietnamese community and British society.

This research hopes to stimulate debate within the Vietnamese community about what it means to be British Vietnamese, and set up a broader conversation among the wider society on the subject of what is really known about groups swallowed up by the 'Other' ethnic group category. Our brief picture of the Vietnamese community highlights the issues of lack of information, participation and inclusion of Vietnamese people in British society, and what a British Vietnamese identity may look like through the eyes of its second generation. □



The Real Histories Directory

www.realhistories.org.uk

Free online resource tool for teachers and schools

The Real Histories Directory is now established as an essential free resource tool created by The Runnymede Trust to encourage teaching and learning about cultural diversity across the UK. On the site there is a wealth of information for schools and teachers. You can, for example, search for:

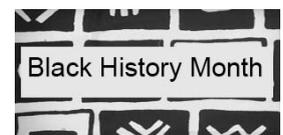


*culturally diverse toys and games
dual language bookshops galleries, museums and archives
individual performance artists organisations providing resources on citizenship, race equality, human rights policy documents
community and advisory groups*

Alternatively, you can quickly search for resources by area and, more specifically, by local authority.



Now we have also added a new feature. Each month the Real Histories Directory will highlight one particular topic and give guidance on how the Directory can suggest resources to support classroom teaching in that particular area. It might be 'Black History Month', 'Migration', 'Religious Festivals', 'Slavery', 'Identity' or a National Curriculum subject such as Science, Mathematics or Design & Technology. Past topics will be available in our archive section.



If you have a topic that you would like us to feature in the Directory, or you have suggestions and strategies that work and that might be of assistance to other schools and teachers, please do get in touch and let us know. We will do our best to research that topic for you and share ideas that help.

You can contact us at:
realhistories@runnymedetrust.org



Seeing double: making visible the needs and interests of ethnic minority women

The needs and experiences of ethnic minority women have long been overlooked in public policy leading to persistent disadvantage in all areas of women's lives. The **Fawcett Society's** (www.fawcettsociety.org.uk) new campaign aims to combat the 'double invisibility' of ethnic minority women by revealing how race and gender disadvantage interact in the lives of different groups of women. As the UK's leading campaign for equality between women and men, Fawcett wants to co-ordinate with others with an interest in this area and invite feedback on their campaign.

We know there's a need

Last year Fawcett published a unique review called *Black and Minority Ethnic Women in the UK* which brought together the latest available statistics on the position of ethnic minority women in British society. It showed that the corridors of power are still closed to ethnic minority women – and their exclusion shows at every level of society. While not at all an homogeneous group, it is clear that ethnic minority women share experiences of discrimination and disadvantage.

We found:

- Although ethnic minority women form about four per cent of the population, they are almost completely excluded from decision-making positions. Only three Black women have ever been elected to the House of Commons, and there has never been an Asian woman MP at Westminster.
- Ethnic minority women suffer from persistent and specific health problems. Babies born to immigrant Pakistani mothers are more than twice as likely to die in their first week as the babies of British-born mothers. Rates of suicide among young South Asian women are double that of the general population.
- Ethnic minority women experience significant material disadvantage, including high risks of poverty and social exclusion. On average, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women earn only 56 per cent of the average hourly wage of White men. Two fifths of Asian and Black women live in poverty, twice the proportion of White women.

The review concluded that ethnic minority women can face disadvantage on the basis of:

- gender
- race
- race and gender acting concurrently (where a Black woman might experience both racism and sexism at the same time)
- race and gender compounding (e.g. racist sexism, or sexist racism)

We know ethnic minority women are ignored

The interests of ethnic minority women have tended to fall between two stools in campaigns and research: on the one hand, the women's movement has failed to robustly integrate race. On the other hand, the anti-racism movement has largely been gender-blind. These factors combine to create low levels of awareness among policy makers and the general public about the specific

experiences, and complex needs, of ethnic minority women.

Fawcett's work with ethnic minority women's grassroots organisations over the past year has further demonstrated that:

- there is a large number of community-based organisations in this field
 - they are typically time and resource constrained
 - they have limited capacity to connect with local or national decision makers, or even with one another
- These organisations' knowledge is therefore inadequately fed into a broader arena, a problem compounded by the fact that few decision makers are themselves ethnic minority women. Services continue to be designed without the voices or needs of ethnic minority women being taken into account.

