# Mind-Forg'd Manacles

# Mind-Forg'd Manacles: Murder, Macpherson and the [Metropolitan] Police

**Jon Gower Davies** 

#### First Published August 2012

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ISBN 978-1-906837-40-2

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Typeset by Civitas

Printed in Great Britain by Berforts Group Ltd Stevenage SG1 2BH

# To my lovely little grand-daughter Willow, whose many interruptions were always most welcome

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## Acknowledgement

This report makes substantial use of research notes left by Norman Dennis, who sadly passed away before he was able to bring his work to a conclusion.

#### Author

Jon Gower Davies retired from the University of Newcastle in 1997. He lectured, first, in the Social Studies Department, and then in the Department of Religious Studies, of which he was Head. For 20 years he was a Labour Councillor on Newcastle City Council. He is the author and editor of books and articles on a wide range of topics, including *Bonfires on the Ice: the multicultural harrying of Britain* and *In Search of the Moderate Muslim*, published by the Social Affairs Unit; *A New Inquisition: religious persecution in Britain today* and *Small Corroding Words: The slighting of Great Britain by the EHRC*, published by Civitas; and on attitudes to death and dying in the ancient religions of the world, published by Routledge. He has a particular interest in war and war memorials as definers of what he calls 'Eurochristianity'.

He was born in North Wales. From there, after the war, he went with his family to Kenya, then a British colony. He lived in Mombasa, went to school in Nairobi, and travelled widely throughout East Africa. After a short spell in the Kenya Regiment, a part of the British Army, he left for England to attend Oxford University. Two years in America, which included attending Brandeis University and participating in the 'Freedom Summer' in Mississippi, ended with his return to England. Since 1965, he has lived in Newcastle upon Tyne with his wife Jean. They have three children, who now have children of their own. He is a communicant member of the Church of England.

#### **Foreword**

The publication of the Macpherson report became a defining moment in recent history. The report accused the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) of 'institutional racism', a deliberately ambiguous phrase that has been regularly confused with overt racism, and which has long been used, not only to condemn the Metropolitan Police, but also to condemn all British police forces. Moreover, for many commentators it was evidence that Britain as a whole stood condemned as a racist society. The lead was taken by Jack Straw, who was Home Secretary when the Macpherson report was published in February 1999. He made it clear that he regarded the report as much more than an investigation of a botched police inquiry. 'I want this report', he said, 'to serve as a watershed in our attitudes to racism. I want it to act as a catalyst for permanent and irrevocable change, not just across our public services but across the whole of society.'1 He had been a student leader of the 'broad left' in the late 1960s and a political activist in the 1970s when the stock cry was 'no platform for racists and fascists'. Like all political movements seeking support, they appealed to sentiments that were already widely held. Memories were still vivid of Britain's fight to the death against German and Italian fascism and so being against fascism was a very safe bet. And being against racism was also a dead cert. The vast majority of British people have always abhorred racism, so much so that whenever groups have tried to exploit animosity they have always ended up beleaguered minority.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) soon came into line with the Home Secretary's wishes and in

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2002 produced a hate-crime manual to guide policing. Jack Straw's statement is quoted on the second page of the ACPO hate-crime manual as if the police had an obligation to act as catalysts for 'permanent and irrevocable change' across the 'whole of society'. Worse still, following the Home Secretary's lead, the ideal of impartial justice was scornfully dismissed. 'Colour blind' policing (in quotation marks to signify its absurdity) was defined as follows:

'Colour blind' policing means policing that purports to treat everyone in the same way. Such an approach is flawed and unjust. It fails to take account of the fact that different people have different reactions and different needs. Failure to recognise and understand these means failure to deliver services appropriate to needs and an inability to protect people irrespective of their background.<sup>2</sup>

Impartial justice was now 'unjust' and officers who had difficulty accepting the new approach were warned that they would be 'retrained' or disciplined. And yet four pages later in the ACPO manual officers were told that: 'Anyone who is unable to behave in a non-discriminatory and unprejudiced manner must expect disciplinary action.' But wasn't non-discriminatory policing another term for the 'colour blind' policing that had just been denounced? Perhaps aware of the paradox, page 9 says this:

There was a time when to be passively non-racist was considered sufficient (i.e. the passive state of expressing no prejudice and engaging in no racially discriminatory behaviours). This is not enough. In a passively non-racist environment, racists can still thrive, discriminatory organisational structures and practices can still persist, and

racism in the broader community can go largely unchallenged.<sup>4</sup>

Such was the atmosphere of policing in the decade following the Macpherson report. But on the tenth anniversary of its publication, Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and before that of the Commission for Racial Equality, declared that the accusation of 'institutional racism' made by Macpherson in 1999 was no longer valid. He thought the police had improved. A welcome return to sanity perhaps, but the real truth is that the accusation was never valid in the first place.

Moreover, the Macpherson report had said as much: 'In this Inquiry we have not heard evidence of overt racism or discrimination'.<sup>5</sup> And a few paragraphs later, despite accusing the Metropolitan Police of 'institutional racism' the report said:

It is vital to stress that neither academic debate nor the evidence presented to us leads us to say or to conclude that an accusation that institutional racism exists in the MPS implies that the policies of the MPS are racist. No such evidence is before us. Indeed, the contrary is true.<sup>6</sup>

It is difficult to fathom what was going through the mind of Macpherson when he wrote those words. He accused the police of 'institutional racism', the term that everyone now remembers, and yet he found no 'overt racism' and the finding of 'institutional racism' did not mean that the policies of the police were racist. If there were a prize for double-talk, this paragraph would be a clear winner.

But as we have learnt, double-talk has consequences. Policing has been disrupted and become less effective than it was and, worst of all, the police became reluctant

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to deal with some of the most heinous crimes when they were committed by members of ethnic minorities. Stop and search was used less effectively, arguably contributing to an increase in knife crime, especially in London where the victims were more likely to be black than white. Cultural sensitivity meant that Muslim women were not adequately protected against so-called honour crimes. And most infamously of all, it emerged in 2012 that the police had initially failed to investigate the organised raping of young girls by Asian gangs in the North West, a failure that allowed the crime to persist for several years. This is the poisonous legacy of Macpherson and *Mind Forg'd Manacles* tries to unravel some of the confusions involved.

After Trevor Phillips' clean bill of health in 2009, the trial and conviction in 2012 of two of the murderers of Stephen Lawrence led to a renewal of accusations that the police were racist. Some support for this belief was provided in June 2012 when Mayor Boris Johnson ordered an inquiry into racism following 51 complaints to the London police and crime committee. Two officers in the MPS have been charged with racist offences and radio and TV programmes have played the mobile-phone recording of one officer using racial terms to insult an alleged offender. If the officer is found guilty, then he revealed prejudices that no officer should have. Moreover, his conduct would have been a disciplinary offence at any time since the inception of the MPS in 1829. If found guilty, he should be dismissed from the force. But the punishment of an individual officer will not be enough for the activists who want to establish that racism is prevalent in the police.

Jon Davies argues that Britain is not generally a racist country and was not racist at the time of the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993. The relationship between most ethnic minorities and their white neighbours was typical of that described by Mrs Lawrence (quoted below on page 38) when telling the Macpherson inquiry about her life when Stephen was growing up:

I personally have never had any racism directed at me... Because of how we lived as a family we got on with people. Our immediate next door neighbour was a white family and we got on with them very well. The children were the same age as my children. We lived in each other's houses and we had no problem.

More significant still, the police, including the Metropolitan police, are not generally racist now and were not racist in 1993. This is not to say that there are no racists whatsoever. Some people in Britain display racebased prejudices. But the general atmosphere in Britain's police forces is not racist or anything remotely like it.

Mind Forg'd Manacles takes it for granted that the prevailing mood in Britain has been and should remain anti-racist. Its concern is that the anti-racist movement has been captured by people with illiberal attitudes. In the late 1990s the tragic murder of a young man in 1993 was seized on by anti-racist activists as part of a wider campaign to establish that ethnic minorities were victims of white oppression. They exploited the fact that the vast majority of British people are not racist, so much so that most of us are mortified by the idea that anyone might even think we could be racist. The feeling is so ingrained that you could say that we are unwittingly anti-racist.

Anti-racist movements have taken two main forms: sectarian and liberal. It is our misfortune that the

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initiative was seized by sectarian anti-racists intent on deepening divisions in Britain, especially by insisting that membership of their racial group was the sole identity of an individual. This ideology formed part of a wider doctrine of multiculturalism, which denied legitimacy to mainstream British culture in favour of group identities based on race and religion.

Mind Forg'd Manacles is a defence of the liberal antiracism summed up most famously in Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech, delivered in August 1963 in Washington, DC: 'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.'

It is worth reminding ourselves of the scale of deliberate falsification that was necessary to claim that the police were racist. Here are two examples taken from the most thorough and objective account of the Macpherson inquiry and its significance so far, *Racist Murder and Pressure-Group Politics* by Norman Dennis and two other academics from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

One claim said to have been vindicated by Macpherson is that the police did not investigate the murder fully because they did not care about the death of a black man. The second is that the police were racist because they did not recognise that the murder was 'purely' racist.

Did the action of the police on the night of the murder and soon after justify the conclusion that they did not care? Stephen Lawrence was murdered on Thursday 22 April 1993. Stephen and his friend Duwayne Brooks were waiting with three other people for a bus. Stephen and Duwayne had walked away from the stop to see whether a bus was coming. While moving back towards the bus

stop, a gang of white youths appeared. Stephen was closest to them and they shouted, 'What, what! Nigger!', as they ran across the road. Stephen was stabbed twice. There was a telephone kiosk immediately across the road and Duwayne Brooks called the police at 10.43 p.m. A local couple on their way home from a prayer meeting at a Roman Catholic church crossed the road and began to attend to and comfort Stephen. An off-duty police constable and his wife were passing in their car and also stopped to help Stephen.

At 10.50 p.m., seven minutes after the 999 call had been received, the first police car arrived. The ambulance arrived at 10.54, left the scene at 11.03, and reached the hospital three minutes later. Desperate attempts to resuscitate Stephen failed and his death certificate was signed at 11.17 p.m.

While the ambulance was still at the scene, a van full of officers from the Territorial Support Group (TSG) arrived and started to search the neighbouring streets. More TSG vans arrived in the next hour. Other police officers were called to the scene from their homes. Dogs and powerful lights were brought in to search the road along which the gang had escaped. According to Richard Stone (an adviser to the Macpherson inquiry) there were about 40 officers on site.<sup>7</sup> At 12.30 a.m. an experienced senior officer, Detective Superintendent Crampton, was woken up and put in charge of the investigation for the first three days. He worked continuously on the case for more than 18 hours, only returning home for a break at 7 p.m. on the Friday.

On the Friday morning DCS Ilsley began to assemble a team of officers, which came closer in size to meeting Metropolitan Police guidelines than most MPS murder

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investigations. The team quickly grew to be about 25 strong. In a phone call made to the police on the Friday at 1.50 p.m., David Norris and Neil Acourt were named by an anonymous informant. Other anonymous messages also contained accusations that the Acourts and their gang had stabbed other people to death in the past, white and black, and were responsible for the death of Stephen Lawrence.

An informant came to Eltham police station on Friday evening and accused the Acourt gang of stabbing two local youths, Stacey Benefield (a white man) and Rohit Duggal. He thought the Acourts, David Norris, and two other youths had killed Stephen Lawrence the night before. An anonymous woman phoned at 9 p.m. and accused two boys known as the Krays of murdering Stacey Benefield, and said that they might be involved in the murder of Stephen Lawrence. These calls were logged and investigated.

Mistakes were undoubtedly made and the Kent Police, which carried out an independent review of the first investigation, voiced strong criticism of the initial inquiry. Unfortunately, botched inquiries were not uncommon in the early 1990s. At almost the same time that Stephen Lawrence was killed, Rachel Nickell was murdered on Wimbledon Common. The police made a hash of that investigation too, making even greater blunders than in the Lawrence case. The police did at least identify the murderers of Stephen Lawrence but were unable to make charges stick. In the Nickell case they wasted years pursuing the wrong person. If there was a systemic problem at the time, it was poor quality police investigation, not racism.<sup>8</sup>

The second issue was whether or not the police accepted that the murder was 'purely' racist. The evidence pointed to the gang being a thuggish criminal group with murderous hostility to all but their own circle. There was ample evidence that they had also stabbed white youths, but sectarian anti-racists were primarily interested in propaganda. It was not useful to them if it was merely a racist murder; it had to have been a 'purely' racial incident. The police had recognised Stephen Lawrence's death as a racist murder. At their press conference at 2.30 p.m. on 23 April, DCS Ilsley described the killing as an 'outrageous and senseless' racial murder.

At the beginning of the Macpherson inquiry the possibility that the murder was 'purely' racist does not seem to have occurred to the inquiry at all. But, by the time the report came to be written, Macpherson had decided the failure of a police officer to have operated on the assumption from the beginning that the stabbing was a 'purely' racist murder was proof of racism. Yet Macpherson, six years after it occurred, did not at first see it as a purely racist murder. Norman Dennis asks, 'On their own argument, therefore, had the Macpherson people concerned with preparing and presenting early statements about the problem inadvertently proved themselves to be racists?'9

In his opening address, Edmund Lawson QC, counsel for the inquiry, listed a number of violent attacks in which the suspects in the Stephen Lawrence case were also suspects. Lee Pearson, a white youth, was stabbed in December 1991. When he was interviewed by the Macpherson inquiry team he said that the Acourts had been part of the gang that had attacked him. He had

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declined to co-operate further with the police for fear of reprisals.

In March 1993, just before the Lawrence murder, another white youth, Stacey Benefield, alleged that he had been stabbed in the chest. When he was first seen in hospital he refused to name those who were responsible. When he was seen by the police investigating the Lawrence murder, however, he 'asserted and confirmed' that he had been the subject of an attack by David Norris and Neil Acourt. In December 1994, the police secretly videotaped the gang at Dobson's flat. Jamie Acourt was not taped because he was in custody on suspicion of stabbing three white men in a Greenwich night club.

What conclusion should be drawn? The fact that the attack on Stephen Lawrence was racist was extremely important, but as Norman Dennis argued: 'it was an aspect of the wider problem of the existence of clockwork-orange type savagery that also takes its prey from other groups and on other pretexts'. The existence of such gangs was a problem that concerns us all. The discovery of persistent police failure and recognition that mindless thugs were able to act with impunity, could have unified the nation in a campaign to rebuild an effective criminal justice system. Instead, the episode was turned into one of the most divisive in recent memory.

Analysing and re-analysing the Macpherson report has its limitations. What are the opinions regularly voiced by members of ethnic minorities? When asked, do they say that the police discriminate against them? Accusations of police racism were renewed at the time of the guilty verdict in 2012, most prominently by Richard Stone, an adviser to the Macpherson inquiry. But if racism was the

normal experience of ethnic minorities it would surely be reflected in the answers they give to opinion surveys.

The British Crime Survey (BCS) is one of the biggest surveys of opinion about crime and the criminal justice system, annually interviewing over 40,000 people. The answers given to the survey in 2009/10 do not suggest a society in which racism is prevalent. One of the questions asks people to evaluate their local police. In 2009/10, 56 per cent said that the local police were doing a good or excellent job. The results are broken down by ethnic status and it emerged that more non-whites than whites think the police are doing a good or excellent job: 56 per cent of whites and 62 per cent of non-whites. The Asian figure was 62 per cent and for blacks 60 per cent.

But what about fairness and respect? The BCS asks people if the police 'would treat you fairly'. The overall result was that 65 per cent strongly agreed or tended to agree. The ethnic breakdown is revealing: 65 per cent of whites thought they would be treated fairly and a larger proportion of non-whites at 68 per cent. Further breakdown shows a difference between Asians (72 per cent) and blacks (59 per cent). The survey also breaks down respondents by newspaper readership. The lowest score was for *Guardian* readers: only 55 per cent agreed that the police would treat people fairly, a lower figure than for black survey respondents.

The BCS also asks people to say whether they agree or disagree with the statement that the police 'would treat you with respect'. Overall 84 per cent said they 'tend to agree' or 'agree strongly' that the police would treat you with respect. The ethnic breakdown in 2009/10 was as follows: whites 84 per cent; non-whites 82 per cent; Asian 84 per cent; Black 75 per cent.

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There is a clear difference for people classified as black, but even so, three-quarters of black people thought that the police would treat them with respect, not the result you would expect if the police were generally racist.

Many journalists and writers have put their heads above the parapet to criticise the deliberate ambiguity of the Macpherson report and its pernicious results for social cohesion. Michael Ignatieff spoke out in Prospect magazine in April 1999 and Lord Skidelsky soon after.<sup>12</sup> Minette Marrin exposed its outrageous distortions in the Liddle showed Sunday Times Rod courageous independence of mind as always, and David Goodhart criticised multiculturalism at the height of its ascendancy in 2004.13 The Sun saw through Macpherson from the beginning and continues to voice the common sense of its readers to this day. Despite their efforts, institutional racism continues to be taken seriously, in part because the power of television dominated by the BBC overwhelm the serious thought reflected newspapers and magazines. Mind Forg'd Manacles is only the latest attempt to explain why it is high time the central tenet of the Macpherson report-institutional racismwas recognised as a piece of tendentious propaganda that should never have been taken seriously.

David G. Green

#### **LONDON**

I wander thro' each charter'd street, Near where the charter'd Thames does flow, And mark in every face I meet Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man, In every Infant's cry of fear, In every voice, in every ban, The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.

How the chimney-sweeper's cry Every black'ning church appals; And the hapless soldier's sigh Runs in blood down palace walls.

But most thro' midnight streets I hear How the youthful harlot's curse Blasts the new-born infant's tear, And blights with plagues the marriage hearse.

William Blake

## Introduction

The Stephen Lawrence affair is first and foremost—beyond comparison with any other issue—about the loss of Stephen Lawrence's life, the loss to his family of a son and a brother; the loss to his other relatives and to his friends; and the loss to the country of an exemplary young citizen. No decent person wants it to be thought by anybody that, to the slightest degree or in any other way, he or she is not wholeheartedly in sympathy with those who suffer from his loss, especially Doreen and Neville Lawrence.

Norman Dennis, 20001

On 22 April 1993 a young man was stabbed to death on a street in London. In January 2012, 18 years later, two men were found guilty of killing him. On the day, 22 April, this murder created little public stir: murders are sadly quite frequent, especially in London. However, the victim was black and his killers were white: and 'race' in that sense (white kills black) became the central focus of the long-drawn out series of investigations and inquiries which, over 18 years, produced a wholesale discommendation of the police and a general rebuke to and condemnation of British society. This set of attitudes is rhetorically dominant in the 'Stephen Lawrence Inquiry' of 1997/9, in which chairman Sir William Macpherson, in a language suggestive of mediaeval penitentials or the formularies of the confessional, insistently demanded, from the police and from the whole of British society, that it acknowledge and 'accept' (the word 'accept' appears frequently) that, though it did not know it, it was systemically 'institutionally racist': 'accept', of course, means 'admit', 'admit' means 'confess'. Macpherson

made little attempt to locate this stricture in either such evidence as he garnered in the course of his inquiries or in broader data about the sins and virtues of British society: 'institutional racism' was and is a concept floating free of empirical referent, to be administered to any human sinner, sufferer or supplicant as and when required. In a supplementary variant, Macpherson used 'institutional racism' as a 'contagion', a plague infecting all and sundry—though, critically, white people, and, crucially, without them knowing (until they accepted it) that they were so infected. Racism is what the white majority has—or does.

Throughout, I will refer to the Macpherson report (The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, to use its official name) by reference to its paragraph numbers, thus for example M 46:1, the first such use in this book. Reference to the Appendices of the Inquiry are more difficult, because the original document lacks consistent page numbers. The full title of the Report and its Appendices is to be found in the references to this Introduction, at Macpherson, 1997/9.

In January 2012 two men were, after 18 years, convicted of Stephen Lawrence's murder. The day after the trial and conviction there appeared, in the national press, a further effusion of maledictions and critical comment about the police and about white British society as a whole. Some writers demanded also the vigorous prosecution of several suspects, already defiantly defined by at least one newspaper, as 'guilty'. We have, then, a story of gangs, crime, police, courts, public inquiries, public meetings, changes in the law, press reports, of 'race'—and of politics, broadly understood. It is of course primarily and irreducibly, the story of the grief of a family and of the tragedy of the loss of a decent young man.

#### INTRODUCTION

In this book I try to understand why this one murder came to achieve so salient a presence in our national story. From a literary point of view, this drama, like any other drama, carries within it its own momentum, moving from episode to episode, from hope to impasse, from impasse to resolution. The story, however, takes place against some major changes in our national 'stage', the stage on which the Stephen Lawrence story unfolded. It is not possible to understand the Lawrence story without having in mind at least two of these changes, now briefly introduced.

First, by the end of the twentieth century the incomers who settled in Britain after the war had gone from being a relatively few semi-isolated people surrounded by (sometimes hostile) natives to being members of genuine and large communities of their own sort, 'integrated' primarily in the sense that such communities developed for themselves all or most of the institutions of social life-housing, schools, places of worship or leisure, voluntary organisations, friendship networks, courtship systems, pressure groups, banks, travel agencies, estate commercial and occupational agencies, systems, newspapers, journals: they became, indeed, in social fact, ethnic minority communities, although, given the miracle of modern travel, in constant buttressing touch with their homelands—and given the conflicts in those homelands, communities with very considerable imported intraethnic tensions.

Once developed, day to day transactions between these communities and the indigenous white population could be and sometimes were kept to a minimum, a situation aided to some extent by geo-demographic changes in the pattern of white settlement—including

'white flight': patterns on inter-marriage and on friendship networks (for example) indicate considerable differences in the communal life and cultures of the various Black and Minority Ethnic communities (BMEs) and between each of them and the majority society. Yet all these ethnic communities were necessarily part of an existing and functioning nation, a national society with an overall white majority and a settled, chosen way of doing things. It was as increasingly effective communities that these BMEs, and by the end of the century from a position of relative communal strength, could and did negotiate better and better 'terms of settlement' with and within this national society and with its dominant elites. To this end, as part of a reciprocal transaction, they created or participated in various national bodies set up to mediate their relationships with the broader (white/ Christian/secular) state and society; there developed routine presence on radio and television, fair or even preferential access to jobs and university places, special access to police and various race relations boards, increasing representation on local and national political bodies and political parties, symbolic presence on calendrical rituals, an increasing identity in law-not all overnight, and no doubt neither at a speed nor in amount to everyone's satisfaction: yet where progress was insufficient, these BME communities, qua communities, possess the capacity as well as the inclination to make their dissatisfactions known to a national elite sensitised to their arguments. Clearly, such matters are things of process, never perfect, never finalised. The highly centralised nature of the British state, and the liberalism of its elites, made the task of 'influence' relatively easy: and where some form of centralisation did not too clearly

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exist, as for example with the police or universities, then it could fairly easily be conjured up and traditional national systems modified in one way or another.

Secondly, along with these structural changes, a major ideological or credal change was introducing into the British democratic value system the language and notion of 'rights'—indeed of 'human' rights: this was part of a trans-European and broader global movement. Coassociated in time with the growth of BME communities, as described above, such a philosophical-political development rescinded the older language of 'class', and of the over-riding legitimacy of majority rule, and instead filled the vocabulary of British politics with notions of 'minority' rights, where 'rights' were seen as the right of a racial or religious minority, or of a member of such a minority, to be free of such constraints as might inhere in ancient or older concepts of citizenship, ancestry, birth, symbol, majority, tradition and inherited obligations. Such constraints, such concepts, were re-cast as 'hegemony' or 'prejudice', or 'racial' or 'religious' prejudice; and these negativities were, particularly under the post-1997 Labour governments, anathematised and criminalised as 'hatred', seen as wrong and of interest to the police and Her Majesty's judges. Thus, the exercise of minority customs and habits were seen, a priori, as 'right' and 'rights' precisely because they were the customs and habits of a minority: while the customs and habits of the majority (the very existence of which was disputed) were seen as actually or potentially (it did not matter which) a form of autocracy or arrogance or oppression and prejudice. So ubiquitous were 'rights', and so operative at all levels, and so associated with minorities, that what might seem relatively trivial (for example the use of the

word 'coloured' or the adoption of a particular physical stance by an official or the wearing of a religious symbol, or a joke about a religious symbol)—such things became a matter of and for politics and for the law, a licence for admonitory comment and judicial action, an infringement of 'Respect', itself now removed from the private into the public sphere.

Of particular significance in this re-casting of our very language was religion. Religion had been steadily retreating in (post) Christian Britain: and much of the force of the doctrine of 'rights' was, initially, to require a further diminishment of the public role of religion. True, an explicit Blasphemy Law (which protected Christianity only) was in existence until 2008; and repealed then precisely because it did not defend minorities: but no one had been sent to prison for offending it since 1921. No sensible Archbishop or Cardinal would seek to defend his religion by recourse to the courts. However, other BME religious organisations, such as those of Islam, were not at ease with this secular or atheist trend: and the creation of a 'religious hatred' criminal offence recognised this. So, for example, Harry Taylor of Liverpool, charged by the police under the Public Order Act, was found guilty and is now forbidden for ever from carrying 'religiously offensive material' in a public place. This rescission of older liberties has inevitably been accompanied by a general reinvigoration of religious language and idiom, as both what is desired and what is forbidden in law has to be spelled out, made explicit, in debate in parliament, in the press and in public. The grammar and idiom of 'religion', therefore, has re-entered the British public space. The story of, and stories about, the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and the language of his killing,

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including the language of official and formal reports, reflect this—murder seen as sacrifice, crimes seen as sins, failings seen as trespasses, verdict seen as expiation, resipiscence seen as confession. Thus the Macpherson report on the murder of Stephen Lawrence can perhaps be best read, as I have already suggested, as a secularised version of a mediaeval penitential or a contemporary confessional, 'acceptance' offered as oblation.

Sadly, and terribly, and not for the first time, religion re-entered British life in part through violence. On our screens young men could be seen describing themselves as 'martyrs' as they proclaimed their intention to kill themselves and others on streets and on railways: and their deaths and those of their victims, too, are now to be seen commemorated, sacrificed, on public streets and in public memory.

This short book, then, is about the 18 years which elapsed between the murder, by stabbing, of Stephen Lawrence, the young black victim, on 22 April in 1993 and the trial and conviction, in 2011/12, of two white men, Gary Dobson and David Norris, for killing him. These 18 years are located within the national developments described immediately above.

The murder, the various inquiries, the anguish of the family—all this is a matter of fact and of an interpretation of fact, a story of one murder: yet it is a story massively moralised by considerations of race. Between 1997 and 1999, some six years after the murder, Sir William Macpherson, a High Court judge, conducted an Inquiry into the murder and the handling of it by the Metropolitan Police.<sup>2</sup> He made 70 recommendations,<sup>3</sup> and concluded that the flaws in the police investigation were due to 'professional incompetence, institutional racism

and a failure of leadership by senior officers' (M 46:1). Of these three, it was the phrase 'institutional racism', held by Macpherson and related advocates to apply not just to London's Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) but to all police services (M 2:19) and indeed to the whole of the white British system of administration and government —this, said Macpherson quoting (rather tendentiously) Lord Scarman, 'threatened the very survival of our society' (M 2:20).

It was the term 'institutional racism' which caught the spirit of the age and became so canonical in its status and so total in its application as to obviate any denial or attempt at empirical refutation: indeed, a denial of the charge, especially when made by whites, on whom the castigation necessarily descended, could in itself be adduced as proof of it: 'there must', wrote Macpherson, 'be an unequivocal acceptance of the problem of institutional racism and its nature before it can be addressed, as it needs to be, in full partnership with members of minority ethnic communities' (M 6:48). Macpherson seems to have been conformed to acceptance of this injunction when, at the opening of the inquiry, he overcame an objection to his chairmanship made by the Lawrence family. The Lawrences accepted Secretary Jack Straw's assurance that Sir William was absolutely the right man for the job.4

Yet on Macpherson's formulation—'unequivocal acceptance'—it would seem to be necessary to plead guilty ('unequivocally accept') **before any evidence is heard**—and what exculpation could there be when evidence is irrelevant? Macpherson set the pattern. Of the Metropolitan Police Service, the ostensible subject of the inquiry, he wrote that 'no such evidence [is] before us that

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the policies of the MPS are racist. Indeed the contrary is true' (M 6:24) and 'we have not heard', he wrote, 'evidence of overt racism or discrimination' (M 6:3). This did not seem to detain him: 'institutional racism' was obviously beyond the need of mere proof, it being 'a more systematic tendency that could unconsciously influence police performance generally' (M 6:5, quoting Robin Oakley). Institutional racism was, he wrote, 'a corrosive disease' (M 6:34), 'permeating' his investigation (M 6.1). To the diffident demurral of crest-fallen Commissioner Paul Condon that 'labels can cause more problems than they solve', Macpherson commented sternly that 'he [Condon] did not accept that there is institutional racism within the force' (M 6:25). I have a certain sympathy for Mr Condon: For not accepting the charge, Guilty! Once accepting the charge, Guilty again!

Perhaps Mr Condon should not feel so puzzled. To fill the gap between the empyrean metaphysical abstraction of institutional racism and the day to day life of the police and all of us, where progress not perfection is how things move, Macpherson provided a working definition of racism: 'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim **or any other person'** (M 12: 328) (emphasis added). This appeared under 'Recommendations', and forms the basis of subsequent 'race' law. So: you, unwitting as you are, do not and cannot know, and thus cannot deny, that you have the disease: while anyone can say that you have! (If WPC Bloggs' semisatirical diary is anything to go by, the police found this definition 'a good thing... [it has] been adopted by all police forces to prove they aren't sweeping racism under the carpet'.<sup>5</sup> Neither WPC E.E. Bloggs nor anyone else tells us what happens if the 'any other person' disagrees.

While, I assume, anyone can be infected by 'corrosive disease', it was in white British institutions and society that the disease was held-and not just by Macpherson, as we shall see-to be most deeply ingrained: this majority system had somehow come to possess a monopoly of the infection, in all of its many manifestations. Most of the writing about the Macpherson report tends to concentrate on the impact of the 'corrosive disease' on the police: and clearly an 'institutionally racist' police force is indeed, were it so, hugely worrying. Yet both Macpherson and his sundry adherents extended their strictures to the broader society: and what seems as important to me is the way in which the report takes its place in the multicultural literature, a literature and campaign which appears to find it necessary to provide a welcome for post-war minorities only in the disparagement and denunciation of the country to which various minorities came and settled in the years after World War Two. I do not fully understand the psychology of this: the picture painted of Great Britain by much of this literature, including Macpherson, would surely make our country an object of avoidance, not immigration, and of flight rather than settlement. Yet here we have a High Court judge condemning both the police and the country they serve: and doing so in a manner which admits of no refutation! I explore these two, related, themes in the pages which follow.

The 18 years leading up to the sentencing of Dobson and Norris in 2012, is, then, thus punctuated by a series of events and inquests, the most important probably being the Macpherson Report. In its 70 recommendations this report laid the moral and operational bases for the way in which our police forces—and indeed society as a whole—

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expected, now, to perform. The most recent 'punctuation mark' is the capacious volume and nature of the press coverage which, in reporting on the 2011/12 trial and conviction in the way it did, massively reinforced the prescriptions of Macpherson and left police, politicians and society with little option but to proceed down new and untried paths of social control and inter- and intra-communal ways of living: 'Britain is a better country', wrote the Daily Mirror in an editorial, 'and now it is the racists who are on the run'.6 In the words of Lord Ouseley, 'the Stephen Lawrence campaign was the most momentous race campaign I have known'.7 Lord Ouseley was once head of the Commission for Racial Equality. His description of this murder and eventual trial is one of many which endow it with a moral, national significance well beyond the normal. The 18 year-long 'race campaign' constitutes one of the most intriguing chapters in the history of Great Britain and its ethnic minorities. In an odd way, it reverses the dominance of a majority (corrupt and corrupting) and renders it obeisant to the tutelary and virtuous minorities—to become perhaps, as Yasmin Alibhai-Brown said (approvingly) of London, a liberated country 'where no one belongs'.8

Chapter 1 then, is a brief account, with comment, of the ramifications of the murder of this one young black man, Stephen Lawrence, in Eltham, London, in 1993: he was 18 years old at the time of his killing. He was, as already said, murdered by two young white men, who were tried and convicted of the murder 18 years later in January 2012—Gary Dobson and David Norris were both, in legal terms, juveniles at the time of the murder: Dobson was 17, Norris was 16.

Chapter 2 is an account, an analysis and an appraisal of the role played by our national press at the time of the trial and sentencing of Dobson and Norris, who were by then practically middle-aged. All eight national papers (the Guardian, the Sun, The Times, the Daily Mirror, the Daily Express, the Independent, the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail) not only covered the trial, but made it their front page article, with headlines, editorials and features of one kind and another. The complex story of the 18 year long police, public, political and judicial involvement with Stephen Lawrence and his family reach a kind of vindication, not just in the trial, but in the press reception of it and their proclamation of the need for, or justification of, the new style of policing which Macpherson's Report had brought about in the UK. The very unanimity and extent of the press coverage is in itself remarkable; as is, to my mind, the actual content and substantive nature of the articles and editorials. Some of the coverage did not merely report the trial and the verdict; they pronounced their own verdicts on the guilty pair, on their alleged accomplices, on the police, on the nation as a whole. In so doing they became part of the story itself-this extraordinary story of the transubstantiation of one young murdered man into a secular martyr of, in and to our national place and purpose and to our own times, a young man from whose sacrifice and semi-apotheosis great national transformations are sought and expected. The papers use the language of liturgy, of the blood of innocence, of evil, of redemption, of forgiveness, of penance, punishment and confession: and do so in a manner which renders expiation, in particular, a most difficult, indeed limitless task: thus, for example, we have

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Trevor Phillips saying that 'racial prejudice is a secular sin that is not to be tolerated'.9

The verdict came about, of course, at the time of the Leveson inquiry into press standards: and to some extent the self-promoting vigour of some coverage represents a plea of virtue made by a 'free press' on behalf of itself.

On occasion, some papers adopted attitudes which, I have to say, I find distasteful. If some of their attitudes to, for example, our national story or to 'suspects' on the edges of our criminal justice system are now indeed to be the orthodoxy, then I will only with difficulty see much progress therein. If Dobson and Norris, or the suspects, or their girlfriends and ex-girlfriends were, say, black, would they have been described in the same way-'devoted molls, flash cars, designer clothes, no sign of working for a living'?10 The salutations which greeted the verdict on Stephen Lawrence's killing articulated and amplified what seems now to have become this story's default mode: because Norris and Dobson were guilty, Macpherson was right: and because Macpherson was right, some media seem to have felt free to abandon certain appropriate standards of reticence, as if in so doing they both obviated hostile comment from Leveson and struck a blow against omni-present insidious stealthy white British 'racism'.

I will, when quoting the various newspapers, assume a date of 4 January 2012, except where another one applies.

Chapter 3 describes the years of the fullest legal and administrative expression of the Macpherson dogma (that the British police are 'institutionally racist'). This dogma was given full political backing by the Labour Party, in particular its two Home Secretaries Jack Straw and David Blunkett, who enmeshed the police in an ornate and

ubiquitous structure of statutes, statutory instruments, white papers, green papers and ministerial exhortations. While the incoming 'Coalition' Government made much of its determination to rescind this detailed, centrally-imposed busy regulatory regime, it too found itself in a world in which, because Dobson and Norris were guilty, Macpherson was right. Our society, our police, will take a long time to recover from the therapy administered by the Labour governments. The Labour Party (of which I am a member) is (was?) the main beneficiary of the BME vote.

This chapter—and indeed a lot of this book—owes much to my dear friend Norman Dennis, who, most sadly, died before he could finish writing up his research on the police. I have, though, made use both of Norman's 'raw' data and his general wisdom on this matter—see his Racist Murder and Pressure Group Politics: the Macpherson Report and the Police, 2000. In the years before his death, Norman had been carrying out interview-based research with the 'rank and file' of several police forces. I have used some of his interviews, making the actual interviewees 'anonymous', as I am sure Norman would have done.

Chapter 4 addresses some of the problems which will (or may) arise in the future, or have already arisen, with what does indeed seem to be a new orthodoxy, viz. that we must disembarrass ourselves of police forces, our policing practices—indeed, our criminal justice system, as these represent nothing more than Britain's old, white, hegemonic, inegalitarian, nationalistic, racist ways. The issue is simple enough: Macpherson described the Metropolitan Police as institutionally racist, unwittingly racist, but, brusquely, racist. This description spread into other and all police services: and indeed came, too, to be

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bruited as characterising all of white Britain: 'all organisations [of our country] and in particular the fields of education and family life' (M 2:19). If we white British people are indeed all racist, (and that is why we have a racist police system), then how are we to re-configure our institutions, if at all possible, to attend to such a failing? How are we to disembarrass ourselves of ourselves? Crucially (perhaps) how are we to envisage the very purpose of our police and criminal justice services, racist as they are in genesis but now required to transcend the limitations of their birth? From many comments, commendations and recommendations, the axis of reconstruction, of moral and operational re-invention, would appear to lie along a policy for the British police which would pay particular attention to the sensitivities of minorities. Is this a move compatible with the foundational charters of British police, which enjoin them to be, like the statue of Justice herself, blind to particularities, be these of individuals or of minorities or sub-sections of our society? Does being 'sensitive' to minorities mean being 'sensitive' to their virtues but Nelson-blind to their vices? Whatever the juridical or political implications of such a notion, with what difficulties does it face the police in a multi-cultural world which generates a troubling and troublesome complexity of domestic crime and, on our soil, home-grown and imported, a dangerous and unscrupulous assembly of criminals? I look at the particular problems posed by two of the UK's Black and Minority Ethnic communities (BMEs), i.e. Muslims and 'Black' people.

Chapter 5 takes this issue into the broadest extension of the doctrine of 'racism', i.e. the proclamation that not just the police but the entire British society is racist. While

such a view is standard fare in the institutions and ranks of multiculturalism, and was in no way invented by Macpherson, it achieves a sharpness in his Report: if the police are institutionally racist, then they must be so because we, the white majority, is racist—and vice versa: and this racism must extend into all our institutions, making Britain a shame to us white folk and a burden to ethnic minority people. Is this really so? Is Great Britain a place to be ashamed of?

Chapter 6 calls up the statue of Justice which stands on top of the Old Bailey. As a child I was always told that she was blind-folded. She is not apparently (though throughout the world many similar statues are) but the scales she carries, and even her gender, signify a very ancient dogmatic expectation that Justice should be indifferent to the individual peculiarities or sectional particularities of human beings: she is assumed to be equally indifferent to all of us, concerned only with Justice. Is this now a notion to be jettisoned? What is the (better) alternative? How can a police service, now adjured to have internal targets for 'the recruitment, progression and retention of minority ethnic staff' (M 64:66) and in its external dealings with the public to show 'racism awareness and [a] valuing [of] cultural diversity'(M 50)—how can a criminal justice system (or any other system) so assembled, so pledged, walk our streets indifferent to who we are, to what colour we are, to what age we are, to what sex we are, and to where we come from? Are BME policemen and policewomen, members perhaps of BME Police Associations, and chosen in part at least because they are members of a BME-are they, in their day-to-day duties, to pay particular (benign) attention to the interests and sensitivities of their fellow

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BME members? If so, is this not the very 'institutional racism' so castigated by Macpherson?

**Conclusion.** In this I ask, and try to answer, a simple question: what is Institutional Racism for?

1

# The Murder of Stephen Lawrence

On 22 April 1993 a young black British man, Stephen Lawrence, was stabbed to death on a public street in London. He was murdered because he was where he was—and because he was black: 'What, what... nigger...', shouted his attackers as they ran at him. (Even this apparently simple way of describing the event can offend: to say he was murdered 'because he was where he was' can (and has) provoked the 'racist' charge, because, we are told, there were white people some 20 yards away at the same time (waiting for a bus) and **they** were not attacked...). However: On 3 January 2012 two of his assailants, Gary Dobson and David Norris, both white, were found guilty of the murder. They received the maximum sentence then available to the Court. Other suspects are still being investigated by the police.

The 19 years between the killing and the sentencing had seen an extraordinary and very public clamour not only about the details of the crime but about the alleged racism of the Metropolitan Police Service and, by extension, all other police forces—and, by further extension, of all British institutions and indeed of all white British people. Home Secretary Jack Straw said that: 'Any long established, white-dominated institution is liable to have procedures, practices and a culture which disadvantage non-white people.' (In 2007 the Church of

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England, as ever leading the charge from the rear, announced that it, too, was 'institutionally racist'.2)

The killing of Stephen Lawrence led to institutional turbulence in the British criminal justice system. There two internal police investigations by Metropolitan Police: one Coroner's Inquest; a private prosecution brought by the family of Stephen Lawrence, a prosecution which failed to satisfy the courts: a secret videotaping of a flat occupied by one of the suspects; a major 1997 investigation by the Police Complaints Authority, as well as others by various governmental and voluntary bodies; and of course the Macpherson Inquiry, one of the land-mark events in the post-war history of Britain, its police and its people, of all or any colour. Amongst other things the Macpherson Report played a part in the rescinding of the 800 year-old 'Double Jeopardy' rule, although it was the campaign of North East mother Ann Ming, whose daughter Julie had been murdered, which had most effect. Scotland has retained the principle.

Nelson Mandela became involved (as early as 1993), eliciting from Stephen Lawrence's mother Doreen the view that the life of a black person was just as cheap in Britain as Mr Mandela had told her it was in South Africa. Mrs Lawrence told a press conference that a form of ethnic cleansing was taking place in south London: 'If it was the other way round, and a white boy had been killed by a gang of black men, they would have arrested half the black community in the area... There have been no arrests and the police won't tell us what is happening. The black community and I cannot stand for this any longer. The killers are still out there and other black kids can't feel safe on the streets.' Five Commissioners of the Metro-

politan Police Service saw their careers affected by the controversy and the charges of 'racism'. In 2012, a new Commissioner, Bernard Hogan-Howe, saw it as his job to improve relations with black and other ethnic minority communities.<sup>4</sup>

The Lawrence family found very prompt and steady support from a variety of groups active in the anti-racist movement. The workers of and for these organisations appeared promptly and 'fully-armed' as it were, providing a legal representative as well as attending and occasionally dominating and overawing a series of public meetings. Representatives of the Anti-Racist Alliance arrived at the Lawrence family home the day after the murder: and while they and the Black Panthers were eventually sent packing by the Lawrences, they were instrumental in providing the family with the services of Imran Khan, a recently-qualified solicitor. Khan described his initial task as providing the rapidly-growing campaign with 'sniper fire' (M 43:13) in the form of frequent and peremptory letters to the police and approaches to the media. Macpherson commented that Mr Khan's epistolary style had not made for 'a happy relationship' between Khan and the police; but 'it is the duty of the police to be tolerant' and it was 'not for the police to tell a family and their lawyer how to behave' (M 43:13). Mr Khan had connections with the Greenwich Action Committee Against Racial Attacks (GACARA) and the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) both of which at various times supported the Lawrence campaign, though not without a measure of internecine strife.