What Fawcett wants to do

Fawcett has launched a three-year programme, steered by an expert advisory group of key stakeholders, to make this persistent disadvantage visible and promote the interests of ethnic minority women.

The main objectives of the programme are to:

- **Build knowledge about ethnic minority women's experiences**
Our themes will match Fawcett's current areas of expertise: economic inequalities, power and participation, criminal justice and violence against women
- **Create alliances among national and grassroots organisations**
Our aim is to develop a strategic network of organisations engaged in promoting the interests of ethnic minority women to share intelligence and coordinate efforts to make change
- **Develop innovative and bold campaigns that create pressure for change**
Our aim is to build up pressure for changes in policy and practice that deliver real improvements in ethnic minority women's lives

How to get involved

Fawcett wants to complement the efforts of others working on these issues to make the strongest possible case for change. If you are interested in coordinating with them, know of initiatives they should be responsive to, or would like to be added to the mailing list for this project, please write to Ms Zohra Moosa, Policy Officer – Race & Gender, at zohra.moosa@fawcettsociety.org.uk ☐

It ain't all black and white: religion in multicultural Britain

The articles presented here are an attempt to add breadth to the debate on the place of religion in multicultural Britain. Too often the debate is presented in polarised terms. We are obliged to make choices that ascribe us to either one camp or the other. Do I agree or disagree with faith schools? Do I agree or disagree with the wearing of the *hijab*? Fortunately the real world is much less simple; reality is more complex than rhetoric. The authors who have contributed to this collection represent a number of disciplines whose connections and involvements with the subject matter are various. Each author was invited to respond to the first contribution entitled 'Religion – do the usual rules apply?' Their replies invite you to enter the debate. Some claims are contentious, some are contradictory, but all are complementary.

Malcolm James argues that the development of multicultural policy in the UK can be linked to a number of headline-grabbing incidents. He proposes that as a result a framework has been built that is capable of respecting difference and into which religious identity can fit. Anthony Burn counters some of these statements by highlighting the differences between claims of religion, race and gender and the dangers of 'ring fencing' religious beliefs and values. He proposes an alternative pluralist model of secular mediation. Humera Khan argues for the acceptance of religion into Britain's equalities framework. She posits that faith has been the 'Cinderella of diversity debate', left out in the cold because of the struggle between the church and the secular state. Harriet Crabtree takes a retrospective look at the development of contemporary debate on religious identity in the UK. She highlights the contribution that faith makes to people's lives and the contribution that religious groups make to society. Harriet stresses the importance of inter-faith

dialogue and of recognising the values that are shared by religious and non-religious groups alike.

Malcolm James: Religion - do the usual rules apply?

The Brixton riots, the death of Stephen Lawrence and the Northern disturbances have changed the public recognition of inter-cultural relations in the UK. New public policy has been ushered in at differing points; integration, multiculturalism, cohesion, and integration again, have been respectively embraced and equality is understood to be about difference instead of sameness. In the twilight of the attacks on the world trade centre multiculturalism has taken on new light. Religious identity has come to the fore. Rather than being embraced as an extension of our multicultural framework, religion has caused concern. Why? Why is religion viewed differently?

Religion in Britain today is big news. It's a hot topic. Think 7/7, think 9/11, think the cartoons of Mohammed, think the debate over religious schools, the *hijab*, Sikh protests over the play *Behzti*, Christian protests over *Jerry*

Springer the Opera. Religion is here and it's here to stay. Undeterred by industrial capitalism or modern western society, religion remains an important aspect of people's private and public lives. It continues to shape the society in which we live.

Religious values are publicly marginalised, through legislation and constitution, in a way not experienced by race and gender. There is a duty to promote good race relations and a pending duty to promote good gender relations. But where is our duty for those whose lives are given meaning through faith? Religious values are hardly different. As noted by Pierre Bourdieu, they are transferred in much the same way as other cultural values: handshakes or shrugs, compliments or attention, challenges or insults, honour or honours, powers or pleasures, gossip or esoteric information, distinction or distinctions, etc.