After five years or so of this considerable pressure, Jack Straw, Home Secretary in the incoming Labour administration of 1997, set up the Macpherson Inquiry. By

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then, a large and growing body of concerned and influential people had begun to subscribe to the view that the real issue was indeed the 'racism' of the police; and that it was this racism and not the normal operational incompetence of the police or the judicial obfuscations of the Crown Prosecution Service or of the courts that had prevented a successful prosecution of several 'wellknown' suspects. Macpherson corroborated this view of the British police, describing the police (MPS and others) as infested with 'institutional racism', a 'corrosive disease' -a phrase, and an oratorical style which was adopted as representing an incontrovertible and now-orthodox truth by leading anti-racist and multi-cultural organisations such as the Runnymede Trust in its major document of 2000, the Parekh Report on The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain.5 The campaign, along with other turbulences in the multi-cultural world, led to the creation of the quasistatutory Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which now produces a steady flow of analyses identifying and execrating the inequalities and injustices of Great Britain, within which are set the singular limitations of the police. Organisations such as the EHRC are dedicated to eliminating all forms of racism and discrimination, and to the installation of a proper and decent culture of Equality in which racism in particular would be anathematised. I make comment on the EHRC in an earlier book, Small Corroding Words.6 Of particular concern to this campaign was the major continuing effort to re-construct the attitudes of the nation's police forces on matters to do with race and ethnicity, so that they might extirpate from their professional culture and 'institutional racism' with practices the which Macpherson had endowed them. It was not long before

this apparently-simple (but in fact a heavy, multi-layered, many-edged phrase and profoundly anti-empirical term) impelled the much-censured police service (police **forces** now being dropped) to adopt many of Macpherson's recommendations, such as the recruitment creation of explicitly ethnically-based or minority police associations, formed to combat the institutional racism of their white colleagues and white society. The Metropolitan Police Service now has 18 or 19 such BME Associations, including three for women officers. It also has a London Muslim Communities Forum.

A cartoon in the *Spectator* of 14 January 14 2011 (the first issue after the Lawrence verdict) showed a public pay 'phone carrying a notice advising the public: 'IN AN EMERGENCY: Dial 999 for POLICE, FIRE, AMBULANCE or RACISM'.

The 'Multi-Cultural' or 'Multi-Ethnic' Britain described or symbolised in, or promoted by, these events and these Reports and Inquiries (or cartoons) is now well-established as An Orthodoxy: and mobilises an historical tradition, a proclamatory epic endowed with metaphorically great Events, hortatory and minatory liturgies of defining moments of tragedy and triumphs, of sins confessed and expiation sought, a legendary drama of villains and heroes—and a pantheon of exemplary men and women of whom Stephen Lawrence is one and his mother another. Stephen Lawrence, for example, is numbered among the '100 Great Black British Heroes' and his mother was awarded the OBE by Her Majesty the Queen.

The trial (or trials rather) of the young white men who were accused of Stephen Lawrence's murder form a most significant episode of this epic: and the 2011/12 arrest and

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trial of two of the suspects, Gary Dobson and David Norris, seemed to bring at least this episode to some conclusion, some quietus, when, on 3 January 2012 they were found guilty of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. I say 'seemed to come to some conclusion' because the cumulative nature of the media coverage of the trial and the sentencing gives rise, in my view, to yet another episode, a prolongation of, not an end to the story: and this is not simply because there are other suspects still under police surveillance, though this is indeed one aspect of the press concern. The 'Event', the 'Chronicle' of the years of and since Stephen's death has developed a momentum of its own. How some journalists now choose to deal with the 18 years that have elapsed tells us much about the effect of those years on some very basic and -I used to assume-some rather unchallengeable norms of our society, including our notions of press objectivity. What the story-not the killing of Stephen, but the 19year-long story of 'the Lawrence Affair', and the nature of the media response—seeks to tells us is that Britain is not just a country in which racism was, arguably, part of the way of life, but that it was and is a country in which racism, most definitely, once defined and, arguably, still defines its totality: and further that only white British are racist-or perhaps, that only British racism 'matters' because we in the UK majority have the power (and, it seems, the inclination) to force this racism onto everyone else. In an almost comically bizarre way, this thesis was given pseudo-authoritative voice in January 2012 by Dianne Abbott MP when, a day or so after the Lawrence verdict, she described white people as always 'loving to play divide and rule'.7 Ms Abbott is the black Labour MP for Hackney North. Ms Abbott was told off by Labour

Leader Miliband: and she apologised saying that she understood that: 'people have interpreted my comments as making generalisations about white people'. Perhaps so, Ms Abbott.

There can be little doubt that Mr Justice Macpherson was 'making generalisations about white people' (who else?)—as indeed was Mrs Lawrence when she compared Britain with apartheid South Africa and when she said that the failure of the police to prosecute three of the suspects was tantamount to: 'making a clear statement to the black community that their lives are worth nothing and the justice system will support any one, any white person who wishes to commit any crime or even murder against a black person'. Mrs Lawrence had of course lost her much-loved son. She made this statement to the February 1997 Coroner's Inquest. The statement is produced in full at page 295 of the Macpherson Report.

The killing of Stephen Lawrence was a terrible event, a killing for which no sorrow can console his family, nor regret nor grief diminish the shame and humiliation we must all feel that such feral violence can take place on the streets of our capital city. White British people like me must be sufficiently proud of who we are to be ashamed of this killing carried out by people who are white too and British—like me. Parents like me must share, in some real way (if, DV. without similar experience), the terror of losing a son or daughter in this way. Yet in neither the colour nor the 'race' of the killers or their victim, nor in the context, could much be found to foretell the broad political consequences of this one murder. In the United Kingdom's sad chronicle of horrors, people get murdered all the time-husbands kill wives, friends kill friends, strangers kill strangers, whites kill blacks, blacks kill

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blacks, blacks kill whites, whites kill whites, drunks kill other drunks, parents kill children, young men kill other young men. The murder of Stephen Lawrence, however, led to 18 years of formal police investigations, of trials and retrials, of press campaigns, of public meetings and major protestations, culminating in the court case of 2011/12, but amplified in the trial's weighty Prologue, the Macpherson Inquiry; and in an Epilogue in the form of the rare unanimity of press and media salutation of the outcome of the trial of Dobson and Norris. In the volume and content of this January 2012 press coverage is to be found an example of quite extraordinary extrapolations made by the press from the single grim unforgivable, but by no means unique, murder of one decent young man. Macpherson finds himself vindicated not only in the trial result but in the press reception of it, in their almost messianic proclamation of a new policing style for Great Britain and a new future for the nation. The Leveson Inquiry into press standards would perhaps find this contribution a height above the squalor of its normal fare.

# The Trial and the Press

A Swagger of Thugs Guardian, 4 January 2012

A murder which scarred the conscience of the nation

The Lord Chief Justice,
quoted by trial judge Mr Justice Treacy<sup>1</sup>

When measured by press coverage, or by the number of letters printed in the newspapers, the actual murder in 1993 fell well short of scarring the conscience of the nation. Nicholas Schoon, of the Independent, who had been telephoned by Mr Lawrence the day after the killing, writes that his own submitted article on the killing was amalgamated with a mid-paper story about 'the latest run of racist murders in Greenwich. None of the national press gave much space to the killing the following day, but a campaign built up around the parents' long search for justice.'2 The campaign involving the Daily Mail and Nelson Mandela was, writes Mr Lawrence, 'organised by the people who were running the campaign at the time'.3 As far as getting publicity is concerned, the campaign media's coverage of the succeeded: 'the Stephen Lawrence murder was transformational'4-but mostly well after the murder, which, as Schoon says, went pretty well unnoticed. The Mail's adoption of the cause in 1997 (five years after the murder) was, in a very British way, a major reason for the campaign's success. Once alerted, press involvement grew apace.

# The Verdict: 3 January 2012

At least one of your group was armed with a knife that lethal night. I am sure you were aware of that. The Footscray tapes though recorded in 1994 reveal the sort of people you were and associated with in 1993. They reveal not only violent racist attitudes but also a casual and accepting attitude to the carrying and use of knives... The evidence does not prove so that I could be sure that either of you had a knife, but the person who used it did so with your knowledge and approval... [but] it does not matter that the knife was not in your hands.

Mr Justice Treacy<sup>5</sup>

Since the activities of these young men took place in a private flat there was no appropriate crime with which they could be charged

M 33:40

(The reference to tapes and a 'private flat' refers to a secret taping, made by the MPS, of some of what were then suspects in their flat. An edited variant of the recording is to be found in the Appendices to the Macpherson report, unpaginated).

On 4 January 2012, the day after the verdict, all eight major national newspapers (*Guardian, Sun, The Times, Mirror, Express, Independent, Telegraph, Mail*) made the story the front page headline item. In total, these national newspapers devoted 74 pages to covering the story of the murder, the trial, the verdict: the *Mail* used 22 pages, and amongst other things published photographs of the girlfriends or ex-girlfriends of Norris, Dobson and the suspects. The 74 pages provided tens of thousands of words and many photographs: there were for example 70 photographs in the *Mail* and 16 in the *Guardian*. Seven of the eight newspapers provided leader or editorial

comment. The Mail has a circulation of 2.3 million, while the combined total of all eight papers is over 9 million. The Mail and (as I shall show) the other papers went far beyond just 'reporting' what various players in the story might have said or done. Together, they articulated a kind of collective national confessional, calling for or offering up not just the two actual sinners who by court verdict had been proven to have killed Stephen Lawrence, or the four or five 'suspects', but an entirety of British institutions, and, irreducibly, the entire nation as guiltily participant in the killing, redeemed only by the proffered general confession and associated penance and sacrifice: amongst other things the sacrifice of some very British values which until now many or even most of us had simply taken for granted. The coverage of 4 January was followed by more on 5 January and on Sunday 8 January.

To some aspects of this coverage I will now turn. Unless where otherwise stated, the quotations are from the editions of 4 January 2012.

The *Telegraph* on 5 January covered the story in a column on the front page, while two pages inside featured a Metropolitan Police encounter with a black suspect: 'it's a genuine insult to call me racist', says the constable, describing some of the realities of policing a knife fight. The *Guardian* (5 January) headlined the story of the trial and ran a special section asking 'Where are the senior black officers?' The *Independent* on 5 January headlined a demand to 'Now Solve These', referring to victims of other racist attacks; and the 5 January edition, included a rather astonishing letter by the Executive Director of the Anne Frank Trust UK drawing parallels between Anne Frank and Stephen Lawrence.

The *Independent* (Sunday 8 January) ran a seven page feature by Brian Cathcart (author of a book, *The Case of Stephen Lawrence*), entitled 'The Life and Legacy of Stephen Lawrence—A bright young man, a wonderful son, a shining example'. The paper also provided a related five page section on 'Race in Britain 2012—the true divide on crime, education, jobs and across [British] society'. In the paper a photograph of a young black man looks across to that of a young white man, while the text makes comment on what it says will be their different paths through life, saying for example that the young black man is 'four times as likely to be murdered' than the young white man.

The Times of 5 January had a front page column, then four inside pages—and an extraordinary cartoon, see below (p. 31). The *Observer* of 8 January gave us a leader on Stop and Search; a page by Mathew Ryder on the 'profound' legacy of the Lawrence case. The *Observer* also provided the results of a new poll 'Hopes and Fears', which dealt amongst other things with race and racism in Britain, but did not explicitly try to tie it all in to the Lawrence case.

The *Mail* continued its comprehensive coverage. On 5 January it provided another eight pages, in which under a headline **NO PLACE TO HIDE**, it continued its campaign of urging the police to 'hunt down' the three or four 'killers still at large'. The newspaper Comment column insisted that the case 'has shaken the nation's conscience and roused its thirst for justice', while asserting also that 'Papers unite to praise the *Mail*' for the way it had handled the case from 1997 onwards. The same issue told the full story of Stephen Lawrence's life.

# Dobson and Norris: the sentence and their prospects in prison

Mr Justice Treacy told Dobson and Norris that the nature of their sentence (they were juveniles at the time of the murder) meant that, being sentenced as juveniles, they would be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure: there was no guarantee of release once the term was served and that 'after release the offender will be subject to licence for the rest of his life and that they might be recalled to prison at any time'.<sup>6</sup>

The Sun, in an editorial 'Now Root Out Racism for Ever', referred to Dobson and Norris as 'swaggering savages' and 'moronic brutes who deserved the maximum prison terms'. The Mirror Editorial referred to 'racist murderers Gary Dobson and David Norris [who will] spend much of what is left of their miserable lives behind bars'. The Express described the two as 'rabid racists' and Norris as a 'foul-mouthed racist bigot', while the Mail described him as 'a Mummy's boy who smouldered with hatred'. The Mail went on to describe Dobson as a 'Bigoted Thug and Gang Stooge'. The press salutations which greeted the verdict on Stephen Lawrence's killing articulated and amplified this by-now orthodoxy-it bears repeating: BECAUSE NORRIS AND DOBSON WERE GUILTY MACPHERSON WAS RIGHT: and because Macpherson was right, several papers seems to have felt free to abandon certain appropriate standards of reticence, as if in so doing they both pre-empted a hostile comment from Leveson and struck a blow against racism.

#### Rats

The Suspects: Now Get The Others

(Sun)

#### Now Get The Rest

(Daily Mirror)

Devoted 'Molls', Flash Cars, Designer Clothes But, Fancy That, No Sign Of Working For A Living

(Mail)

I Would Like To Think That They Suffer The Torment Of The Guilty

(Telegraph)

The Times editorial of 4 January said that: 'If it had happened in the American Deep South sometime before the war we would have called it a lynching'. I will have something more to say about this invocation of the American 'Deep South': but *The Times* itself rather tortured this image by on 5 January printing on its 'Opinion' page a strange and sinister cartoon by Peter Brookes. The cartoon presents a picture of what we have to assume to be Dobson and Norris as two rats in a cage. The rats have got white faces. One rat is commenting on the 15 year sentence they received: '15 years and 2 months... I'll be out in no time!' says this rat to the other rat. The other rat replies: 'But we only live 2-3 years'. In the top left hand corner of the cartoon, above the two rats, are the words 'IF ONLY...'

# If only what?

Norris, presumably one of the rats, had already been in prison awaiting trial for drug dealing: and according to the *Sun* while there he had been severely beaten by an Asian gang, the 'Muslim Boys', who left him for dead, having 'worked out who he was'. The *Mirror* version of this attack was that it was carried out by four 'black inmates' some of them serving life sentences for murder,

who in a 'revenge attack' beat Norris 'half to death', apparently using socks stuffed with tins of tuna as a weapon. There are other versions of Norris' experiences in prison. A *Times* article of the same date as the cartoon said that 'according to prison sources,<sup>7</sup> Norris and Dobson will not be put in special units for prisoners deemed to be at risk of attack by other inmates because for their notoriety or crimes'.<sup>8</sup> Various newspapers had reported considerable public disquiet at the 'leniency' of the sentences. The *Sun* referred to 'Just 12 Years Jail', and the *Telegraph* of 5 January said that the Attorney General was to review the sentences having been the recipient of a request from 'a member of the public' to do so.

There was considerable discussion in the press about possible remission of sentence, contingent upon 'cooperation' from either Dobson or Norris, with Dobson being bruited as the weaker reed. Should they name others, according to Alison Saunders, Chief Crown Prosecutor for London, they might be able to obtain a reduction in sentence—a sentence Whitehall officials said they expected to be 20 or even 25 years. The Times noted that only one in three inmates who maintain their innocence is granted parole. The sentence of the pressure of the

The Independent Police Complaints Commission's Deputy Chair Deborah Glass stated that: 'the MPS has worked tirelessly since 2006 to secure these convictions and to ensure that the two racist killers will not be free for many years'. <sup>11</sup>

It is difficult to see why the nature of the incarceration of these two men is a matter for the IPCC—or, still less, the proper object of such a cartoon as appeared in *The Times*.

At the end of the trial of Dobson and Norris, Mr Justice Treacy, who had earlier referred approvingly to the Lord Chief Justice's description of the Stephen Lawrence murder as 'a murder which scarred the conscience of the nation', told the police that he hoped the conviction would 'not close the matter' and that the police would be 'alert to further lines of inquiry'. On BBC News UK the new MPS Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe warned that 'the other people involved in the murder of Stephen Lawrence should not rest easily in their beds'. The *Mail* wanted to know 'Now What about the Other Three?' The *Express* headlined across two pages that 'WE CAN'T REST TILL ALL THE KILLERS ARE HUNTED DOWN'.

The Mail, in what was then a most unusual front-pagecum-editorial, had on 14 February 1997 (the day after the earlier Coroner's Inquest) published photographs of Norris and Dobson, and of three other men (the Acourt brothers and Luke Knight), had branded them all as 'MURDERERS', and had challenged them to sue the Mail for doing this: none of them had at that time been found guilty of anything. The challenge was not taken up. The Mail continued this support by publishing, on 4 January 2012, large front-page photographs of the now-convicted Dobson and Norris. Inside the same edition, the Mail reproduced scaled-down versions of over 30 earlier editions in which it had championed the Lawrence case. The 4 January Mail had on its front page the question 'Now what about the other three', who it named and photographed (again!): 'still swaggering', said the Mail, as it provided photographs not only of the suspects/murderers, but also of their female partners or ex-partners and a general indication of where they were living and in what kind of accommodation. The Telegraph

printed large photographs of Dobson and Norris alongside one of Stephen Lawrence, and reported that the MPS considered the Acourts and Knight to be 'prime suspects'. Inside, the paper published photographs of the Acourts and Knight threatening and gesticulating as they came out of the earlier June 1998 inquiry. The *Telegraph* reproduced photographs taken from the secret police video-tapes of a flat used by several of the suspects: in this reproduction Neil Acourt and Luke Knight are seen wielding knives and mimicking stabbing actions. (At no point in this secret videotape does anyone boast about the killing of Stephen Lawrence).

The *Guardian* provided general addresses for the two convicted men, as well as for the second Acourt brother, Jamie: Jamie, writes the *Guardian*, lives in Sidcup, Kent, with his partner and two children, and 'few people were aware until the last few weeks of the past suspicions hanging over him'. The *Mirror* used footage from the earlier secret police video-recording. The *Sun* carried the photographs of the three suspects on the front page, together with the headline NOW GET THE OTHERS. The Times of 8 January provided a photograph of a man they said might be the 'sixth man', and identified him as Michael Bunn, and another possible 'sixth man' as 'Blue Stuart'. Both men denied having anything to do with Stephen Lawrence's killing.

# If It Had Happened In The American Deep South Sometime Before The War We Would Have Called It A Lynching

(The Times 4 January 2012)

It Was A Rosa Parks Moment For British Society
(Mathew Ryder QC, on BBC, 4 January 2012)<sup>13</sup>

I am aware that the use of analogies or similes does not imply that their authors claim a perfect 'fit' between the two things (people or events) that are being compared: analogies have their uses: but in the context of this murder and its profound consequences, it is necessary, in my view, to point out just where the analogies help and just where they mislead. Indeed, I am not sure that the reference to the American Deep South is offered simply as an analogy—but more as a device to claim the moral high ground.

No one who has ever been in the American 'Deep South', now or not that long ago, never mind in the interwar period referred to by *The Times*, would or could find much that was plausible in the 'lynching' analogy offered by *The Times*.

I was in Mississippi in the 'Summer of '64', the Freedom Summer, when an assortment of Americans (black and white) and three Brits (one of them me) joined the more experienced civil rights workers of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC) and other organisations to try to wrest political control of the state from the monopolising and remarkably hostile white populace. The week before we went to the 'Deep South', three of the workers disappeared and were later (much later) found to have been killed and buried in a swamp perhaps by, or with the assistance of at least some portion of the law 'enforcement' agencies. Certainly, it was a section of the law enforcement apparatus which waved a loaded pistol in my face, the while berating me for turning up in his pleasant little town with what he described as 'a fedurrl armeh' (federal army), something we all devoutly wished for but did not, Sheriff, have. Further experience of the Mississippi legal system was the

spectacle of a presiding judge refreshing himself from his beer six-pack (it was very hot), while his deputies were sufficiently unfriendly as to counter-indicate a visit to the toilet or tea-room without some protective company. On another occasion, the de-segregating (at the minister's request) of an Episcopalian church in Mississippi elicited an on-the-step catechism from a very hostile choirmaster and his bass section. Being an Anglican, I passed. A return visit the next day to talk to the plainly scared priest was attended by a gang of white men who waited for me to leave the house.

Funny now, perhaps-and all a long time ago: I introduce it to indicate that no one in Britain, before or after Stephen Lawrence, faced or faces the kind of official, overt, legitimated, all-system hate-fuelled organised institutionalised racialism faced by all black people in the semi-reconstructed Deep South of the 1960s, not to mention 'sometime before the war'. This system was maintained or expressed in laws and policies in schools, churches, universities, colleges, private clubs, hotels, public transport companies, shops, prisons-and in law enforcement personnel who monitored and regulated them and subscribed to them, openly. Friendship networks, not to mention courtship activities and marriage networks were governed by these rules and norms. In the Deep South officials like Sheriffs and Town Mayors were elected, by their all-white electorate, because they were racist: see, too, the example of Selma, Alabama. The activists of SNCC and the black residents of Mississippi were being assaulted, beaten up, and now and then killed just because they felt that black Americans ought to have the right to vote! The Klan turned up in its uniform not because this was a disguise: it was a uniform

proclaiming an allegiance of which its occupants were proud and wanted to brag about—and which was worn as a warning: a warning to any potentially back-sliding white liberals (there were such, like the Episcopalian priest), but primarily to the black people of the South. Whole communities of black people were scared (so was I). I could and did leave: they couldn't and had to be stalwart and steady (in a word, brave) all the time. How brave they were.

Rosa Parks, in Atlanta, Georgia, deliberately put herself in harm's way because she had had enough of this system of total racism, expressed, God help us, in a policy about seats on a bus! She was tired, on the day and of the system, and wanted it changed, for ever, not just for herself but for all people like her—indeed, for all the people of her city and her state. It is not a good fit to compare anyone involved in the Stephen Lawrence matter with Rosa Parks. Mrs Lawrence came here as a child: and, it is true, told the 1997 inquest that Britain was a 'racist country where the justice system supports racist murders'. As we have seen, she told the great Nelson Mandela that life in end-twentieth century Britain was for black people like life in apartheid South Africa. Yet she also told the Macpherson Inquiry that:

I personally have never had any racism directed at me. There was always something I felt on the outskirts but nobody ever directly approached me and was racist towards me... Because of how we lived as a family we got on with people. Our immediate next door neighbour was a white family and we got on with them very well. The children were the same age as my children. We lived in each other's houses and we had no problem.<sup>14</sup>

'Nothing much disturbed me or my confidence in my family's future' Mrs Lawrence told The *Independent* on 4 January 2012: and the paper said that 'their unwanted status as fierce campaigners came only because of the death of their son'.

Neville Lawrence told the Macpherson Inquiry that:

We went to see [Stephen's] his Head of House before he went to school and there were so many good reports about him... We brought our children up to respect the law... Stephen had friends of all races... We brought Stephen up in the belief that you did not see colour as a problem... Stephen has never said anything to me about having problems concerning race so as far as I know he didn't have any.<sup>15</sup>

It bears repeating that the death of their son was a horror no parent would wish to contemplate: and while, unlike Rosa Parks. Mrs Lawrence would seem to have seen no need to engage in civil rights activities before the very dreadful experience of her son's murder, it is indeed true—very true—that after her son's murder, and because of it, Mrs Lawrence engaged in a campaign to have his killers prosecuted and punished, and that she and her supporters drove the campaign to a conclusion few would have predicted. Yet this does not, in my mind, make Mrs Lawrence into a Rosa Parks, a young woman who on her own initiative and at considerable risk to herself sought to change a system which controlled and threatened the lives of all black people in the American South. Rosa Parks helped make sure that the people of the South had what Mrs Lawrence said she had before she started her campaign: 'confidence in my family's future'.

Was Stephen Lawrence's murder a lynching? I think I have said enough to indicate that I find the term to be misused. Lynchings were not the surreptitious activities

of small gangs of feral skulkers of the night, masking their intent and their business from the 'ordinary' community and from the forces of law and order, killing clandestinely, and then hiding both themselves and what they had done by fleeing from the scene in order to avoid arrest and prosecution. That describes the style of Dobson and Norris. They and their gang would appear to have had some communal sympathy or 'support', although there is no evidence at all that such 'support' was for committing murder: and Dobson and Norris demonstrated, by fleeing from the scene, by hiding evidence, by lying and expressing such animus against (for example) the police, that they knew that the faces of the larger society were turned against them and that punishment, not condoning or even applause, was what they could expect to get-and got. Not even Macpherson's 'institutional racism' stretches to 'lynching'. Indeed, Macpherson (offering as comment words he should properly have thought about as evidence) exonerated policeman after policeman from the charge of racism. Thus, for example, while the Lawrences at various times offered 'racism' as an explanation for what they thought was the poor first aid provided Stephen at the murder scene, Macpherson specifically rebutted such a charge: 'there was no indication that PC Bethel would have acted differently if the person on the pavement had been white' (M 10:30). He said the same about PC Geddis and PC Gleason: of Geddis 'there was no racist motivation or reluctance in PC Geddis' failure to do anything to Stephen Lawrence' (10:21), and of PC Gleason 'there is no indication that he was consciously affected by the fact that Stephen Lawrence was black' (10:38).

These three police constables were involved very early on. There is no evidence that they acted as some sort of communal back-up squad for a 'lynching'. Indeed, such evidence as Macpherson chose to report (and in general he has an odd way with evidence) specifically refuted, as we have seen, any racism or racialism in their behaviour.

Further, when 'the community' did arrive, in the shape of four white, Christian passers-by, it arrived not to join in a lynching, or to muse approvingly over the body, or to stand by it and take pictures. Two of the four were an off-duty policemen and his wife, two others were Conor and Louise Taaffe, and all were just out of (different) prayer meetings at nearby Churches. There was some hesitation to 'get involved' (M 10:1)—it was night, there seemed to be a fight going on—but they all did what any decent citizen should. Conor Taaffe's understanding of this murder is contained in his *Tablet* article of 25 April 1998, reprinted 7 January 2012.

Crouching down beside him, I saw a wide flow of thickened blood... Stephen was accompanied by the prayers of fellow Christians in his dying moments—not only from Louise and myself but, incredibly, from an off-duty policemen and his wife who were returning home from another prayer meeting. Louise whispered into Stephen's ear 'You are loved'. Stephen died just across the road from the Catholic Church of Sts John Fisher and Thomas More, and after witnessing his death Louise and I went back to the prayer meeting... The whole prayer meeting brought the situation before God, praying in tongues and interceding for Stephen... There, in front of the Blessed Sacrament, it was as if Stephen's death was joined through prayer to that of Christ.

Amen.

A Punch In The Air Moment For Every Decent-Minded Person In Britain

(Mirror)

A Glorious Day For British Justice

(Mail COMMENT)

An Ugly Britain Largely Consigned To The Past

(Telegraph)

His Murder Was One Of Those Watershed Moments In Our Nation's History When We Stop And Ask: What Has Happened To Us That We Could Allow Something As Shocking As This In Our Midst?

(Mirror)

The Fact Is That Racism And Racist Attacks Are Still Happening In This Country And The Police Should Not Use My Son's Name To Say We Can Move On

(Mrs Lawrence in the Sun)

It Was A Day Of Redemption For The Police

(Mail COMMENT)

With the invocation of the 'Deep South', where we find ourselves placed on a par with lynching and apartheid-South-Africa, British society can be in little doubt that it needs a total exculpatory cleansing of our nation's besmirched soul. A Full, Personal and a General Confession is required. The nation's press of January 2012 duly obliges in over 70 pages of text and tone which are, sequentially, confessional, then self-congratulatory, and then (and thus) confessional again. The language used is redolent of the liturgy—'redemption' and 'shame' for example, are words used of and about the police. The *Sun* (below) did not follow the herd.

The newspaper articles and editorials are, to be fair, more than that: they are a confessional not simply for what Britons have done, but also for what we are only too likely to continue to do (albeit with at least one confession in place) because we are, by definition, ourselves unconscious of the full nature of our institutional sins. Indeed, Trevor Phillips' dismissal (see below) of the need for a definition and specification of the offences leaves the field clear for an infinity of offence, known only when announced and imposed upon us by our moral superiors. It is as well to point out here just how strategically valuable is Phillips' shrugging off any need to define 'institutional racism': it becomes all and anything, depending for its meaning, its truth content, **only** on who is wielding it—and white folk, probably, do not qualify.

The point of the initial confession is to render us both open to the need for further confession and thus to render us humble recipients of the much-merited and imminent further correction, proffered or imposed by those who knew all along how wicked we were. The proclamations of victory or success—'a punch the air day'—are mere prolegomena to a more serious test coming our way: and as with the confessional, we are made aware throughout that neither the specification of the sin nor its absolution comes from us, but from those who have been the victims of the dark days of our sins: our own language, our own definitions, our very sense of who we are is suspect, null, void, racist.

The following are some examples of the exhortations of the post-trial press, beginning with Trevor Phillips.

In the *Telegraph* Trevor Phillips referred to 'An ugly Britain largely consigned to the past... We no longer need to have arguments about terminology—the fruitless

dispute about the meaning of 'institutional racism' for example... Despite all this, I would be the last to suggest that we now live in a post-racial paradise. This is not the moment to... stop working to tackle racial prejudice and discrimination... The underlying changes in British society are such that it is unlikely that we will ever return to the dark days before 1993... We should never forget the terrible injustice done by the Stephen Lawrence case. But the worst legacy would be if our determination to seek justice blinded us to the fact that his murder changed us all and changed us for the better'. The Telegraph has on page 21 a very moving photograph of two men, one black, one white, kneeling in reverence at the spot where Stephen Lawrence was killed. Above this image is 'A Death that changed everything'. Trevor Phillips is perhaps less generous. He qualifies 'The Stephen Lawrence verdicts are a reminder of an ugly Britain largely consigned to the past' by the insistence on further penance. On page 3 of the Telegraph Stephen Lawrence is identified as the 'Boy who touched the nation's conscience'.

The *Mirror*: The paper's front page headline, over a half-page photograph of Mrs Doreen Lawrence was 'NOW REST IN PEACE MY BEAUTIFUL BOY'. Inside, Brian Reade, journalist, wrote of 'A punch in the air moment for every decent minded person in Britain. A moment we had waited a generation to enjoy after being forced to watch arrogant racists swagger around the streets of South London wallowing in their infamy and flaunting their contempt at our inability to take away their liberty... A big door opened yesterday.' A *Mirror* Editorial warned that the 'Race case [is] not over... [however] the legacy of that fateful evening back in

1993... is that Britain is now a better country and now it is the racists who are on the run'.

Mail: proclaimed 'A Glorious day for Justice', and described the reaction of the Mail's readers to the 1997 Mail headline identifying the 'murderers': 'for days our phones went into meltdown and, God bless them, for the first time many people in Britain realised that black readers were as important to the Mail as white ones'. The Mail devoted 24 pages to the story.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary who set up the Macpherson inquiry, wrote in *The Times* that 'the decision to hold the Lawrence inquiry was the single most important I made as Home Secretary'; and 'Thanks to the Lawrences Britain is now a better place... This is the lasting memorial to his death.' The Times reproduces the photographs of Dobson and the other suspects coming out of the 1998 inquest, and describes them as 'the snarling and feral... lashing out as they were pelted and abused', 'a toxic moment in British race relations, the white suspects unrepentant and at liberty, the crowd enraged at what was perceived as a violation of natural justice... Yesterday these scenes seemed symbolic of an earlier uglier age... Stephen Lawrence's murder has helped build a new sort of Britain.' (Dobson and his friends were indeed being 'pelted and abused', leading one contributor to the Press Editor's Blog to liken them as being forced to 'walk the gauntlet of a baying mob [as] just short of a modern day lynching'.)16

The *Mail* referred to 'the forensic breakthrough that nailed the killers'.

As we have seen, there was near-unanimity in press demands for further prosecution of other (named) suspects, demands to which the presiding judge had

added an unusual post-trial direct 'invitation' to the Metropolitan Police 'to be alert to future lines of inquiry... perhaps based on information from those who have been silent so far'. 17 The Metropolitan Police Commissioner asserted that 'the other people involved in the murder of Stephen Lawrence should not rest easy in their beds'.18 The Independent, in a four full-page edition of 5 January took a somewhat different line, leading with photographs of four other victims of racist attacks, unconnected with the Lawrence case, still 'waiting for justice'. 'What about us' said the mother of one of these victims, 'Why are we different?' The Independent, worried perhaps, took the view that pursuing the other alleged Stephen Lawrence killers should not 'prompt the formation of a lynch mob'. The Guardian of 5 January led with the story ('Killers are still at large, says Lawrence judge'), provided four full pages and a G2 section in which Richard Stone, a member of the Macpherson inquiry, in an article bemoaning the paucity of senior black police, referred to the 'angercreating suppression of the hopes and opportunities of people from black backgrounds' (sic).

The *Sun*: produced an inside Headline 'CRIME CHANGED POLICE, THE LAW—AND BRITAIN' and an Editorial: 'The 1993 murder of Stephen Lawrence had sweeping ramifications on attitudes towards racial prejudice, overturned British law, and spawned today's race relations industry'.

The *Express*: The head of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust wrote that Mrs Lawrence's contribution was 'a metaphor for the very best of British values, that Stephen Lawrence's murder leaves in its wake a changed criminal justice landscape, but it is a change in the social

justice topography that the Lawrence family hopes will be Stephen Lawrence's lasting legacy'.

The *Independent*: 'Justice at last—but this chapter in our history is not closed. It is no exaggeration to say that the media's coverage of the Stephen Lawrence murder was transformational, forcing an unprecedented examination of the issue of race in Britain today.' Brian Cathcart wrote in the *Independent* that 'the denial of the race motive (by the police) was a precious indicator of something much bigger. Most of white Britain—that is most of Britain—was so deeply uncomfortable with issues of race that we tended to pull down the shutters at every mention of the word.' On 5 January the *Independent* published a letter in which Stephen Lawrence was compared to Anne Frank.

*The Times* produced a Panel of the nation's Great and Good, a choir of praise-makers and salvation-singers:

The Times: John Sentamu, Archbishop of York: I will continue to pray for Stephen Lawrence's family and friends. Cressida Dick, Acting Deputy of Metropolitan Police: We pay tribute to Mrs Lawrence's courage and dignity. They have contributed to major changes within policing, the law and society as a whole. Alison Saunders, Chief Crown Prosecutor for London: We hope these convictions will offer some justice to the family and friends of Stephen Lawrence. David Cameron, Prime Minister: Stephen Lawrence's family have fought tirelessly for justice. Today's verdict cannot ease the pain of losing a son. But, for Doreen and Neville Lawrence, I hope it brings at least some comfort after their years of struggle. Ed Miliband, Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition: The murder... was a wake-up call for all of us who believe Britain is—and always must be—a country where everyone is shown respect-irrespective of

race, culture or faith. Michael Mansfield QC for the Lawrences: This is just another milestone for the family in a very long journey. Paul Anderson-Walsh, chief of the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust: The greatest desire of the Lawrence family is to give to others what was so cruelly snatched from Stephen-a chance to fulfil their potential in life. Jack Straw: I don't suggest for a moment that if you are a black or Asian young man you get the same deal in your treatment by the police as you do if you were an equivalent young white man, so we still have a long way to go. Steve Allen, MD of LGC Forensics: This case shows that the key to successful forensics is to assume nothing-which is all the more important in the historic cases like the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Clive Efford, MP for Eltham: I hope the verdict also brings some closure for the people of Eltham. Duwayne Brookes, Stephen's best friend: For me personally it's part of closure... I'm happy we have a guilty verdict. Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission: Stephen Lawrence's murder was a turning point for Britain. It changed us all. Most people today see racism as a secular sin that is not to be tolerated.

The often-enigmatic Trevor Phillips offered a comment which will carry us over into Chapter 3:

Though the origins of this tragedy lay in racial hatred, its consequences would transcend racial categories. His readers saw a decent upright family who shared traditional values of faith, hard work and ambition, under assault from the ugly face of a new Britain, vulgar, violent and vicious. Colour was not an issue.

Then what was?

# Community Community — and Crime

We no longer need to have arguments over terminology the fruitless dispute over the meaning of 'institutional racism' for example.

(Trevor Phillips)1

Do we not? Clearly Mr Phillips is not saying that we can all agree that Macpherson's term is meaningless or that it is fundamentally misconceived and has done more harm than good. He means that it has **now** ('we no longer need') the canonical status of an incontrovertible truth: and **that** is why there is no point in asking what it means. It is not after all 'the winner' who questions the rules. And Sir William had decreed that 'there must be an unequivocal acceptance of the problem of institutional racism and its nature' (M 6:48).<sup>2</sup> What then has to be done on behalf of justice, the BMEs, and ourselves (I'm white) in a white society rooted in institutional racism?

In 2006 Gordon Brown, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, said:

And I tell you: just as in the last century governments had to take power from vested interests in the interests of communities, in the new century people and communities should now take power from the state and that means for the new challenges ahead a reinvention of the way we govern: the active citizen, the empowered community, open, enabling government.<sup>3</sup>

#### COMMUNITY COMMUNITY - AND CRIME

It would obviously be very silly to ascribe everything that happened after 2000 to Macpherson and his Report. Neither, contrary to Gordon Brown's implicit claim, was everything invented de novo by the Labour Party and its plans for community power, including community policing. It was, after all, a Conservative Government which, in the Public Order Act 1986, introduced the concept of 'racial hatred' into British law. Macpherson would, though, appear to have caught the spirit of the 'New Labour' decade which led up to and followed the publication of his Report: and both Jack Straw and David Blunkett, Home Secretaries under Blair, devoted themselves to implementing Macpherson's 70 recommendations, large and small. As already noted, Mr Straw said it was the most important thing he ever did as Home Secretary.4 (A successor, Theresa May, seemed to find Straw's activities important, but wrong, when in 2010 she announced the 'complete' rescinding of all Labour policies, see below.)

There is a very high degree of overlap between Labour policy and Sir William's recommendations. It is of course these recommendations which indicate to a very large extent what Macpherson himself meant by the term 'institutional racism'. Curiously, Sir William said that he had in part derived the concept of institutional racism from Stokely Carmichael (who was, incidentally, one of the most prominent and brave of the SNCC workers in Mississippi in the 'Summer of '64'). Carmichael would have been (at that stage in his career) at one with the considerable array of anti-racist lobbies and advocacy groups which surprisingly quickly came to provide the organisational force behind what became the Lawrence campaign. The press in January 2012 made little mention

of such lobbies and groups: yet Neville Lawrence refers to some of them as being involved the very day after his son's murder, though he and his wife soon distanced themselves and the family from the activities of the more radical elements activities such as the Anti-Racist Alliance and Panther UK, activities which at times led to some turbulent scenes.

Such advocacy groups constituted what Stenson and Waddington call 'circuits of power', driven by a very clear agenda of the necessity and desirability of 'governance from below'.5 To some degree, they were pre-figured in the American 'War on Poverty', when large numbers of one-time fiery radicals became employees of the state, but paid, paradoxically, to carry out community mobilisations and anti-anti-racial activities which were meant to cause turmoil (but not too much turmoil) at a local or communal level: the licence, the wages came from the central (federal) state. This style of practical politics fits with Sir William's conception of up-ending at least some of the structures of institutional racism by using the power of the central state to force the local state (in particular the police, all of whom are 'local') to adapt to 'community' interests and concerns: 'community', in post Macpherson Britain, meant above all ethnic minorities or BMEs. As we shall see, this model accorded very well indeed with the plans, policies and ambitions of the Labour Government of 1997-2010, with its 'Third Way' notions of making the public sector responsive to 'communities', especially 'disadvantaged communities' in which category all ethnic minorities were, courtesy of Macpherson and others, to be found, institutionally. From this Labour Government flowed policy after policy aimed at moderating institutional racism by empowering local communities.

Many community activists, both old and young, became, as Kevin Stenson and P.A.J. Waddington put it:

embedded within the liberal governmental elites. New policy networks emerged linking, for example, liberal media, civil servants in the Home Office, with the Commission for Racial Equality [later the EHRC], local race equality councils and lobbies of minority lawyers, police officers and others involved in the criminal justice agencies.<sup>6</sup>

Stenson and Waddington go on to point out how these 'liberal versions' (as opposed to Marxist versions) of antiracist narratives endorsed multiculturalism and human rights and 'tended to disconnect racism from an analysis of class inequality'. This was one of the most stunning successes of the Macpherson Report: It re-oriented the cutting edge of British political debate from where it had been for centuries, about class, heavily institutionalised, to race, where the contending congregations were not classes, but racial or ethnic agglomerations or 'communities', with the largest (i.e. white) one morally bound by racist guilt, racial privilege and shame to undo the wrongs of centuries by giving and not taking. This change was quite rapid—and still dominates.

I was for 20 years (1969-1989) a Labour member of Newcastle City Council, busy on the usual concerns of the people of Newcastle upon Tyne, including its basic majority, white working-class people. (The police, of course, are now, after Mr Cameron's down-sizing of the Army, the largest working-class institution in the country).

Newcastle's indigenous working-class or 'communal' organisations (local Labour Party, Co-op, chapels, the CIU and other clubs, churches) were attenuated, often to the point of non-existence, the victim perhaps of much urban

shuffling and redevelopment, as well as major changes in the labour and commercial markets. I was, though, aware that amongst my neighbours there was a resident Pakistani community getting on with running shops and with being landlords in the West End (Newcastle's rougher end, where we lived), where they were busy adapting an old warehouse for a mosque (it now has a very fine and skyline-dominant minaret and dome). There is a separate Bangladeshi facility nearby: and Sikhs and Hindus, similarly, were also busy on updating and extending religious premises and associated communal activities. In my first book, and in a parallel study by my friend and colleague John Taylor,7 we saw, mostly, positive signs—housing was no great problem, kids were doing well at school, we had no 'riots' (and had none in 2011). We could see little to support in the much grimmer picture being painted (about Birmingham) by John Rex and Robert Moore in their very influential Race, Community and Conflict.8 True, 'Race' was beginning to be an explicit concern: my son, for example, would mention 'Paki-bashing days' at the local comprehensive he attended, but in no serious or (institutional) sense were many of my fellow councillors and I assiduously 'looking at or out for' matters to do with race (institutional or otherwise) or discrimination. Things have changed: or perhaps I didn't look closely enough. I do, for example, remember hearing the leader of the local Community Relations Council stressing how well they got on with the local police: I was surprised that such a thing was a matter of and for comment: why should they not get on with the police? Why should the police not get on with them? Why, was what was for me a non-issue, an issue worthy of comment for them? And why was there such a

fuss about Salman Rushdie's novel, burnt by a mob in Bradford?

I was perhaps institutionally blind—or perhaps things were, if not perfect, not too bad. After 1997 the new Labour Government of Mr Blair and Mr Brown sensed that things had indeed changed, and poured Macphersoninspired policies (Green Papers, White Papers, Statutes, Catalyst and/or Cohesion programmes) onto the world of localities and communities, with specific concern for ethnic minorities.

# Macpherson and the Labour Government

Under the proclamatory blazon of OPENNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE Macpherson had as his very first concern recommended that 'a Ministerial Priority be established for all Police Services to increase trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities'. The next and more specific recommendations said that:

the process of implementing, monitoring and assessing the ministerial priority should include performance indicators in relation to: the existence and application of strategies for the prevention, recording, investigation and prosecution of racist incidents, measures to encourage reporting of racist incidents... the degree of multi-agency co-operation and information exchange, achieving equal satisfaction levels across all ethnic groups in public satisfaction surveys, the adequacy of provision and training of family and witness/victim liaison officers, the nature, extent and achievement of racism awareness training, the policy directives governing stop and search procedures and their outcomes, levels of recruitment, retention and progression of minority ethnic recruits; and levels of complaint of racist behaviour or attitude and their outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

Macpherson went on to say that 'The overall aim [was] the elimination of racist prejudice and disadvantage and the demonstration of fairness in all aspects of policing'. He continued, saying 'Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary be granted full and unfettered powers and duties to inspect all parts of Police Services including the Metropolitan Police Service' and that 'in order to restore public confidence an inspection by HMIC of the MPS be conducted forthwith'. In another pronouncement as hard as adamant he defined 'A RACIST INCIDENT' as 'any racist incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.<sup>11</sup>

This was the approach so highly regarded by Mr Straw, Home Secretary, and his colleague Mr Brown. Under Labour, policy followed policy—sometimes by leapfrogging, sometimes rescinding, sometimes merely adding to its predecessor.