Culturally, religious communities are much the same as other communities: they are highly diverse; they have multiple challenges and different interpretations. Religious arguments are not impenetrable, or at least they are only as impenetrable as scientific arguments. When conversing over common concerns we need not understand all the science or all the theology. We understand the issues because we belong to the same society. We all have something in common.

Interaction between faith and cultural communities is a reality, and what's more it's desirable. Britain should unite in its diversity, common belonging and inclusiveness (Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000). Religious communities should engage and be empowered to have their say. The



RELIGION

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

Malcolm James is Research Officer with the Community Development Foundation. He researches and writes on community development, 'race', religion and multiculturalism.



RELIGION

Anthony Burn is on the Board of Trustees of the British Humanist Association. He is co-founder of the Labour Humanist Group and Chair of the Central London Humanist Group.

opposite certainly isn't desirable as to publicly ignore people's identity, provokes isolation, misunderstanding and resentment.

When two-thirds of the population acknowledge the influence of religious values in their lives, to argue for their public exclusion not only seems unfounded but also unlikely. Instead, we must publicly engage with the values that give individuals' and communities' lives meaning in the UK today. The trigger may have been 9/11 but this certainly isn't the justification.

Anthony Burn: Ring-fencing religious beliefs and values

Around 80% of British Muslims identify themselves as being both 'British' and 'Muslim'. Clearly both national and faith identity are more important to British Muslims than other identifiers such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnic identity and occupation. It is therefore not surprising that British Muslims increasingly argue that having group rights organised around faith rather than ethnic identity is more pertinent to Muslims than other BME communities where ethnic identity is of greater primacy than that of faith. Many British Muslims are keen to place religion on the same philosophical and legislative plane as race, gender and sexual orientation with the same group rights and protections under the law that these identities enjoy.

However, you cannot justify placing faith in the same sphere since faith fails to share the properties of race, gender or sexual orientation that justified their greater recognition and protection from that of other categories such as political beliefs. These differences are vital because there are important reasons why race and gender were given extra protections with regard to free speech and media representation that political or philosophical beliefs were not. Race, sexual

orientation and gender are identities that you are born with, have no choice over, and are entirely value free. Challenging or opposing aspects of someone's race, gender or sexual orientation is therefore both unfair and invalid, something the state has recognised in affording them extra protections on that basis. Religion on the other hand is a belief system, and beliefs are something individuals are not born with but are freely chosen, are changeable and are inherently value-laden.

Therefore it is right for the state to provide protection from criticism or censure the aspects of communities and individuals that cannot be chosen or changed, while ensuring those aspects of communities that are voluntary, value-laden and changeable such as beliefs (religious and otherwise) remain open to criticism and even rejection as a necessary component of a secular, pluralist democracy.

As with political identity, people's religious or non-religious identity should be recognised on the understanding that the exercising of that religious identity can be justifiably restricted if it impacts negatively on the rights and freedoms of others – such as stoning homosexuals or performing human sacrifices. Upholding a community's right to their values and beliefs is not the same as promoting them, and the state and society at large are not beholden to promote or acquiesce to either religious or non-religious values in the same way as they are not beholden to promote or acquiesce to political values or beliefs.

Western secular society has become comfortable with requiring religious values to be converted into universal, secular values and language in order to be discussed, evaluated, upheld or dismissed. The secularisation of religious values and religious language into universal values and

concepts allows all, faiths and none, to discuss the validity and merits of those values on an equal footing when religions enter the public realm. Society acts as the ultimate mediator determining in a process of constant discussion and revision and challenge which values are in the ascendancy and which are not.

I believe this process has worked very well and there is a danger that with religious values and beliefs being ring-fenced, different faiths may withdraw from the process of secularising their values and beliefs in communal dialogue and debate and insist that their values be recognised and accepted separately from the society within which they are contained. This is an argument for the special treatment of religious values at the expense of all the others, and a process that could end up in greater isolation and segregation amongst faith and non-faith communities and between different faith communities.

There are ways of engaging faith communities that are inclusive and welcoming without surrendering intensely debated value positions. This includes opening multiple fronts to engage with faiths on issues of importance while avoiding contentious matters such as sexual orientation or education, thereby increasing the chances of positive engagement and progress in other areas. A recent example of this was offering banking services to Muslims in a way that is now consistent with the tenets of their faith. Another example is providing funding for these different groups to tell their stories and express their faith through art and media, fostering cross-community understanding and inter-community identity and discussion.