The following pages and data are taken from the threeyear empirical study of the police being carried out for Civitas by my most good and valued friend, Norman Dennis. Sadly, Norman died before he could fully organise and present his data, which are thus as yet unpublished. From some of his draft chapters, though, we get the sense of the sheer busyness of the Labour Government as it followed the bugle calls of Macpherson. So busy was it that, as Norman points out, what were once pre-legislative consultative documents—Green Papers and White Papers-were now accorded a prescriptive semi-statutory authority on their own account. By 2000, of course, Jack Straw had committed the Labour Government to implement all of Macpherson's 70 Recommendations, and his successor David Blunkett carried this policy on. The ensuing flood of central-state documents

involved both a detailed (if endlessly changing) set of 'targets' or 'standards' for internal police manpower policies and systems, as well as indicative or obligatory methods or strategies of community mobilisation or orientation and relationship. I have amalgamated and cross-matched and shortened a lot of Norman's writing, and there is no need to read all I have reproducedalthough to me it has a fascination all its own. To me this 'New Labour' language reads like something out of Gulliver's Travels-the police being Gulliver, tied down and staked out in a web of minatory trammels which arrive and then dematerialise, without releasing, the minute you lay a hand on them: what, for example, is the ordinary cop on the street to make of the claim that a racist incident is whatever 'any other person' says it is, or such banalities as the public 'would not have confidence that the service is actually delivering unless the police were effective in tackling crime'?! In the pages immediately below (pp. 57-69), I have picked out in 'bold' the specific references to concerns about 'racism': and in italics comments made by Norman Dennis.

A page—any page—of this text will probably provide the basic understanding of the extraordinary busyness of the Labour Government as it propelled, cajoled and bullied the police into the Macpherson world. The era 'ended' with the arrival of Conservative Mrs Theresa May as Home Secretary, an arrival greeted with delight by at least one policeman, Inspector Gadget, whose welcoming 'blog' is reproduced as a conclusion to this part of the story. Inspector Gadget enthused about what he hoped would be the end of the days of 'Orwellian central control'.

A 2001 White Paper 'Policing a New Century' was followed by another in 2003 'The National Reassurance Policing Programme', which carried on the philosophy of 'new localism', based upon national standards. A 2008 Green Paper 'From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together', and another in 2009 'Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice', another in 2009 'Building Britain's Future' and another in the same year 'Protecting the Public: supporting the police to succeed' produced not only new national standards and targets for the police but also subjected them to organisations like the Audit Commission with 'National Indicator Set', and to other devices such as the annual police activity analysis form, when each police constable had, on the appointed day, to fill in a form specifying what he or she was doing for each 15 minute period. Various Equality, Diversity and HR strategies were developed to ensure the police 'reflected the communities they served'. 'Revitalised Neighbourhood and Community Policing for the twenty-first century' was 'central to the Government's approach'. By 2008, 'we wanted' every community to benefit from 'the level and style of neighbourhood policing that they need'. This would involve dedicated teams of police officers, Community Support Officers and wardens 'providing a visible, reassuring presence', 'preventing and detecting crime' and 'developing a constructive and lasting engagement with members of their community'. £50 million of new money for the Neighbourhood Policing Fund would deliver 2,000 Community Support Officers during the course of the financial year 2002/03. (Centralised control retained its prominence.) 'Minimum national standards' would be imposed. Forces, Basic

Command Units and Neighbourhood Teams would be required to 'deliver services with the needs of their users very firmly in mind'. They would be required to 'act on customer feedback' to generate continuous improvement in the service they provide—required by the Home Office. Nationally-guaranteed standards of customer service would apply to the public whenever they had contact with the police. Every force would have to have these standards in place within two years and would have to 'agree with their communities how the standards could be built on locally'. The Government and the police service remained 'firmly committed to race and gender equality'. 'We' (in this case, presumably, the Government and the police service jointly) were putting forward nationally-mandated measures to increase the rates of recruitment, retention and progression of minority ethnic, female and other underrepresented groups in the service.<sup>12</sup> What is more, Neighbourhood Policing, 'vitally important though it is', could not be looked at in isolation. Unless the police were effective at tackling crime and criminality from the local to the national level, the White Paper said, then the public 'would not have confidence that the service is actually delivering'. Alongside proposals in relation to responsiveness and customer service, therefore, 'the service as a whole' needed to be strengthened. That meant effective leaders at every level throughout the police service. It meant working with strengthened partnerships. It meant better approaches to tackling cross-border and serious organised crime. There had to be 'national coherence' on issues such as the gathering, management and sharing of intelligence; the effective use of science and technological advances; robust performance management arrangements; and a

National Intelligence Model had to be effectively used by all forces.<sup>13</sup>

In June 2007 the Treasury Committee reported its views on 'the experience so far' of Public Service Agreements and their targets. A number of concerns had been expressed, the Treasury Committee said, about the operation of Public Service Agreements in evidence to it and to its predecessors, and in reports on Public Service Agreement targets by the National Audit Office and the Statistics Commission.<sup>14</sup> These concerns were that the system was too top-down and unwieldy; that the quality of data measurement and the statistical infrastructure were not sufficient to measure with accuracy the extent to which Public Service Agreement targets had been met; that there were long time-lags before data became available; and that the different sets of Public Service Agreement targets established under successive Spending Reviews for each department (in our case, the Home Office's targets for the police), created confusion and difficulties for those seeking to assess performance against targets. The 2006 Pre-Budget Report had given an initial indication of how the Government expected the framework to change. First, there was an indication of an improvement in the number of Public Service Agreements themselves: A new set of Public Service Best Value Performance Indicator sets for Local Police Authorities were the means by which 'the performance of each police authority in England and Wales in exercising their functions can be measured'. In 2008 the Indicators issued in 2005 and 2006 were abolished, and a new set was instituted.15 There were to be 34 Best Value Performance Indicators for Local Police Authorities, for which targets were to be set. They were grouped under 13 headings. (The logic of much of the

classification is obscure. The most striking difference between the 2008 set of Indicators and the sets of 2005 and 2006 was that the 2008 set disposed of targets to be set for the number of police officers on 'front-line' duties—even though (or perhaps because) it was among those in which the public took the keenest interest. Only seven of the 34 deal with the number of crimes as collected and recorded in the criminal statistics. Targets were to be set for each indicator, the wording for each indicator is from the Statutory Instrument):

- 5.1. Number of most serious violent crimes per 1,000 population.
- 5.2. Number of serious acquisitive crimes per 1,000 population.
- 5.3. Number of assaults with less serious injury per 1,000 population.
- 5.4. Number of domestic homicides per 1,000 population.
- 5.5. Number of gun crimes per 1,000 population.
- 5.6. Number of serious violent knife crimes per 1,000 population.
- 7.1. Number of deliberate (i) primary and (ii) secondary fires per 10,000 population.

(Three more deal with how many people think there is a high level of anti-social behaviour.)

- 4.1. Percentage of people who perceive a high level of anti-social behaviour in their local area.
- 4.2. Percentage of people who perceive people being drunk or rowdy in public places to be a problem in their local area.

4.3. Percentage of people who perceive drug use or drug dealing to be a problem in their local area.

[Eight of the 34 deal with satisfaction with or confidence in the police or—in which satisfaction specifically with the police might or might not be a determinative consideration—'the Criminal Justice System as a whole'.]

- 1.1. Percentage of users that are satisfied with the overall service provided by the police.]
- 1.2. Comparison of satisfaction between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided by the police.
- 1.3. Satisfaction of victims of racist incidents with the overall service provided by the police.
- 2.2. Percentage of people who agree that the police and local councils are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime that matter in their area.
- 2.3. Percentage of people who think the police in their area are doing a good job.
- 1.4. Overall satisfaction with the contact had with the Criminal Justice System by victims and witnesses of crime whose cases reach the point of an offender being charged.
- 2.4. Percentage of people who are confident that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is effective.
- 2.5. Percentage of people who are confident that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is fair.

(One deals with the question of whether people think that the 'police and local council' seek their views—again, the police are amalgamated in the Indicator with a different organisation.)

- 2.1. Percentage of people who agree that the police and local councils seek their views on anti-social behaviour and crime in their area.
- (Five deal with the proportion of crimes that are 'detected' or 'brought to justice'.)
- 6.1. Percentage of most serious violent offences brought to justice.
- 6.2. Percentage of serious acquisitive crimes brought to justice.
- 6.3. Sanction detection rate for racially and religiously aggravated crimes.
- 6.4. Percentage of serious sexual offences brought to justice.
- 8.1. Value of cash forfeiture orders and confiscation orders per 1,000 population.

(Four deal with re-offending or offending rates.)

- 10.1. The change in convictions for Prolific and other Priority Offenders over a 12 month period.
- 11.1. Rate of proven re-offending by adults under Probation supervision.
- 11.2. Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders aged 10-17.
- 11.3. Number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17.
- (Two deal with the ethnic and gender composition of the police labour force.)
- 3.1. Percentage of police officer recruits from minority ethnic groups compared to the percentage of

# people from minority ethnic groups in the economically active population.

3.2. Percentage of female police officers compared to the overall force strength.

(Three deal with the internal productivity of police forces.)

- 12.1. Delivery of net cashable, efficiency and productivity gains.
- 13.1. Percentage of working hours lost due to sickness for police officers.
- 13.2. Percentage of working hours lost due to sickness for police staff.

(One deals with road casualties, measured in absolute numbers and as a rate.)

- 9.1(i). Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.
- 9.1(ii). Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled.

(Four of them deal specifically with ethnic minorities—a reduction in the number in 2005 and 2006 sets of Indicators.)

- 1.2. Comparison of satisfaction between white users and users from minority ethnic groups with the overall service provided by the police.
- 1.3. Satisfaction of victims of racist incidents with the overall service provided by the police.
- 3.1. Percentage of police officer recruits from minority ethnic groups compared to the percentage of

people from minority ethnic groups in the economically active population.

# 6.3. Sanction detection rate for racially and religiously aggravated crimes.

The Home Office published its Vision for Cutting Crime in February 2008.16 It emphasised that crime was being reduced: But is also emphasised even more that the 'vision' was the joint product of the Home Office and its 'partners', and the 'experience it had shared with them'. 'Working in partnership, together we are reducing crime. Crime has reduced by 13 per cent [in the year ending September 2007] compared with the year ending March 2003. ... These significant achievements reflect the considerable hard work and commitment of a wide range of practitioners.' The experience of delivering this reduction had taught 'us all' much about what worked in cutting crime, namely, 'intelligence-led problem solving; focused and responsive local action planning; robust governance and accountability; and effective communication and community engagement'. (What the Home Office had decided, and what it would require—this is the constant flattering tone of Vision for Cutting Crime—was simply what you, the reader, the public, the practitioner or anyone might want).

In April 2009 the Secretary of State for Justice, the Home Secretary and the Attorney General produced their Green Paper 'Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice'. According to the Green Paper's figures, dangerous criminals were more likely to go to prison and stay there longer. Since 1997 overall crime had fallen 39 per cent and spending on law and order had increased by 40 per cent. There were 15,000 more police officers, and 16,000 of the new Community Support Officers.<sup>17</sup> But in the longer

term, the 2009 Green Paper said, the Government would have to think about 'entirely new ways' of delivering policing services. 'This may include: empowering citizens through information for example, building on crime maps, which show recorded crime in a local area, giving the public the tools they need to hold the police to account.'18 Across the public services, they said, the next stage of reform will be a shift 'from a system based primarily on targets and central direction to one where individuals would have "enforceable entitlements" over the police and other services'. [Norman comments: Again, who were these 'individuals'? Were they the victims of burglaries who had an 'enforceable entitlement' that the burglar would be caught punished—or indeed an 'enforceable entitlement' that they would not be burgled in the first place? Were they the burglars, who had an 'enforceable entitlement' that their victim should be punished if they used unreasonable force to protect themselves, or an 'enforceable entitlement' to courteous treatment in the 'custody suite' of the police station or to certain standards of prison accommodation?].

Where necessary the Government would mandate service providers, 'from schools and youth workers to neighbourhood managers', to 'work together' with Neighbourhood Policing Teams in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.<sup>19</sup> 'It is our belief' they wrote, 'that world-class public services should be a guarantee... with clear redress mechanisms when entitlements are not delivered.' The State would give power to individuals so that they enforce their entitlements from the State 'through clear redress mechanisms'. They added that they did not want this new system of enforceable entitlements from the State's decentralised world-class services to mean people could take public services to court to enforce

them.20 Quite the contrary. 'Crucially... we will not legislate in such a way as to mean that redress will be through the courts.' Instead, people would be 'offered' greater powers to 'complain' and so they would be given the right to have their complaint 'heard' by an independent ombudsman.<sup>21</sup> This system would 'drive up standards', protect 'core' entitlements (but not peripheral ones?), and ensure that improvements were 'genuinely universal'.<sup>22</sup> The Government would see to it that 'communities' were given a 'fair say' in setting 'fair rules' to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour according to 'local priorities'. The Government would 'support the police' and Government would 'free the police from red tape', so that the police could 'focus on catching and punishing (sic) criminals'.23 Each individual would have the 'right' to a police 'response' to emergencies within 20 minutes, to 'priorities' within 60 minutes, to 'non-urgent enquiries' within 24 hours and to 'complaints' within 24 hours. There would be an individual 'right' to a police response to non-urgent enquiry within 48 hours. Everybody would also have an individual 'right' to have his or her 999 call answered within ten seconds. Each individual would have the 'right' to 'police on the beat'-specifically, the right that Neighbourhood Policing Teams spend 'over 80 per cent' of their time 'on the beat'.24 The Green Paper announced that all these and other 'rights' that each individual had in relation to the police would be 'enforceable' by everybody 'over the next 12 months'. Further details, the Green Paper said, would be set out in a Policing White Paper in the autumn of 2009. In addition, there would be non-enforceable 'initiatives' Neighbourhood Policing Teams, 'including offering to walk people the last mile home if they feel unsafe', or

'starting up e-mail groups for people to keep each other informed about burglary'.25 Over £5 million was to be spent by the end of 2010 on a Community Crime Fighter Programme, to train and support 3,600 members of the public who were already active in fighting crime in their communities.<sup>26</sup> The Green Paper announced the launch of a new National Action Squad of Trouble-shooters who would focus on areas where perceptions of anti-social behaviour were high or where 'the authorities' were not doing enough.27 At the time of the Green Paper, widespread publicity was being given to cases where bystanders who have intervened or even victims who defended themselves had found themselves accused of having committed an offence in the course of doing so. Yet the Green Paper says that the Government would 'continue' to do 'all it could' to encourage 'active engagement by local people'.28 Micro-management of policing can hardly be better exemplified than in the Green Paper's announcements that the Government had invested £15 million in a new nationwide Burglary Prevention Initiative, which included Neighbourhood Policing Teams 'working closely' with the insurance industry and Do-It-Yourself retailers to provide advice packs and support, and that it was about to launch Operation Vigilance. To 'ensure' that crime, which would not rise during an economic recession, Operation Vigilance would be launched in May 2009. Operation Vigilance was designed to target the areas facing the greatest 'emerging challenges'. It would, the Green Paper said, improve co-operation and intelligence-sharing between local agencies-particularly between the probation services and Neighbourhood Police Teams-to tackle burglary and robbery, and to monitor prolific

offenders on release from prison.<sup>29</sup> [Overall crime, burglary and robbery did not rise during the recession.] The Government would also use 'all the powers at our disposal', and to strengthen them where necessary, to deal with people causing 'significant nuisance to neighbours'. In recent months, the Green Paper said, the Government had made it easier to close and board up the homes of such offenders.<sup>30</sup>

The Green Paper referred to other Government intitiatives. The Tackling Gangs Action Programme had introduced in September 2007, in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, supported by national action on gun supply and sentencing. 'Gun crime is now falling across the country.' 'We are now taking the same targeted approach to knife crime, bringing together police, schools, local authorities, youth workers, the probation service and other agencies through the Tackling Knives Action Programme, launched in June 2008. This has led to more stops and searches, more search equipment including search arches and wands, tougher sentences, and a more targeted approach to prevention, with 14,000 more youth activity places available on Friday and Saturday night, and police now being given a role in planning these activities in high crime areas.'

Knife murders had fallen by 12 per cent (from 59 to 52) in October to December 2008 compared with October to December 2007. Knife woundings had also fallen, with 17 per cent fewer teenagers hospitalised with stab wounds nationally, and steeper reductions of 30 per cent in the areas targeted by the Tackling Knives Action Programme. The Green Paper announced the extending the programme to 14 police forces in total, and broadening it to include other forms of serious youth violence.<sup>31</sup>

A Youth Crime Action Plan in July 2008 had set out a £100 million package of measures of crime prevention and early intervention which by April 2009 were 'being delivered' in 69 Priority Areas in England (with two additional areas in Wales to 'begin delivery shortly'). The measures in the Youth Crime Action Plan included increased after-school patrols; bringing together police and children's services to take at-risk young people off the streets and to a place of safety with support services on hand ('Operation Staysafe'); and US-style Street Teams (including reformed ex-offenders) in 55 local authority areas working in partnership with the police to 'engage with young people on the fringes of crime'. The Youth Crime Action Plan, the Green Paper said, 'is cutting antisocial behaviour by half'.32 The Government ('we') now had a 'deepening understanding' of how to identify and address early in a child's life issues that could cause problem behaviour later on. Through the expansion of Children's Centres, and Family-Nurse Partnerships the Government was 'transforming the support families get in the early years', and thus 'reducing future crime'. Children's Centres, and Family-Nurse Partnerships were being expanded from ten Primary Care Trusts and local authorities in 2008, to 30 in 2009, 'on the way to 70 areas by 2011'. For older children involved in crime or antisocial behaviour, the Government would be expanding Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders 'to ensure parents have the right combination of challenge and support'. Those parents who were 'struggling most to provide a supportive home environment', were not only 'letting down' their own children but also 'the communities who are damaged by their behaviour'. For their benefit the Government was expanding the 'highly

successful intensive Family Intervention Projects'. These provided 'support and tough guidance' to families in trouble. In April 2009, the Green Paper said, every local authority had Family Intervention Projects in 2007. Only a small number of families had been included in Family Intervention Projects in 2007. There were 2,000 families in Family Intervention Projects in April 2009. There were to be 20,000 families in Family Intervention Projects by the end of 2011. [Norman comments: *And, in the name of progress, 50,000 or 100,000 by the end of, say, 2015, 250,000 by 2020?*].

### Theresa May: another new era

Then, in 2010 the new Coalition Government Home Secretary, Mrs Theresa May, announced the end of all this. On 29 June she told the ACPO annual conference in Manchester that she wanted to help police get back to basics. 'Targets don't fight crime, targets hinder the fight against crime,' she said, 'in scrapping **the confidence target** and **the policing pledge**, I couldn't be any clearer about your mission: it isn't a 30-point plan, it is to cut crime, no more and no less.'<sup>33</sup> I append to her comments the 30 June reaction of Inspector Gadget.

## Inspector Gadget blog, 'Resistance Is Futile – Or Is It?'

I was extremely proud today in parade when the Chief Inspector, who used to be in charge of performance, came down to inform my team that the new love of my professional life, Theresa May, had abolished the Policing Pledge and the Public Confidence measure.

I was proud because my team looked at him in a bewildered way, not having a clue what he was talking about.

I have protected them from this rot over the last year, never passing down the crappy instructions, deleting the pointless

emails and shredding the performance tables before they reached the Constables.

My view was that endless navel gazing over whether a certain person knew the name of their local PCSO, or whether someone felt safe in their bed despite the fact that the last knife-point night time burglary in Ruraltown was probably in 1958, or arguing with the Control Room (renamed the Customer Focus Centre) over whether we arrived at a call 30 seconds late (true story) was simply not worth troubling the eager young minds of people who still give a shit, on a daily basis, or at all.

If the shock that all these silly 'poncements' have been abolished on the third floor was immense and glorious to watch, it was the abject bewilderment and disinterest on the ground floor which made my day.

After the Chief Inspector had read out his list of now obsolete targets and measures, Sergeant Dan eyed me suspiciously from the corner of the room.

He approached me afterwards and said "Christ! Were we supposed to be doing all that shite for the last year?"

I admitted that we had. "How in God's name have we gotten away with that for so long" he said in his classic Ruralshire drawl.

How indeed. Thinking about this Blog, the book, Ellie Bloggs and all our newspaper coverage made me think of something that Thomas Jefferson once said:

"The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain occasions, that I wish it to be always kept alive."

I get thousands of comments, texts and emails as Inspector Gadget, so I know that thousands of decent police officers have carried out their own brave and unrecorded resistance tactics during the last few years of Orwellian central control.

The days of the Transgender Diversity Monitoring Crime Audit Apologise For Slavery Gypsy History Month Non Job are over. Viva La Reaction!

At the time of writing, no one knows for sure if the days of Orwellian central control are over, although the Policing Protocol Order of 2011 seems determined to put a measure of 'localism' in place. However, other Coalition Government documents—for example 'Creating the conditions for integration', from the Orwellian-named Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) February 2012—pull in the opposite direction: Inspector Gadget should stay on alert, keeping watch on the new love of his professional life.

# How Communal are Communities?

The community will tell us who carries knives and guns. There are people out there who are prepared to work with us.

Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of the MPS Daily Telegraph, 13 January 2012<sup>1</sup>

Staff and students who have criticised the Islamic Society (ISoc) have been threatened, Jewish and LGBT students have been intimidated and prevented from openly expressing their identities, and a police investigation into a serious attack on Muslim students collapsed, not least because of ISoc's non-cooperation.

Quilliam Briefing Paper, October 2010<sup>2</sup>

'We have completely lost our way'

(one of Norman Dennis's police interviewees)

Of all of the reforms urged upon the police in the post-Macpherson era, none has been so assiduously promoted as that bruiting the virtues of 'community policing', especially 'minority community policing'.

This chapter deals with some of the implications for the police of the type and levels of criminal activity to be found, in varying degrees, in a couple of Britain's minority communities, those associated with Islam or Muslims and those related to 'black' people, usually of Caribbean/Jamaican origin, but less so with a growing number of African arrivals. I refer to ordinary crimes such as assault, knifings, theft, receiving, drugs, as well as to

#### HOW COMMUNAL ARE COMMUNITIES?

more exotic ones such as coerced marriage, 'honour' killing, and terror (the last three being much more of an amongst Muslims and virtually unknown elsewhere). Such a discussion is in no way to be held to imply that such criminal activities are institutionally grounded in such minorities, and only in such minorities, i.e. that they are what 'most of them do most of the time': Simply, such crimes are, whether committed by whites, Asians or blacks, the matters of concern to the police, 'community' police or otherwise. Whites commit most crimes because in the UK there are more whites than blacks or Asians: at any one time there are more white people on buses. Yet the much smaller black or Asian their own distinctive, statistically minorities have significant, criminal profiles—of concern to the police, and of interest to academic researchers. Indeed, some sense of the difficulty that the police have in confronting this 'New Britain' might be inferred from the parallel (if gentler) difficulties experienced by such researchers. Macpherson urged police to abandon a colour blind approach and to 'take into account the nature and needs of the person or the people involved, and of the special features which such crimes and their investigation possess' (M 6:18). He urged the police to familiarise themselves with the cultural traditions of the various BMEs.3 It is of course the job of social scientists and researchers to try to analyse those traditions, to make the unfamiliar, familiar: and as far as they can to provide objective ascertainable data about BME society: if they have difficulty, or find themselves threatened and harassed and treated objects of suspicion—how much more so the police?

# The Racialisations of Crime

Professor Eugene McLaughlin's comment (immediately below) about the problems faced by the police could apply, with obvious differences, to the problems faced by researchers:

There is the question of how to realise a new overarching cultural identity in a radically unsettled and unsettling postsocial context. A new generation of police officers inhabit an increasingly volatile context. We are witnessing multiple racialisations of 'crime' with new ethnic tensions associated with new waves of immigration, asylum and settlement. And perhaps most significantly, this generation of officers now have to live with the long-term repercussions of the attacks on London on 7 July 2005 by home-grown suicide bombers, as well as the failed attacks of 21 July 2005 and the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes the following day. The reignited debate on how politically correct policing is partly responsible for producing an 'enemy within' and the renewed arguments for a commonly accepted framework of citizenship and a stronger sense of British national identity have wide-ranging implications for police practice and police community relations and, of course, an ever emergent police culture.4

I hope that Professor McLaughlin will forgive me for saying that I hope he is on hand to advise the average policeman and policewoman so 'contextualised'!

The Lawrences were Christians, West Indians, Jamaican, black: the convicted killers were English, white. But black/white is no longer the appropriate description of or for Britain's ethnic profile; and no more is 'Christian' much of a descriptor of or for either British whites or British ethnic minorities. London is now one of the most ethnically-diverse cities in the world, with over 300 languages and 50 non-indigenous communities of 10,000

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people or more. Thirty-one per cent of Londoners are non-white ethnic minorities, and another 11 per cent is white but not white and British. The Daily Mail of 18 February 2012 reported on an East European crime wave in the capital, with Poland being the worst of the top ten offenders, although non-East European Jamaica was in the middle: Jamaica has the third highest murder rate in the world. The Border Agency said that foreign nationals who offend could be deported: but then the Border Agency lost a lot of credibility when, on 21 February 2012 it was announced that 500,000 people were let into Great Britain completely unchecked.<sup>5</sup> In 2011 the Border Agency, reporting on a 2010 inflow of 350,000 incomers seeking family visit visas, commented rather forlornly that it sought (as many people have!) 'an objective way of defining whether a [family] relationship is genuine and continuing or not'.6 The Agency was concerned about possible sham marriages and marriages of convenience, as well as forced marriages.

Such figures indicate the existence of tens of thousands of 'illegal' immigrants, whether from Eastern Europe or elsewhere, sharing in one way or another communal values and interests with their legally-here fellow-ethnics, with few of them, legal or illegal or semi-legal, coming from parts of the world habituated to 'policing by consent' by unarmed policemen and women. This demographic, of a significant amount of illegality, semi-illegality and the exotic mixed in with the run-of-the-mill day-to-day life of each larger BME 'community' is familiar to both police and researchers.

Apart from the problems this causes for the criminal justice system, whether the police or the Border Agency, all of this inflow and outflow has generated a

considerable array of academic research activity. Researchers in this area, as they set about tracing the 'behaviour and cultural traditions' of various minorities, report a variety of difficulties, sometimes straightforward threats (see below), but also those arising from the fact that many academic institutions have themselves succumbed to a form of intellectual or institutional partisanship, itself often enough based on some quite decretory sources of finance and career promotion. As I write, I am engaged in something of a controversy about the advertisement, by London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of PhD scholarships to study 'The integration of Muslims into British Society'. The scholarships, funded by the rather mysterious Nohoudh Trust, are for Muslims only-one form of integration, I suppose.

One of the more insidious accomplishments of multiculturalism has been to confer respectability on the argumentum ad hominem or, conversely, to give succour to the pre-emptive tactic of the coy, a form of selfcensorship. In Policing beyond Macpherson, Stenson and Waddington describe the experience of facing the 'hostile reaction, including ad hominem attacks [made] by 'strong vested interests' upon those who question 'the dominant narrative'.7 The Quilliam Foundation, in the document quoted above, blocked out the names of their informants for fear of reprisals.8 If academics, generally a fairly timid lot, who simply produce data and narratives, experience such hostility, how much more so the police, who seek to enforce the law? As we shall see below, for some researchers life got considerably nastier than a mere dispute about a narrative.

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In the same volume as that of McLaughlin, Professors Stenson and Waddington make further extended comment on the business of researching 'multiple racialisations':

In many urban areas, the framework of description and explanation highlighting racism, manifest in the Macpherson Report, is ill-equipped to analyse and narrate the complexities of modern urban life. Given the strong vested interests in retaining the existing dominant narratives, it would be surprising if the presentation of this argument does not evoke hostile reaction, including – as we have already experienced—*ad hominem* attacks. Such a reaction should not be allowed to foreclose open criminological debate. More profoundly, it betrays the interests of the populations it purports to serve.<sup>9</sup>

In this part I deal with the relations of two of these 'populations' with the criminal justice system. Amongst the 'populations' of the UK are of course white Britishborn people (the majority), whose 'interests' are also of concern, though seldom made explicit. The 'test' throughout is MPS Commissioner's sanguine belief that 'there are people out there who are prepared to work with us', where 'us' is the police—but also researchers whose work might be of use as well as interest.

#### Muslims and Their Crimes

The surge in Muslim crime is not being discussed openly within the community... probably out of a sense of shame. But in reality we should feel ashamed because we are not facing these problems openly and discussing them.

(Yahya Birt)10

We police round your communities, but not in them.

(ACPO Representative)11

The Prevent agenda has led to Muslims being spied on from cradle to grave... in Birmingham the police were found to be spying on the entire Muslim community using CCTV on the false pretence of targeting criminal elements.

(The Muslim News)12

Yahya Birt, above, wrote in 2001. Perhaps things have changed (for the better?), and 'shame' no longer prevents Muslim communities from openly discussing such matters—and, where necessary, reporting their coreligionists to the police? The ACPO representative in July 2005 would seem to be offering an excuse for the 'failure' of police intelligence to foresee the London bombs of that year. The *Muslim News* seems to think that things have got worse and that it is all the fault of the police—spying on the entire Muslim community!

In the same book<sup>13</sup> from which we get the quote from Professor McLaughlin (above) we have a chapter called 'Policing Muslim communities', by Neil Chakraborti. This chapter is almost totally preoccupied with 'terror' and the major anti-terror legislation of 2000 and 2001. Chakraborti talks about the risk of 'encouraging an aggressive police stance based more on "fishing expeditions" than on substantive intelligence [something which] would further alienate and criminalise Muslim communities'.14 Much mention is made of 'Islamophobia', by now the default response to any and every criticism of Muslims. Chakraborti's chapter concludes with 'post-Macpherson policing initiatives need to be considered in the context of their potential impact upon Muslims as a specific group in their own right, and not just as part of a broader network of minority ethnic communities'.15 Terror is terror: and it is hard to see how the police and the security services could do, or should be doing, something which

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does not involve 'fishing expeditions' or how the police are meant to tailor their work-style to the 'specific' requirements of Muslims as 'a group in their own right': what does that mean? To some extent, the answer depends on what is going on within such a 'group' (or groups): and every BME is both proud of and defensive about its own idiosyncratic pedigree.

Perhaps the more interesting thing Chakraborti's chapter, though, is that it almost entirely fails to mention the extraordinarily high crime rateordinary crime, that is-of this Muslim 'group' or BME community. The author does mention on page 112 'the vulnerability of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households to crime', an ambivalent formula which tends to make the members of such households either passive bystanders or victims of the crime of others rather than, perhaps, occasionally, perpetrators. The chapter avoids, whether artfully or otherwise, mention of the fact that the Muslim 'group' or community has a very high crime rate-not 'terrorism' (which can be 'added in'), but of ordinary crimes (violence against the person, robbery, drugs, theft etc.) which produce, from about three per cent of the British population, a Muslim prison population of over 12 per cent, i.e. over 10,000 individuals, nearly all men. The Muslim population of jails in England and Wales rose from 2,000 in 1991 to 11,000 in 2012.

Marie Macey's essay 'Interpreting Islam: young Muslim men's involvement in criminal activity in Bradford'<sup>16</sup> tells, for example, how, in 'defence' of 'honour', young Muslim men in Bradford 'control' 'their' women: the control goes from' relatively minor nuisance to murder'. 'A common threat is to "run families out of Bradford", a threat that Muslim women say is a real one:

"They can do it and everybody knows it".'<sup>17</sup> Macey says that 'the majority of the illegal drug trade in Bradford is controlled by Pakistani Muslims... heroin is the most common drug and Muslims have ready access to it in Pakistan'.<sup>18</sup> The involvement of Muslim men in 'grooming' young white girls for sex was a major story in early 2011,<sup>19</sup> and again at time of writing,—and of the difficulties the police had in dealing with it—or with their reluctance to do so?<sup>20</sup>

Just as interesting, though, is how such stories affect researchers, such as Macey, who lives and works in Bradford. She talks about the 'strong pressure on researchers not to publish material that might be seen as critical of minority ethnic groups';21 and about a colleague who found herself in a 'highly charged debate' in which she was told that a white woman had no right to comment on ethnic minorities: and how the 'labelling' of researchers and students as 'extremist' is sometimes followed up by assault, something actually experienced by her colleagues; and by the development of a 'conspiracy of silence between minority ethnic men, male academics, professionals and the state' producing a 'climate of fear and oppression which extends to research and scholarly pursuits'.22 She quotes Ousley on Bradford: a city 'in the grip of fear... fear of talking about problems openly, fear of challenging wrong-doing, fear of confronting the gang culture, the illegal drugs trade and the growing racial intolerance, harassment and abuse':23 Macey says that:

Fear and oppression and the silencing of voices that suggest alternative analyses of situations do not produce either good social science or social policy because the latter is (sometimes) based on the former. Nor do they enhance

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racial relations; they may actually worsen them as white people react adversely to constant accusations of racism, observing that 'Asian racism' is ignored or explained away. This is particularly so for those white people who have suffered racially based assaults (as many as 70 per cent of all such assaults in some areas).<sup>24</sup>

Roger Graef was perhaps thinking of Bradford when he wrote that now 'black and Asian gangs often have the upper hand' and 'young white men feel like victims of a foreign invasion'.<sup>25</sup> The recent Channel 4 two-part documentary 'Make Bradford British',<sup>26</sup> while interesting, made no mention of the matters referred to by Macey. The Prison Service's Muslim adviser blamed out-of-touch foreign imams, unable to speak English, for the rise in Muslim crime.<sup>27</sup>

From neither Macey, nor Graef, nor the Muslim News do I get the sense of a communities 'prepared to work with us', to refer back to Hogan-Howe, the MPS Commissioner quoted above, where 'us' is the police. If Bradford, for example, has its due statistical proportion of the 12,000 Muslim prisoners and ex-prisoners, and its due statistical proportion of those Muslims who on various polls support 'terror', and its due statistical proportion of men and women in (illegal) polygamous marriages and its due statistical proportion of drug users, addicts and sellers-then we have a community with a problem tending to the furtive, not to the visible, to shame and not to pride. A more sensible comment comes from an anonymous policeman who, in 2011, told the Sunday Times how 'heartened' he was to see that the issue of 'grooming of young white girls for sex by Pakistani males finally being confronted', the police having avoided the issue because 'the police service seems to have become

paranoid about the race issue'.<sup>28</sup> When, in February 2012 the trial of a number of Pakistani men finally came to court, it seems that allegations of abuse by one (white) girl had been just ignored by the police—institutional racism, reversed?

## Black People and Stop and Search

Racism still blighted society... and the Metropolitan Police disproportionately targeted black people: in their mindset they still believe they are criminals.

(Mrs Doreen Lawrence)29

I did an annual assessment of an officer. I wrote, 'Although westernised, she's naïve.' I used the phrase, 'Asian female'. **Grievance procedure!** It hurt like hell. It's very easy to make an allegation. It is very difficult to disprove it. How do I prove that I'm not a racist?

#### Norman Dennis's Interviewee:

Today the future for many young black men is not death at the hands of white racists. It is, at best, to repeat the catastrophic underachievement of their father in education or employment: or at worst to die by the knife or the gun—weapons typically wielded by black hands.

(Trevor Phillps)30

Sections 45:8-45:10 of Part Two of the Macpherson report dealt with ethnic community complaints about Stop and Search. Macpherson quoted research which showed that black people were five times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people. He noted, somewhat gnomically, that 'the use of these powers for Asians and other ethnic groups varied widely'. No figures were given. Nobody in the minority ethnic communities, he said, believed the 'complex arguments' offered to

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explain the policy. He said it was 'pointless' for the police 'to justify these figures purely or mainly in terms of the other factors identified' as most of them (the police officers) 'accepted' that 'discrimination' was 'an element' in the 'disparity', and 'this must be the focus of their efforts for the future'. 'Attempts to justify the disparities through the identification of other factors, whilst not being seen vigorously to address the discrimination which is evident, simply exacerbates the climate of distrust' (M 45:10), he said.

Led by this (to my mind) extraordinary language, Macpherson made three recommendations on Stop and Search. In recommendation 60, risking an exacerbation of the climate of distrust, he said that the law should remain unchanged. Ironically, this indeed earned him the charge of exacerbation of the climate of distrust: The Muslim News Editorial 17 January 2012 said that the 'Lawrence conviction [was] only the beginning... Macpherson like Scarman before him was entirely indifferent towards the role of stop and search in damaging community relations with the police'. In recommendations 61-63 Macpherson imposed upon the police a requirement for detailed recording of all such stops and searches. A download from the MPS web site provides some awesome examples of such detailed recording or 'Monitoring Reports' -'pointless?'

When Hogan-Howe announced the halving of Stop and Search, he did it, in part at least, **not** simply because it might be a poor use of police time, but because it offended (in particular) the 'black' 'community', which would he felt be ready to supply the necessary intelligence anyway. The *Telegraph* made a connection between the timing of Hogan-Howe's announcement and

'the week after two of Stephen Lawrence's killers were convicted'.<sup>31</sup> Mrs Lawrence, the *Muslim News* and Hogan-Howe would seem to be as one in seeing stop and search as not so much an expression of police concern about crime as an expression of police racism, unwitting or otherwise. Macpherson's claim that 'discrimination is a major element in the stop and search problem' (M 45:8) would have supported them in this view, though Macpherson, as we have seen, refrained from recommending its suspension.

Yet some years before Hogan-Howe's intervention, (though obviously after the Macpherson inquiry) a Government programme called 'Tackling Knives Action Programme' was launched in June 2008. This, we were told by the Labour Government, 'has led to more stops and searches, more search equipment including search arches and wands, tougher sentences, and a more targeted approach to prevention, with 14,000 more youth activity places available on Friday and Saturday night, and police now being given a role in planning these activities in high crime areas'. (see above, p. 67) As a result, 'Knife murders had fallen by 12 per cent (from 59 to 52) in October to December 2008 compared with October to December 2007. Knife woundings had also fallen, with 17 per cent fewer teenagers hospitalised with stab wounds nationally, and steeper reductions of 30 per cent in the areas targeted by the Tackling Knives Action Programme. The Green Paper announced the extension of the programme to 14 police forces in total, and a broadening of it to include other forms of serious youth violence' (see above, p. 67).

Thus in 2008, 'Stop and Search' in its various forms, and when comparing the last three months of 2007 with

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those of 2008, is credited with reducing knife murders from 59 to 52 (the overall 'improved' annual rate would seem to be still 208 a year!). So on these figures, by the end of 2008 seven young people were alive who, in some notional statistical sense, would not have been in 2007—because of Stop and Search.

Nothing is said in this report about the ethnicity or the gender or the age of either victims or perpetrators: one assumes there were black people amongst both groups. Official and research data are often very informative on the BME status of victims but not too helpful on the BME status of perpetrators. The data indicating (or even proving?) 'discrimination' i.e. deliberate racial skewing, would have to be very strong indeed to justify Hogan-Howe's halving of the practice simply because it offended black people in particular, exacerbating 'the climate of distrust' as Macpherson put it (M 45:10). Yet, following Macpherson in giving prime weight to minority community sensitivities, Hogan-Howe announced, as we have seen, that 'in an attempt to improve relations with black and other ethnic minority communities' random (he uses the word 'generic') stops and searches were to be halved, and that 'the community will tell us who carries knives and guns'.32 Well, no doubt.

Over 500,000 black people in the UK are of Jamaican origin. Jamaica has the third highest murder rate in the world. One in eight, or about 15 per cent of London's population is 'black'—though 'black' refers to an increasingly heterogeneous population, moving away from a mainly Caribbean background towards an African presence. Ed West<sup>33</sup> reported Rod Liddle (who 'bravely tells the truth about knife crime') saying that black males are responsible for nearly 60 per cent of arrests for

robbery and for the 'overwhelming majority of gun crimes, most of it black on black violence'. This is a description which, sadly, complements that of Trevor Phillips: but because of the reluctance of the authorities to publish figures as a matter of routine, we have to deal with more than the usual difficulty of such data. The Mail OnLine for 22 July 2008 provides us with what it calls 'confidential' figures for 'black' crime in London. It states that these 'confidential' Scotland Yard figures show that between 1 April and 30 June 2008, 124 out of 225 (i.e. over half) of under-18s legally 'proceeded against' for knife offences were black. Most victims in reported knife crimes were white—Trevor Phillips might need some correcting on this point. For the same period, of the 741 people of all ages accused of knife crime, 299 were white, 296 black, 40 mixed race, 70 Asian, 27 Chinese or other minority, nine not stated. Of the 637 under 18 victims of knife crimes, 222 were white, 61 black, 11 mixed, 40 Asian, other 11, not stated 292. Of the 292 'not stated', 'one possible explanation is that they were black gang members who did not wish to cooperate with the police'.34 This would not be an irrational concern on the part of such victims. The gang world is one of violence and revenge-seeking. A MPS funded 'Capital Conflict Management Project' (CCM), costing £350,000 a year, and mobilizing over 20 volunteers, tries to mediate life-threatening feuds and revenge-seeking between gang members.35 The CCM defines its mission as intervening to try to stop 'serious injuries or even the wasted death of a person'. It states that it is one of 'a multi-agency response to the real concerns local communities face with group violence'.36 One of CCM 's full-time staff is an ex-MPS policeman,

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where he was with Operation Trident, set up to try to tackle gun crime in black communities.

Graeme McLagan describes a (mixed-race) MPS detective chief inspector working on the Trident programme as saying that he had nothing but contempt for gang members:

They are amoral, with no concept of life whatsoever. Even the Krays and the Richardsons had problems with being able to pull the trigger and kill someone. Some of these we are dealing with just don't think about it. They have a complete disregard for public safety, for example using a machine gun in a high street, or youngsters who think it's flash to have a gun and a car, who'll shoot someone for pushing into a queue'.<sup>37</sup>

Sorious Samura reports on gang rape,<sup>38</sup> and he shows not only how 'diffident' the authorities are about collecting and publishing data on the race element of crime, but how serious such matters are. Of Samura's sample of 92 young men involved in gang rape (defined as involving 3+ rapists), 78 per cent were black or mixed race, 11 per cent white and 11 per cent other, including Afghanis, Iraqis and Libyans. Other reports show that some of the rapists were 13 and 14: and others,<sup>39</sup> while as usual avoiding the race identification, picture a young black girl under a headline which says that such girls now see such rape as 'normal', a ticket to gang membership, the gangs which are of such concern to the MPS's Trident project.

Stop and Search is, or was, a policy which sought to attend to the problems caused by such behaviour. Research described in Rowe<sup>40</sup> showed how Macpherson's basic metaphysic (that race, or racism, and not the demographics of age and class, explained the MPS, the

police in general, and Great Britain) could perhaps have skewed his (and others) understanding of the 'S and S' figures. Simply, the 'ethnic make-up of young lower-class men using the urban street' has followed post-1950 patterns of immigration and settlement. For generations, the police have been stopping young lower- or workingclass men who are on the street: there are now, as there always were, a lot of young lower- and working-class men about, on the street; the difference is that most or many of them are black and Asian. Controlling for class and street-use, it seems that in Islington (for example) young Irish men were the most likely and young middleclass African men the least likely, to be stopped and Research discussed by Stenson searched. Waddington<sup>41</sup> indicated that black and Asian young men were not disproportionately stopped. They report research that (again!) shows that class, at least as much as race, is the explanatory variable. Data were gathered in Leeds, Islington, Slough and Reading. In Islington, a working-class Irishman was most likely to be stopped while a middle-class African was the least likely. In Slough and Reading, the research showed that when the 'street population' (mainly, at any one time, young men) is taken as the comparator, then Black and Asian young men were not disproportionately stopped. A Home Office research project HO Research Study 223 did report differences in white, black and Asian experience of stop and search: but also said that a regression technique showed that 'ethnicity was not a strong predictor of being stopped on foot in 1999': it was more likely to be so if the person stopped was in a car.42

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# Conclusion: The Community Will Tell Us? Really?