Given the plethora of available means in which to encourage and support religious identity in Britain it is both inadvisable and

invalid to promote faith and faith identity to the same sphere as race or gender. Instead it would be far better to focus on education, public dialogue and provision of non-controversial faith-based services to cater for growing faith and non-faith identities.

Humera Khan: Religion in a framework of equalities

At a recent public debate the question was asked whether Jack Straw's condemnation of the niqab was an indication that the concept of 'multiculturalism' adopted by the left in the 1980s and 1990s had been thrown out the window. My brief answer to this is basically 'yes'.

Anti-racism and multiculturalism actually went out the window long ago being replaced by the more recent ideas of 'social cohesion'. But these are all buzz words that mean different things to different people. A quick definition is that anti-racism is challenging the institutional structures that perpetuate discrimination, while multiculturalism is the promotion of other cultures that are of equal value to that of the dominant culture, and social cohesion brings people together regardless of their social, cultural or religious background.

It would be fair to say that none of these 'isms' were or ever has been fully implemented, though from their obituaries in the media you would think that they had. Rather we need to review their successes and their failures within the context of their limitations. When legislation is implemented primarily as a result of conflict they are likely to reflect the tensions that motivated them. Reluctant 'cohesion' strategies of any nature are unlikely to provide the long-term results that are required for Britain, where diversity of all hues is now the norm.

Faith has been the Cinderella of the diversity debate. Left out in the cold due to age-old

paranoia around the relationship between the Church and the State, other less indigenous faiths have been tarred by that same brush. In fact, that was exactly what I was told by a civil servant a few years ago. Following a meeting in which the issue of institutional Islamophobia was hotly discussed, he argued that the British establishment actually doesn't have so much of a problem with Islam as it does with the Church. The secular domination of the corridors of power works to keep the Church out of public policy, if other religions get caught in the crossfire then so be it!

This analysis may have some truth in it and it may certainly explain the alliances between the secular left and the anti-racist movement – both vehemently hostile to religion.

Enter the Race Relations Act. It was revolutionary in its own way in its attempt to challenge deep-rooted chauvinisms embedded throughout Britain's colonial and missionary past. But the zeal of its implementation left many feeling confused and pigeonholed. To acknowledge its limitations does not in any way take away from what it achieved which is that, at least in principle, discrimination on the basis of someone's colour is wrong.

But the 'race-centric' perspective of the anti-racist movement ignored the multi-faceted nature of human identities, in particular in relation to discrimination. It was therefore not able to identify emerging trends such as the social exclusion of the Muslim community. Muslims have been at the forefront of this discrimination for over 30 years and not just as a response to the atrocities of 9/11. The double whammy of unrecognised historical prejudice coupled with contemporary secular antagonism meant that Muslims were taken out of the loop, excluded from the benefits and initiatives following the implementation of

the Race Relations Act and spiralled into social decline – some of the effects of which can be seen in the media every day.

Where does religion fit in? The arguments against the implementation of anti-religious discrimination legislation are based on the same sort of fear that dominated during the early years of the Race Relations Act. Scaremongering about being 'taken over' by Blacks and pillorying of race-related political correctness went on for years. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear the same fears regarding religion today.

The complex international politics that affect us all should not distract us from the implementation of what is right and 'just' at home. The recognition of the importance of faith and its relevance in people's lives will close the circle in the anti-discrimination debate and provide a more holistic understanding of the nature of British society.

The government has been pushed to recognise 'religious discrimination' through its soon to be established Commission for Equality and Human Rights. But this Commission will do little to eliminate the Cinderella syndrome facing the Muslim community and other faith groups. The reason for this is that faith discrimination has not had the same level of legislative support as race discrimination to ensure its implementation. It also has not had its own commission, unlike other areas of discrimination. Unless this is redressed systematically it is unlikely that the Muslim community will be jumping for joy.

Currently it seems that it is not possible for 'all' to be equal at the same time. If this is true then perhaps we need to start accepting this and implement policies that reflect it rather than giving people illusions about what they can and can't do in a secular western democracy.