The data show what, at various times, the police and their 'customers' do: and the data do not, irrefutably, describe a police force zealously and unfairly discriminating against BMEs. Other data, referred to above, indicate that crime amongst at least two BME communities is a serious matter, and well merits police attention, and that it would be a folly of optimism or of political correctness to rely on steady community support for police action. We have Roger Graef, scarcely an English Defence League ideologue, writing that 'black and Asian gangs often have the upper hand' and 'young white men feel like victims of a foreign invasion'.43 More significantly, and grimly, we have Trevor Phillips analysis quoted earlier: today the future for many young black men is not death at the hands of white racists. It is, at best, to repeat the catastrophic underachievement of their father in education or employment: or at worst to die by the knife or the gun—weapons typically wielded by black hands.44 Such comments, such research indicate that the application to Stop and Search policies of Macpherson's mantra 'institutional racism' might well provide the young black men Phillips is (rightly) so concerned about with lots of freedom from police surveillance and searching, true, but with lots of opportunity too-not always too wisely used, if the 'Tackling Knives' data and other data are correct. Trevor Phillips's comment carries too much truth to be ignored: too many of the new generation of young black men would appear to be set to add further dysfunctionality to that of their fathers'. {It is of course almost impossible to prove or refute Phillips' implied claim that white racists were in the past ('today the future...') responsible for young black deaths: when?}.

Some years ago we had at my university a couple of British-born Jamaican-origin girls. Jamaican girls do much better than their male comrades in education. They were good students and did well: but they were quite scathing about Caribbean men, pointing out that the senior management grades in London transport were staffed by Caribbean women, while the Caribbean men were down on the platforms doing the unskilled un-careered jobs. They had no intention, they told me, of marrying such men. There is clearly something radically problematic about the behaviour and life-styles of many young black men of Caribbean origin. Sadly, the present generation of such young black men seems set to adopt both of Philips' negative categories, of poor educational performance and self-destructive life-styles: living like this, they can do little but make things worse for themselves and for society as a whole. My two students referred to above insisted that Britain does not deny BMEs people access to and progress within the educational system. Other sources give support to their opinions. In Minority Ethnic Pupils in the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, DCSF Research Report RB002, Steve Strand showed how misleading were figures depicting ethnic minorities as being in general discriminated against and thus underperforming in the educational system. When analysed correctly the data show that the only ethnic group which was indeed under attaining was black Caribbean males. Strand's data showed that, controlling for class, maternal education, poverty (free school meals), home ownership and household structure (i.e. single-parent households) the apparent gap between white British and Indian and Bangladeshis turned into a 'lead' for the two latter, the gap for Pakistanis was reduced by 4/5ths, for black

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Africans by 2/3rds: Only black Caribbean (men?) stayed below the mean. 45 A Communities and Local Government Report by REACH on 'raising aspirations and attainment of black boys and young black men'46 was concerned with the same problem of educational under-achievement by black boys and men. REACH was one of the successors to the Stephen Lawrence Steering Group. Some young black men of Caribbean origin are a problem to themselves, to us and, too often, to the police. The very existence of the Capital Conflict Management Project, referred to above, in which £350,000 is spent every year in 'mediating' intergang conflict, indicates how ill-advised the police would to rely on Hogan-Howe's assurance that 'the community' will simply step forward and tell his constables who is and who is not carrying knives and guns.

It would be difficult to find a more dispiriting comment on 'the black community' than that made by Trevor Phillips: and the problems of, or caused by 'black' groups other than those descended from the Caribbean would seem to make things worse. One of these groups, Somalis, bridges the division between the 'black' and Muslim communities on which I have been concentrating. Somalis figure amongst the 'top ten' of foreigners prosecuted in London last year.<sup>47</sup> The Sunday Times of 19 February 2012 reports that 'up to 40' radicalised Britons are being trained in Al-Shabaab terrorist camps in Somalia. London street gangs raise money and organise travel for such trainees.48 The Sunday Times also reported on the radicalization of Muslim prisoners by imprisoned Islamists. 49 The Prison Service's Muslim adviser, Ahtsham Ali, told *The Times*<sup>50</sup> that 'a generation of young Muslims is turning to crime and ending up in jail because of old-

fashioned imams in Britain's mosques', indicating that ex-Home Secretary Jacqui Smith's plan to import 'moderate' Muslim clerics had not worked or had back-fired.<sup>51</sup> There are 55 full-time imams working in jails, along with 59 part-timers and 96 sessional workers. Mr Ali urged the mosques to 'make religion fun'. In 2011 a gathering at the London Muslim Centre, Whitechapel, heard various speakers criticise the 'Prevent' counter-terrorism strategy. One speaker objected to the 'bandying about' of such terms as 'salafi' or 'takfir', while another accused the Prevent programme of being 'about spying... reporting dissent and creating "depoliticised Muslims".52 In 2011 also, the Economic and Social Research Council reported a survey of 'community-based focus groups' which concluded that 'government policy is seen to be targeting wide swathes of its own citizens producing forms of disengagement which have potentially serious long-term consequences relating to social cohesion, equality and citizenship'. Researcher Dr Michael Lister said that 'differential treatment' embedded in current antiterrorism measures were leading:

all ethnic minority groups—not just Muslims—to feel disproportionately targeted by current anti-terrorism measures. Worryingly for British democracy, this view of differential treatment held by ethnic minority groups leads many to feel not only detached from the body politic, but less likely to co-operate with the police and security services.<sup>53</sup>

The 'disengagement' and fragmentation of the BME world seems to have spread into the police service itself where, as part of the Macpherson injunction to extirpate institutional racism by becoming 'colour-conscious', the MPS for example had, by 2012, established 18 or 19 formal

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BME police associations within the service. One of these, the MPS Black Police Association responded to the sentencing of Dobson and Norris with a press release which amongst other things referred approvingly to 'the Lawrence's persistence which... questioned challenged the inadequacies and failures inherent within the police and wider justice systems to deliver fairness in cases which involved minority communities'.54 It is hard to see how this level of licensed and condoned fission could do anything other than add to tensions within the MPS: and it is perhaps no surprise that in 2011 six white police officers sued the MPS for racial discrimination. Ex-Sergeant Wilson, in defence of his six colleagues, said 'If there is any allegation by any black or ethnic minority person against white police officers, they have gone completely the opposite direction to the point where it is actually the white officers getting discriminated against'.55 Norman Dennis reports a level of concern about the systems of 'political correctness' which followed from the active and uncritical acceptance of the Macpherson doctrine. One of his interviewees said that: 'In this force, managers are afraid to manage BME officers for fear of Individuals accusations. are praised or promoted inappropriately to meet targets. There was an inverse relationship between general progress and proper policing-policing that is, which was blind to repressive communal distinctions.' Another commented to Norman Dennis that: 'You don't have to be a Sikh to understand a Sikh. It didn't matter to me where anybody was from. It was only a matter of whether he or she was obeying the law. Now we have SWOA [Shire Women's Officer Association-actually the acronym is SWAY], RADAR [the umbrella group for the other groups], the Black

Police Association—everything—black, gay, whatever...' Another interviewee reported the 'absolute fury' of two black recruits when asked if the entry standards should be adjusted for them: 'I am a recruit', said they, and 'I will be a constable because I am good enough and not because of the colour of my skin'. Another dismissed policies based on 'diversity and 'equality' saying that: 'There's only 22 on the field in a Premier league game... a lot from ethnic minority groups... you don't make it a statutory requirement that the number of whites has to be proportionate to the number of whites in the general population'.<sup>56</sup>

In all this post-Macpherson turbulence, in society and in the police, who provides the better guide? Dr Michael Lister of the ESRC, who reports a growing detachment of BMEs from 'the body politic and the police', or Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe, who anticipates help from such BMEs? A rhetorical or academic question to me, perhaps, but practically a matter of life and death to a constable not sure what it was he or she was meant to be, or do, having been told by Macpherson that he/she was racist, whether he or she knew it or not. Would-indeed should?-such a constable infer from Trevor Phillips' description extraordinarily bleak of the black 'community' that such young men would not only let him/her know who was carrying guns or knives, but that such a putative informant would himself be totally averse to carrying and using such weapons? Would such a constable be well advised to go along with his Commissioner's view that information would be indeed forthcoming from 'the community'—or should he or she place his or her reliance more on the (not so random, 'generic') 'Stop and Search' practices so well thought of

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by the his/her Government in 2008? Should he/she so decide, then he/she would be faced by something more terrible than the admonition of the Commissioner, to wit the pointing finger of Sir William and the charge that, in so acting, he/she was demonstrating the reality of 'institutional racism', for such Stops and Searches' were in and of their nature racist—how could they not be, why would he/she not accept that?

# Good Old Great Britain

A land mark... which challenged us all, a defining moment in our history, a test of moral leadership, one which has profoundly changed the character of our society.

Jack Straw 20101

I look around every single institution in Britain and I see a white man's world. I'm not saying that people in power in these institutions are sitting around being racist; but they are sitting around making decisions that create a highly discriminatory and unrepresentative world.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown<sup>2</sup>

The Runnymede Trust, discussing institutional racism and political disenfranchisement:

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

The Runnymede Trust, 2002<sup>3</sup>

Show some respect for the old citizens of Britain for sharing their small island with us, they [gave me] a pension and my own independence. They didn't look at my face and refuse me that, did they?

Yasmin's Mother to her daughter Yasmin<sup>4</sup>

Mrs Lawrence on why she took Stephen home to be buried: Britain does not deserve him<sup>5</sup>

#### GOOD OLD GREAT BRITAIN

Mrs Lawrence's 'Britain does not deserve him' is as damning a dismissal of my country as I have ever heard. Fallen indeed must have been a society so in need of Jack Straw's ambivalent eulogy or of Runnymede's strange urging. Like Mr Straw, seven of the eight major newspapers which reported the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the conviction of Dobson and Norris presented the events not just as a personal or family tragedy, but as an epochal saga in the story of our island nation, a rendition of judgement on the entire nation of Britain. The ever-allusive and untranslatable Archbishop of Canterbury told a special commemorative service at St Martin's in the Field (attended by Prime Minister Gordon Brown) that the events 'suggested the fragility of our picture of ourselves as a liberal, tolerant and settled society'.6 Jack Straw, who regarded the setting-up of the Macpherson inquiry as the most important thing he had done in his time as Home Secretary, was less allusive, more direct: he said that the parents, family and supporters of the campaign could take comfort from the fact that the lasting memorial of their campaign was that they had 'made Britain a better place':7 he was even more laudatory in his speech of 2010, quoted immediately above.

The judgements were, of course, even when superficially positive, implicitly pejorative—necessarily so, of course, if Stephen Lawrence's death was to retain the salvific potency which had been conferred upon it. The newspapers stressed how *systemically* significant the long-drawn-out Stephen Lawrence episodes were—it was not just three or four Metropolitan policemen who were, allegedly and not merely on that one occasion, simply 'racist', but the entire force, institutionally, and then all

the police forces, and then all the other public organisations, then the whole nation, in all of its history, in what we have done, and left undone, and through our own deliberate fault. Britain itself was, is, at fault.

Immediately below are quotes from the newspapers of 4 January 2012.

The *Mirror* defined the murder as 'one of those watershed moments in our nation's history... What a stain on our nation this story became'.

The *Guardian* referred to 'a generation of shame on the Metropolitan police' and a 'national reprimand to the criminal justice and political system in a wider sense'.

In the *Telegraph* Trevor Phillips referred to 'a death which changed everything', the death of 'a boy who touched the nation's conscience', though he rather undermined this imagery by referring to 'an ugly Britain largely consigned to the past', the 'largely' tending not only to keep Britain on the rack, but also to diminish the sacrificial competence of the boy's murder and death.

The *Express* editorial said that 'the case that put Britain's attitude to race in the spotlight. The police failed the Lawrence family for no other reason than that they are black'; and quoted Acting Deputy Police Commissioner Cressida Dick as paying tribute to the Lawrence family as they 'contributed to major changes within policing, the law and society as a whole'.

The *Mail* (maintaining the confessional mode) told how 'huge swathes of the police—and the public sector in general—began to declare themselves 'institutionally racist'—even the BBC and the Church of England... Macpherson led to a culture change in British policing', a 'huge step that's made Britain a better place and [made it] the kind of world we wish to live in'.

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In the *Mail*, one-time Home Secretary David Blunkett called it 'A glorious day for British justice'.

In the *Independent* Brian Cathcart said that 'the killing ended Britain's denial about racism... 'Denial denial denial—a race murder had happened... Britain's white establishment told them to talk to the hand... Never before had the British people shared the grief and grievance of a black family'.

(One interesting thing is, given such views, is how few published letters appeared in the various correspondence columns).

Only the *Sun* sounded a cautionary note: it headlined 'Crime changed the police, the law—and Britain' and said that 'the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence had sweeping ramifications on attitudes towards ethnic prejudice, overturned British law, and spawned the race relations industry... the ripples of the report were felt across government, the judiciary, the National Health Service and schools. It also said racist language in public should be an offence. However, the pendulum arguably swung too far...

The *Observer* of Sunday 8 January devoted a leader and an article to the matter of Stop and Search, with specific reference to Stephen Lawrence and the Macpherson report, as well as an opinion poll on 'secret fears and hopes of 2012 Britons'. The *Observer* described their poll as being of particular relevance in the week in which shadow Health minister Diane Abbott had said that 'white people love playing divide and rule'. The *Independent on Sunday* 8 January ran a seven page feature 'The Life and Legacy of Stephen Lawrence; by Brian Cathcart'.

It also produced a survey of 'Race in Britain... the true divide on crime, education, jobs and across society'. The front page of the Independent introduced the survey with photographs of two young men from Eltham, one white, one black, both at a university college at Twickenham. Alongside them are imputed statements such as 'I am three times as likely to go to a leading university' (white Luke Kimberley) while black Mimi Olaide says that 'I am three times as likely to be excluded from school': other comparisons are made for life expectancy (including the likelihood of being murdered), rates of pay, poverty etc., with Mr Olaide always on the 'losing' side. He was four times as likely to be murdered. He seemed, in reality, and in spite of all this, and in the disagreeable circumstances the paper put him in, a cheerful and optimistic young man.

Neither the newspapers, nor their writers, nor the Macpherson Report are unique in their disblandishments of Great Britain. It seems to be a necessary part of the process of multicultural in-migration and settlement for the newcomers and settlers to produce a busy 'representative' elite which then in turn produces whole-sale censures of the receiving nation. Is it perhaps a stance of reciprocity, a return of real or anticipated insults inflicted by the 'hosts', or is it maybe a way of rendering innocuous and excusable any embarrassing failings on the part of at least a minority of the incoming migrants and would-be settlers? I do not know. Neither do I know why these processes also produce a small number of native-born apologists who, on our behalf, make un-bosomed admissions of our sins.

The basic ur-text of this rather provocative style is of course Lord Parekh's Report of 2000, *The Future of Multi-*

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Ethnic Britain. Lord Parekh (plain Mr Parekh at the time) tells us that Britain is in 'urgent need of re-imagining itself';8 and that should we turn our faces away from multiculturalism we will become static (as opposed to dynamic), intolerant (as opposed to cosmopolitan), fearful (as opposed to generous), insular (as opposed to internationalist), authoritarian (as opposed to democratic), introspective (as opposed to outward-looking), punitive (as opposed to inclusive), myopic (as opposed to farsighted).9 Lord Parekh's report is speckled with censures and sniggers at Britain's expense: we are told that 'Britain has never understood itself', that 'Britain is not and never been the unified conflict-free land of popular imagination'. The solution, salvation, will come from adopting the example and the liberating style of multicultural minorities: and while it may seem odd and singular to expect so much from so small a proportion of the population-i.e. ethnic minorities-'try picking up your pen without the aid of your thumb. It is its strategic importance that gives it a disproportionate importance'. 10 And so on.

Lord Parekh's description of what Britain was or would have become without multiculturalism is surely one of the most novel and negative portraits of this nation ever put before us: he is our very own Oswald Spengler. Were we really, or were we set to become, without postwar in-migration, static, intolerant, fearful, insular, authoritarian, introspective, punitive and myopic? The article in the *Independent* of 8 January, in which the national story is represented by one young black man and one young white man is another dismal and grudging version of 'the story of Britain'. At every point, the young black man Mimi Olaide has a worse life-prospect than

Luke Kimberley, the young white man-worse education, worse income, worse experience of crime, worse lifeexpectancy-etc. etc. In 2010 the Equality and Human Rights Commission, born of Lord Parekh and Oswald Spengler, produced a 750 page report 'How Fair is Britain', in which a statistical rendition of this story of two young men was written large upon the national demographic.11 In table after table, the EHRC demonstrated that being born white, and British, was better than being born black or Asian, and British. So, for example, the life expectancy of a Pakistani woman born in and dying in Britain is, at 77.3 years, about three years below the overall average and well below that of a white woman born in Britain. The fact that the life expectancy of 77.3 is **nearly 10 years** more than the average life expectancy of women born in and dying in Pakistan is of no interest to the EHRC-such data are just not available in their 750 page document: not relevant, not interested and certainly not interested in the relatively complex analyses such as those of Steve Strand, above, which show how much the picture changes when class, education, household structure etc. are taken into whether of education, life-expectancy anything else. Race-as-racism must retain its favoured position, the main explanatory variable of everything.

My point here, though, is this: like Parekh, and like Macpherson, the EHRC presents us with a whole-nation abnegation of Great Britain, an ideological denunciation so wide, so pervasive, so indifferent to the niceties of statistics and the narrow precision they require, that no response can seem anything other than a mere defensive expostulatory quibble, destined to be overwhelmed by the power, the sound and the fury of the indignant denunciamento. From such a resource can come for

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example the assured utterance of Dr Robin Oakley, a Macpherson expert witness, that 'institutional racism [is] pervasive throughout the culture and institutions of the whole of British society' (M 6:31); Macpherson's 'we have not heard evidence of overt racism or discrimination' (6:3) counts as nothing, mere fact, itself proof of its opposite, rendered trivial or blank by the moral force of the proclamation that the 'whole-of-British-society' is bad. When the trumpet sounds, what use is there for a bimodial distribution graph or a Mann-Whitney U-test? Britain is white: institutional racism is pervasive throughout this white society: therefore British whites (and only whites?) are racist, always prone as Diane Abbott put it, to want 'to divide and rule' the others. There can be no more stupid a way of sorting out and organising human society than to do so on the basis of skin colour: yet this is what we are accused of doing, in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes, by the EHRC (at length) and Ms Abbott (mouthing off). Are we so stupid?

It is from this Britain-dismissive ideology that Macpherson drew his potency, sped to it by articulate anti-racist spokespersons and motivated by the very evident distress of the parents of a murdered son. The reception and propagation of his report and his doctrine, by the excoriated police and their anxious-to-please leadership: by a Labour Party sensitised by an older humanism and new electoral concerns: by a press facing, at the time of the conviction of Norris and Dobson, a revelation that it was in part responsible for the shame of a Britain that had perhaps become as bad as Parekh had said it already was: and by an intelligentsia tending to promiscuous, credulous, career-enhancing 'tolerance'—

the reception of the report, and its incorporation into a new orthodoxy for the police (and much else) was based not on 'the facts of the case', but on an ideological insistence on the 'unfairness' of Britain. The damage it did the police has been discussed above, and will be discussed again in both the next and in the last chapter of this short book. Here I find it necessary to say this: on pretty well any international measure of the quality of life of a country—and there are many such measures—Britain scores very well indeed. The life-expectancy index mentioned above (in connection with the life expectancy of Pakistani women) is just one of many demonstrating this: for example the Freedom House Index of Freedom in the World, the Global Peace Index, the Capital Punishment Index, the Index on corruption provided by Transparency International, the Press Freedom Index, the Global Competitive Index, the Legatum Prosperity Index, and the UN Human Development Index—all these show how well we do-not perfect, but well enough for most purposes. No one coming to live and settle here, especially if coming from many of the countries from which many in-migrants and their successive settled generations have indeed come, will find himself or herself worse off here than they were where their ancestors or they themselves came from. Mrs Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's Mother makes more sense than Jack Straw, Sir William Macpherson, Lord Parekh, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and Yasmin, combined.

Unfortunately, the Macpherson report came to wallow in the 'Britain is Unfair' (institutionally racist, in Macpherson's variant) view of our society and culture: and from this ideological position, came to promote policing 'solutions' which have probably made things

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worse—and which will almost certainly not make things better. I do not know where the family of Mimi Olaide (the young black man referred to above) hails from—some part of Africa?: but as presented to us by the *Independent* he seems a man sensible enough to resist the diet of whinge offered him by a large section of our 'race relations industry'. He would do well to shrug to one side the invitations to subscribe to the party of 'Unfair', to eschew the language of 'Rights' and to shoulder instead the language of 'Duty': and to do so in the amiable realisation that the country to which his family came offers him a better chance (no guarantees, no perfection) than wherever it was they came from.