RELIGION

Humera Khan is a freelance consultant and researcher. She has a background in equal opportunities and is currently focusing her work on improving policies for services for the Muslim community. Humera is a founder member of An-Nisa Society, a women's managed organisation working for the welfare of families. She was part of the Home Office Working Group on Forced Marriages 1999, the Home Office Community Cohesion Review Team set up following the 2001 riots in the North of England and more recently was part of the Home Office Engaging Muslim Communities Task Force in 2005. Other work includes involvement in various interfaith activities and running a Jewish-Muslim dialogue group and she has recently become part of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Christian Muslim Forum.



RELIGION

Harriet Crabtree is Deputy Director of the Inter Faith Network for the UK which links faith community representative bodies and inter faith bodies in the UK and works with them to promote good inter faith relations. She has researched and written a number of publications for the Network, including *Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey*; *The Local Inter Faith Guide: Faith Community Cooperation in Action*; and *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*. She is currently serving as a Commissioner on the Commission for Integration and Cohesion.

1. *Focus on Religion*, published by the Office of National Statistics, draws on the Census data and other Government surveys to give detailed profiles of the different faith groups in the UK (www.statistics.gov.uk).

Harriet Crabtree: Religion – shared values and social engagement

It is true that 'religion' or 'religious identity' has of late been much in the public spotlight. It is also true that at one stage religious identity was viewed in the UK as less significant than ethnic identity in terms of public policy. The dimension of religious identity, however, had already come more to the fore well before the northern disturbances in summer 2001, the terrorist attacks in the US of September 2001 or the recent London bombings of last July.

The significance of religious identity was already under debate during the late 80s and 90s, with writers such as Tariq Modood drawing attention, for example, to the fact that many Muslims preferred to be identified and engaged with as such and not as, for example, 'Asians'. The *Satanic Verses* affair gave impetus to the increased attention to religious identity and the impact of this on understandings of multiculturalism. But other factors were also involved.

During the 1990s the Inter Faith Network and its member faith representative bodies were engaging with a number of Government departments and public bodies to raise awareness about the significance of religious identity. The Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC) was set up within the then Department of the Environment in 1992 to advise Ministers on inner city issues. This was an important forerunner of the new Faith Communities Consultative Council in the Department for Communities and Local Government launched earlier this year. By the late 1990s, religious bodies of various faiths more recently settled in the UK were developing and extending their organisational structures, playing a more visible part in public life, and had joined the Churches and the Jewish community in playing an active role on various fronts.

During 2000, work began involving the Inter Faith Network, the ICRC and the Local Government Association (LGA) which was to lead to the publication in 2002 of *Faith and Community* – a key document encouraging local authorities to engage with faith communities and to support the development of good inter faith relations. *Guidance on Community Cohesion* (LGA and partners, 2002) and *Community Cohesion: An Action Guide* (LGA and partners, 2004) followed and contain extensive material on the importance of religious identity – both in terms of the contribution faith groups can make to a multicultural society and also in the context of appropriate provision of service delivery and developing community cohesion.

All these developments were happening without receiving much public attention. But a number of factors led to the media increasingly picking up on the multi faith dimension of British life. An iconic moment and a watershed in many ways was the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the Faith Communities of the United Kingdom in January 2000 which was one of the official events at the start of the Millennium, televised live from the Houses of Parliament. In the 2001 Census a question about religion was asked for the first time since 1851 and the data from this drew the attention of the media and others. 76.8% of people in the UK identified themselves as having an affiliation to a religious faith and some areas of the country emerged as strongly multi faith'.

Other factors have also helped bring religion centre stage such as: the input of religious leaders to debate over issues such as assisted dying; the process leading up to the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003; the debates over whether and how to legislate on incitement to religious hatred; the inclusion within the role of the forthcoming Commission on Equality and

Human Rights of work on 'religion and belief' with priority given to this alongside 'race', in its good relations work; and recent debate over the role of faith schools.