In 50 years time, when Mr Olaide is the age I am now, he will be living (should he decide to stay, and that's a freedom he has) in the United Kingdom (Mr Salmond permitting) of 2050. In 2011 the HSBC Bank produced 'The World in 2050: quantifying the shift in the global economy.<sup>12</sup> The world will clearly not then be the same for a 70 yearold Mr Olaide, any more than it has stayed the same for me. But he might consider this: of the small, aging, rich European economies, the UK does well. Its per capita income is set to increase from \$28,000 to \$50,000, making the UK on that measure the 6th richest country in the table (down one on 2012). On total GDP the UK in 2050 is also at 6th, down on 2101, when it was 5th and on 1970, when it was 4th. On the major variables determining this prospect, the 'rule of law' is prominent. 'The rule of law' depends on at least two things: the belief of the populace that the law is what it says it is and is so for everyone irrespective of class, status, gender, race; and, secondly, on a level of morale in the staff of the criminal justice system that their work is valuable and valued. Macpherson-for reasons I

do not understand—seemed moved to undermine both these things: the law is not, he says, the same for all, and the criminal justice system, the police, is racist. For those so persuaded, riot is a logical recourse, and, for a police force so accused, an arms-folded passivity makes sense. No doubt Mr Olaide saw this in last year's pillaging and arson in London and some of our other cities. Mr Olaide may care to ponder the other matters identified by the HSBC document: the importance of monetary stability, of democracy, and of control on 'governmental interference', measured by the 'proxy variable' of the level of government spending. Then he may care to consider where he should plan to live: and should he decide to stay, to work out what he needs to do to help make this place better—not perfect, just better: and he starts with an enormous inheritance-which he and his neighbour Mr Kimberley would do well to succour. Both men would do well to consider this a privilege and a duty: rights without duty are a theft. There is absolutely nothing guaranteed about our future-Spengler and other despairing souls may well turn out to be right. The United Kingdom might well retain its wealth, but probably not its global position; and will thus become vulnerable to a variety of shocks and turmoil, which a fragmented society, raised on a diet of 'rights' and the concomitant preoccupation with internal domestic matters, and a positive doltish encouragement to avoid a concern for duty-such a society will undoubtedly need loyalty and a police force loyal to that broader society and indifferent to the sectional interests of individuals or groups or 'communities', black, Asian or white.

# That's Why We Have the Power of the Constable

The Treaty of Lausanne, 1923, Chapter 3, Clause 42/2, on the rights of minorities: Jewish leaders declared that 'As a result of the separation of religious and secular affairs, all laws are cleared of religion and prepared solely with respect to the requirements and development of the state, thus rendering it unnecessary to have a special Jewish and family [law]... Therefore, the Turkish Jews are willing to be subject to the secular laws that are issued in family and personal law as well as other fields of common law.

Gulertuz, 20091

Norman Dennis's interviewee: Partnerships!! They mean' what can the police do for us'. We lost it when we ceased to be a police force and became a police service—supposed to solve all the ills of society. Interviewee: **We've lost our way completely**. We don't have the bodies. Somebody needs to say, 'We'll do it—with these resources. Without the resources, we can't do it'.

Norman Dennis's interviewee: **We have lost our way.** Flanagan says, 'Peel's principles still apply'. But they can only be applied where there's Peel's proportion between crimes and constables, and the same level of agreement of Peel's time on what the police are there to defend.

Norman Dennis's interviewee: Policing is unique... important... satisfying the public's sense of proportion and justice—not any public, but the historic British public... The way it's going at the moment, is that people don't want to have contact with the police.

Norman Dennis's interviewee: Peel's nine principles, yes... consent, yes but not to pander to parts of the public. Consent by not pandering to parts of the public! Consent by not pandering to the whole of the public at the moment, for that matter its long-term confidence in the police that is the key to consent.

A colour blind approach fails to take account of the nature and needs of the person or the people involved, and of the special features which such crimes and their investigation possess (M 6:18).

The reference to the Treaty of Lausannne, 1923, is to the 1925 decision of the Jews of the new Republic of Turkey to forego the privileges made available to them (and all other minorities) by clause 42/2 of the Treaty.

When I was a boy I was told by my mother that the blind-folded Statue of Justice on top of the Old Bailey in London represented one of the most important things or ideas which made us British what we are. I know now that the Old Bailey version of Justice is not blind-folded —my mother had never been to London. Born in Rhuddlan, North Wales, I had never been to London either; so for me the story had and retains a quasi-mythic character, like the story of Caradoc and the Romans, or the symbolism of the silent stone soldier on whose plinth the schools of my village would, every Remembrance Day, lay a solemn wreath.

I was also taught, though, by my Plaid Cymru grandfather, that the English-British did not necessarily live up to the Statue of Justice because the proffered 'justice' was institutionally English (he had a different word for it). He felt, that is, that the promise of the Statue was being subverted, and that therefore separation from and abandonment of England, the 'Patagonian' or

'Salmond' option, was the answer. The message, though, of the Statue-that all should be equal before the lawwould apply, he said, in Welsh, to the Welsh, in the Welsh state so constructed: he was a genuine multiculturalist-the English could do, with and in England, whatever they liked. My mother, though, took the view that it was the behaviour of the English (though not just of the English) which was failing the Statue and not the other way round: and that bad behaviour could, would and should be corrected by an amplification and rededication of the Statue of Justice, and not by its negation-or demolition. She felt that while the Welsh and the English were not the same, they shared a sufficiency of both history and identity to be able to live together when doing so under a common Justice, in a democracy-she was of the first generation of women to vote on an equal footing with men—and with no need for special privileges or treatment, which were merely the mirror image of special burdens or discrimination.

My grandfather, much more hostile to the English, still did not feel that there should be special laws and special privileges for the Welsh, if only because he would see such things as forms of disguised manipulation, English hegemony in fact if not in face, and more threatening precisely because of the mask. He would have found highly risible Macpherson's assertion that the police were guilty of racism because they failed to treat the Lawrences 'within their own culture and as a black grieving family' (M 6:34 and M 26:37-38): How, he would have asked, would the police know what such a culture was? What could they know about the nature of Welsh *galar* (grief)? Would they have sent a policewoman (a woman!) to the graveside funeral? Did they speak Welsh, and if so which

variant? How would the police, trying (authentically or otherwise) to be friendly, react to that small section of the Welsh, more radical than my grandfather, which would inevitably regard such an attempt at 'community' policing as an opportunity to exploit, for making trouble, perhaps burning down a house or two, thus facing my grandfather and his more moderate colleagues with an option (report them? or deny them?) which he did not want? Either way, he and his cause would lose: as indeed would the principle of equal justice.

In the face of all this, my mother asked of the English only that they, like the Statue, be blind (in fact if not in actual design) to ethnic or linguistic or racial or religious differences: treating everyone the same was a practical as well as a moral matter: it worked. She knew, having imbibed the messages of Wales as depicted (for example) in 'How Green was my Valley', and she knew too, from personal experience, how determinedly the police were kept out of communal affairs in the mining communities of the south and the farming and sea-going communities of the north. She knew, too, how these self-policed communities relied much on communal love and selfrespect but also on male muscle-violence when necessary-and that much of the social cohesion so engendered required, amongst other things, a heavy burden on women: and she knew too that women, on occasion forced by circumstance and by their men-folk into pain and humiliation beyond tolerance, wanted a justice which was precisely not that of 'the community'. She knew, also from experience, how the pulpits of the community could and on occasion did utter grim sonorous admonitory versions of the nature of God's love (she eventually joined the Church of England). She knew that the police (the non-community alternative) were not perfect: one of her cousins had joined the police: and in his own stumbling way he expressed the simple good sense of an impartial police service, aware of social and cultural differences, but in no way allowing such awareness to determine the culture-blind performance of his duty. (Sadly he fell into corruption, and was drummed out of the force).

# London Riots: The Police Lost Control

Between 2002 and 2006/7, five in every six policemen or policewomen were assaulted. In 2006 there was one assault every 20 minutes. In the last five years (2002-7) there have been 127,000 assaults on policemen and policewomen.<sup>2</sup>

As a percentage of GNP, the UK spends the largest amount on the police, that of 2006/7 being 40 per cent up on 1997/8. On that measure, this is more than the USA, double that of Sweden, France and Denmark, and 50 per cent more than Canada, Germany and Japan. Between 1997 and 2007 3,600 new criminal offences were created. The UK has 5,300,000 names on its 2008/9 DNA data base.<sup>3</sup>

Over the period 1982-2005 the percentage of people thinking the police were doing a good job declined from 43 per cent to 14 per cent. In 1963 there were 978,000 recorded crimes and 80,000 police officers. In 1997 there were 4,600,000 recorded crimes and 125,000 police officers. There was, that is, 370 per cent increase in recorded crimes and a 56 per cent increase in police numbers. In 1963 there were 35,000 recorded crimes of violence against the person. In 1997 there were 482,000 crimes of violence against the person. Between 1963 and

1997 the number of crimes for each constable rose from 12 to 36. The introduction of suspect-friendly legislation such as PACE made each crime much more time-costly.<sup>4</sup>

It would obviously be silly to blame Macpherson and/or other leading lights of the multicultural world for what has happened in British society and to British policing: we had, as the figures above show, home-grown troubles enough: yet people like Macpherson can, it seems to me, be censured for adding to those troubles. For a force so beleaguered, was the charge of 'institutional racism', so casually made, an appropriate charge? Norman Dennis well describes the world onto which the report was imposed:

Anti-war demonstrators, strikers, drug users and urban recreational rioters had this common characteristic: they all demanded the right **not to be policed**. The Peelite principle that 'the police are the public and the public are the police' which had assumed a unity of interest of citizen and police officer in the police upholding the law of the land as it stood at the time had been transmogrified. The new claim was that the unity of the police and the public required that if, and to the extent that particular communities or sections of the population did not approve of the law of the land, then it ought not to be imposed on them. 'Community policing' came to mean 'community non-policing'.<sup>5</sup>

Brian Holland<sup>6</sup> describes the problems he faced as a member of Greater Manchester's various 'Respect' programmes set up by Greater Manchester Police, under the leadership of a 'progressive' Chief Constable. Holland says that ethnic minority communities felt that they were at one and the same time both **over** policed (stop and search particularly) and **under** policed (especially on race hate matters), and that these two things, being 'ideologically' sustained by 'an underlying racist culture' in the

force, made it difficult to recruit policemen or women or to keep them: thus a 'key tenet of British policing—consensus policing—is totally undermined'.

Holland seems to be saying that having BME police – I assume in the relevant proportions of and for each of Greater Manchester's 130+ BME communities - is or might be what would or might make 'consensus policing' (the 'key tenet') possible. Holland notes at the end of his essay that 'there has been some melting of the ice' in dealing with these (surely, on those terms, insuperable?) problems. In a Manchester which has about 130 ethnic minority communities-not to mention (and it is rarely mentioned) a large (80 per cent+) native population where, on the underpoliced/overpoliced continuum, is a constable to place any individual, perpetrator or victim, he or she comes across in the course of his /her day? And what problem would not be better (not perfectly) solved by treating all and any of them absolutely the same? Otherwise, we do indeed get what Norman Dennis calls, 'community non-policing'-or its near equivalent, a policing which is open to minority virtues but blind to its vices (and minorities do have vices).

Macpherson recommended the installation of BME police associations in each police force. The Metropolitan Police Service has 19 or so such Associations: Black, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Irish and more (including, since 2009 a Pagan police association). The MPS has a full-time member of staff engaged in managing the relationships between these various organisations. There is now a National Black Police Association.

In an essay entitled *Black Police Associations and the Lawrence Report*, Holdaway and O'Neill discuss the

boundary problems of such a notion.<sup>7</sup> 'Troublesome arguments', say Holdaway and O'Neill, have arisen about 'essentialism', i.e. the idea that 'black' is a definite and definable inclusive category, and, if it is, why should it include brown people, whose 'essentialism' may be located in, say, their religion rather than their skin colour?<sup>8</sup> 'Black' Associations can only with difficulty claim the 'essentialism' of, say, Muslims, where the boundary of membership is reasonably clear (though of course full of possible intra-communal and theological conflict: a perpetual 'Arab Spring'?), whereas 'Black' as a noun, or even 'black' as a mere adjective, denotes nothing homogeneous: Aborigines, Kikuyu and Jamaicans are black. Holdaway and O'Neill describe the Black Police Associations:

patrolling ethnic boundaries that define 'black', aware that this is a political activity with the potential to threaten their status and authority within a constabulary... The Black Police Association [of the MPS] claims essentialism related to racism (*sic*), the Sikh, Muslim, Jewish and Hindu associations to religious belief and related cultures, and the Turkish and Italian associations to culture <sup>9</sup>

The 'troublesome arguments' spill over into the force hierarchy. Chief officers, say Holdaway and O'Neill, find themselves:

pulled by this tension between racism (sic) and cultural difference, between a unified and a diverse presentation of minorities within the workforce. Home Office policy has done little or nothing to clarify or deal with it.<sup>10</sup>

In a way none of this would matter – a simple waste of public money: but if (as indeed seems to be the intention and rationale) the recruitment and promotions of BMEs and the creation of BME Associations is to ensure that the

separate police units so created are expected to have special and communal relations with their particular BME communities-and what other than that is the point of them?-then we would have indeed institutionalised racialism if not 'institutional' racism. Holdaway and O'Neill conclude by saying that one of the tasks of chief officers will be to 'recognise' and 'accommodate' the fact that in this system 'humankind can be defined into groups that are essentially different'.11 Granting this (although it has a sinister ring about it), we then move to recognise that we live in a society and under a juridical system in which we all now have, qua Human, Human Rights held, simply, because we are human, i.e., following Holdaway and O'Neill, because we are all, as humans, essentially different! Holdaway and O'Neill, Macpherson and many others would seem to wish upon us (or upon some of us), in addition, 'Minority Rights', under which, whether as employees of the police service, or as members of a minority, or as criminals or as potential criminals or suspects or as collaborative citizens, we can legitimately claim these additional rights. In a culture so constructed, in an anarchy of Human Rights ('essentially different') punctuated by Minority Rights, and with Obligations shy and off-scene-where, how, when can policing be possible? How under such a system would it be possible, as J S Mill put it 'to translate the rule of virtue from the abstract to the concrete'?12

Other times and other places seem to have come to a more sensible solution to the problem of social order. In 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne eventually put an end to conflict between the Allies and the new Republic of Turkey. Articles 42/2 of the Treaty, 'Protection of the Minorities', stated that 'cases on family and individual

law [were] to be handled by Turkish courts in accordance with the traditions and customs of these [minority] communities'. In September 1925 the leaders of the Jewish community waived these rights, saying that 'As a result of the separation of religious and secular affairs, all laws are... prepared solely with respect to the requirements and development of the state, Turkish Jews are keen to be subject to the secular laws that are issued in family and personal law as well as other civil law fields'.13 We should clearly allow, on the one hand, for an element of exaggeration in this, and on the other for some understanding of the extraordinary circumstances of postwar Turkey (grim circumstances to be found in no part of the modern UK). Yet is there not, here, a better lesson for us in the reliance for communal life not on an insistence for additional privilege but on its embedment in general societal laws constructed for the benefit Specifically, for the relations of the citizenry and the police to be based on what was written in 1829:

The police seek and preserve public favour, not by catering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustice of individual laws; by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of society without regard to their race or social standing.<sup>14</sup>

When, under the vigorous but misguided influence of Macpherson and others, we moved away from such a simple decent ideas, we indeed end as David Green puts it, with:

policies which are likely to diminish rather than improve racial harmony. The danger is that in our efforts to ensure that everyone within our frontiers feels at home, we fall prey

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to the subtle arguments of those demanding racial preferences. A free and democratic society depends first and foremost upon equality before the law, and relies on a sense of solidarity we all feel because we all live under common rules which, by restraining us in certain agreed respects, releases the potential of everyone to make the most of his or her talents. Such solidarity is a better safeguard for good community relations than policies of racial preference.<sup>15</sup>

In this way, we get what Norman Dennis has called 'the slow construction of specific habits and rules of good conduct'. <sup>16</sup> There is no other way.

# Conclusion

# What Is Institutional Racism For?

I look around every single institution in Britain and I see a white man's world. I'm not saying that people in power in these institutions are sitting around being racist; but they are sitting around making decisions that create a highly discriminatory and unrepresentative world.

(Yasmin Alibhai-Brown)1

Although Inspector Ian Little agreed that any dealing with Mr and Mrs Lawrence in the circumstances needed careful, delicate and sympathetic handling, he did not seem to realise that the approach made by him (*if it happened*) was insensitive and clumsy and only capable of misinterpretation and difficulty. Mr and Mrs Lawrence, particularly Mr Lawrence, says that nothing was said at all by Inspector Little to him, and that he (Mr Lawrence) never made any visit to the resuscitation room either with one or two police officers in order to formally identify his son.

(M.12:45) (my emphasis)

The concept of 'institutional racism' removes from the white majority citizens of this country all positive moral stature whatsoever. That is what it is for.

As mobilised by Macpherson, the concept is more absolute, more total, more abstracted, more irrefutable (though more selective) in its condemnatory capacity than the Christian doctrine of original sin. The Fathers of the Church, realising that the notion of 'original sin' furnished neither reason nor opportunity for an

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assessment of individual action, that is for individual morality, provided the concept of personal sin, therefore providing also opportunity for personal virtue. In doing this they endowed human beings with an empirical basis for ethical judgement of and for themselves and of and for each individual by others if necessary. The unfortunate Inspector Little referred to immediately above had no such recourse: his 'approach' was described by Macpherson as 'insensitive and clumsy'—'if it happened'. If it happened?! The Lawrences, the putative recipients of Inspector Little's putative abhorrent behaviour, had no recollection of having spoken to the Inspector, whether to be charmed or to be offended by him. If it happened! Being white and being a policeman was sufficient to earn him Macpherson's description as being 'grossly insensitive and unsympathetic... insensitive and clumsy', If it happened, regarded by Macpherson as if it most definitely did, thus making Inspector Little a paid-up member of Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's 'highly discriminatory and unrepresentative world'. What Inspector Little actually did, his personal sin or his personal virtue, his acts of commission or omission, are simply not on Macpherson's moral map. The only source of information on what the Inspector actually did at the hospital is his own notes: 'one of us said to him (Mr Lawrence) "we've got a young lad in there, he is dead, we don't know who he is, but we would like to clarify the point. If it is not your son then all well and good, but we do need to know. I am sure you would like to know as well".' From these brief and de-contextualised notes, with no evidence at all as to Inspector's tone of voice, or gesture, or facial expression, and with no independent witnesses to the encounter, we Macpherson's stricture on Inspector Little as being

'grossly insensitive and unsympathetic', institutionalised racism personified.

'Institutional', then, means 'beyond need of proof', its mere assertion constituting truth, its mere assertion certifying guilt.

'Racism' is perhaps more susceptible to analysis. When born, we all of us enter into various (initially involuntary) collectivities-family, kin, neighbours, associates, people we slowly begin to know because we meet them, people we know though we will never meet them. This knowing is always moralised. It is discriminatory—how else could we flourish? It is unrepresentative—how else could we become? Gradually, our artless biology becomes social and sociable: our collectivities move towards a capacity to know and incorporate strangers, including strangers from and in the past, a history, a moralised pedigree, of self, same and other. This is always discriminatory. To cope, to create an active moral world, we devise rules of recognition which help in determining our attitude to ourselves, to new experiences, to new encounters, to new strangers. Often enough, and necessarily so given the effusion of our lives, these rules develop by reference to and readily ascertainable 'markers'-size, external gender, colour, language, age, expression, place of birth. Often, and increasingly, the largest collectivity in which we can make some practical sense of this flow of a national community: Latin: natio, experience is nationis—of origin, of birth, a pedigree, terms which have a socio-political and a geographical referent; Latin: *communiter, com-murmuror*—fellowship, communitas, together, in common, to murmur in common.

Anthropologists tell us that we all do this, we all murmur in common—Kwakiutls, Armenians, Basques,

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Wanderobo, Navajo, Waziris, Scots, Hindus, Bangladeshis, Slovaks, Zoroastrians, Russians, Mackems, Chinese, Australians, Californians, Peruvians, Italians—and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown: and Sir William Macpherson, 27th hereditary chief of Clan Macpherson. These processes are never complete, as known and unknown unknowns keep coming, to be rebuffed or incorporated as the case might be. Often the broader universalisms of religion or 'humanity' transcend and qualify our day to day narrower identities. Sometimes the process fails, and sorrow, shame or nostalgia replace dignity and mutuality. All this seems quite obvious and banal to me.

Our rules of recognition provide pre-judgements, which are at one and the same time broadening and restricting. These pre-judgements should not be confused with prejudice-though they may well move in that direction, and perhaps back again. The most common 'prejudice', of course, is that pre-judgement which people come to make in their own favour. Without such a prejudgement, which mobilises and incorporates a sense of collective merit, shared by all, public morality is not possible. Thus, for example, it is not possible to be ashamed of a collective wrong-doing without a prior sense of pride in the collectivity and its traditions. I grew up in colonial Kenya. At some stage in the 1950s I, along with all other white males, was compelled to join the Army. One day, while we were moving along a bush path in the lands beyond the Rift Valley, an African man came speeding round the corner on his bicycle. At the sight of us—six or seven young white men, uniformed and armed -he dropped his bicycle and hurtled off into the bush. He must have been terrified of something, as bicycles were a valued possession, not readily abandoned. What

had 'we' done? What had 'we' done wrong? I had been brought up to be proud of being British, and 'being proud of being British' meant being ashamed of doing things which were wrong *by British standards* (and probably by those of others, too). There can be no shame without proper prior pride. I hope the man got his bicycle back.

A letter from a serving police officer states the case against 'institutional racism' better than I can:

One of the most disgraceful features of the whole episode was the indecent haste with which police chiefs queued up to throw their hands in the air as soon as Paul Condon had set the trend... The contrast between the sensible approach of Scarman and the desperate attempt by Macpherson to universalise the definition trivialised a very important matter by alienating a great many who would have been content to form a coalition of the willing to address it. There is no argument in the service that our ranks have within them a proportion of members who hold all sorts of view ranging from the undesirable to the downright odious, but so does society. Until we are able to look into the hearts and minds of both recruits and existing personnel... we will be stuck with the sensible, democratic efforts we are currently able to make to eradicate racism from among our people. The bottom line is that away from the lala land of the zealotry, a lot of well-balanced, cosmopolitan-minded individuals in the service have their fingers in their ears and aren't listening.

Public policy, whether as regards the police or education or politics, should not 'institutionalise' Macpherson's failure to maintain the distinction between pre-judgement and prejudice. Macpherson simply leapt over the distinction: and in so doing not only obviated the need to make a realistic if less flamboyant analysis of the limitations of the policing of the murder of Stephen

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Lawrence, but also led an over-anxious police leadership to make a fool of itself by adopting policies which are neither operationally nor socially nor ethically sound and proper.

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### Conclusion: What is Institutional Racism For?

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