There have also been a series of court cases, tribunals and vigorous debates relating to topics such as whether the *jilbab* can be worn by pupils in school or the *niqab* while teaching; whether *eruv* poles can be erected in Barnet to enable local observant Jews to carry items on the Sabbath; whether a crucifix can be visibly worn by a newscaster or an airline employee or the *kirpan* (ceremonial dagger) carried by Sikh ground staff at an airport; and whether plays and operas such as *Behzti* or Jerry Springer the Opera should be staged. And there are the ongoing debates about aspects of how religion and public life interact – from the discussion of such issues as whether Bishops of the Church of England should sit in the House of Lords and whether, if they do, other faiths' leaders should join them, to requests on religious issues, such as those from some Hindus that there be a public holiday linked to Diwali.

Anxieties about the possibility that people are living 'parallel' lives in areas such as Burnley or Bradford and the visibility of the strand of religious identity within the communities most concerned have also contributed to greater focus on religion. So too has the link made by the men who carried out the London bombings between their religion and their actions. This is not the place for an extended discussion of the complicated links between terrorism and the religious or quasi religious justifications sometimes advanced for this but it is important to note the rejection by the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the UK of a religious justification for the kind of terrorism experienced on 7 July.

It is often the negative aspects of religions and religious interaction that are highlighted in debates about the place of

religion in a multi faith and multicultural society. But it is important not to lose sight of the fact that faith is important in today's society because it is central to the lives of many people and helps shape their outlook and actions. People of faith have, for example, much to offer to their areas through working for the social well being of their neighbourhoods².

Likewise, in the face of arguments from some quarters that religious people are a problem because of their strong views and that they all cordially dislike one another and contribute to prejudice and conflict, it is important to remember that people of different religions and beliefs can and usually do co-exist harmoniously and work reasonably cooperatively for the common good.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to link and promote good relations between people of the major faiths in the UK (see www.interfaith.org.uk for

information about its work and publications). Its member bodies include the national representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths; national and local inter faith organisations; and educational bodies specialising in inter faith relations. The last ten years have seen a steady expansion of inter faith initiatives both at national and local level. There are now, for example, over 250 local inter faith groups, councils and forums in the UK.

It is important that as well as inter faith dialogue there is a sustained and deepening dialogue between people for whom religion shapes their views and actions and those who interpret the world differently and do not identify themselves as religious or formally religious. Malcolm James's piece talks about 'religious values'. It may be that there are some values which people from different faiths agree are peculiarly religious but there are also many values which have resonance for

both religious people and people who are not religious, such as justice, compassion, love of truth. It is in discussion of these values and their implications for our shared lives that we need to come together – diverse in background but united in a common desire to work for a society which is inclusive, respectful and just.

Interaction, both between religious people and between these and wider society is critical to a functioning and effective multicultural society. Religious people are not a kind of alien entity within the multicultural body politic – they are fellow citizens who share responsibility for helping shape society. At times their views may push at the boundaries of comfortable engagement but so too may those advanced by ultra-secularists or non-religious political people with strong views. An effective, integrated and cohesive multicultural society can, and will find ways to enable a tough and honest discourse and emerge the stronger as a result. □



RELIGION

2. A recent report which has looked at this important phenomenon and also at some of the potentially divisive dimensions of faith is R. Furbey et al (2006) *Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing?* Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (downloadable from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop>).

Iris Young – A Memoir

Born January 1949 (New York), died July 2006 (Chicago)

On 27 October in Swansea a conference commemorated the life and work of Iris Marion Young. Iris Young was a political philosopher at the University of Chicago. Her work on feminism, multiculturalism, social movements and global justice was not only very influential among political philosophers and other academics, but more broadly influenced our thinking on these issues, especially in the US but also here in Britain and throughout the world [see Vic McLaren (2003) 'Invoking Community' *Runnymede Bulletin* no. 336 (December): 15].

Professors Anne Phillips (LSE), Tariq Modood (Bristol) and Carole Pateman (UCLA), among others, all paid tribute to the important contributions Iris Young made to our understanding of feminism, multiculturalism and global justice. While each of these contributions was significant and incisive, readers of the Bulletin will be most interested in Young's understanding of groups, justice and multiculturalism.

Young's 1990 book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* has been one of the most influential contributions to our thinking on the relationship between diversity, democracy and justice. According to Young, what she calls the 'distributive paradigm' has dominated our understanding of justice. Young argues that the paradigm's focus on the fair distribution of resources among citizens has failed to understand the multifarious forms of oppression. And because oppression takes many forms, justice cannot always be achieved simply by redistributing resources. In particular, she argues that groups such as African Americans and women are ill-served by the distributive paradigm.

Since Young first wrote her book, her model has been called the 'politics of recognition', although she doesn't explicitly use that term herself. Critics view the idea as the 'politics of identity' and assume it implies a politics based on static groups without a sense of shared values.

However, this is a misreading of Young, who rejects a 'billiard ball' view of groups and instead emphasizes their multiplicity and diversity. If she occasionally implies that groups themselves are worthy of moral concern by affirming the value of group difference, her article 'Gender as Seriality' (in *Intersecting Voices*) provides a much more nuanced view. Finally, in *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000), Young turned to how democratic procedures could respond to oppression in such a way that all can be included in public debate, discussing such issues as citizenship and deliberation in a critically engaged way.

These are challenging and contentious questions, and were addressed in the conference by each of the contributors. Though there was some disagreement in interpreting Young, there was universal recognition of her important contribution but also her warm and generous interaction with colleagues and friends. As a feminist but also as a scholar her contribution to our understanding of political philosophy will be missed. □

Omar Khan

Bibliography of Young's major texts

Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana, 1990)

Justice and the Politics of Difference (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990)

Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997)

Inclusion and Democracy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

On Female Body Experience (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

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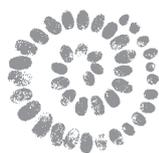
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The experiences of Black school governors in London

School governing bodies play an important role in the management of schools, working with the head teacher, school staff and parents to support the delivery of the best possible education for pupils. Available data indicates that there are at least twice as many pupils from Black and minority ethnic groups as there are school governors from similar backgrounds in English schools (Bird, 2003). **Nicola Rollock** writes here about a recent study of these governors from The Institute for Policy Studies in Education.

It is important that school governing bodies reflect the wider communities they serve and that Black and minority ethnic groups have the opportunity to contribute to the strategic direction and decision-making processes at their schools. Our small-scale study focused, in particular, on participants' reasons for becoming governors, their experiences of school governance, the role of ethnicity and their views on increasing the recruitment and retention of additional Black governors.

While having school-aged children was the most commonly-cited reason for becoming a governor, some participants were inspired by a particular desire to support the educational attainment of Black pupils who they regarded as traditionally disadvantaged within the British school system. Others simply wanted the opportunity to support their local community and make use of their professional and personal skills.

While governing provided the opportunity to engage more fully in the school environment and, in some cases, to develop new relationships with staff and friendships with other governors, participants in the study also spoke of the alienation they felt when they first attended meetings and of the on-going challenges they faced regarding the amount of time and paperwork involved.

Participants were asked whether they felt that their ethnicity contributed to their roles as governors. Responses varied across the group. Some governors felt that their ethnicity was intrinsic to their role influencing, for example, their commitment to ensuring that the governing body thought about and addressed the needs of Black and minority ethnic pupils. Others, however, regarded ethnicity as incidental to their role, instead emphasizing the importance of their skills and experiences or, in some cases, other constructs such as gender, age or place of residence. Such findings reveal some of the complexity surrounding the construction of identity and that those defining or defined as Black should not simply be regarded as a homogenous group. Some participants explained that the subject of race and ethnicity was never raised during meetings and those participants who did voice concerns about the ethnic group composition of the governing body or the attainment of Black and minority ethnic pupils, described the awkwardness and reticence of white governors to discuss such issues.

Participants recommended that schools and local authorities ought to do more to highlight the purpose of school governance and the achievements of governing bodies. They also suggested that recruitment campaigns target media sources and social spaces traditionally accessed and utilised by Black and minority ethnic groups and that the successful recruitment and retention of further Black governors would need to be sensitive to their work and childcare commitments and challenge the perception of school governing bodies as traditionally white and middle class. □

S. Bird (2003) *Do the right thing! How governors can contribute to community cohesion and accountability*. London: DfES/TEN.

The full report of 'The Experiences of Black School Governors in London' can be found at: www.londonmet.ac.uk/londonmet/library/t37986_2.pdf

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